



# Coming of Age Leader's Resources

Edited by Stan Crow

Published by the  
Institute of Cultural Affairs  
Rite of Passage Journeys Program  
2002 Edition

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# Coming of Age Leaders Resources

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4/17/02

# *The Model*

*Mentored  
Learning*

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*Enacted  
Ritual*

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*Practical  
Testing*

*Empowering  
Story*



# Planning A Youth Initiation Program

By Stan Crow, Director,  
ICA Rite of Passage Journeys Programs

We use the word *PASSAGES* to refer to the significant transition points in our lives. There are many types of passages we experience in our lifetimes. Dr Angeles Arrien says they all fall into four types, **BIRTH, INITIATION, PARTNERING, and DEATH**. These categories can be helpful ~ thinking about planning your own events.

A **RITE OF PASSAGE** is a *ritual or the ritualization* of a Transition or Passage.

By **BIRTH** we refer to *new beginnings*. These can include starting a new business, moving to a new city or into a new house, as well as the birth of a new baby and becoming parents.

**INITIATION** is about *learning and testing*. One can be initiated into various new stages of life. Many vocational apprenticeship programs illustrate this type of passage. Traditionally, the community initiated young people into adult status at puberty (requiring significant effort on the part of the initiate to master and demonstrate the culture and knowledge of an adult in that society).

**PARTNERING** passages take place when things *come together*. Starting a new business partnership, a merger of organizations, collaborating on a significant project are included, along with the coming together of two lovers or the blending of parts of two families.

**DEATH** is a time of finishing or letting go. Retirement and divorce are two death passages we as a society must find more appropriate ways to mark.

**THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF RITES OF INITIATION** are *Mentored Learning, Practical Testing, Enacted Ritual and Empowering Story*. Their individual elements are not necessarily sequential, but their presence takes into account the important steps of an initiation program for individuals within a community (no matter what age).

This article explores a model we have found helpful as we plan initiation events. It is based on these four categories which might be considered foundational and another four topics under each of the categories.

Initiation is a time of **MENTORED LEARNING**. A mentor with the ability to teach appropriate skills and offer an expanded world view is a key aspect of this phase of initiation. The mentor's role is as a guide and confidant -- selected by the family and community, this individual can provide a safety valve for young people to test theories, new personas and an expression of concerns.

For young people, it is easy to see some types of learning which might be included in the learning self-reliance skills, personal and community responsibility, teamwork, and specific skills like camping or canoeing. Adults entering specific training programs will be learning other skills and knowledge bases.



If this learning is done within the context of an established community (such as a religious group), its history and values are to be learned. The existence of a community is, in fact, critical to the whole program, and if, as in our programs, no community exists, a temporary community must be created in the process of the program.

The way these new skills and information are related to one's spiritual journey or larger world view are pivotal to this life event -- they are not separate. For youth, this can include times of serious group conversation, journaling, writing personal faith statements and a conversation with their pastor or rabbi.

Relating one's own life to the world is also important to a youth's journey. Activities we've seen include community service projects such as preparing and serving a meal to the homeless, helping with the building of a community, play area, and registering people to vote.

In traditional cultures, *TESTING* was done by the community, not the parents. Usually it was done by representatives, but sometimes the whole community was present for a part, such as the public reading of the Scriptures (the Torah) in the Jewish tradition. Like that reading, we believe that it is more important for the testing to demonstrate practical skills than answer theoretical ones.

Today, it is still important that parents not do the actual testing of the initiate. Certainly, it is possible for parents to do a good job of it, but when there are others from the community who perform the task, it emphasizes that this is a worldly passage, not just a family one. In many traditional cultures, the young person leaves the family at this point, at least for the duration of the testing.

Testing should never be comfortable. When the test is too easy, it becomes meaningless. It should be structured so that the youth are motivated to "hang-tough". We are partial to having a ROPES course as a part of these events as these activities are designed to take participants into new challenges individually and as teams. Other outdoor events such as rappelling, white-water rafting, etc. can be equally effective. In all these activities, trained guides are crucial.

Finally, the importance of reflection by both individuals and the group make the difference in the long-term effect of the program. We use a *talking-stick* style circle throughout our programs to help the youth relate what they are experiencing to the rest of their lives.

**RITUAL** is the drama which brings meaning to the initiation. It can and probably should happen many times during an initiation program. In our programs, we utilize ritual to begin the program (a death ritual), to mark the transitions in the program itself, at the actual initiation ceremony and finally, a ritual of closure, to let go of our temporary community.

When your community begins to create the rituals for such an event, make sure you maintain elements of your traditions as well as create new ones.

Over the years, we have tried many ritual elements from many cultures,

making sure to be true to our own principles. Those we have found to work best are dramatic – actually capable of being “performed” with costumes and ritual tools such as rattles, candles, and robes. They are designed to create an aura of the unfamiliar -- taking the youth to a mysterious place and in strong metaphorical language.

Traditionally, the ritual was done by the elders of the community, but the presence of the whole initiated community or at least its representatives is important to the notion that the whole community is participating.

In the celebration of the new initiates, the whole community acknowledges the newly admitted members of the community and honors them for their achievements.

The whole community is present, for the younger ones are being prepared for their initiation. even though its content is not revealed during the celebration. The community presents gifts to these initiates, stating through these acts both the promise and the expectation that they are responsible members of the society.

Most important, this is a celebration. The youth participate in its design and fun things happen -- perhaps dancing, perhaps singing, and certainly, food.

And what is the anticipated outcome of such initiations? If the magic works, an initiate will come out of the experience with a new and EMPOWERING STORY which will help him or her to take charge of the decisions which set the course for his/her future. This story should be based upon an exploration of the initiate's own values. A story which is developed in the community setting should also connect the initiate to a community in which he/she will be actively related. Finally, an integral part of the story are the tangible symbols -- artifacts of the journey -- whose presence reminds and rehearses the decisions made while on the transformational journey.

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# The Community and the Drama of Initiation

by Stan Crow, Director, ICA Rite of Passage Programs



**I**nitiation is defined in the dictionary as "the rites, ceremonies, ordeals or instructions with which a youth is formally invested with adult status in a community, society or sect."

Rites of Initiation have always been rooted in Community. Their intent was to shift the perception of youth toward their roles in the community and the perception of the community toward their youth. More important, however, **Initiation was about the creation, maintenance and longevity of the community.**

When a young Maasai initiate stood before the community, allowing himself to be circumcised without flinching, he was participating in an ancient ritual which assured that warriors would protect the village with all their being, not turn to run or give up if they were injured or in pain.

Initiation rituals also bonded the men of the village in a way which created the teamwork necessary on the hunt or in the warring party.

In several cultures, when young women were taken away to the encampments of the women's societies to learn the traditions of the tribe and the secrets which allowed the women to maintain their power base in the community, similar bonding and imprinting took place.

In *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*, Malidoma Somé says:

"A true community begins in the hearts of the people involved. It is not a place of distraction but a place of being. It is not a place where you reform, but a place you go home to. Finding a

home is what people in community try and accomplish. In community, it is possible to restore a supportive presence for one another... The others in community are the reason that one feels the way one feels. The elder cannot be an elder if there is no community to make him an elder. The young boy cannot feel secure if there is no elder whose silent presence gives him hope in life. The adult cannot be who he is unless there is a strong sense of presence of the other people around. This interdependency is what I call supportive presence."

Initiation is about the maintenance of community. In initiation, roles are defined and redefined. The stories which freight the values and history of the community are retold and learned to be told again. Adults become elders as youth become adults, and the familiar (family) bonds are forged and tempered.

Initiation is about finding your home -- knowing who you are and where you come from. One's personal history is founded upon a unique genealogy passed on by parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. In a true community, all people evolve active relationships. One's personal cosmology is built upon that of those who have gone before. The experience of the elders and the ancestors has value because it is one's dowry -- life tools which have worked for your forebearers and will continue to work for you.

Initiation in traditional communities was HIGH DRAMA with three acts and many scenes. It was performed by members of the community who became the *enactors* of the age-old *enactments*.

In each Act, there were specific roles; and only certain community members were permitted to portray particular parts. The dramaturgy (the script, rationale, mood and tone) was intended to have specific effects on the individuals being initiated and on the community itself.

## ACT ONE -- The Severance or the Separation.

In the first act the Initiate was cut off from parents, community, and most importantly, from the very life s/he had been living. This was intended to shut the door forever on former relationships and to create strong new ones which would sustain the community. In this enactment, the Initiate and the parents experienced loss and fear. The Initiate at this moment decided to step through a passageway into a new world, and h/e/r/s parents decided to let go. The only parallel I can think of in our modern society is in times of war when parents say goodbye to children going off to be soldiers.

In most instances, the poetry of the drama of separation, told a story of the death of the child. Children were "taken" from their homes by the enactors and delivered to the initiation ground for a scene in which they were ritualistically separated from their role of child. In many cultures, they were isolated in huts or caves or buried up to their necks in the ground. In one tribe, they were lined up and one by one trussed-up and thrown over a fence. On the otherside, a log was dropped with a thud or splash to create the appearance for observers that the initiate had "landed hard", while the enactors on the other side caught the incoming youth. The community members who played these parts did so with the very future of the community in mind.



## ACT TWO -- The Threshold or Transition

In most cultures, Initiation was not short. It lasted from several months to several years. One might think of this transition period as going to another space and time -- passing out of the world that was known, being transformed, and passing back into the world that was left behind. The world was still the same, the Initiate was radically different. Our forebearers used the metaphor of death (act I), descent into the underworld (act II), and rebirth (act III).

During the second act, the young person was *afforded the chance* to become a fully accepted member of the community. In many communities, this was not a foregone conclusion. Scenes of this act varied from culture to culture, but commonly, youth were required to learn and be tested.

**Learning** was based on things youth needed to know to assure the future of the community. Training was done either in groups or with mentors (frequently in both ways). The training was intended to widen the child's world view. Mentors offered the child a chance to learn from a different individual's life experience. S/He was not a surrogate parent, but a proxy for the whole community. This individual (usually an elder) helped to form a bridge which transported the Initiate into an adult way of thinking.

**Testing** was frequently life threatening. The young African male was sent out to kill the lion or be killed. The male Initiate in Papua New Guinea tied vines to his ankles in the original bungee jump and dove from a tower. Many died from infections which were a result of circumcision and scarification.

In *Rite of Passage* by Alexei Panshin, the Initiates are told before beginning their *Trial*, "The important thing to remember is it makes being an adult a meaningful sort of thing, because adulthood has been earned when you come back from *Trial*. That makes *Trial* worth concentrating on."

Rituals ran throughout the threshold time. The final ritual was about preparing for the return journey. The Initiate was honored for having completed the trials, was received as a fully responsible member of the community and was charged to put the community's interest first.

## ACT THREE -- the Incorporation into the Community.

During the entire time of Initiation, youth and community were saying goodbye to the children they knew. During the third act, they would welcome *persons who had never been a part of this community* -- strangers who wanted to join this community and had demonstrated their allegiance to the community in learning its mysteries and passing its trials. This was not about re-incorporating people who had been away, but rather, about incorporating new beings into the community.

## WHERE ARE THE MODERN RITES OF INITIATION ?

With few exceptions, children today do make the transition from youth to adult. So, where's the rub; why are we so concerned?

The purpose of Initiation was to keep the youth linked to the community. In this century, in North America, we have evolved into a situation in which youth initiate themselves. The "gang" or "posse" initiations are the most obvious, as they require the youth to separate themselves from the community in a dramatic way which sometimes include random acts of violence directed against the larger

anonymous community. The Mall culture and the substance abuse crowds have their entry rituals as well.

Now, consider parents who have fallen victim to an impossible - to - fulfill story called the *Nuclear Family*. Whether a couple or single, parents are expected to give all the guidance, discipline, values and support to their offspring while working and commuting 50 to 60 hours per week. How are they to initiate their own children and into what society?

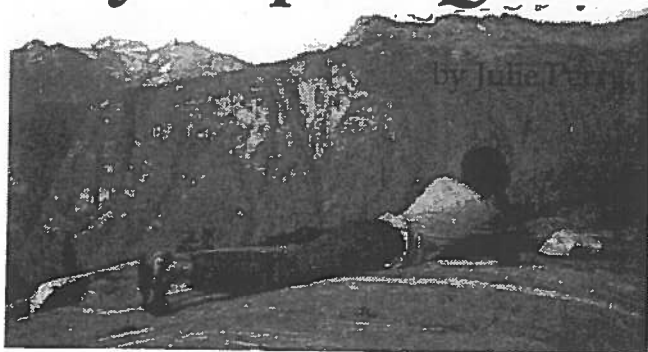
Finally, as we have stratified our societies, we have relegated the elders to insignificant, non-community related roles. Their life experience is ignored, and their participation in the rearing of children is seen as objectionable. In former societies, the elders were those who cared for the society by initiating the youth.

Many of us who are doing Rites of Initiation work are doing so with the future of the larger community in mind. This task, however, is far too big for us. The larger community must once again assume the task.

That will not happen by some large governmental program, nor should it. Instead, every church, mosque and temple, every service club, lodge and ethnic association, every quilting group, civic club, and sports association must assume responsibility for the youth whose lives or parents' lives they touch.



# Why a Spirit Quest?



I could write something colorful and exotic about other cultures. I could tell you how many send members of their tribes on vision quests at important transitions in their lives, or to gain answers to important questions. But I won't, that can only explain what other peoples have done. You want to know, "Why would anyone not living in a tribal society want to go on a vision quest now?" Everyone has different reasons, but I'd like to share a few from my experience.

In many meditation practices, people focus on the space between thoughts or breaths, sitting in the quiet of between. Similarly, a quest asks an individual to sit in the space between their life before and life after, focusing on the self in-between.

If you choose to travel into this "between" place, you soon learn that pre-quest ritual is laden with symbols of dying, death, and letting go. Preparations for questing challenge you to consider your own life story, then let it go, asking "Who am I without this story of my past?" You are asked to consider all relationships past and present, then let them go, asking "Who am I without all these people in my life? Who am I if I am not a daughter, son, girlfriend, sister, brother, mother or father to someone?" You are asked to consider who you are without your beliefs about yourself and the world. What if you give up even your name? These are all parts of your identity. A quest ritual asks you to let this identity die, so that you may seek insights about your life without the baggage of your life thus far.

Imagine that. . . Go on, do it now! You are sitting on a hill top. Who is left when you take away your past, your relationships, your beliefs, even your name? Who is sitting there on that hill for 72 hours? This is the space that a quest encourages you to return to again and again, even as your thoughts drift to and fro. You may think about your new life to be. You may see your new life being different. You may feel everything from intense grief, fear and loneliness, to joy, excitement and love, or even boredom. A quest provides a time and space for thoughts and feelings to run their course. Pulling away from normal life a quest can remove you from society's perpetual focus on things. A quest allows the space and time to ask "What has meaning

in my life?"

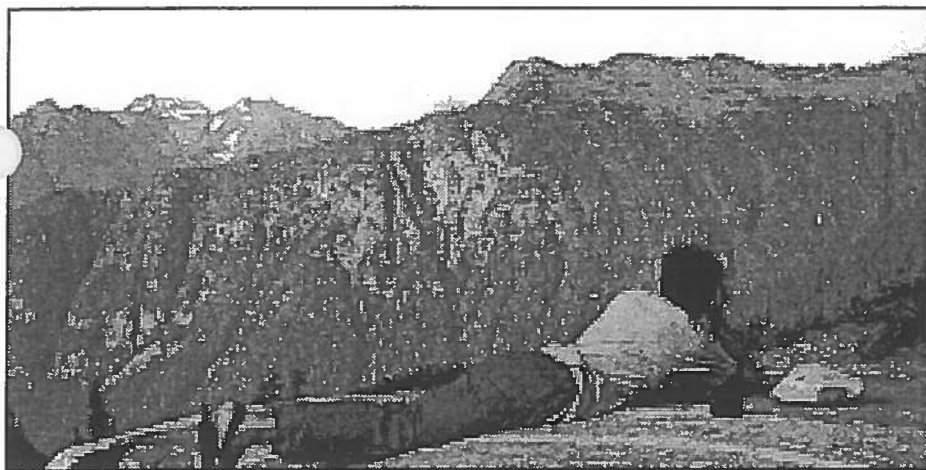
During a quest, depriving yourself of food, company and the comforts of home for a few days provides perspective for you to think about what is really important, beautiful and appreciated in your life. While meditation in normal life can be a way to examine one's priorities, it is often intellectual. A quest can be an *experiential* way to put priorities in order. You "feel" with intensity what you appreciate, love, miss, and may have taken for granted in the past.

With new appreciation, you see things you no longer "need" which previously you considered necessary. A quest can awaken a strong sense of self-reliance and strength. It is a powerful feeling to know you are alone in nature, living your life, doing well without the help of other people, food and home or distractions. Allowing this simple experience into your life, even for just a few days, is a powerful tool to help sort your priorities.

Fasting can bring about a heightened sense of awareness and mental clarity. Although your physical body may feel slightly weaker than usual, your mind is often incredibly sharp and energized, able to examine your life with unique perspective.

Again, why a quest? Giving yourself the gift of a quest allows you to recognize and facilitate changes in your life. Having died to your old life, sitting in a quest space (symbolic of a womb) lets you nurture your new life. After the quest is over, ceremonies of rebirth, celebration and incorporation help to bring your new life into being.

Bringing quest insights into daily life can be an ongoing process. When you return from a quest, do not be fooled into thinking you understand the extent of your learnings. Some people return thinking they have all the answers for their lives. More commonly, people return thinking that nothing happened *up there on the hill*. It has been said, "A quest does not last three days, but three years". It often takes years for insights, dreams or "visions" gained on a quest to become fully understood. A quest always has many messages to teach. It is a way to plant a seed for your life and growth in the future.



## Preparation For A Wilderness Quest

by James Wright, M.A., "Wild Places" Quests

A wilderness rite of passage or quest is a complex experience, meaningful in more ways than can be counted. At heart it acknowledges a significant developmental change in the individual, but also inspires renewed commitment to working in the world. Although the wilderness quest is an experience focused on solitude, the intensity of that solitude provides a profound sense of connection to our communities and the world around us. Rite of passage work opens up the deeper potential of our being, encouraging us to take on visionary purpose and channel our lives to meaningful ends. This is serious work and requires preparation on a level equal to the complexity of the experience.

Because these quests often involve wilderness ordeals such as solitude, fasting, exposure to the weather, and other natural stress, it is critical to prepare for the physicalness of the experience. Awareness of bodily needs, weaknesses and strengths, adequate survival equipment, a working knowledge of the environment and how to cope with it are basic elements of preparation work. Most of this work is skill-building and can be readily taught to those willing to learn.

More subtle is the preparation on the non-physical plane. One brings to a wilderness rite of passage the burdens of the past as well as the strengths. It is important to identify these burdens and strengths and to clarify their roles in the individual's life. In some cases it may be necessary to attempt the resolution of some matters before going on the solo stage of the quest. Passage guides can work with questers in these matters, suggesting activities and approaches that may assist in the clarifying work. Seeing the present self as clearly as possible is essential preparation for perceiving the vision of the new self that emerges from the solo stage.

It is also important to identify the precise intent of the individual going on the quest. For many youth, it is simply to acknowledge a transition to adulthood. But for adults going on quest and other youth it may be a matter of healing a damaged self, taking on new responsibilities or otherwise re-visioning the self. It is important to define this intent before the passage so that one's community can be involved in a supportive way, whether that community be only friends, family, or the whole town. This community will validate the passage rite through their love and witnessing of the quester's efforts. When the quester returns from the ritual space, he or she will be a more fully realized person, ready to take on a greater role for the good of the whole community of beings. Ultimately we do this work not only for ourselves, but so that we can give more completely and satisfyingly of ourselves. The incorporation of this stronger, empowered self is based on thorough preparation for the wilderness quest itself.

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## What is a Wilderness Quest?

Wilderness quests are based upon an ancient tradition — going to the wilderness, alone, to find one's vocation, to find peace, to seek a vision of the future, to seek guidance. Jesus, Buddha and Mohammed all went on such a quest. In many indigenous cultures, quests were entered into whenever an individual was preparing to make a passage to another life phase, or to take on a new responsibility.

These quests are not a sort of heroic dragon-slaying venture, but rather focus on the inner work necessary to discover personal strength and bring balance to one's life.

There are three elements of the typical modern quest — *Severance*, during which the quester's work is to shed the ties and other baggage which might get in the way of doing the inner work of the quest — *Threshold*, the actual time of leaving all else behind and allowing oneself to cross over into an unfamiliar place of self-discovery — *Incorporation*, processing the experience of the Threshold and relating the learnings to the world one enters again. For most people who quest, this last phase can continue for several months after the return to "civilization".

The quester's time in the wilderness typically involves fasting, meditating and waiting. Our modern lives with their rapid pace make this experience both exhilarating and difficult for most of us who have seldom spent an afternoon by ourselves, let alone three days (five to eight days if you count the preparation time).

ICA's Wilderness Quests for youth and adults are led by trained guides. Their role is to assist individuals prepare for their time apart, to support the individual during the experience and to process the experience afterward. We would also be happy to refer to quest leaders in other parts of the country.

-- Stan Crow





P. NOAH

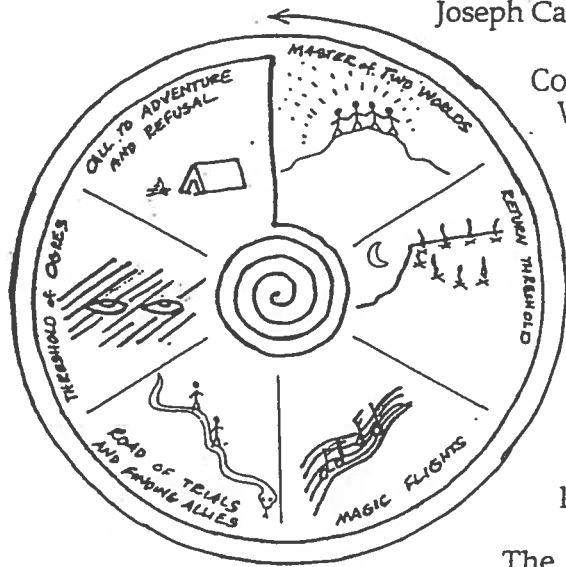
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# THE HERO'S JOURNEY

By Jane Glancy

*... Furthermore, we have not ever to risk the journey alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world".*

Joseph Campbell, "The Power of Myth".



Conceptually the scope of the "Hero's Journey" is huge. Without specific contexting it can easily delude to all forms of human and planetary body experience. Essentially devised by eminent mythologist Joseph Campbell, it seeks to re-invest archetypal patterns of thought and experience with contemporary overtones. We are called to re-image the hero/heroine as ourselves, abandoning modern media "distortions" in favour of the hero as meditative principle; source of wisdom and oversight; intentional Being of the highest ethical/psychic order. Such a re-imaging isn't so much designed to nurture ego, as provide participants with a progressive and affirming framework through which to view their lives.

The "Hero's Journey" is best understood as a cyclical process.

Linear presentation fails to recognize the spiraled motion by which it transits through our lives. The basis of the story is a journey between two worlds, or perhaps merely two dimensions of Being. Those prepared to "risk" leap euphorically from this world into the "Other". "Other" is where new experience, new challenges and the unknown live. Potentially it is a fearful place, guarded by monsters of human anxiety and filled with promise of uncertain reward. No-one leaves the "Other" as quite the same person they entered. The "Other" is where the rite of passage happens, departure from the "Other" affirms the change. It is the time at which a new name may be given.

The "Hero's Journey" consists of six distinct stages, two of which are thresholds between worlds. In reality participants "zig-zag" between stages, and the journey never reaches a definitive point of resolution. However, for simplicity's sake, the normative depicts a pathway of heroic progression and triumph. These stages are as follows :

## (1) CALL TO ADVENTURE

- designed to release the "dare-devil" In every individual, "Call to Adventure" is the mysterious and intoxicating voice which awakens you from your sleep. A charismatic call from within to risk and discover. It is the pinnacle on which you tremble before diving into the abyss ...

"...A girl lived with her mother in a wigwam on the edge of a village. She was a very beautiful girl but extremely proud and would not accept any of the boys. The mother was terribly annoyed with her.

One day they were out collecting wood quite a long way from the village and, while they were out, an ominous darkness comes down over them. Now this wasn't the dark of night

descending. When you have a darkness of this kind, there's a magician at work somewhere behind it. So the mother says, "Let's gather some bark and make a little wigwam for ourselves and collect wood for the fire, and we'll just spend the night here".

So they do exactly that and prepare a little supper, and the mother falls asleep. Suddenly the girl looks up, and there is a magnificent young man standing there before her with a wampum sash, glorious black feathers - a very handsome fellow. He says, "I've come to marry you, and I'll await your reply" And she says, "I have to consult with my mother". She does so, the mother accepts the young man, and he gives the mother the wampum belt to prove he is serious about the proposal. Then he says to the girl, "Tonight I would like you to come to my camp". And so she leaves with him..."

## (2) THRESHOLD OF OGRES :

- this is the bumpy crossing into the "Other World". In the same way that the ancient Greeks were greeted by Hades on their journey into the Underworld, the hero/heroine encounters the ogres of their individual mythology. There are ogres of exhaustion, thirst, estrangement, indecision ... responsibility, growing up. Basically, the "Threshold of Ogres" involves a complex process of letting-go and opening up to receive the new ...

...She accompanies the man to his village, and they enter his lodge. They spend two nights and two days together, and on the third day he says to her, "I'm going off today to hunt". So he leaves. But after he has closed the flap of the entrance, she hears a strange sound outside. She spends the day in the hut alone and, when evening comes, she hears the strange sound again. The entrance flap is flung open, and in slides a prodigious serpent with tongue darting. He puts his head on her lap and says to her, "Now search my head for lice". She finds all sorts of horrible things there, and when she has killed them all, he withdraws his head, slides out of the lodge, and in a moment, after the door flap has closed, it opens again, and in comes her same beautiful man. "Were you afraid of me when I came to you that way just now?" he asks. "No" she replies, "I wasn't afraid at all"...

## (3) ROAD OF TRIALS AND FINDING ALLIES

- this stage is deceptive. Trials block the outwardly visible horizon; allies are cloaked in a misty haze. This symbolizes a need for social re-orientation. The hero/heroine must sustain the momentum of the quest; yet still find the time to look and listen. The earth, the animals, may be trying to tell them something. Sources of help are unpredictable and frequently dress to challenge prejudice, indifference or motiveless fear. Trials are as much Self-illusion as harsh mountain climbs and river hikes ...

stop, thing. prejudice, harsh mountain

... The next day to gather fire- the rocks - and then and discouraged, and he goes off to hunt again, and presently she steps out of the lodge wood. The first thing she sees is an enormous serpent basking on another and another. She begins to feel very strange, homesick returns to the lodge. That evening the serpent again comes sliding in, again departs and returns as a man. The third day when he has gone, the young woman decides she's going to try to get out of this place. She leaves the lodge and is in the woods alone, standing, thinking when she hears a voice. She turns, and there's a little old man, who says, "Young one, you are in trouble. The man you've married is one of seven brothers. They are all great magicians and, like many people of their kind, their hearts are not in their bodies. Go back into the lodge, and in a bag that is hidden under the bed of the one to whom you are married, you will find a collection of seven hearts".



She returns to the lodge, finds the bag of hearts, and is running out with it when a voice calls to her, "Stop ! Stop" This is the voice of course of the magician. But she continues to run. And the voice calls after, "You may think that you can get away from me but you never will".

She is running and running and soon she begins to feel faint, then she hears the voice of the little old man again. "I'll help you", it says and, to her surprise, he's pulling her out of the water. She hadn't even known she was in the water..."

#### (4) MAGIC FLIGHT :

- this fluid stage weaves magic into the journey of the hero/heroine. It is a promise of all things possible, a melodic dance in which the hero/heroine is the charismatic leader and pivot of inspiration. Magic flight celebrates a spontaneous and acute connectedness with personal power. Individuals, groups, flow together like a well-oiled machine; confident in their abilities and released from pre-concieved notions of Self ...

...As the old man pulls her out of the water she find herself in the company of a number of old men, standing along the shore, looking exactly like her rescuer. They are the Thunderers, the powers of the upper air. Her first response is to cry with relief and exhaustion. Once she has rested, she begins to learn of the origin of the brothers and the evil nature of the magic which they seek to weave throughout the world.

The Thunderers help the young woman discover powers of divination and earth-wise magic and identify her as a priestess. Confident in her abilities, she returns to the lodge to destroy the negative powers of the abyss ...

#### (5) RETURN THRESHOLD :

- this is the transition out of the "Other" into this world. Although ogres leave the crossing unchallenged, it still holds a certain trauma. What seemed easy in the surrealistic realm of magic flight may be difficult to implement in everyday working contexts. The 24 hour solo-vigil is a time for reflecting on the journey, clarifying direction and making resolutions. It is the point at which individuals decide either to integrate their otherworldly experience into a daily reality or to abandon it as an abstract dream. This stage is crucial to the journey beyond the trip ...

... The brothers are banished and the young woman senses her work is done. She begins to think again of her humble village and the loved ones she left there. She reflects on her experience in the transcendent world and feels shame at her arrogance, and she begins to prepare herself for the long journey back to the physical reality. Carefully she gathers all the magicians pocessions, burning them as a sacrifice to the wisdom of the tribal Elders. As she watches the fire burn she seeks a vision, she looks for the medicine which will help her be strong in her journey home. Bear comes to her from the west, he asks her to taste the sweetness of truth in her learnings and use her inner-strength to further the understanding of all her people. The young woman thanks the great witch Creatifixe for the vision and places ash from the dying fire into a leather pouch around her neck. This done, she turns and walks towards the rising sun in the east..

#### (6) MASTER OF TWO WORLDS

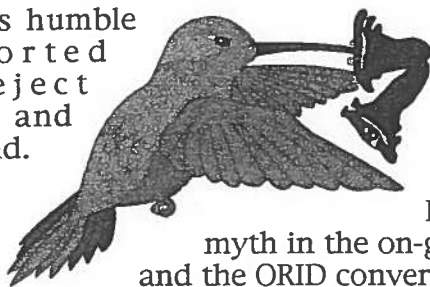
- this is the stage which tells the hero/heroine they "Did it!"; they set out to achieve, and they pushed through. It is an experimental ground for testing the hero/heroine's ability to make things happen on his/her own. The keys to remaining the "Master of Two Worlds" are self-discipline, determination and integrity. There is barely a chance to climb the mountain and

breathe the fresh air before the process starts all over again. The Call is relentless and insistent

...“The young woman arrived home to a tremendous welcoming. To her surprise much time had passed and many youthful faces had turned haggard, but still they remembered her. Former suitors came to her as old men and begged her to share the wonder of her journey into the Other World. The young woman responded only with silence, and for many days sat isolated in her lodge. Her mother repeatedly came to her, yet still she would not speak.

One day a young man from the village whom she had not seen before came to her lodge. He entered in silence and sat down directly opposite her. Around his neck is also a pouch, he removed it and gave it to her. She smiled and as she did so, words of wonder spilled uncontrollably from her lips. She shared the whole story of the magician from start to finish. It became dark, then it became light then it became dark again. Still she talked ...

At last she fell silent. The stranger took her hand and showed her to his humble lodge in the village and the humble way in which he supported himself and his aging parents. The young woman did not reject it and his way of life as once had been her way, instead she affirmed it and agreed to share it with him ... her journey had come to an end.



If the journey model is to work, it is essential to ground the myth in the on-going experience of the trip. Campfire reflections are essential, and the ORID conversational method is a good way of transposing the day's events into a story type format. Youth are encouraged to think laterally and go beyond the literal definition of “ogres”, “allies” etc. The following are examples of questions which could be used in such conversations

#### OBJECTIVE :

- What did you see ?
- What did you hear ?
- What did you smell ?
- Where did you go today ?
- What did you do today ?
- What stage of the “Hero's Journey” have we reached

#### REFLECTIVE :

- Was there any point at which you noticed the attitude of the group change ?
- Was there any point at which you felt excited? frightened? angry? frustrated ... ?
- Were you reminded of any similar experiences ?

#### INTERPRETIVE :

- Did you meet any “ogres” or “allies” ?
- How did they identify themselves to you ?
- How did you respond to them ?
- What was the purpose of this exercise ?
- How does this exercise relate to the story out of which you are living your life ?

#### DECISIONAL

- How did the “Hero's Journey” present itself today ?
- Has your relationship to the terms “hero”, “ogre”, “trial” etc. changed ?
- What was the most significant event of the day ? Why ?

- How do you feel about what happened today ?
- How would you describe today to a friend/relative not present ?
- What would you call today ?

The manner in which program staff chose to signify the transition from one stage into the next will clearly vary according to those present and the location in which the event is to be enacted. The following indicates how the 1989 trip captured the spirit of each stage:

## STAGE

## MAIN ACTIVITY

Call To Adventure

- Introducing youth to the basic camping/wilderness training skills which would allow them to follow the Call.
- Ten mile day hike through Bandolier National monument.

Threshold Of Ogres

- Blindwalk.

Road Of Trials &  
Finding Allies

- River hike.
- Three day hike thro@ Colorado mountains.

Magic Flight

- Shift in adult-youth responsibility ratio, with bias towards youth.

Return Threshold

- 24 hour solo-vigil.

Master Of Two Worlds

- New youth choreograph camp events, assume full responsibility for enablement.

# My Rite of Passage Journey

by Kristofer Porter

During my summer vacation of 1996 I experienced something important. It was my rite of passage.

It started in the second week of vacation, and was to last for three weeks. In the beginning I had no way of knowing what impact it would have on my life.

I shared this experience with a group of ten other people; three adults and seven to-be-youths. We did quite a lot together in those three weeks, and each event was a special experience.

The rites of passage journey consisted of eight main parts.

The first part of the Journey was the "call to adventure". It started out with preparation for the "scramble hike" the next day and a thorough check of our gear. We had a severance ritual with our parents, marking the fact that the whole journey was really about each of us separating from our parents, going on a challenging journey, and then re-uniting with them as a new person. We spent that night at the base camp at Songaia. We slept in an old remodelled barn under simple conditions.

The next day we got up and headed to a small mountain for a "scramble hike" to Lake Serene. And boy, what a scramble we got!

This scramble hike was awful. Actually, the more dirty, scratched, and wet I got, the more fun it was; not for all the-people, though. You see, we were going to hike up the mountain on a path to Lake Serene, about halfway up the mountain. We ended up losing the path and we had to forge a path threefourths of the way up. We missed Lake Serene and hiked almost to the top of the mountain! Nick, one of the boys, and I led the way the whole time, forging a path for the rest of the group.

We were very wet and bedraggled when we got down again. Everyone thought it was awful, but I had a ball. For me, the unexpected turn of events changed a boring hike into a challenging adventure.

Back at base camp we made a campfire and talked

about the day. We then went to bed and slept deeply.

The next part of the journey was the "threshold of ogres". This part was two days long. During that time we did trust games and made plaster masks.



On the second day we did a ropes course which had many challenges that we had to overcome as a group. There was one challenge which we had to overcome by ourselves. It was a 22-foot vertical pole with rungs on each side like a telephone pole, to climb. The pole was quite unstable and wobbled when you climbed. I had to climb to the top, which was 6 inches in diameter, and stand on it. When I stood on the top, my knees turned to Jello. Even though I had a body harness on, it was still a little scary. There were "belay-ers" who held the harness rope in pulleys. You had to trust them to hold you. I jumped to a trapeze and then was lowered down. I was the

pioneer of the group, the first one to try it, which felt great.

We then drove to Salmon la Sac to prepare for the six-day hike.

The next part was the "road of trials". This was the most difficult part of all. —It was a six-day hike in the Cascade Mountains. We hiked an average of six to seven miles a day in the beauty of nature.

We had many separate adventures in that time; it would take too long to write about, but they were there.

The view was awe-inspiring and the sight of the misty tree-covered mountains was peaceful and beautiful. There were also many animals, birds, squirrels, and deer. It was quite an experience!

The next part of the journey was the "magic flight". It included returning from the six-day hike and a sweat-lodge at base camp. The sweat lodge is a dome about four feet high and about 12 feet in diameter made of branches and covered with cloth. Inside, it has a pit that you put red-hot rocks into. At certain times during the sweat we poured water

on the rocks, making very intense steam. The dome traps the heat and the steam rests inside. The sweat cleansed me not only physically, but mentally as well.

The fifth part of the journey was the "return threshold". We travelled to the Olympic peninsula by car and hiked to Cape Alava, where we prepared for a vigil.

The sixth part of the journey was "master of two worlds". It included a vigil of 24 hours. This vigil was quite important to me: we had to keep a fire going the whole time, we had to stay awake, and we had to fast. I was able to keep my fire going and not eat. I fell asleep for 15 minutes.

I learned a lot about myself during my vigil. The things I learned are hard to explain in words, and are mostly spiritual. After the vigil we had a large feast and we slept soundly that night.

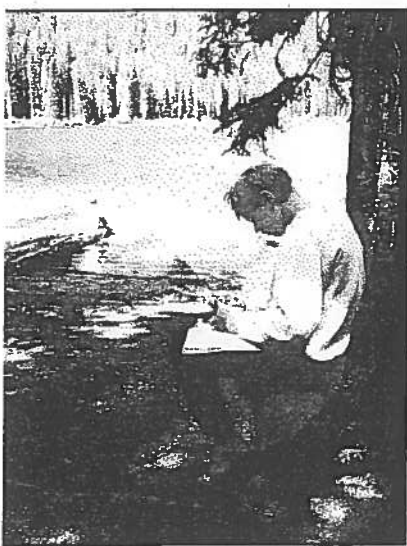
The next day we hiked to Bogachiel and camped there. We spent three days hiking in the Hoh rainforest. The rainforest was beautiful with its mosscovered logs and old trees.

The seventh part of the journey was "recording the story of heroes". We returned to base camp and had a reflection on the journey and a celebration for our group.

Through my rite of passage journey I learned about the wilderness. I also learned about working with a large group of people for a long time in rough conditions. The process of going through these challenges raised my self-esteem and willpower.

The eighth and final portion of the journey was "closing and reflection". This included an incorporation weekend when our parents came and we set new goals for our future and had a large re-uniting ritual and celebration with them.

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The Pacific Northwest **Coming of Age Journey** will be exploring the Cascade mountains, and the rain forests and shoreline of the Olympic Peninsula. The Peninsula boasts one of the most beautiful mountain ranges on the west coast, the only rain forest on the North American continent and spectacular shoreline dotted with enchanted sea mounts. The Northwest adventure will include challenging hikes, camping along streams and waterfalls, team building events such as the Ropes Course, day hikes along the beach, a sweatlodge ceremony and a deathmask ritual surrounding the vigil.

At once, this is both an individual journey and a community experience. Just as each individual will find support and encouragement from the group, the group will look to each individual for responsibility and team effort. As individuals discover new facets and capabilities within themselves it is the sharing among friends in community that brings significance to these new gifts.

The Rite of Passage Journey is modeled after Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*. Capturing the poetics as well as the experiential, the three-week event embodies the Call to Adventure, crossing the Threshold of Ogres, passing into the Other World and coming back through the Return Threshold into the realm of Master of Two Worlds beckoning new youth to a sense of care for themselves, their community and the planet.

Daily Activities		
MORNING	7:00 Wake-up	Greet the day at breakfast Morning context Preparation for day's activities, eg. packing
	7:30 Breakfast	
	8:00 Clean-up	
AFTERNOON	8:30	On the Trail (road) --Day's activity--
	Mid Day	Reflection & journal writing
EVENING	7:00 Dinner 8:00 Campfire 9:30 Quiet time 10:00 Bed time	Singing, stories, skits and reflection

## Coming of Age Journey 1997

for youth who have completed 6th and 7th grade

Call to Adventure		Threshold of Ogres		Road of Trials
Sun - July 27	Mon- July 28	Tue - July 29	Wed - July 30	Thur - July 31
*Participants arrive before 6 pm airport pick-ups *Team assignments *Gear check Severance Ritual	Scramble Hike  Initiative Games  *Campfire	*Hero's Journey Context *Trust games *Mask creation  *campfire	*Ropes Course * travel to Salmon la Sac Prepare for "the Trail"	6-Day Hike Salmon la Sac to Waptus Lake
Road of Trials			Magic Flight	
Fri. - August 1	Sat. - August 2	Sun - August 3	Mon. - August 4	Tue. - August 5
6-Day Hike	6-Day Hike	6-Day Hike	6-Day Hike	6-Day Hike Return to Salmon la Sac
Magic Flight		Return Threshold	Master of Two Worlds	
Wed -August 6	Thur. -August 7	Fri. - August 8	Sat. - August 9	Sun. - August 10
*Sweatlodge  * Mail	*Travel to Olympic Peninsula	*Hike to Cape Alava *Preparation & sendout to Vigil *24-hour Vigil	* 24 hr Vigil *Reflections receiving individuals back as youth. *Celebration	*Return Hike to Lake Ozette *Set up camp at Bogachiel *prepare for hike
Master of Two Worlds		Recording the Story of the Heroes/Sheoes		
Mon - August 11	Tue. -August 12	Wed - August 13	Thur.-August 14	Fri.- August 15
*Travel to trailhead of Hoh Rain Forest * 3 day hike in the Hoh Rain Forest  *Council of Elders	*Hoh River Trail  *Council of Elders	*Return to Hoh Center  *Council of Elders	*Return to Songaia *Reflection *Council of Elders	*Council of Elders  *Closing Celebration:
Closing & Reflection				
Sat.-August 16	Sun - August 17	Mon- August 18		
*Parents & Youth Incorporation Weekend	*Parents & Youth Incorporation Weekend Closes 2 pm	*Staff reflection & celebration		

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# Values for Rite of Passage Programs

Personal Empowerment	Social Effectiveness	Responsibility for Global
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*I choose <b>Commitment</b> to quality vs. what's easiest/sabotage</li> <li>*As I <b>care for others</b>, I am cared for</li> <li>*My <b>uniqueness</b> is my greatness</li> <li>*My <b>learning style</b> is a gift</li> <li>*I <b>can and will change</b> as I mature</li> <li>*I can take <b>personal responsibility</b> for my own development</li> <li>*<b>Developmental Understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Boys develop later</li> <li>-- Reflection now physiologically possible.</li> </ul> </li> <li>*I <b>can do things</b> I've never thought I could</li> <li>*I can eat/try <b>new foods</b></li> <li>*Answers are within. Developing inquisitiveness vs. I don't know.</li> <li>*My <b>personal resources</b> are great</li> <li>*Developing the <b>courage to risk</b></li> <li>*<b>Balance</b> of Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional Health</li> <li>*Finding/Articulating your <b>own Questions</b></li> <li>*It's <b>O.K. to be wrong</b></li> <li>*This <b>transition</b> is not the only one... learn here to prepare for ones to come.</li> <li>*<b>Calm centeredness</b>, focus as source of power vs. scattered, tense, weak.</li> <li>*<b>Circumstances are neutral</b>. It's our perceptions that determine good or bad.</li> <li>*The <b>value of gratefulness</b> vs. taking for granted.</li> <li>*Gratefulness as statement of our trust in higher power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*<b>Consensus</b> vs. voting</li> <li>*<b>Cooperation</b> vs. all for self</li> <li>*Taking care of self, taking care of others- leads to self trust, trust from others.</li> <li>*I am responsible for <b>whole team's</b> performance and safety</li> <li>*I <b>honor others</b> with my words and actions</li> <li>*I <b>respect the feelings</b> of others</li> <li>*My <b>energy</b> effects others --Negative energy is destructive to others and to me.</li> <li>*How I <b>respect others</b> is a measure of my personal effectiveness</li> <li>*My <b>respect</b> for other people includes their belongings</li> <li>*<b>Trust</b> is hard to win and easily destroyed</li> <li>*Group success depends on <b>EVERYONE'S</b> responsible efforts.</li> <li>*<b>Allies</b> are gained to help us in our heroic quest.</li> <li>*<b>Win/Win</b> (personal relationships <u>and</u> games)</li> <li>*<b>Wholeness</b> requires change</li> <li>* <b>Interdependence within group/community</b> vs. self-centered dependence/independence</li> <li>* Perceiving persons strengths, gifts. <b>Respect of individual</b> vs. Put downs. Perceiving lack.</li> <li>* The greater the <b>willingness to accept new</b> challenges the greater the flow of energy.</li> <li>* We learn from one another. <b>Everyone's voice is valued</b>. Possible for youth and adult to dialogue.</li> <li>* Communication skills - listening, reflecting, speaking- as necessary tools for optimum group functioning.</li> <li>* We carry different roles in a group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Transferring meaning to real life. Finding the metaphor to outside world from present to future.</li> <li>*<b>Ritual</b> as connection with higher power. Foundation of having a dialogue/learning from nature/spirit.</li> <li>*Sense of <b>wonder and awe</b> at the world, nature, life.</li> <li>*<b>Symbols</b> tell me who I am, what's my community about.</li> <li>*<b>Stories</b> of heroes inform, map for own path.</li> <li>*Seeing <b>interconnectedness</b> of the ecosystem.</li> <li>*Each part important to whole.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All species necessary to eco-system</li> <li>-- <b>Interdependence</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>*<b>Sustainable systems</b> balanced, cyclical vs linear.</li> <li>*<b>Low impact</b> camping/living vs. inappropriate use of resources, irresponsibility.</li> <li>*My species has <b>potential to save or destroy</b> the earth</li> <li>* Importance of <b>individual choices</b> on impact the of the whole sustainable system.</li> <li>*The hero as <b>true leader</b> offers gifts of his/her attainment as service/sacrifice within global community.</li> </ul>

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Rites Of Passage: Why Bother?  
jaco B. ten Hove

(NOTE., This is designed for youth and adult readership. perhaps a *good* discussion starter.)

How did - or will - you find your "proper" place in this world, truly knowing your own gifts and talents, understanding what it is that you contribute from your most authentic depths? How did - or will - you know what path to walk in passionate balance? What method did - or will you use to learn your particular role in the unfolding of this magnificent, complex universe?

Trial and error ... ? Instinct ... ? A "higher" authority ... ? Intense struggle ..? Perhaps some combination of these and other approaches have led -or will lead - you toward the fulfillment of your destiny. Or maybe you feel destined to wander within and without yourself, unable to fix your gaze on a worthy task, one worthy of you and worth something in the larger scheme of things. Or perhaps you are dancing between the call of destiny and the voice of ambivalence.

Make no mistake about it, we all have roles to play in this Life drama, roles based on our unique identity, our specific mixture of chemistry and spirit. We experience not a contrived or predetermined scenario, but a living, evolving theatre of planetary existence. Your character is built by your internal momentum.

Perhaps you are realizing that "happiness" is less a tranquil and satisfied state of mind than a stimulating harmony of inner awareness and outer action. It would seem that the more one moves in the world according to an innate sense of direction, the more one walks with power the path of passionate balance, undeterred by distracting forces that clamor for attention.

But how do we know the boundaries of this path. or the entrance, even? How do we find our way. when so much else is demanded of us so often? How. do we see clearly which way to turn?

The first step. might Well be to ask and sit with these questions. That alone immediately describes a vivid intention to move toward a harmony of inner awareness and outer action. Asking for guidance is a large step toward getting it.

Otherwise, one's innate sense of direction usually emerges from experience. often challenging experiences that carry lessons about what is true and deeply authentic for a given Individual. Very often such events are unexpected, even undesired teachers. but they happen nonetheless. We tend to get what we need. which isn't always what we think we need. Whether or not we do anything with those unbidden experiential lessons is another thing. But there is a different. ancient class of human experiences which are very intentionally designed and which serve to advance an individual's sense of self in concerted and significant ways. Time was when these types of experiences were a basic part of the fabric of human society. That time was some generations, if not centuries ago.

Where are OUR rites of passage? Do driver's licences, military services, sexual groupings, voting and events of that ilk really perform the same function for us that honoring rituals led by guiding mentors accomplished for young people of earlier cultures? They may try, but they fail. Previously, new generations of emerging

adults received essential training about how to be productive members of their culture from usually unrelated elders, in powerful ceremonial settings. (some such settings still exist today, but far, far from the mainstream.

Have we outgrown such rituals? Or do we jettison them at our evolutionary peril? Perhaps both. We have inescapably developed into our own time, the late 20th century; there's no avoiding that reality. There's no use pining for a less complicated past when our kind leaned on ritual to survive, physically and psychically. No it seems that, even without much ceremonial participation on our part, our physical survival at least seems relatively assured (nuclear and/or environmental catastrophes notwithstanding).

But the human psyche cares about a different kind of survival. Here, in that mysterious, uncontrollable portion of our being, is where spiritual and archetypal dramas are the food of sustenance. For instance, as long as our species can dream, then "the psyche is alive and involved in our development. (Jeremy Taylor, the noted expert on dreaming, says unequivocally that dreams always serve wholeness, expressing translucent truths of deep honesty that point toward the survival of wholeness.

It is this latter mode of psychological survival that still rises up in us, young or old, begging for rites of passage. We may not hear the words of such a request because its language is fading in our vocabulary. Many of us ourselves may not honor the urge because we see no models, no described values for discreet rites of passage in our culture. (A driver's license, on the other hand ...

Our era is indelibly laced with techno-sophistry, urging us to trust a panoply of fascinating mechanical material gods. In our infatuation with modernity we have been ignoring a fundamental human need for intentional rites of Passage. A few more generations growing up without any such character-building events and we risk becoming fundamentally separated from ourselves. Already, many of the ills of our world can be traced to actions of people who are off-center, out of balance, unaware of their inherent worth, people who have often known passage into maturity of wholeness.

Yet even a small exploration of the subject confirms the deep, enduring lure of mythology that illuminates universal themes of human journeying. Witness the popularity of Joseph - Campbell's presentations, including his explication of the even more popular Star Wars trilogy. If we care to look for it in ourselves (and know how to recognize it), we can feel in our heart-of-hearts a long-standing, transcending connection with the psychic evolution of our kind. Therein lies the meaning of rituals that aid our life passages.

But we cannot simply return to ancient orders that served a different time and try to replicate their methods of ceremony. The vaunted and ever-accelerating rate of change has thrown a time-warp into the equation of our consciousness; so that we are creatures of rapid transition, in need of grounding amid our dizziness. Unless we abdicate this responsibility, our challenge now is to develop modern rituals that work for our contemporary psychic survival, to design events that honor the present interests of our people AND point us toward a deeper path of balance.

Not a small task, but not always compellingly complex, either. Even small steps in this direction will be fruitful. For instance, consider the following Possible

settings for rites of passage...

- Obvious opportunities present themselves at moments of age transition such as from a junior or middle school level to senior high, or upon graduation from high school or college, or at certain thresholds of aging. The socially mandated, one-size-fits-all rituals of these times often leaves us feeling strangely empty and wanting more;
- Location changes, such as a family move. are also laden life-markers to be plumbed in customized rituals of good-bye and hello;
- Multi-age. single gender gatherings can be very effective with even a simple format:
- Losses that affect a person's daily world are especially critical times to widen the context of life Passages. A ritual place to honor the new psychic landscape is not something we will necessarily know how to ask for, but will likely welcome if it fits our needs.
- Any important decision made by a person can be honored and deepened ceremonially.

The rituals of our time await us. They call to us for initiation into a personal and collective tomorrow. With heightened intention we will be able to walk in balance, weaving our trials and errors, our instinct, authorities and struggles into rites of passage that support our continuing presence on this planet.

Look around you with open eyes and open heart. Bother to care.

.....

*Jaco B. ten Hove is a minister at the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church in Adelphi, MD.  
A 1989 Vision Quest experience in the California desert opened his eyes and heart.*



## Annecdotal Results of COA Programs

- We have had a strong / bonded youth group which we (including our Youth Adult committee whose membership has a supermajority of youth) attribute to the COA program and its emphasis on bonding with the mentors, the church, and each other.
- Mentors claim to have gotten a great deal from the program... They have met other mentors and worked at a significant program together. They were together long enough to get to know each other. Many were pushed indirectly to rewrite their own credos as they assisted youth to think about their values.
- The bond can be seen on Sundays, as we see youth sitting in service with their mentors.
- The entire congregation has been addressed, as our youth presented the morning worship service at the end of the COA program.
- The program is a bench mark for many youth as they talk about their time in the Youth programs of the church.
- Even though there is a great deal of expenditure required from members of the church to do the program, and even though, as a relatively small church which must constantly ask if there are programs which require more expenditure than they bring benefit, we have heard no one question this program and its benefits.

# Financial Considerations for COA program

## Ropes Course Facilitation/Facility

\$300-400 per group of 16

(You may be able to reduce this somewhat, but don't put kids at risk. Use a certified facilitator and an accredited course.) Some courses like 4-H provide the facility and a list of certified facilitators which you must contact and work out a price.

## Insurance

Off-site... check your organization's policy. Make sure you are covered for off-site accidents. You may need to purchase a "rider" to cover you at a rope's course, someone else's building, out in the wilderness or public park.

Medical — in your permission forms, ask for medical insurance information (policy number and any specifics re its use) and get treatment waiver in case parents cannot be reached in a timely manner. This paper can mean the difference between acceptably prompt treatment and long delays and questions about why you had a young person on an outing without written permission.

## Library of Materials & Books

You may want to budget \$150 to add basic books to your library on Questing and Tribal/aboriginal ritual.

## Retreat Facilities

We utilize private land and cabins of mentors, so this doesn't cost much, but if you have a large group, you may need to rent a Gym or a camp.

## Food

We organize parents to provide all food.

## Symbolic Supplies

Beads, cloth, paints, feathers or whatever you choose to use

## Symbols of Completion

We give pins which cost us \$10 each.

## Sweat Lodge

A gift for the facilitator(Symbolic) plus a cord of wood (\$165)

## Postage & copying

Figure about 25 impressions for each participant, staff member (including clergy) and mentor. plus 4 mailings to each of them. plus 4 impressions and a mailing to all potential mentors & youth.

## Social Action Project

If this is done as a group, some churches include this in their budget.

## Travel

Many churches include a trip to some historical church site or to a Social Action workcamp.

## Fund Raising Project

Many groups encourage youth to raise money for parts of the program.

# Creating a Leadership Team for Your COA Program

This advice comes as a result of trying the first year from taking on too much of the work (as we figured it out). To make things run smoothly, you'll need a team to make it happen. The task list below gives you an idea why, as many of the activities require being done at the same time. For a group which is providing a program for 6 to 20 youth, I'd recommend a team of six or seven people.

## Tasks

**Team Leaders** -2 people who hold the big picture. (They are undoubtedly also doing other tasks). This job includes *motivating* the youth, the team and the mentors - *chairing the meetings* , - *anticipating needs* and problems and *holding accountability* for rest of committee.

## Logistics

***Food coordination*** - Buying & preparing or coordinating parents preparation of the food for meals served during meetings, events and retreats. (*Could be a parent*)

***Communications*** is a crucial element -- everyone must know what is going on in advance to assure that everyone clears their calendar... AND the must be reminded several times.

**Newsletters and printed context materials** need to be in everyone's hands, Youth, Mentors, Staff, Parents, Minister, and anyone else effected by scheduled events

**Reminder phone trees** can work, but don't make the branching too long, as if it breaks down early in the tree, a majority of participants could not get a reminder

***Sites & facilities for events*** - Finding and securing sites for retreats and other activities can be time consuming. Who ever takes on this job may find themselves spending several hours on the phone. It frequently also involves visiting the sites and sometimes requires arranging to have people from your organization to get a facility ready (Setting up a sweatlodge, chopping wood for fires, cleaning up an outdoor camp area which previous campers have trashed, Setting up chairs and tables, cleaning up after a program/ putting away chairs and tables -- remember that youth can help do many of these tasks, don't see this role as "waiting on the youth". This is a coordination role.

## Mentor Coordinator

***Recruiting*** - the process of finding mentors is an important task. The team needs to set an adequate context for the need and then cast the net wide for potential mentors.

***Matching*** - Ways to inform the youth of the qualities of each mentor is crucial in order to let the youth choose their mentor. Then, as you will probably not use all the prospective mentors, you'll want to get others involved in other ways, and you'll want some "mentor understudies" ready in case someone has to drop out.

***Training & Support*** - Mentoring is not a natural activity for a majority of people. Mentors need training in dialogue, listening and questioning. They need contexts in their role and what it means to "journey" someone. They will need someone to turn to when they run into difficult situations, i.e. "What should I say when she says....?" And they need the chance to do their own work before the youth does. Think of having each one do her or his own credo and solo vigil.

### Tracking of Completion

There is a danger that youth and mentors will let time get away from them and not be able to complete the task of the COA due to lack of time at the end. Therefore, someone who keeps the record (a pharisee) is important.

#### Scheduling

Social Action – a couple of common social action tasks work better than each team for itself. They also provide a chance to get into the newspaper. Someone needs to arrange for the work and make sure the teams have the tools they need

Mentor's retreat – coordination of schedules is difficult. In small groups, you can usually find times for a particular mentee/mentor group to meet together

**Minister's meeting schedule** – I have found this difficult to coordinate, as minister's schedules change and so do the youth's. Getting things re-scheduled quickly is important.

### Ritual

#### Design

**Retreats** - determination of what retreats and how they will be conducted. Creating the objectives and designating the activities to be conducted. Writing the context "scripts".

**Initiation Weekend** - Creating the objectives, designing the elements and creating the time design. Writing the "scripts".

**Ritual Performance** – preparing ahead for ritual, having the ritual objects available, the roles assigned and rehearsals held

**Elder participation** – recruiting of community elders who will participate in councils, affirm the youth, and speak of the the importance of taking responsibility

**Community Celebration** – working with the worship service committee or other group on the event during which the youth

**Values Clarification** – creating the events and exercises which help the young people identify their personal values.

### Coordination of Whole Team

# *Mentored Learning*

*Physical  
Skills*

---

*Knowledge  
Base*

---

*Spiritual  
Development*

*Social  
Realities*



# MENTORING



To Mentor:

to facilitate, to cajole, to encourage, to reveal, or trick someone into, the acceptance of the gift of their unrepeatable life.

The Sage

**Mentors give us.....**

**the magic that allows us to enter the  
darkness.**

**a talisman to protect us from evil  
spells;**

**a gem of wise advice;**

**a map and, sometimes,**

**the courage to undergo the transition,  
by moving through, not around, our  
fear.**

# The Role of the Mentor

by Stan Crow

I am frequently in situations where people discuss mentoring as a great idea. "We could solve a lot of our problems with youth if we could just find mentors for them."

Perhaps we could, but first, we've got to understand what a mentor is, what one does -- the purpose and responsibility of mentoring.

A current popular idea of a mentor seems to amount to *someone to hang out with*. Mentors are seen as persons who *will share great wisdom based on their own life experience, teach by example, be a good friend, and make the young person feel comfortable*. I find that many people who come to us to learn to be mentors (as a part of the leadership teams in our summer programs) come with many of these images, especially the idea of being a good friend.

From My experience, these commonly held ideas contain many pitfalls.

One can be a mentor or one can be a friend, but not both! Friendship is developed as people go through trials together. A real trust and an ability to be honest with each other must be nurtured. The mentor's role is to be a journey master, a "sensei" -- one who takes a measure of responsibility for this other person. As arrogant as this sounds to take responsibility for the life journey of another human, this awareness must be present.

There's nothing wrong, I suppose, with an adult who tries to "be a good friend" Adult friends are good to have, as long as they're not excusing unexcusable actions or encouraging irresponsible behaviors.

The mentor archetype which most people are familiar with is Yoda, from George Lucas' "Star Wars" trilogy. Yoda's task was to train a *thinking/reflecting* Jedi knight, not a mindless foot soldier. (You'll forgive the military references -- the dynamics would be the same if he were guiding a novice chess player.)

Yoda performed his role by setting difficult challenges for his initiate and while we saw his compassion, we also saw an unwillingness to compromise. He demanded performance of the task, a trust in the mentor and the initiate's belief in himself. He challenged the initiate to figure out ways to accomplish a task -- he didn't demonstrate and then say copy me.

He was training the mind and soul of the initiate. The performance of the body grew out of the initiate's inner resources. Yoda's training ground was a swamp. His training methods were not always straightforward. He set trick problems in front of his trainee and raised questions to help Luke Skywalker process the experience.

Yoda also shared his feelings and concerns openly. He did not try to sugarcoat problems he saw in his young trainee. He talked directly about the things that concerned him.

Yoda provided both the training experience and the

testing. The testing was designed to demonstrate to the initiate that he was either ready or not ready. It was another chance to reflect on the realities of life he would encounter after his training.

Initiation is about reflection. The role of the mentor is to set up situations -- preferably real, but hypothetical ones will work -- in which the initiate is challenged to deal with something she/he'd rather not. Frequently, boldness is called for. I know a mentor who was trying to help a group of young people whom he considered selfish and unaware of how well off they were. Their only contact with suffering people was on TV. In discussions with them, he saw they weren't seeing the pain which many people in their community were experiencing. He arranged a "sleep-over" and about 11pm got everyone into cars and headed for the charity hospital. They sat in the emergency room waiting area, watching victims of heart attacks, drug over-dose, knifings, shootings, and auto accidents being rolled-in on a busy, icy Friday night. The next day, after a little sleep, the youth had a chance to talk about the difficult experience. They had encountered real suffering, and their reflection was no longer theoretical. Several years later, I met one of the young men who told me it was a life-changing event for him.

We use intentional reflection as a major tool in all our rite of passage programs. As mentors, we start out with the understanding that our role is to be aware of what is happening with the initiates and utilize the daily challenges as starting points. Disputes between participants, poor preparation for the day's hike, abuse of someone else's

Yoda performed his role by setting difficult challenges for his initiate and while we saw his compassion, we also saw an unwillingness to compromise.

property, mistreatment of the environment, along with many other happenings become opportunities for individual, small or large group dialogue. I call this the *Curriculum of the Moment*. This dialogue offers a chance to guide participants through a reflection on the event and its effects and to create plans regarding alternative approaches in the future.



Bob Burgess (r), mentor, Caeli Lynch (l), initiate on the Pacific Crest Trail -- ICA Wilderness Quest

A major presupposition I use for mentoring is, "My role is to provide an experience which takes this person beyond their comfort level." Physical activity, honest dialogue, initiative games, rituals, and councils in which real issues are raised and dealt with are all discomfoting. I often find myself un-

comfortable as a mentor, wondering if I'm on track, with some of what I do. Then, I think, if I'm not uncomfortable I'm probably not really taking my role of mentor seriously enough. There is no script, no set of tactics which always work. In fact, one of the risks is that you will fail to connect. When this becomes evident, a good mentor will yield to another mentor.

In many traditional societies, the parents were not allowed to initiate their own children. Today, some parent groups organize rites of passage for their own children. Yet, someone else must do the mentoring, because for a parent to mentor is a conflict of roles. A parent cannot be a mentor.... and that's not bad! A parent's role is to protect and nurture. A mentor's role is to push and challenge. One of the major functions a mentor plays is to introduce a different adult voice -- a differing world view for the young person to relate to -- perhaps even in the Devil's advocate role. A mentor offers the initiate an opportunity to try out ideas

or ask questions in an accepting environment. The mentor's task is to give the young person permission to quest beyond his or her customary borders and to help process the journey.

Mentors have the possibility of being more objective than parents because they don't have the full experience (or baggage) of parenthood. I have seen young people who "heard" something a mentor said and made some life changes, even though the parents had been saying the same thing for years. I remember a family which treated their fifteen-year-old daughter as if she were seven (perhaps because she often acted that way). The daughter complained to the mentor about her "not being allowed to grow up". Her mentor's response was to ask, "Is there anything that you think you might be doing to perpetuate this?" The mentor continued to probe, "How would you respond if your brother was old enough to take responsibility for his own things, or demanded that things always be his way and never appeared to be grateful?" "Would you be ready to give him recognition and more privileges?" ...She got it!

I also know another similar situation in which the young person turned to the mentor and rebutted, "Who do you think you are, my psychiatrist?" No guarantee comes with the job.

I recently had a person I had mentored tell me, "You know why I changed? Because you told me what I needed to hear. Other people may have been thinking it, but no one else said it. And you let me know that you cared about me and wanted to see me change so people wouldn't treat me like a child anymore." I know this person's parents had done a good job and had said similar things, but I had a chance to help him hear.

One final caveat. Robert P. Eckert, director of the Learning Institute for Functional Education (LIFE) in upstate New York, says, "We lose the power of initiations because the adult initiators attempt to put themselves across as 'having it all together'. This is exactly what happens in cults."

Mr. Eckert's caution about cults rings true. How easy it is to pontificate -- and how ineffective. Initiation is about individuation, not about learning to follow the flock.

As mentors who are on journeys of investigation and discovery ourselves, our role is to assist the initiate to discover his/her own answers, to teach by question and by encouraging the initiates to risk in situations which drive them to reflect on meaning and relationships. We must ask, how can we assist them to have an experience which pushes them beyond their comfort level and into a recognition of their personal power.

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# The Stance of a Mentor

by Stan Crow

**I**n a recent seminar, someone said, "you have said, several times that 'a good mentor challenges the mentee to meet various goals, do their best, etc.'" that sounds combative to me, is that what you mean?"

I had to admit it could sound that way, and, I guess at times it could even look that way, but it certainly isn't my stance.

My basic intent as a mentor is to do whatever is necessary to convince the mentee to live their life as the great human being they are. Now, I'm sure there are those who will respond, "Yea? How do you call some of these young people we deal with 'great'?"



Mentor Sara Richardson (right) and Solo Crossing participant Corrina Nielsen relax and talk in a high-country meadow

Many of the youth we see are lacking self confidence, have a history of failure, don't trust adults, let alone themselves.

My response was, "Right!, that's what makes being a mentor so darn hard. There is no one guideline. Each situation is different, and you'll find that what works once is seldom a reusable tool. The mentor will find him or herself as challenged as the mentee.

However, I do operate from a basic stance toward the mentee which grows out of my earlier intent statement and a deep seated commitment to how we

treat each other.. At present, my draft of this stance is:

- *I believe that you are a capable human being.*
- *Let's not waste time while you try to convince me that you are incapable. Rather, let's spend time identifying the challenges you face and how you might overcome them.*
- *I am not here to fix you, but to help you see the gifts you have and the ones that are within your reach.*
- *When I challenge you to do something, it will be because I believe you have what it takes to do it, no matter how difficult or scary it is.*
- *Nervousness and Fear are OK., as long as they don't paralyze you. They are a reminder that you really want to succeed.*
- *I trust that somewhere within you there is a desire to have others see you as capable.*
- *I will promise not to set you up for failure, but I will not bail you out either (unless you are physically in danger).*
- *We all have failures, and they are a part of the Life School. Our task is to learn from them, to turn our failures into ideas for how we will succeed next time.*
- *I believe that a major part of my task as mentor is to help you reflect on and learn from both your wins and your losses.*
- *In the long term, what you learn may be more important than whether you completed a task.*
- *I will not engage in shame or blame and ask that you don't either.*

This is not a covenant I make all at once with the mentee, it is rather a series of mini-covenants which get promised along the journey as appropriate. I can envision some situations in which a gift of such a covenant might be profitable, my experience is that once I have identified what I believe my stance is, then, when it is appropriate, it will be available for a conversation with the mentee.

This reflection leads me to ask, "What is your stance as a mentor. I invite your reflections. I'd love to be able to publish them in our January issue of Journeys.



# *I Signed-Up To Be A Mentor, Now What Do I Do?*

by Stan Crow

We were sitting in his living room. My friend of 20 years, now retired, had agreed to work with some of the young people at the local Junior High who were failing math. His first few sessions with these young people had been anything but satisfactory. The students had seemed disinterested and a couple hadn't listened to a word he'd said.

As we talked, several things became clear. The program organizer had not done any training with the mentors – nor with their potential mentees. They were assuming that if you put someone *without* math skills together with someone *with* math skills learning will happen.

My friend assumed that the young people were there to learn and willing to work. He discovered that all four were there because their parents had enrolled them in the program. They had no interest in learning, only in having someone give them the answers on the homework. The only one who was the least bit motivated could get her car back if she passed the math course.

The whole idea of having a mentor implies a relationship. Relationships are built – created step by step. A new mentor needs some tools: things to do to help that relationship get launched.

One tool I've used effectively is to create a contract or agreement between the mentor and mentee, especially if there is a skill to be learned. The contract need not be formal, but needs to say: 1) why you are forming the relationship; 2) what each of you expects of the other; 3) what your boundaries are? Be sure to include promises to be honest with each other and to stifle shame and blame behaviors. The contract might

also include what the reward or anticipated positive outcome would be for both mentor & mentee.

"At any event," I told my friend, "I don't think I'd start any tutoring without a contract."



*Mentor & Mentee talk while deer continues its grazing*

Another approach might be the jointly created "plan". It needs to be specific. What does the mentee need/want to know? When does he/she need to know it? What does he/she already know? (A look at some of the mentee's tests or other papers may reveal where the learning process is blocked.) What learning style will you try? Since you are not the teacher, dealing with all the students, you have the ability to experiment with methods. What subjects is your mentee succeeding in? What learning methods are working there?

These plans should be regularly reviewed and modified as you learn more about your mentee.

My friend should probably be looking for reasons that block the mentee's success. Frequently these have little or nothing to do with math. Look to things like relationships, family, in some instances a literal lack of food (expense or eating disorder). He also must remember that he cannot solve all the problems, but he may be able to get some help.

While my friend is tutoring students in math, contracts and mutually agreed on plans work well in any mentor/mentee situation. Many outdoor programs, including ours, use the creation of a "Full Value Contract" as one of the beginning activities of a group adventure.

Mentoring is based on communication. These tools are a way to get to know each other. They should not be "another paper to fill out," but a freeform exploration of what you will do together. One should also acknowledge the possibility that an agreement can't be struck. And if that's the case, let the mentee move on to another mentor.

# Mentor/Mentee Covenant Workshop

**Instructions:** Together with your mentor, share your Life Timelines. Then, identify things which you share in common. What experiences has your mentor had which you'd like to learn more about? Brainstorm the potential goals you might have in each of the categories below and then potential things you can do together to accomplish these goals. Once you have something under each category, turn to page 2 (Mentee/Mentor Covenant) and realistically state what you anticipate you can accomplish during the time of this agreement.

**How will you get to know and feel comfortable with each other?**

**What will you do to choose your Mentee/Mentor Service Project to the community?**

**What special thing might you do together for a Church Service project?** (usher, help in the office, care for children, care for the lawn & flowers, make a new sign or something else which the church needs?)

**What will you do to prepare the mentee to write his/her Credo?**

(What subjects might you discuss? How will you identify what you as a mentee actually believe? How do your doubts enter into the discussion? How do your ideas differ from your parents? How can the two of you develop an open sharing relationship which also respects each other's boundaries?)

**What special thing would the Mentee like to learn which the Mentor will assist in the learning?**

(Examples of activities: prepare a meal together for one or both of your families; play games; watch a TV show about a problem the mentee chooses like AIDS, pollution, consumerism, child abuse, etc. and talk about how you each feel about the subject; go to a sporting event; buy 2 copies of TIME and each spend the week reading it... then get together and talk about which articles captured you attention)

Coming of Age Program  
**Mentor/Mentee Covenant**

This covenant is made on (month, day, year)\_\_\_\_\_ between  
\_\_\_\_\_(Mentee) and \_\_\_\_\_(Mentor).

This covenant shall conclude on (month, day, year)\_\_\_\_\_. At that time, we may renew it with new goals and activities, if we wish.

It is our intent to be co-learners together.  
During this partnership, we intend to: (Goals)

Our learning pathway shall include, but not be limited to: (activities)

It is also our intent to treat each other with respect, honor each other's time limits, and keep the confidentiality agreement (below).

Signed: Mentee\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Mentor\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Confidentiality Agreement**

We enter into this agreement as mentor and mentee. What we share with each other is confidential and each agrees not to share what we say or do with anyone without permission from the other party to this agreement. The exceptions shall be that should the mentee share anything which leads the mentor to believe that the mentee might be likely to harm herself/himself or another, or if the mentor shall be behaving in a manner which the mentee experiences as uncomfortable or inappropriate.

## The PAST Life and Times of

IV. My Name for my life

III. Names for the  
sections of my life

I. The Years of my Life

Today's  
Date

II. The major events  
of my life

I was born

# The Mentor's Art: *Crafting Discussion*

by Stan Crow, program director

**T**his time we call YOUTH is a time of questing when young people are driven to create their own unique identity. They chip away at the boundaries which have restrained them as children -- you see them trying on wild clothes, assuming new roles, and purporting strange ideas. Of necessity, young people must pull away from parents and find someone to try things out on, to be there for them and affirm their values (even though the affirmer may question their youthful behavior). To whom do young people turn as guides on their quest? If they are lucky, it will be adults who assume a mentor role, who stand ready to assist young questers in this enterprise.

So, lucky you! You've been chosen to be someone's mentor-- perhaps as part of a formal program, possibly through a happenstance that brought the two of you together. What do you do? Among the many tools a mentor might need -- humor, self reflection, a remembrance of being a youth., intuition, etc. one of the most important tools you already have or can develop is

**LEADING DIALOGUE OR DISCUSSION** -- These skills include **Listening, Questioning, Role Playing, Devil's Advocacy, and Story Telling**

You'll notice I didn't include advice giving or pontificating. When I first started as a mentor, I found it hard to resist the temptation to give advice (so easy to give, and seldom of any profit to the mentee). The role of a mentor is to help their mentee (a word not found in Webster's, but showing up in common use) answer their own questions, not to give them answers.

**Listening** is a most important tool. This may seem self evident, but nonetheless, it frequently gets overlooked. Over the years, I have learned that I get myself into trouble when I don't listen long enough. I have noticed that many people appear to listen while busy trying to think of what profound thing they might say. Some don't even try to appear to be listening.

But, you know the drill... Focus on your mentee visually and hear what is being said. Ask questions to clarify points and to help the mentee clarify thinking.

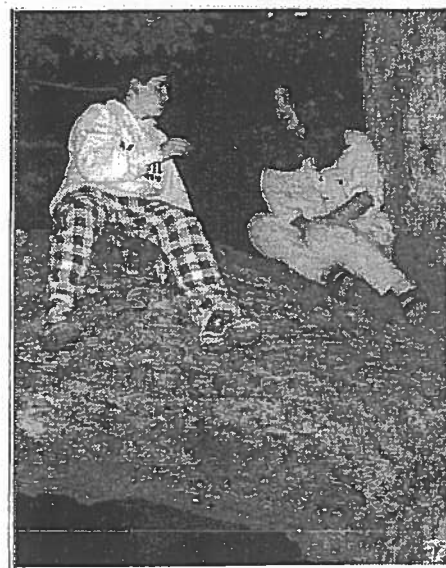
**Questioning** is definitely an artform. By questioning, you can encourage dialogue or shut it down. Instead of a "grilling" approach, try phrases like, "Have you thought of...?" or "What would it look like if...?" Use an analogy or a metaphor or restate what you hear, "Now are you saying...?"

The first ICA facilitation technique I ever learned was one I use regularly and find most useful in creating a dialogue in a mentor/mentee relationship. We call it "The Structured Conversation" or "O.R.I.D."

ICA (our parent organization) spends two thirds of a day teaching the technique and its application in our basic training program. But I remember finding that even the simple idea of the approach informed and improved my dialogue skills. I share the basic idea here in hopes that some of you can benefit from it, and that once you get the idea you'll want to get further training in the method.

There are four levels of a conversation in this approach, each one leading to the next. An assessment of a conversation's level reveals where one is in a decision making process.

**"O"** -- the first level, stands for *Objective*, the mentor's role is to help get to the facts. If a young woman states, "My mother hates me!" she is



Mentor Gretchen Wegner and youth, Justin Fleischer find a spot on ancient tree limb to have a dialogue

probably not dealing with a fact, but an interpretation of her own emotional response to an event or a series of events. To help get at the truth, the data needs to be examined. "What happened?" "How were you involved?" "Who did what?" "Did you say anything back?" might be appropriate questions.

**"R"** stands for *Reflective* -- seeking to discuss the part emotions played in the situation being discussed. We are emotional beings, yet we frequently stuff our emotions which limits the depth of our thinking about possible solutions/responses. Experiences and the emotions they engender trigger the memories of other experiences (or perhaps even stories from books or movies) which, if reflected on can enrich our database for possible outcomes. "How did you feel when she accused you of that?" "When you did that, what were you feeling?" "Did his actions remind you of any other experiences you've had?" "Can you think of any similar situations you've heard about?" These are some examples of reflective questions.

**"I"** -- stands for *Interpretive*. Insights frequently give birth to new perspectives on a situation (perhaps a new idea of how another person might have been perceiving the situation). This is the level to work on the relationship to the mother. Here judgements are made based on more data and a wider range of perspectives than is possible when you begin with the question, "What's wrong?" Possible questions include, "What's the lesson we might learn from this?" "What, do you suppose, are some possible issues be-

tween you and your mother?" "What's your short list of possible solutions?"

**"D"** stands for *decisional*. After the above work, you'll find it is more possible to make good decisions. Remember that there are levels of decision-making. As a mentor, you'll need to decide if it is time for a, "So, what are you going to do?" or a "What else do you need to find out before you can create your plan?" It may even be something like, "This is a hard one! How long do you think it might take you to come to a resolution on this?"

**The style** in which a mentor guides a conversation is crucial. What may work for one person may bomb with another. I find that telling stories about my own experience or that of someone I know can help set a context to ask a question. I tell these stories to illustrate that I can identify with their problem/questions, not to share solutions.

Once a relationship has been built, it is sometimes possible to use much stronger questions or restatements to push the mentee to deeper levels of critical thinking. It is possible then, in some situations, to directly challenge with a strong statement like "Let me see if I've got this, you'd be willing to hurt someone else in order to get what you want?" With others a gentler, "I wonder who else might be hurt if that were to happen?" might make the point.

Sometimes, being the "Devil's Advocate" -- setting up a hypothetical situation -- might bring out the response that's needed. "Let's say you are as blunt about telling her your reaction, and she has a strong response and never speaks to you again? Is that a response you'd be willing to live with?"

And then there is the most frustrating mentee -- a person who insists on playing "the victim". Your role is to change her perception, to help her see she must take responsibility for her own actions and attitudes. You may need to ask in many ways, "So? What do you expect me (or someone else) to do about it?"

Doesn't the mentor ever share any of her own ideas or opinions? Of course you might, but not until the mentee has a chance to work on their own problem -- and they must *ask* you for advice. You must remember this is not your confessional -- set your boundaries, share what's appropriate -- what they're ready for. Don't dump all the details. Ask yourself, "Why am I sharing this?" "How will what I share affect this youth's journey?"

Finally, I try to remember that, as a mentor, my role is not to take away the mentee's struggle, but to help her take the journey of figuring it out for herself.

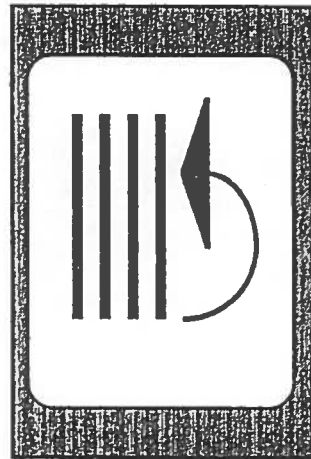
# FOCUSED DISCUSSION METHOD FLOW

**O**BJECTIVE



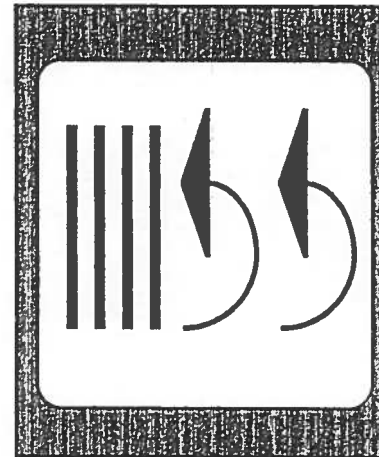
GETTING THE FACTS

**R**EFLECTIVE



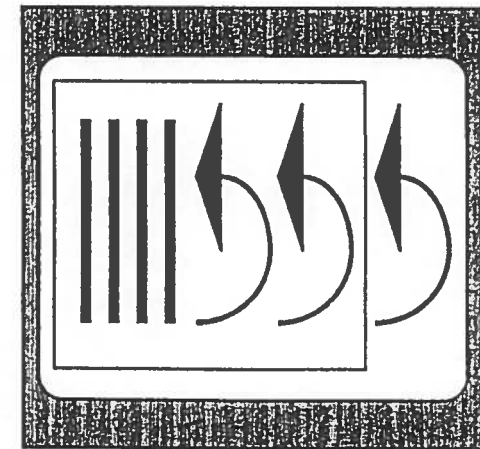
EMOTIONS, FEELINGS,  
ASSOCIATIONS

**I**NTERPRETIVE



VALUES, MEANING,  
PURPOSE

**D**ECISIONAL



FUTURE RESOLVES



## WHY IS THE DISCUSSION METHOD NEEDED?

Every experience is a potential focus for reflection. The BASIC DISCUSSION METHOD is a progression of questions that take a group on a journey of consciousness. This method is useful for reflecting on experiences such as a movie, a project site visit, a planning session, a work day, or any common or extraordinary life event.

The DISCUSSION METHOD is a structure for effective communication. It is a process that can be used with individuals or groups. It is a tool that enables concerned people to initiate and take part in productive dialogue. And, when used with sensitivity, it can enable profound sharing and unity within a group.

Several difficulties are common when we try to communicate with others. Often we are asked (or we ask others) to evaluate or judge something without all the facts. Or, discussions that are held for a specific purpose remain so general that it is difficult to make a decision. Or, we ramble and talk around the subject without ever reaching any depth of feeling or thinking, leaving everyone unsettled and dissatisfied with the results.

It takes some study and practice to become skilled at using the DISCUSSION METHOD. But its use can lead to group discussions that result in clearly stated ideas and well thought out conclusions. The DISCUSSION METHOD can become the basis for:

- collecting data and ideas
- giving out information
- discussing tough issues
- reflecting on important issues and events
- getting ready to do a problem-solving workshop
- group preparation of reports or presentations

# DISCUSSION METHOD OVERVIEW

## OPENING

WELCOME  
CONTEXT

### RATIONAL OBJECTIVE

What does the team need to decide about?  
What topic does the group need to develop?

### EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE

What the team needs to experience with each other  
ie, excitement  
intrigue with a new idea  
authentic struggle

## CLOSING

COMMENTS  
REFLECTIONS

## O BJECTIVE



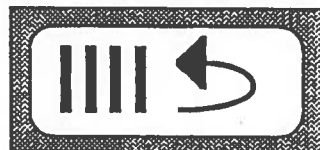
### GETTING THE FACTS

Focus attention.

Questions begin with what people

- see
- hear
- touch
- smell
- taste

## R EFLECTIVE



### EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, ASSOCIATIONS

Questions illuminate:  
--People's emotional responses

- What they feel about something - what angers, excites, intrigues or frightens

- What past associations they have

## I NTERPRETIVE



### VALUES, MEANING, PURPOSE

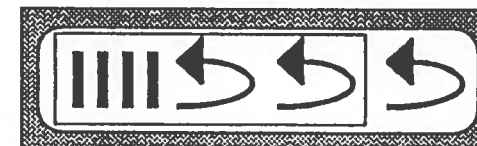
Questions highlight:

- Layers of meaning and purpose

- The significance people attach to a subject

- The story out of which they live

## D ECISIONAL



### FUTURE RESOLVES

Questions allow individuals to decide their relationship and response to their situation..

TOPIC:

OPENING

RATIONAL OBJECTIVE(S)

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE(S)

CLOSING

**O**BJECTIVE

**R**EFLECTIVE

**I**NTERPRETIVE

**D**ECISIONAL

## PATTERNS IN LEADING A FOCUSED DISCUSSION

When using the Discussion Method, it helps to be familiar and comfortable with several common situations and know how experienced leaders handle them. You will gradually develop your own ways of handling them, ways that best suit your own personality and the needs of the group. But until then, here are some specific recommendations.

SITUATION	WHAT TO DO	EXAMPLES
1. GETTING STARTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure pleasant climate, no interruptions before the session begins. Uncluttered, tidy space.</li> <li>• Provide a context as the session begins: what we are doing is important.</li> <li>• First question should be asked with precision. Have it written down before you start.</li> </ul>	"Let's get started. Jim, will you please shut the door. At the annual meeting we decided to establish a more effective communication system. We need to get this in place quickly and smoothly to ensure participation of the entire community. What are the elements of a good communication system?"
2. KEEPING TRACK OF IDEAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write brief phrases on your own note pad after each response.</li> <li>• Ask one or two participants to take notes.</li> <li>• Use notes to recap between questions.</li> <li>• Use notes for writing reports.</li> </ul>	"You mentioned these elements." (Read back the list) "Which is most crucial to..."
3. KEEPING THE DISCUSSION GOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If nobody answers, repeat the question; reword or rephrase only as a last resort.</li> <li>• If participants are going off the topic, repeat the question.</li> <li>• If someone grandstands or talks for a long time, ask for a specific example; ask if someone else has a specific example.</li> </ul>	"Someone else, how will a new communication system affect the community?"

## SITUATION

## WHAT TO DO

## EXAMPLES

### 4. MAINTAINING FOCUS

- When the group begins to stray off the subject, recap briefly what has been said so far.
- Acknowledge and "bracket" the distraction.
- Repeat the question.

"That is an important concern. Let's bring it up next time we do a problem analysis. Now, someone say how the new communications system will affect the community?"

### 5. KEEPING THE DISCUSSION PRACTICAL

- When you introduce the question, give a practical example yourself.
- When an answer is abstract or merely gives the person's judgement, ask for an example from their own experience.

"The video board in the lounge caught my eye the other morning. What are some other practical examples of good communication?"

### 6. RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

- You don't have to. It is helpful to have many points of view in the discussion.
- If people argue, don't take sides, but ask the group if there are any other viewpoints.
- If someone disagrees, have them say what their own idea is, rather than just disagree.

"Strong feelings are ok, but we have to get a wide range of ideas, too."

"It looks like we have at least three angles to cover. Are there any others?"

### 7. BRINGING THE DISCUSSION TO A CLOSE

- Review what was discussed.
- If you made notes, let the group know how the results will be used.
- Tell them when they will receive the results and acknowledge their participation.

"We have covered a lot of ground in just a few minutes. Now let's move on to the problem solving workshop to decide on the specific action plans."

# THE FOCUSED CONVERSATION WORKSHEET

**OPEN:** (Discuss what the conversation is about, why it is important.  
If helpful, state the focusing question.)

<b>OBJECTIVE</b> example questions	What happened? (FACTS - <i>sense</i> questions asking "What happened?")	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What objects did you see?</li> <li>▪ What words/phrases do you remember?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What actions took place?</li> <li>▪ What did you notice?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ What questions were asked?</li> </ul>	
<b>REFLECTIVE</b> example questions	What was your response? (FEELINGS – <i>heart</i> questions asking "What's in your gut?")	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What surprised you?</li> <li>▪ What caused you to smile?</li> <li>▪ What was difficult for you?</li> <li>▪ What does it remind you of?</li> <li>▪ What reaction do you have?</li> </ul>	
<b>INTERPRETIVE</b> example questions	What do you understand? (FINDINGS – <i>head</i> questions asking "So what?")	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What's one thing you learned?</li> <li>▪ What main insight did you gain?</li> <li>▪ Why do you think this happened?</li> <li>▪ What point were they trying to make?</li> <li>▪ What explanation can you now give?</li> </ul>	
<b>DECISIONAL</b> example questions	What choices do you make now? (FUTURE - <i>action</i> questions asking "Now what?")	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What changes might you consider making?</li> <li>▪ What might you do to make this worth while?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What next steps will you take?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ From your perspective what might the group do next?</li> </ul>	
CLOSE: (A statement summarizing the discussion and possibly stating what might be next.)		

## *Mentor* *The Journey Master*

**Goal: To Facilitate Youth Exploration**

- Challenges/Encourage
- Risk Taker
- Asks Questions/Listens
- Plays Devil's Advocate
- Speaks from the heart
- Focuses on Journey of Youth
- Takes Responsibility for youth
- Not Friendship dependent
- Is Compassionate
- Is Empathetic
- Calls forth Reflection
- Calls Forth Responsibility
- is Human/without pretense
- Embodies a World View
  - which differs from parents
- Challenges the B/S
- Open to Outcome
- Calls forth a Dream of the Future

*You Are Not...*

Authority over Youth  
Therapist  
A role Model to be copied  
Serving your own Journey

## *Initiate* *The Journeyor*

**Goal: To Journey, To Explore**

- Ready to Accept Challenge
- Explorer
  - Risk Taker
  - Works with Questions
    - (no easy answers)
- Is Trustworthy
- Speaks from the Heart
  - Answers from own integrity
    - (doesn't give expected answer)
  - Seeks own truths
- Ready to jettison parts of own past which no longer serve
- Seeks new personal Story
- Encounters a world beyond self
  - Challenges the B/S
- Encounters Innocent Suffering

*You are Not...*

Graded for your answers,  
but esteemed for your efforts  
Here because your  
parents made you

## **Relationship**

**Goal: To build a Trust Bond and  
a relationship with depth**



- An Encounter with the Other
  - Depth Experience
  - Established on Trust and mutual respect
- Two-way communication
  - Common Pursuit
  - Growth experience

*You are Not...*

- always going to be comfortable
- expected to be pals



# WHO WERE MY MENTORS

*Held  
accountability*

*Created an  
environment  
for growth*

*Fostered a  
love of  
nature*

*Listened*

*Challenged to  
be your best*

*Accepted as  
you were*

*Accessible  
counsel*

*Welcomed  
you*

*Affirmed your  
right to think  
differently*

*Set an  
example*

*Demanded  
your best*

*Challenged  
your  
world-view*

*Provided  
a space to  
be your  
gender*

Your age at the time \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Description: Age,  
occupation, relation  
to family

What did mentor do  
which spurred you to  
action?

How did mentor Affirm  
you?

What made this person a  
good mentor?

Your age at the time \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor #2 \_\_\_\_\_

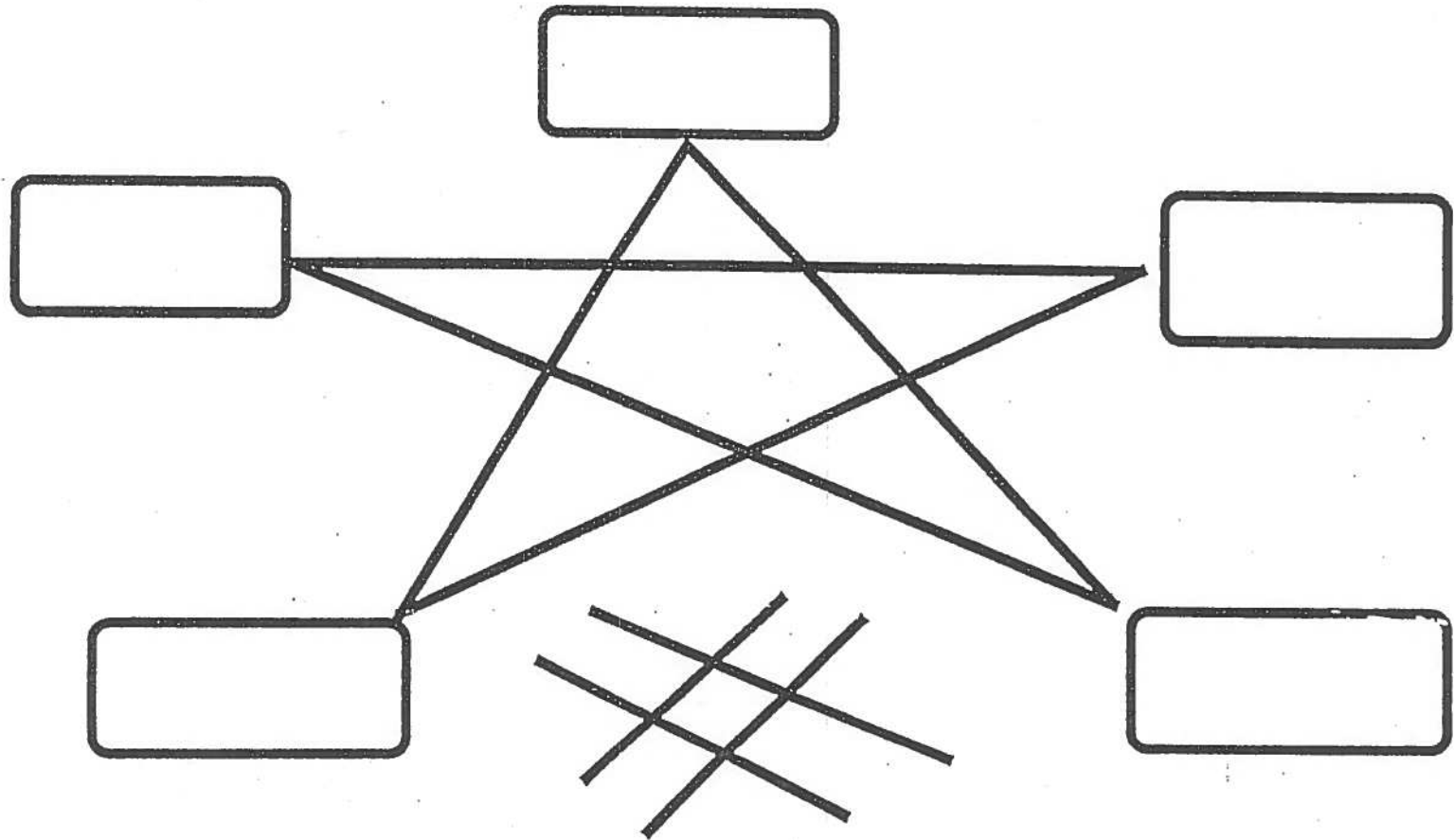
Description: Age,  
occupation, relation  
to family

What did mentor do  
which spurred you to  
action?

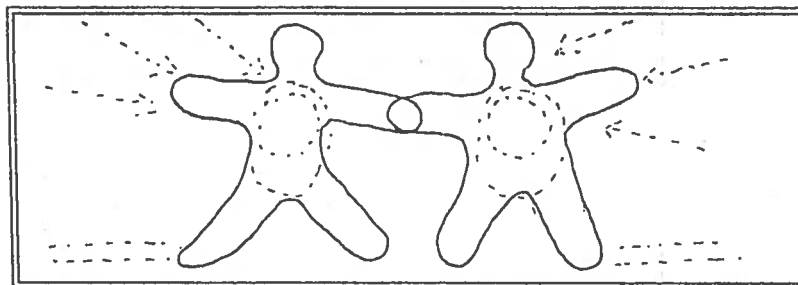
How did mentor Affirm  
you?

What made this person a  
good mentor?

## Five Key Points of Image Theory



## IMAGE SHIFT EXERCISE



1. Draw the two bodies as in the illustration above. (Don't worry about imperfection).
2. Focus on yourself and your present behavior. Think of the roles that you play. Focus on your role as a (facilitator, trainer, teacher, family support worker, day care provider). Think of your present behavior that is not rooted in creativity. Write one or two of these behaviors at the bottom left by the foot.
3. Draw a circle inside of the "left body". In the circle describe the IMAGE that is responsible for that behavior (example: "A Non-Artist").
4. Think of the messages that you have received in the past (and perhaps presently) that have created this image. Write those messages on arrows pointing at the body, into the IMAGE.
5. Now consider the set of values that are locking that IMAGE into place and protecting it. Name those values (example: humility, perfection). Draw a circle around the IMAGE circle, and place those values in the "screen" that protects the blocking IMAGE.
6. Now think of the behavior that you would like to replace what has not been helpful. Describe that behavior in a short phrase on the line at the foot of the "right body".
7. Now think of THREE positive qualities that others have mentioned that you have that can help you shift the IMAGE that is limiting you. Write each of these qualities in the holding hands of the two bodies.
8. Decide on a releasing IMAGE that can generate behavior that will move you toward your vision. Draw a circle inside the "right body". Describe the IMAGE in that circle.
9. Name the values that will hold that IMAGE in place. Draw a screen over the image and write the values on that screen.
10. Now decide on messages that you can "beam" to yourself that will support those values and create the releasing IMAGE. (Think of Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic ways of doing this). Write these ideas on each of the arrows on the right.

# Using Movie Conversations for Values Clarification

There are many great movies which can be used to get a conversation about values started. Over the years, we have used many of them – The Savage Innocents, Requiem for a Heavyweight, Sometimes a Great Notion, Inherit the Wind, Zorba the Greek, Twelve Angry men, The China Syndrome, Pow Wow Highway, and Star Wars, to name just a few. We've also used Twilight Zone and Original Star Trek TV shows. It is important to remember your audience. The movie must catch the participants. It needs humor and/or drama and/or a situation which evokes their compassion or allows them to identify with the characters or the situation. With a group of 12 year old boys, Twelve Angry Men is too slow, but the Power of One, despite its length catches their attention.

The ORID guidelines which precede this section will help you prepare questions which will work well with a movie conversation. Make sure that you can answer the questions yourself, however, be open for other answers from the group and don't push them to come up with your answer. (You may want to add your own comments... something like, "I also loved the scene where....")

Read your audience mood, and pace the conversation accordingly. Don't belabor points when responses are coming slowly, but be careful about moving too quickly when responses are coming and your group is engaged.

Here are a few good movies you might want to consider.

## *Personal Responsibility*

### **+ The Power of One**

## *The Life Journey and U.S. Treatment of the Native Peoples*

### **+ The Education of Little Tree**

## *The Need for a Civil Society*

### **+ Lord of the Flies**

## *Human Sexuality and Humanism*

### **+ Cider House Rules**

## *Civil Rights*

### **+ Four Little Girls** (Spike Lee's —the bombing of the Birmingham church)

### **+ The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman**

## *Capital Punishment*

### **+ Dead Man Walking**

## *Innocent Suffering and the Human Desire to Live*

### **+ Breathing Lessons** (30 minute documentary; a man in an Iron Lung)

## *Attitude toward the Medical Profession/The role of the Iconoclast*

### **+ The Patch Adams Story**

## *Mentoring (for use in mentor training)*

### **+ Goodwill Hunting**

### **+ Dead Poet Society**

## *Father/Son Relations and the Power of Guilt*

### **+ Smoke Signals**

## *Two from Dr. Seuss (causes of War and Environmental degradation -- shorter films)*

### **+ The Butter Battle Book**

### **+ The Lorax**





## THE JOURNEY

She wasn't sure how long it would take  
And she didn't know just where she was going  
But she felt she was on the path  
Sometimes she would ask for

### DIRECTION

Women would come and dance with her  
They sang their troubles to the moon  
She loved to be with her sisters  
Relationship made her feel

### CONNECTED

She was content, which is a lot  
Sometimes she was confused, tired, lonely and scared  
She was also curious, joyful, strong, happy and free  
Most of all, she experienced and walked with

### FAITH

Sometimes she would arrive at a community  
Sharing, building, serving, learning and praying with others  
She always knew when it was time to move on  
When she left she always felt overwhelming

### LOVE

One day, a storm gathered in the lavender sky  
She sought shelter beneath a giant oak  
She called the tree "Mama"  
And she delighted in the

### COMFORT

When the rain stopped she kept moving  
Arriving at destinations only to find new ones  
She began to understand what this was all about  
She laughed out loud when she realized her

### VISION

Her journey of freedom, movement  
seeking, finding, being, loving was her path  
She felt more herself than she had ever before  
Her creative spirit soared with renewed

### PASSION





# Using Your JOURNAL

EXPRESS YOURSELF ★ MAKE STUFF UP ? TELL THE TRUTH ♡  
WRITE POETRY TO A NEW DAY @ MAKE MEMORIES .  
ASK A MILLION QUESTIONS ?? DRAW, DOODLE, SMUDGE  
PLAY : FEEL REAL ♡ LET GO ★ HOLD ON . & USE  
COLOR @ SHARE YOUR DREAMS @ MAKE WISHES ★  
WRITE DOWN YOUR PRAYERS ♡ MEDITATE :  
BREATHE (m) GLUE STUFF @ BE SILLY ★ FIND  
THINGS YOU LOVE ABOUT YOU ♡ MAKE LONG LISTS ♡  
BUILD VISIONS FROM STAR DUST... REMEMBER WHO  
YOU ARE... WHO ARE YOU?

# *Practical Testing*

*Knowledge  
& Skill*

---

*Reflective  
Encounter*

---

*Beyond  
Comfort*

*Perseverance*

# Facing Your Dragons: At a Ropes Challenge Course

by Stan Crow

Once upon a time, a young girl was trying to get home. There were two roads she could take and each was guarded by a dragon.

She hated to make decisions, but finally had to decide on one path. She decided to take the path with the wimpy dragon, and set out to sneak past him in her most clever way, but he was looking the other direction. She ran past him. Then stopped... "That was too easy, there must be something really dangerous ahead which he knows will get me." So she retraced her steps.

After several false starts, she finally succeed in getting past the second dragon and preceded home. As she approached her home, the dragon was there again.

"Congratulations", he said, "you are almost there. You must kiss me. Once you have kissed me you may go home easily."

"What's your name?", the little girl replied, "I have never kissed anyone I didn't know."

"Oh, you know me, my name is Fear."

.....

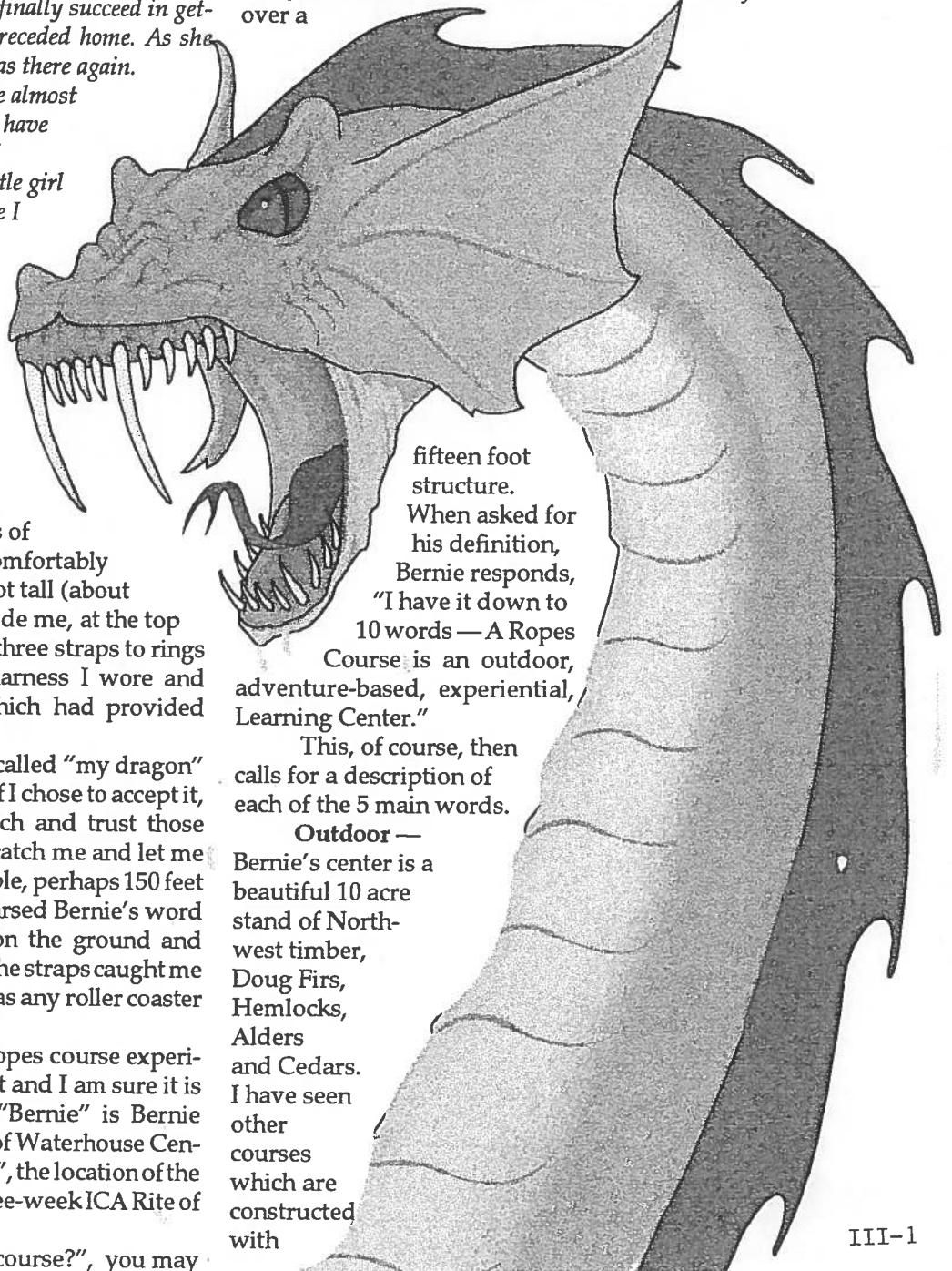
There I was, sitting on the edge of a platform attached to the top of a Douglas Fir tree some 50 ft. in the air. To reach this perch, I had climbed — pulling myself up on rings driven into the sides of the trunk, spaced at a distance comfortably spaced for someone about six-foot tall (about three inches more than me). Beside me, at the top was Bernie who was connecting three straps to rings on the back of the parachute harness I wore and disconnecting the belay line which had provided safety on my climb.

Now I was facing what Bernie called "my dragon" — a fear of heights. My mission, if I chose to accept it, was to fling myself off that perch and trust those straps, which I could not see, to catch me and let me sail down the zip line — a slant cable, perhaps 150 feet long. After a few minutes, I rehearsed Bernie's word that I was safer up there than on the ground and pushed off. I fell... a few seconds, the straps caught me and I was off on a ride as exciting as any roller coaster I've ever taken.

This was my most recent ropes course experience. Neither my first nor my last and I am sure it is not my last to face a dragon. "Bernie" is Bernie Waterhouse, owner and director of Waterhouse Center — "Where people grow in trees", the location of the Ropes Challenge course for all three-week ICA Rite of Passage programs.

"What is a Ropes Challenge course?", you may

ask. Perhaps the above vignette gives you a clue. The challenges are many and varied. There are "personal challenges" like the zip line in which you face your individual fears, "team challenges" which ask the group to assure that all members of the team successfully complete a physical feat, and "initiatives" which call on the team to figure out how to solve a physical problem. An example of an initiative is the "Wall" — the activity is to get every member of the team safely over a



fifteen foot structure. When asked for his definition, Bernie responds, "I have it down to 10 words — A Ropes Course is an outdoor, adventure-based, experiential, Learning Center."

This, of course, then calls for a description of each of the 5 main words.

## Outdoor —

Bernie's center is a beautiful 10 acre stand of Northwest timber, Doug Firs, Hemlocks, Alders and Cedars. I have seen other courses which are constructed with

telephone poles on treeless land. Their value is in getting out into an environment that is unfamiliar to most of us.

**Adventure-based** — There are very few things that most of us do on a daily basis which cause our adrenalin to course rapidly through our veins like a tilt-a-whirl at the midway and simultaneously challenge us to think and solve problems. These adventures have been given names like "crocodile's crossing", "spider's web", "hole in space" and the "acid sea" to add to the fun.

**Experiential** — Although we do learn when we're reading from books and manuals and hearing lectures, the best learning happens when you are **DOING**. When you see a performer walk a slackwire or climb a tall pole, it's easy to say, "I can do that", but when you actually do it yourself, you understand what you could never learn from observation. This is whole body learning.

**Learning** -- "I like to emphasize this with students", says Bernie, "because they are away from school, and think this is just a field trip, but there's something more...." Learning can go on in two ways: *Personal Learning*, in which the individual is learning something about themselves — who they are, what gifts and talents they have with which to solve a common problem or to reach a goal, and *Group Learning* — learning about working with a groups of people and group dynamics. What are the issues that come up when a group of people are working together? How do we support and trust one another? How do we communicate with each other and balance the various personalities, the strengths and weaknesses that we have in our group?

"This is what we're going to do the rest of our lives.", Bernie muses, "Unless we go into the mountains and live like a hermit, we're always going to be working with other people and solving problems together."

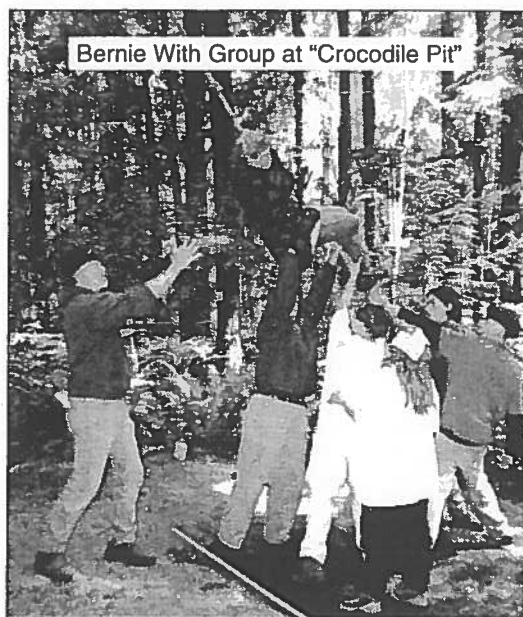
There are two distinct areas of a full ropes challenge course, the *low* course and the *high* course.

The low course activities are designed so that one person cannot do them by themselves. If one goes to these activities thinking, "I can do everything in this life by myself!" and then comes, literally, to a wall that's 15 ft high, there is no way one can get over it (unless the group creates a plan to get everyone up there). The course "sets people up" to have to deal with each other.

Then, there is a time given to process the learnings and relate them to every-day life. Bernie says, many people think this is "like an obstacle course — we're going to race through it and see how many we can get done in a day." That's not the reason for being there. Maybe you get stuck at one activity and spend the whole day at this activity. Not always doing it, but talking about some of the issues that have come up. The course is designed in such a way that the human interaction issues that could come up normally in your group (classroom, workplace, church, family, etc.) will be brought to the surface."

Are we open with our communication or are there things that are not being shared? Many issues come up in ropes challenge courses. Over the years, it has been my observation that the most profitable ropes course experiences have spent almost as much time on the dialogue/meaning part as on the activity itself.

The high course is peopled with individual dragons. There are a series of ropes, nets, platforms and cables attached to trees twenty to forty feet in the air. Bernie and his staff guide you through the challenges — walking on two wires across a fifteen foot span (with nothing to put your hands on) sliding your feet in a *Charlie Chaplin* walk; jumping with both feet together across a 4 foot distance, which on the ground would be easy, but at 40 feet up, makes your stomach do flip flops; or traversing a span on two, less-than-taut



wires (one for your feet the other for your hands) which change places half way across.

Safety is a strong part of the drill and is built into the activities. At every point, there are checks of the equipment. A buddy system on the high course requires that every time you move a safety line from one cable to another, you are being watched and, if necessary, reminded of the proper way. There is never a time when you are more than 4 feet off the ground without at least two fastened safety lines.

Bernie likens a ropes challenge course to a laboratory. People go into a laboratory to experiment. Here, in a relatively safe place, one experiments with expanding the limits of their ability to take risks. There is also the chance to experiment with making teams work, and understanding the ways we impose limits on ourselves.

One of the nice aspects of the program is that the atmosphere is positive and most people experience a sense of victory several times during the day (or two).

"I tell every one", Bernie rehearses, "that the one word we don't allow on the course is can't. We don't ask them to do things they can't". People aren't set up for failure. They experience strong challenges. They may not succeed at every challenge, but the reflection that follows can be more beneficial than if they had.

This is "Can't-lose learning". Every challenge brings its teaching. And what is the worst thing that could happen in this learning lab? You haven't lost the account nor flunked the course.

.....As I waited at the end of that zip line for the ladder and help to get down, I was exhilarated, felt good about myself, and knew I could handle the challenges ahead.



## THE VIGIL

Set within the context of caring for and healing the planet, the vigil is the culminating solitary experience where each individual participant must present themselves, alone, stripped of defenses, before the living mystery of our environment, as a significant part of the eco-structure that breathes with this planet. The vigil represents the symbolic threshold of the rite of passage event. It is the Return Threshold from which they will cross as Master of Two Worlds, bringing with them the wisdom and power gained from conquering the challenges of the Other World. It is the time from which the participants are sent out from the group as children and welcomed back as youth. It is a time of serious introspection: looking back at the journey one has been on and formulating new decisions about the path one is preparing to embark upon.

**The context:** As we explore what it means to participate in healing of the planet, one aspect of the Rite of Passage, is the journey to a sacred place, a place that captures the earth's mystery and grandeur as a well-spring of inspiration and courage from which to fill our spiritual cups to overflowing. The journey is as important as the rite itself in that it is where community is built and the bonding of the group takes place.

Rites of passage are by no means new, we need only look at the history of many traditional cultures, cultures that have survived thousands of years, to see the various forms that these important rituals have taken. In many tribal cultures the hunting of a dangerous animal or the testing of one's courage by engaging in perilous life-threatening exercises brought about a new awareness and appreciation for the life one had and for many peoples the solitary questing for one's new identity or role sent them on long journeys of fasting, searching and contemplation. There are many stories surrounding the rite of passage from childhood to youth/adulthood.

1. The shaving of the head or the knocking out of a tooth of a young man followed by the refusal of his mother to recognize him and chasing him out of the village like a stranger are part of the drama that reinforces the understanding that these young people are different and must learn to integrate that "newness" into their lives.

2. The vision quest of many tribal cultures which encourages individuals to go out and survive on their own skills and awareness many times wandering for months or spending days in silent meditation living on next to nothing as they seek out their new significance.

3. For some peoples the rite of passage experience has been so crucial that adolescents are expected to spend an entire year in the wilderness acquiring the skills of survival and integrity as part of their emergence into the community

4. Death and Resurrection are major images of most Rites of Passage. The child is Dying and a new person (a youth for our context) is born. In many of the ancient myths, the hero departs for Hell or Valhala and returns having conquered death itself – with new tools, strengths and insights. Our heroes will be ritualizing this death through the rituals of saying their "Goodbyes", burning their childhood, and by declaring themselves "Youth" upon their return.

5. Fasting is almost a universal experience in rites of transformation signifying a decision to detach oneself from that which is comfortable and familiar and at the same time choosing to immerse oneself in the cleansing and various stages of awareness that accompany fasting.

In all of these rituals it is a journey of moving beyond the familiar, the self, by conquering fears and gaining a new insight as to who one was and the community to which they belonged.

The vigil is that solitary experience. For most of the young people, if they choose to take it seriously, it will be an emotionally challenging exercise taking them through a whole range of feelings from loneliness and homesickness to fear and even anger. Probably for all of them this will be the longest period of time they will have ever spent in deliberate solitude

and they may reach a level of serious introspection. For both of these reasons it is crucial that there be a time of reflection.

#### **The setting:**

contemplative, preferably natural wilderness, secluded and containing some of the basic elements of life: vegetation, water, animals, wood for fire, a view of the land or area around the site and a way in which the site can be monitored by the staff. It might be suggested that each participant sanctify their vigil site by placing stones in the four compass points around the site in the manner of the Medicine Wheel and asking for the guidance of each of the respective totem spirits.

#### **The elements:**

1. There should be some thought as to the placement of the individual site. (protection from weather and tides, animal dens, proximity to fire hazards and dangerous conditions).
2. Youth should prepare and maintain a fire throughout the 24-hour period.
3. Youth should write in the vigil journal (take some time to go over the questions in the journal with them before hand and answer any questions they might have). They should also be encouraged to paint symbols for themselves on their Death Mask and power pouches. They may also paint or draw in their journal.
4. Youth should maintain the vigil for the duration and stay awake.
5. Honor their vow of silence and fasting if they commit to do them.
6. Materials they will need: journal, pen, paints and brushes for their death masks, leather for their power pouch, needle and twine, yarn and leather thong, matches and fire starter cans, canteen of water, tarp, warm/dry clothing and a hat to protect from sunburn.

#### **The Preparation:**

Selecting the site for each individual should be done in such a way as to try and limit the chances of one youth interfering with another's vigil. Spacing them far enough apart that they will not feel inclined to wander into someone else's site is a good practice and placing them in such an order that two "buddies" are not going to tempt each other by being too close also is wise. One other suggestion if the staff decide to participate in the vigil is to place themselves in between or in proximity to their team members so that they can keep an eye on things. Preparations for the celebration after the vigil should either be done before staff and youth depart for the vigil or there should be an additional staff member who can take care of those preparations.

### **The Vigil Liturgical Script**

The Mechanics of the Vigil is explained before the participants leave for the site. They are told what to take:

- Water bottles
- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Warm jacket & sweat pants for after dark
- hat & sunscreen
- Journal & Pen
- Fire starter & matches
- Death Mask (positive & negative)



They are told what to expect -- hot & cold, fasting, journaling, being alone by self.

They are asked to COMMIT to being on the Vigil and to not disturb others.

There should be a simple meal here in preparation for the vigil.

After lunch, the group moves to the vigil site.

### **The Ceremony of Beginning:**

Before the ceremony begins, the group receives another rehearsal of what to expect, and is given a chance to ask questions. They are then given a bag of materials -- paint, cup, brushes, glue, charcoal sticks for drawing and an envelope and note paper to write themselves a letter during the vigil (to be mailed to them at a future date) to use on their quest.. Hand out the vigil journals with the context that there will be a time of reflection with the staff where they can share what has been written and raise any questions or concerns that they might have. Make sure everyone has everything they will need-- matches, clothing, pen/pencil, paints and brushes etc.

At the beginning of the trip, tentative guides are assigned to each youth (dividing up the youth among the adults). These assignments may be adjusted before the vigil, if it appears that there are more appropriate assignments. However, the intent is to have each adult building special relations with specific youth, allowing reflection about every youth's journey and time to focus on each youth. These relations should not be formalized until the time of the vigil. This guide is now introduced to the youth.

1. Come together and create a circle with stones (including the 4 taken from the initial medicine wheel) Create the sacred circle by smudging the circle and everyone there.
2. In a circle, Chant
3. welcoming people to this significant event and noting the uniqueness of the group that has gathered and importance of the site that has been selected for the vigil.
4. This is the time for a context describing the vigil and what it is about . Give examples of Vigils in other cultures -- The Knight before being honored with a title, The Humblatia of the lacota, the 16 year walk of the Basque.
5. Someone might share their own vigil experience or a story of someone else's vigil. Joel Black's story is very appropriate and might be shared as a way of sending them out to find a new name for themselves as a symbol of their new person. Also the 1987 document has a lot of good examples for giving them ideas on choosing a new name but it should be emphasized that this exercise really needs some background before the vigil.
6. It is important to explain that this is their vigil and that this will be their only opportunity to do this vigil and that only they can decide to honor their vows and hold true to themselves. In other words all the previous conversations about COMMITMENT are now true. They are then told they will be asked "the Question of commitment", then those who answer will be marked with the spirit of the directions and given the materials for making a power pouch during the vigil -- Their own, paint it make it unique.

7. In turn, around the circle, ask each of them to repeat:

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_,  
do Commit myself to participate in this 24-hour vigil

of silence and fasting  
and to reflect upon  
the importance of my decision  
to begin the journey of youth toward adulthood

8. Each adult staff next places a smudge of charcoal on a quadrant of the youth's face and says:

North - I bring power to your spirit from Waboose, the white buffalo. As you go into the void to reflect on the death of your own childhood, Waboose brings you the power of the Elder who has gone before and who knows it can be done.

East - Wabun, the eagle. As you look into your self, Wabun brings you the ability to see far into the past and future.

South- Shawnode, the Coyote. As you go into this unknown space, coyote brings you the ability to take a different approach to what you see so you may see the wisdom which hides behind the sight.

West- Mudgekewis, The bear. As you spend time alone, wabun brings you power to know yourself and your own wisdom.

9. Youth are then led in single file down the beach to their sites

The guide begins his/her task by taking each youth assigned (one at a time) to the site where they will spend the vigil. Youth are then to prepare their site. The Guide should make sure that the youth has all the materials listed above and if they are placed near the beach, that they are fully aware of the high tide line and the potential danger. A shelter and fire pit are to be built, wood is to be gathered to last for the whole vigil.

Once the Youth has started a fire, the guide arrives to do a "Death of the Child" ritual. The Guide acts as surrogate for all the loved ones (parents, siblings, grandparents, etc) -- one by one, the youth says "goodbye to each" Things I want you to know, as I will never see you again" The person who returns from this vigil is a youth, no longer a child!

After the Goodbyes are said, The youth writes "THE CHILD \_\_\_\_\_ (own name) on the negative mask. Then the mask is placed into the fire with the words "D say geedbye to my childhood"

#### The Watch:

During the next 21-22 hours staff takes turns observing (out of site) each site every 1 to 2 hours. When a youth has obviously gone to sleep, the guide awakens them and invites them to keep the vigil -- acknowledging that this is a difficult task. At 2 am and again at the time set for reflection, the guide takes a thermos of broth and offers it to the youth.

If there are youth who are not at their sites, the guide should find them and offer them the option to return and stay at their own site or come back to the location where the staff is and stop their vigil... If they decide to stay, they should be warned that next time they will have to come back.

#### The Power Objects/pouch

During the vigil, the youth chooses a power object (a small stone or other small object) from the area around their site. They also take the leather, string and thong and create a power pouch.

#### The Reflection

1. Upon completion of the 24-hour period the guide should go to each youth individually and spend some time reflecting with them on their vigil experience and their journal writings.

Questions include:

- O. What happened during the vigil ?  
What will you remember when you tell your family about it?
  - R. What sort of emotions did you experience during the 24 hours?  
What sorts of questions were raised for you?
  - I. What meaning do you think this experience has for your life?
  - D. What sort of Decisions have you made about your life as a youth?
2. The guide will next do a "medicine card" reading including the drawing of a card at the end to choose a totem animal.
  3. At the end of the reflection they place the power object into the power pouch, rehearsing its meaning .
  - 4 They are then given a stole to decorate and given a rehearsal of what they will do at the anointing ceremony.
  - 5.. After the discussion and ritual they should clean up the site and return to the designated site of the feast and celebration.

### **The Drama of the Anointing:**

Part of the celebration, whether it falls before, after or in the midst of, needs to be the welcoming back of the children as youth. This is where the group collectively affirms each youths' completion of the vigil and each youth has the opportunity to state a new intent for their life.

Again, this ceremony can happen in a circle. One of the staff will address each youth individually with the questions:

Have you kept the Vigil, honoring your vows of silence and fasting?

Response: I have.

Have you chosen to enter onto the journey of youth, letting go of the child that first came to this adventure and taking on the role and responsibilities that will lead you into adulthood?

Response: I have.

Are you then to be called "Youth?"

Response: I am

Who have you chosen to guide you as a "hero-mentor"? and for what qualities have you chosen this hero?

Response: Youth shares this with the group.

What one decision have you decided to share as a symbol of the arisen youth that you have become?

Response: Youth shares.

**"YOUTH, KNEEL"**

The guide then comes forward and stands in front of the youth and anoints the youth with oil. The act may be done by pouring a few drops of oil on top of the head, or smudging oil onto the forehead, but all guides should do the symbol the same way.

**"I ANOINT YOU ( Name of the new youth ) A YOUTH, WITH ALL OF THE PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH ACCOMPANY THIS POSITION.**

After all youth have completed, they are welcomed as NEW YOUTH and invited to a feast prepared in their honor. (This should be an especially tasty and sumptuous meal served in as grand and elegant a fashion as the circumstances permit).

# Brooding Questions for your Wilderness Quest

In preparation for the Wilderness Quest, we suggest that you find a time to get out into nature by yourself for 4 to 8 hours -- perhaps in a park. The ideal timing for this activity would be after you have had time to read and reflect on at least one of the books on the reading list and about a month before your quest begins. However, your situation will determine what time and place are best for you. If you have no other option, take 3 to 4 two-hour blocks of time.

*A journal to record your Quest is important. Begin yours now on this retreat, if you haven't done so already. The journal is your personal record of the journey -- you will find it important after your journey is over. If writing in narrative form is not your style, use phrases, mind maps, cartoons or drawings with notes to record your thoughts, emotions, and experiences.*

If at all possible, interact with no one for the whole day. Take a hike in the woods, to a stream, waterfall or lake. Take an intuitive course. From time to time, find a spot to stand or sit quietly and focus on a tree, animal hole, rock, bug, etc. and allow other thoughts to slip away for a while, then get up and move on. Bring along a journal and be sure you occasionally jot down whatever has occurred to you. As you wander, stand still, or sit, **be aware of how nature is aware of your presence.** Look for **signs and symbols which might help identify your life purpose.**

**Ask yourself:** "What are my gifts?",

"What heritage do I get from my ancestors?"

"What about my life is going well?"

"What about my life is not going well?"

"What fears drive me?, paralyze me?"

"What are the burdens of the past which I carry?"

"What are my biggest concerns?"

"What relationships need mending?"

"Which of my gifts do I deny?"

"What values is my life based on?"

"What sustains me in my every day life?"

**"What is the reason I am going on this quest?"**

"What do I need to remain open to?"

"What insight am I seeking?"

"What type of insight would be really helpful to me at this time?"

# Things To Do On Your Vigil

The Vigil is a time to focus on your future. Below are activities which will help you to do so.  
Choose some that you'd like to do and prepare yourself to enter the journey of a YOUTH.

*Sew up your Power Pouch*

*Paint a symbol on your Power Pouch*

*Paint your Death Mask*

*Find 4 power objects for your pouch*

*Write a letter to yourself  
to be mailed a year from now*

*Answer Questions in your Journal*

---

Write letters to family and friends about  
"The New Youth" you are becoming

*Write Poetry*

Commit to:

*Keep Your Fire Going*

Maintain Your Silence

*Remain by Yourself*

Nature  
Meditation  
Cards

*Create a  
personal symbol*

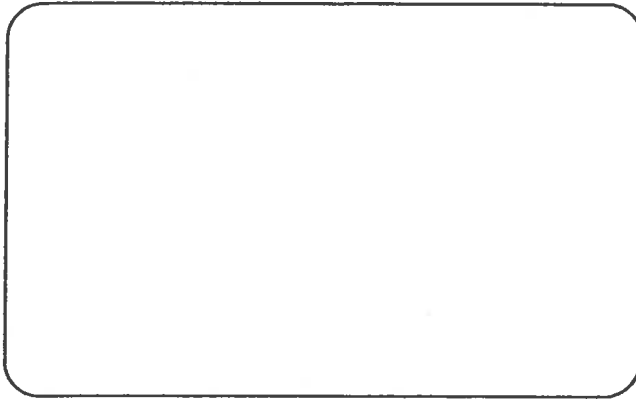
*Day Dream  
about your future*

*Still Hunt  
for wild  
life*

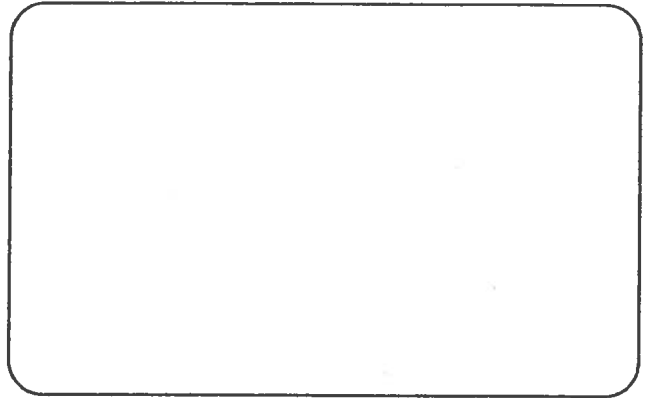
# THE VIGIL

*This Journal Section is meant to encourage you to think about the importance of what is happening as you as your journey shifts from Child to Youth. Please feel free to write poetry, and draw, as well as writing prose.*

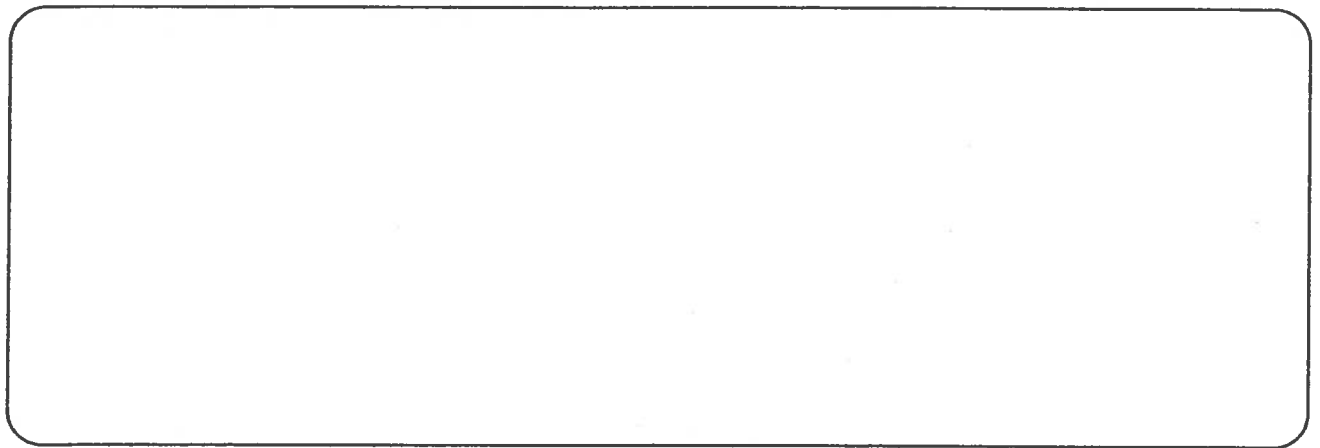
1. List the places you have lived.



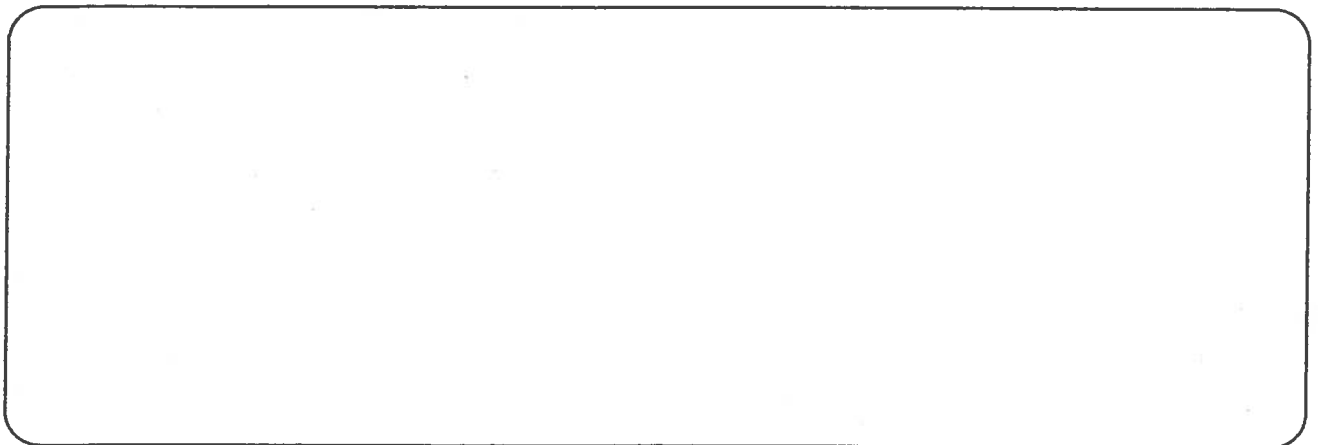
2. List the places you have traveled.



3. List the people who have had an influence on your life.



4. List your talents, gifts and skills.



5. List 9 things your family has done for you that you'll now be doing as a youth.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Put a \* next to the 4 hardest ones.

6. What are 9 things you are looking forward to in the next 3 years as a youth.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

7. What are your concerns for the future of our world?

8. What are your concerns for your family?

9. What Changes will you have to make in your thinking during the next few years?

10. What Changes will you have to make in your activities in the next few years?

10. Create your **Life Timeline**, on the next page (Use the sample to help, don't copy it, do your own)

- a. write the years you were born and guess the year you will die.
- b. fill in other years on the year line to divide them up (like a ruler).
- c. Write in the major events of your life on the left side (question #1)
- d. Write in major events you predict will happen in your future.
- e. give names to the sections of your life ( sections on lines III & IV)
- f. give your life a title or name (Section V)

11. On the next page, draw a symbol for yourself or draw your experience of this journey or of this Vigil or of your future.

12. List several Heroes whose example might help you to live your life better. Don't limit yourself to "dead men" consider parents, teachers, other living people. Fictional people and other Creatures.

Human Heroes	Fictional Heroes and other Creatures

Which of these heroes would you like to adopt to whisper advice to you when you need it?  
Place a \* next to the ones you choose.



V. My Name for my life	<b>(SAMPLE) How to use this form not what to say !</b>							
IV. Names for my past & Future life	<b>The Journey of the Victor</b>							
III. Names for the sections of my life	<b>On the Move</b>		<b>Overcoming Losses Illnesses and Accidents</b>		<b>I am a Winner</b>		<b>The Future</b>	
I. The Years of my Life	19 <u>74</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>89</u>	1992	<u>20</u>
II. The major events of my life	<p> <b>I was Born 9/2/74</b>  <b>Family Moved to Dallas</b>  <b>I go to Preschool</b>  <b>Brother Born</b>  <b>Appendectomy</b>  <b>Family Vacation To Mexico</b>  <b>Move to Oregon &amp; Enter jr High</b>  <b>Get Drivers License</b>  <b>Enter Hi School</b>  <b>Confirmed at Church</b>  <b>Family Moved to Phoenix</b>  <b>My Sister was Born</b>  <b>I enter First Grade</b>  <b>Best Friend Moves to Florida</b>  <b>Lose Trumpet at Band Competition</b>  <b>Dad &amp; I Go Camping by ourselves &amp; almost drown</b>  <b>My Grand-mother has Cancer</b>  <b>First Chair Trumpet</b>  <b>Poetry Writing Award</b>  <b>Seventeen Stitches to my chin from fall off jungle gym</b>  <b>My Father gets award for teacher of Year</b>  <b>I Submit Applic'n for 5 colleges</b> </p>							<p>Just put a year for your death here! (I know that's not an easy thing to do! ) We'll do more with the future during the quest!</p>

V.My Name for my life

IV.Names for my past &  
Future life

III.Names for the  
sections of my life

The Future

I.The Years of my Life

19\_\_

1998

20\_\_

II.The major events  
of my life

Birth

# An Early Return

by Jennifer

I've been led into the wilderness as a quest participant to seek vision. - I have also led others into the wilderness as a quest guide. As a guide, I was always very careful to emphasize that returning early to base camp by no means meant one had failed their quest. Questing is not a test judged by others. A wilderness quest is a microcosm of one's life quest, thus, an early return simply mirrors a part of the seeker's journey. How many times did I share this belief with folks before the solo time commenced? It sounded so easy in theory. Then, as a participant, it was my turn to experience returning early to base camp.

It was my sixth personal quest. I had been a guide for three years. I was four months pregnant with my first child and it was the last quest my partner and I were going to lead as codirectors of Rites of Passage, Inc. (Novato, CA). There were several people to be guides on this trip so I figured this was an appropriate time for me to mark my passage into motherhood and to mark the end of my role as midwife for questers. These were big changes and deserved a well defined threshold.

About three hours into my solo I knew in my Heart that I had intellectually decided that I sit alone on the mountam in order to make these passages more meaningful. An enormous amount of internal conflict began as I considered returning to base camp. My Knowing self said, "return" and my ego/mind self said, "Oh come on, you can stick it out. What will the others say? For God's sake, you're a seasoned guide, maybe there's something for you to learn if you give yourself a chance.

Eight long hours later I listened to my Heart and returned to base camp. During the short trek back to camp, the internal dialog continued doing battle within. "You're doing the right thing. You know whenever you follow your inner Knowing things beyond your linear comprehension fall into place. Relax." "But you're not fulfilling your quest contract with yourself, you're supposed to be marking two important passages. You whimp!" All the while, I was rehearsing the speech I would make when asked, Why have you returned early?

As it turned out, another quester had also returned early. The trainees and my partner were busy mirroring his journey and I was able to slip back into the role of guide without much light shining on me. The young macho teenager who was sent to us by his parents for an attitude adjustment was not so lucky.

The simple act of walking back to camp was as difficult for him as it was for me. We ended up spending a lot of time together partly because I understood how he felt; we had betrayed our macho self-images. It took some processing before we realized that it took a good deal of courage for us with our "I can do it by myself/ don't need anyone's help" attitude to allow ourselves to be supported by those in base camp.

As a guide, I learned a great deal from the experience of returning early. I can now honestly relate to the tumble of emotions felt by questers who return to base camp before their time alone is "complete." Before this experience, whenever a quest participant returned, for whatever reason, I had the inner pangs that somehow I had failed. That it was my responsibility to prepare this questers well enough that they could handle being alone for the duration of the solo time. These feelings were all very deep and were never expressed for I considered myself a professional and I was there to simply mirror their journey, wherever it led them. I was not there to judge their early return as a failure, but simply as a door to better understand their own inner workings.

Since I too have returned early, I can be more patient, more relaxed and am able to really listen to the quester's story without having to feel responsible for their journey or secretly believing that they had somehow failed. The process of returning and asking for help or love is very difficult for so many of us. Some may create dire emergencies to justify an early return. Some may want to make returning look easy. It's not! The lessons learned may be far from the ones we set out to learn but no less important,

Remember base camp personnel: for those who choose to return early, a gentle arm around the shoulder and a cup of tea may be worth a thousand words.

# *Enacted Ritual*

*Ancient &  
Modern*

*Dramaturgically  
Full*

---

*Presence of the  
Elder*

---

*Community  
Celebrations*

Rituals belong to us,  
and we to them,  
as surely as do  
our language and culture.  
The human choice  
is not  
whether to ritualize  
but when,  
how,  
where,  
and why.

-- Tom F. Driver

# Confessions of a Ritualist

by Stan Crow

I have been actively leading rites of passage since 1983 when I joined ICA's youth leadership team. For several years, I struggled with what to call myself, and have finally created what I think is a workable response when people ask me, "What do you do?" -- "I am a Ritualist." I am not ordained by any group or religion, and yet I lead and train others to perform sacred rites -- rites which signify life passages. I have a strong belief in the power and importance of marking the significant points of the journey for individuals and groups. These markings are sacred because they bring meaning and focus to events which might otherwise slip by us unnoticed.

Rites or rituals can be used for many other reasons as well: healing, bonding, honoring traditions of community or religion, petition to a higher power for intercession, personal enlightenment, etc.

My focus is, obviously, times of life transitions. My theatre is community, either an existing one or one created for a special occasion.

## The Process of Ritual Creation

As a ritualist I have learned that there are many ways to create ritual. But there are always a number of questions to be asked before you begin.

- What are our rational and experiential objectives for this event -- in other words, what do we want to happen and what experience do we want the participants to have (especially the ones for whom the ritual is being performed)?
- Who needs to be present?
- How will we care for their spirits?
- Where does it need to take place?
- Will there be an altar? What are the metaphors and symbols we will use? Therefore, what should be on the altar?
- Who shall lead this ritual?
- How will the principal participants

make known their intent? Should they come with a prepared statement? Should they respond impromptu or simply answer "I do."?

- How will we begin and end?
- What mood should we strive for and how will we achieve it? with music? poetry? stories?
- What setting would best facilitate the intent? lights? size of room? comfort?

These questions act, for me, as a

guide to the creation of rituals. Inspiration for the actual ingredients of the ritual must still be sought. In the next few paragraphs, I'll share some about their inspiration.

## Birth

Turning to books by those who have more experience works well.

For the *Home Birth* of her third child, one of our daughters wanted to do some special rituals. I had just completed reviewing Robin Heerens Lysne's *Dancing up the Moon* (ICA Journeys '95.2) and gave her my copy to stimulate ideas. She chose a ritual from the book for their family to do in preparation for the delivery, and then created her own ceremony of welcome for this new person by members of the family, the midwives, doulas and friends as we came by the house within hours of the birth.

*Perhaps the most important tools you have for ritual creation are your own understanding of what is needed, and a sense of what will make that happen.*

## Divorce

Simple formulas can inspire ritual invention.

Last year, the marriage of a couple we had come to know and love ended. They didn't want the end to come as just a divorce pronouncement from a judge, so we created a ritual of closure, to allow them both to move on.

In a class with Angeles Arrien, I learned a four part formula for a ritual of closure.

The four elements were 1. an expression of gratitude, 2. a statement of what had been learned, 3. acknowledgment of what was being closed and 4. a statement of future intent.

So it was that a few friends gathered to bear witness to the ceremony (much as had happened at their marriage). During the course of the ceremony, both spoke of their gratitude for the ten years they had spent together, took several symbolic actions in recognition of their decision to live apart, and released each other from the vows they took at their marriage.

### Child Naming or Dedication

Most religions baptize or dedicate children to God as dictated by their tradition. This year, I had the privilege of leading a special naming ceremony for a family in our church. One child was one year old the other three. We met at their home for dinner and to plan the event. When we asked the question "How shall the participants be involved, it became clear that the three-year-old could participate in several ways. She wound up passing out flowers to everyone, repeated a Sunday school verse she knew, and, with her father's help, lit a candle,

### Initiation,

Rituals are not always for large groups. Some of the most meaningful are for 2 or 3 people. Initiation is traditionally understood to be a time of training, followed by testing. One of our daughters recently secured a job as a labor and delivery nurse which will involve a two months on-the-job training. On the day before she began her training, my wife and I sat down with her over lunch and did a quiet ritual in which she had a chance to reflect on this initiation she was about to enter. It offered us a chance to affirm her and to let her know of our love and support for her on this journey.

### Death

I do not like to lose friends, family members, and colleagues to death. No matter how rational I can be about it, there is still both the pain of the loss and the reminder of my own mortality. Last summer and fall, our community lost a dear friend and colleague. Throughout her illness, many had gathered at her place to spend time with her, celebrating our community and her role in it. We sang songs that she liked, read poetry and talked while two of the women massaged her feet with oil.

One week when we were ready to go to her place, her husband called to say she was in the hospital; and two days later she was dead.

The story of that family's journey with her during her last hours was one of significant ritual. The family came together, all in one room with her. They and she knew she was dying and during those hours as she moved in and out of consciousness, they talked, sang, and played games their family had always played when they were together.

When she died late that evening, they held their own wake -- singing her favorite songs, looking at family photos, creating a montage of photos of her life (copies of which they distributed at the memorial service, which they also planned that night). The next morning, they called the undertaker. Those of us who joined them the next day could sense the power and comfort those rituals had provided.

Resources for ritualists are many and varied, including books, experience, and working with others. Perhaps the most important tools you have for ritual creation are your own understanding of what is needed, and a sense of what will make that happen.



Youth on ICA Coming of Age Journey participate in anointing ritual at water's edge



## CIRCLE

In the Native American traditions circles have always been observed as symbols of individual and corporate power. Circles speak of birth-rebirth, giving-receiving, continuing life process, and frequently form the basis for ritualistic activity (e.g. Medicine Wheel). Circles seek to remind us of our connection to all the sons and daughters of Mother Earth : we are all part of one another's evolution.

As a curriculum event, *Circle* is a sacred space created by the intentional gathering of a group of people. The term "Circle" itself denotes the physical formation of the group and affirms the power of circles in Native American mythology. A "Talking Stick" mediates and is passed between participants so each has an opportunity to share his/her wisdom.

Circle can be a simple reflection on the day, sharing frustrations, anxieties and victories. Circle can be a meditation or a visualization. Circle can be a game or a story. The question of what Circle is lies only in the confines of the human imagination.

It is important to establish a regular time and meeting place for Circle, evening is preferable. Typically Circle's open with a brief context, either a starting point to a discussion, or an outline of how the evening's activity is going to work. Following the activity the person leading the event offers the opportunity for a brief reflection before closing the evening. Circle usually closes with some type of a group ritual -- a group hug, a song, some type of ritual statement.

Circle's are important because they legitimize emotions as an Integral part of the thinking-learning process. Circle's provide a "safe" place in which to risk and reveal. As an "Otherworldly" activity Circles are particularly useful because they allow the group to step easily in and out of a different space and require the minimum of "props" for staging.

# OPENING CIRCLE

The first "Circle" of the camp will be a combination of introductions and games designed to build trust and skills in communication

## **INTRODUCTIONS:**

The following questions are designed to stimulate dialogue as much as anything else; having said that they could also act as useful pointers to determine the motives of individual youth.

Begin by introducing each of the Staff/Mentors. Tell a little about yourselves

### Objective

- What is your name ?
- Where are you from ?
- Favorite movie in the last year?

## **NAME GAME AND GROUP JUGGLING:**

This game is designed to reiterate the information supplied in the first group of questions. A ball is thrown randomly from one participant to another.

The game should move as rapidly as possible with the person throwing the ball shouting the name of the person they wish to catch it immediately before release.

Once the ball has gone around several times, ask who can name the most names. Have several try to do so.

**GROUP JUGGLING:** Then begin again. This time, the ball should be thrown in a repetitive pattern. In turn, each player throws the ball to someone on the opposite side of the circle who has not already received the ball, until all have received the ball. Now, repeat the pattern until everyone is clear who they receive the ball from and to whom they throw. **THE OBJECT IS TEAMWORK — NOT LETTING THE BALL DROP (JUGGLING).** As the game progresses other balls (or other toys) are introduced and played in the same manner. Team work is emphasised and the group is responsible for keeping the ball in the air.

STOP when there have been a few drops and process what is happening and how the group might succeed in the objective. You are looking for suggestions like "make eye contact before throwing", "throw underhanded", "exaggerate the throw so the receiver sees it coming", "chant and throw in rhythm", etc. You're out to teach them how to process.

Use the O.R.I.D.. (What do you see that we're doing?, Do you feel we might improve our performance? Do you see anything we're doing that might be good to change?—suggestions?, What should we try?)

## **ANTICIPATIONS CONVERSATION**

Find a spot to sit and begin a dialogue. This could be in the Tipi with a fire in the pint and could include a whole ceremony of beginnings. Use singing !

Introduce and use a talking stick.

### Objective

- What are you looking forward to doing ?
- Where are you looking forward to going ?

### Reflective :

Do you have any particular fears or anxieties about the trip ?

Have you ever done anything like this before '?

### Interpretive :

What are some of your anticipations for the trip ?

What are some of the things you hope to discover or learn on this trip

### Decisional :

What do you believe will help you get you through the next 20 days?

How do you believe you'll be different after this trip?

# COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The Council of Elders is a reflective session. It assumes that all participants are responsible for the wisdom to be found in council. In addition to the "guest of honor", elders might be the staff of a three week journey or a group of mentors or mentors and other young people who have been through the program in previous years. Three to four "elders" is a good number, don't overwhelm your "guest". It can take place at the end of any cycle of events (after a vigil, at the end of a program, if there are problems which need resolving).

Each youth comes one by one to a circle which is properly decorated with a candle, stones (possibly in a small medicine wheel and other decor pieces from the program). It is important to welcome them and to tell them what your intent is and how it will happen in order to take away some of their anxiety of sitting down with a group of adults.

The Youth is asked to answer questions, and then the "Elders" share their impressions and make helpful suggestions regarding the future journey of the youth.

THE QUESTIONS are meant to occasion reflection on the part of the youth. They might include:

1. What events stand out for you on the trip? (Most memorable events?)
2. When were you maddest? Happiest?
3. Were there any times you thought about quitting?
4. When did you experience homesickness?
5. What were your hardest times? (Biggest challenges?)
6. What were your VICTORIES? (When did you win?)
7. How would you talk about your relationships with the other Youth? With the staff?
8. How are you different now (than before trip)?
9. What new decisions do you expect to make as a result of the trip?

A council held at the completion of a quest might focus on the learnings of the time alone. If the focus is to write a story or complete any written assignment, this is the time to let the guest of honor share the product and then to reflect on it with questions

-- (Sarah, you've talked a lot about what you're going to do with your life, but I heard nothing about who will be taking the journey with you. Have you thought about.....?)

THE RESPONSES are also meant to occasion reflection on the youth's part (insights on how dealing with a situation another way might work better). They are also meant to affirm the youth. (If you err on one pole, make sure it is on the latter!) Frequently, a suggestion can be contextualized with a compliment

("I've been watching the way you have been so caring of your team members whenever they need help or were hurt, and it's been a real gift to have you around to do all those nice things. I've also noticed, however, that you continually put the other youth down or make fun of them when they make a mistake. I wonder if you ever thought about how..... etc.")

The council is usually completed with the youth being allowed to make any additional comments or ask questions.. Then, the youth is sent out by the leader ... If appropriate, hugs or ritual handshakes are given.

## HINTS.

Be serious, but not morbid.  
Share funny stories or remembrances.  
Smile (at least from time to time)  
Be affirming!

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## Creating the Death Mask

This event is based on an exercise that uses the death mask as a means to explore different facets of one's personality. By creating a mask that expresses those elusive qualities of one's inner, protected self and then wearing that mask and acting out those qualities, one begins to understand a little better that dimension of themselves.

The artform that we will be creating will be used to dramatize the passing from one stage of life into another. We will be building a plaster likeness of each of the youth's face and having them paint, adorn and generally modifying them to capture the "new youth" that they see themselves becoming. Part of the process that we will be incorporating into the exercise is the burying of the negative.

Each individual casting requires about one hour's time from start to finish. The materials for doing the initial face casts are:

1. medical plaster gauze cut into 6-8 inch strips
2. Zig-Zag brand cigarette papers
3. a bowl of water
4. vaseline petroleum jelly
5. a towel
6. short pieces of wire coat hanger bent into circles the size of a 50 cent piece.

The face casting can be done with the person lying on the floor or on a table. Have each youth pull their hair back and apply vaseline to all of the face, from the hairline to the adam's apple and from ear to ear. When applying the casting gauze you want to cover as much of the face as possible. The cigarette papers are to be placed over the eyes and lips so that they form an invisible seal with as few wrinkles as possible. Start the gauze around the nose and eyes working the strips diagonally and horizontally and as quickly as possible without creating wrinkles or bubbles. Work the cast up to about 8-10 layers, leaving breathing holes for the nose. The plaster dries almost as fast as you can put on so you may need to smooth the face cast with water as you go. Once you have a good plaster shell that goes from ear to ear and throat to hairline let it sit for 10-15 minutes and then carefully remove. Be gentle with the casting negative so that it doesn't get crushed or bent.

When pouring the plaster mold, set the negative in a box with crumpled newspaper to support it horizontally and apply a good coating of petroleum jelly on the inside of the negative cast and fill it full of plaster. When the plaster becomes firm enough that it will hold the wire hoop, place it so that the wire is half-way submerged in the plaster and angled toward the top of the of the negative (the top of the head). This will become a hanger once the plaster has dried. Let the mold cure for at least 8-10 hours before removing the gauze casting.

At this point, once the positive has been freed, it is ready to paint, sculpt, adorn or whatever to bring forth the new youth that is becoming! Some suggestions:

1. Using paint, marker, sparkles, etc. express some of your gifts or strengths or simply paint geometric patterns on your mask.
2. Collect feathers, leaves stones and other articles of nature that you find meaningful and attach them to your mask.
3. Take your pocket knife and carefully sculpt some of the details of your face onto your mask or add new features.
4. This is a chance to be wild and unfettered, let your imagination run amok and permit yourself to be anything you want, a Kabuki dancer, a wise sage, a butterfly or a beam of light.

## VISION QUEST : SEARCHING FOR A NAME

In the tribal culture of the Native Americans there came a time when each boy and girl child would be compelled to leave the security of the settlement in search of a Vision, in search of a Name.

Preparation for the adult Vision Quest began at an early age. Males were taught the skills of hunting and trapping, girls the mysteries of the natural world. Both learned of the importance of "Medicine", and the need to listen to Mother Earth and all her people.

The following tells the story of a young Navajo warrior who, at the age of 12, left his family and tribe in search of his adult identity ...

"My people are the Navajo. They cared for and honored the land before your people ever existed, My name is Tukwana Putwatka, meaning 'He Who Walks Among The Stars'. You may know my name, but that was not always my name".

"When I was born I was Baby Brother. My father did not call me anything for I was not yet a human being until I walked on my own. Then I was a child, as a child I was Walking Brother. As a child I walked with my many brothers : chipmunks, rabbits, bluebirds. I walked with my father in the trees and we faced the wolverine".

"With my father I learned many rituals. I learned where Brother Fish hides, I learned the passing of the snows, I learned where fruit is found. Then my father said 'Walking Brother, you need a name, you need a medicine, a symbol, you need to become a man now' ... "

"I had seen 12 winters. So my father gave me of his medicine which he wore over his heart from around his neck, where I wear mine. This can only be shared with my sons, I can not share it with you. And I took my knife and small pouch and I went into the woods. There I met Bear and I learned to get away: there I met Eagle and I learned to listen: there I found shelter at the feet of Brother Pine And Sister Oak. There I learned inspiration from Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon. My brother Yarrow cured me when I was sick. My sister Balsam Root gave me food and I learned to speak to Brother Trout so that he might come to my fire that I may eat. And in all this there was great joy and great learning. But I had not yet found my name or my medicine, so my vigil was not yet over".

"Time passed... the Perisimmons ceased their blossoming and bore green fruit and the fruit turned large and red and still I was alone. The fruit fell and the Raccoons and I shared them, one to each side of the tree. I knew my family, but not my Name".

"Then, one night as I lay in the roots at the feet and between the toes of brother Pine, I felt the first flakes that told me winter was coming. I saw among the stars my Name ! I saw my life, my father, my mother, my brothers and my sisters and I knew I was to walk with them. That night Father Sky sent down a lightening bolt and dropped a staff next to my bed. When I picked it up in the morning I found under it my medicine, which I carefully put in my pouch. This I must always wear and share with my sons. It is special to me and reminds me who I am. It reminds me of the earth and it reminds me of my heritage. It holds me true to that which is my best and which I must be".

"My Vigil being done, I returned. The time is unimportant, the Vigil was complete. I returned to my father and he saw me coming and he said 'Your name is He Who Walks Among The Stars' and I said, 'Yes, Father'..."

• • • • •  
Tukwana Putwatka went on a journey. He sought his power totems or guardian spirits and learned to live in harmony with the family of Mother Earth. Tukwana performed a ritual of intentional separation and homecoming : a rite of passage now largely inaccessible to youth entering puberty.

In contemporary society, guided Imagery can provide us with a rare opportunity to re-image the Vision Quest and interpret it in terms of our personal experience. If carried out effectively, participants can begin to genuinely experience the Calling, the searching, the uncertainty of entrance into the unknown .... and ultimately the joyous homecoming ... The receiving of the new man or woman as a unique individual in their own right.

## GUIDED IMAGERY ACTIVITY

This activity is like seeing pictures in your head. It's a bit like both dreaming and imagining all at the same time...

"Close your eyes and let your mind wander for a while... Now Imagine that you are living many, many years ago, long before the white man came to this land ... and it is approaching time for you to leave on your Vision Quest, in search of your Name".

"Do you see where you are living ? Is it on the rolling plains? Is it by a cool glacial lake ? Is it in a shady wooded clearing, or high on a windswept desert mesa ? What does your lodge look like ... ? Where is your sleeping place in the lodge ?"

"Now imagine a dream and in the dream you become aware that it is time for you to leave the security of your lodge and make a solo journey away from your home to find your medicine. Imagine leaving and walking for a long, long time ... away from your home into an unknown land. What do you see ... ? Can you hear new sounds or are you aware of unfamiliar smells?

"...After walking for a long, long time you become aware that you are ready to begin your Vision Quest. To do this you must find a safe and protected space. You look around... you search for a safe and sheltered area... "

"You get settled in this safe place, you wait quietly and watch intently. Do you see anything yet, is there a rustling in the trees, a noise from the sky ? ... You begin to drift in and out of a light sleep, soon this sleep pulls you deeper and you begin dreaming, imagining... "

"As you enter the Dreamtime you seek a vision of your power totem or guardian spirit, the one who will bring you your new name. Again the landscape is unfamiliar, your movements are purposeful. As you look around you, an image begins to form, slowly, slowly... What is it that you see? Is it an animal, a person, or a thing... ? The Image is becoming clearer, you can begin to pick out details. You start to recognize what it is... and you listen as it speaks to your new name. It gives you your medicine And a special gift. The medicine you place in a pouch around your neck, the gift is a source of wonder".

"You chose to linger with your totem, you are able to communicate In a strange free-flowing dialogue, again you speak your name, and the family of Mother Earth hears It ... At last the time comes when you must say goodbye to your guardian spirit, for it is time to return home and share your story with the Elders..."

"Clutching your medicine and your gift tightly, you say goodbye to the messenger. You turn your back on the horizon and begin to walk away from the Dreamtime landscape ... mysteriously entering the familiar solitude of your shelter".

"You clean-up your camp area, and say goodbye before beginning the long Journey back to your tribal homeland. As you walk you think about your experience and repeat your new name ... Now you are approaching your village and your lodge. Your friends and relatives cluster round you. How do you feel ? What do you tell them ? ... Suddenly you are very tired, you tell them you must lay down and rest. You go to your sleeping area and put down your head on your arms... "

"Slowly you become aware of a different set of smells, a different set of noises. You can feel a slight breeze on your face, you are back at the circle from which your journey began. Slowly you open your eyes and breath deeply the air around you. You are awake and you are here ... looking at the others in the circle as they too come back to join you ...

## Another Naming Process

This is another way to come at the search for a name.

In a group setting, each individual is interviewed by the group. The group under the leadership of a facilitator, asks such questions as:

- "Tell us how you think your best friend would talk about you."
- "Tell us how your mother would talk about you.", your teachers."
- "Tell us how you would talk about yourself." "What are your strengths?"
- "What is unusual about you? (in a positive way)?"
- "What things have you done you're proud of?"
- "Which of you qualities do you think is most important?"
- "Which of you qualities do you think is most attractive to others?"

The group listens to the answers and then puts together names which express the ideas they have heard. "How about *Water Mover*,? *Deep waters*?", "How about *Wave Rider*?, *Walks on Water*?", "How about *Rider of the Deeps*?, *Sent from the Waters*? "

The person seeking the name listens to the suggestions and either says yes to one of them or crafts a name based upon some of the ideas and announces:

"I am *Waters Filled with Life*!"

The group responds "*Welcome, Waters Filled with Life!*"

The group then moves on to the next participant.



# CEREMONY OF THE PRAYER STICKS

A personal ritual for beginning a Vision Quest

Prayer Sticks: Choose two (2) sticks from 10 - 18 inches in length and no more than 1 inch in width. Choose feathers that have meaning to you, any number. Create your prayer sticks with feathers and the four colors of ribbon: red, yellow, black and white. You may use leather straps for wrapping if you wish.

Spirit of Place Bundle: Your bundle is to be made of red cloth about the size of a bandana. It should be a natural fiber. In the bundle should be the following contents a red candle, incense (sweetgrass, sage or cedar) flowers, tobacco and cornmeal.

You will make two sticks: the Life Stick and the Death Stick.

Life Stick: On a piece of paper write five things you want to accomplish in the next year. What do you want to do in the world? Be specific with your answers.  
Wrap the paper around your Life Stick and secure it.

Death Stick: On another piece of paper make a list of things you want to have dead and buried, your addictions. What problems do you carry and want to remove from your life? DO NOT PUT ANYTHING ON THE LIST THAT YOU CANNOT LET PASS AWAY!! Secure it to the stick.

## The Ritual of the Death

Go into nature and choose an energy place for your ritual -- use your intuition or seek guidance to find a spot that is near the base of a hill, bluff or mountain, as the second part of this ritual requires that you go to a higher spot. Place your death stick in the earth. Make a circle around the stick beginning in the East with tobacco and then corn meal. Leave an opening in the East so that you may enter. Take your bundle with you and enter the East door, closing the circle behind you with tobacco and corn meal.

Open the Spirit of Place Bundle, light the candle and incense, place the flowers and make a prayer to Spirit as follows:

"Great Spirit, Mother Earth, Earth, Powers of the four directions  
Winged ones and Four-leggeds  
My Medicine and Allies and Ancesters and All  
those who love me, hear me now."

Speak your Death Stick Giveaway. Be "light and free".  
Close with the prayer: "Please help and give strength on my way."  
Burn the Death Stick and bury it. Thank the spirits for being with you.  
Leave with joy and happiness. Leave by the East.

## The Ritual of the Life Stick

Go to the top of the highest hill or mountain near where you did your Death Stick ritual and repeat the ritual except leave the Life Stick as a giveaway. DO NOT BURN IT. Leave the circle joyfully.

During both rituals NOTICE EVERYTHING that happens around you -- direction of the wind, wildlife, birds flying over, cloud movement, sounds, smells. Record it all in your journal.

When you speak the prayers and giveaways, speak verbally. The spirits respond to the voice, so don't be timid. Remember, the world is made of sound.



# Coming of Age Journey 1997

## The Earth, The Air, The Fire, The Water

The earth, the air, the fire, the water return,  
return, return, return,  
(Repeat three times),  
Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya, hey ya, ho ya, ho ya,  
ho ya, ho ya  
(Repeat three times).

## Listen to My Heart Song

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song,  
Listen, listen, listen to my heart song,  
I will never forget you,  
I will never forsake you,  
I will never forget you,  
I will never forsake you.

## We are a Circle

(Chant)

We are a Circle, within a circle  
With no beginning and never ending

## THE RIVER SHE IS FLOWING

The river she is flowing,  
Flowing and growing,  
The river she is flowing  
Down to the sea.

Mother, carry me  
A child I will always be;  
Mother, carry me  
Down to the sea.

Repeat several times

## Russian Hymn For the Earth

(Round)

If all the people  
Lived their lives  
As if it were a song Singing out the light  
Providing music  
For the stars  
To be dancing circles In the night

## We all come from the Mother

We all come from the Mother  
And to her we shall return,  
Like a drop of rain  
Flowing to the ocean....

## CIRCLE AROUND

(Round)

We circle around, we circle around  
The boundaries of the earth  
(Repeat)

Wearing our long wing feathers  
As we fly  
(Repeat)

We circle around, we circle around  
The boundaries of the Sky.  
(Repeat)

## **Fly Like an Eagle**

Fly like an eagle, flying so high,  
Circling the Universe, on wings of pure light.

Ho witchy tai tai,  
Witchy tai hai-o.  
(repeat)

We all fly like eagles, flying so high,  
Circling the Universe, on wings of pure light.

## **We Are The New People**

We are the old people  
We are the New People  
We are the same people  
Deeper than before

## **The Earth is Our Mother**

The Earth is our Mother, we must take care of her,  
(Repeat)

Hey yunga ho yunga hey yung yung,  
(Repeat)

••

For sacred ground we walk upon with every step we take,  
(Repeat)

Hey yunga ho yunga hey yung yung,  
(Repeat)

••

The Sky is our Father, we must look up to him  
(Repeat)

Hey yunga ho yunga hey yung yung,  
(Repeat)

••

We are the firemakers, we bring our world to light  
We give you fire for your cooking and your sight  
Hey yunga ho yunga hey yung yung,  
(Repeat)

••

The Earth is our Mother, she takes good care of us,  
(Repeat)

Hey yunga ho yunga hey yung yung,  
(Repeat)

## **We all Come from the Mother**

We all come from the Mother  
And to her we shall return  
Like a drop ... of water  
Flowing to the Ocean.

## **RAINBOW TRAIL**

We are the MUSIC MAKERS  
Dreamers of dreams  
We are the earth builders and  
Movers, it seems.

refrain:

Walk on the Rainbow Trail  
Our song will never fail  
Dance in the sun  
Dance in the rain  
Where the four winds sail

We are the RAINBOW MAKERS  
Unexpectedly  
Unveiling fearfully  
Life's great Mystery.

refrain

We are the SYMBOL MAKERS  
Shaping history  
Beckoning souls to live in  
Freedom's unity.

refrain

We are the MAP MAKERS  
Forging destiny  
We are the pioneers of  
New Community.

refrain

We are the CARETAKERS  
Of humanness, you see  
Calling each other  
To live responsibly.

refrain

We are the DANCE MAKERS  
Clowns of history  
Beckoning everyone to  
Strange tranquility.

refrain

# Celebrating the Initiates

By Stan Crow

The celebration of new initiates into the community is as important an activity as any other part of a coming-of-age program. Those who were children just a few days, weeks, or months ago are now being presented to the community as having accepted new, more responsible roles. Old eyes (the seeing of old patterns and roles) will see these youth as the same irritating "kids" as those who went away on quest. One of the major tasks of the celebration is to peel those filters from the eyes of parents, former teachers, those with whom they have had less than pleasant encounters, and anyone with whom they may be working.

I separate this phase from the previous one – Enacted Ritual – because the former phase is for the initiate and her/his family, and this phase is for the community. However, the celebrational phase requires as much attention to its dramaturgy. Ritualists must consider how the rituals will draw ALL of those present into the ceremony and allow them to feel good about these new community members.

## Intergenerational Participation

Another intent of the celebration is the rehearsal of the community myth surrounding initiation – this is the doorway from childhood and into that coveted position of youth. Younger members of the community should be present to see the whole thing. This event should be seen as a way of setting the context for the next age group to be prepared for their own coming-of-age.

The whole community should be well represented. Those who don't have children at home are needed to demonstrate the importance the community places on its youth and to participate in the transition of these children to youth. The presence of community elders in the ceremony can add an important element.

Rituals and ceremonies which grant a new status, without a demonstration of the competency of the initiates, may be experienced as hollow. Traditionally, initiates were presented to the community as NEW BEINGS, not former ones grown-up. Welcome to the community as full players may be set contextually in the ceremony, however, I believe a demonstration by the new youth of some of their skills to be far more convincing.

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Encourage the youth to take full responsibility for a portion of the program. Speaking, telling the stories of their coming-of-age journey (remembering to retain a bit of mystery for the children who will follow, singing and other music, words of thanks to those who have assisted in their initiation are examples of a few things they might do.

## Bestows Responsible Mantle

The tribal community might have honored its new youth with a permanent mark such as body scars, circumcision, an ornament which pierces the skin, a tattoo, or with ceremonial clothing such as a robe or a mantle. These scars or mantles were a constant reminder that this person was a new being.

Our communities might find it difficult to scar one of its youth. This is, however, the opportunity to present some symbol of the community's recognition such as a pin, a necklace, earrings, or a sweatshirt. Another option is to choose an item, which all adults of the community have like a name badge, a robe or other garb, or something like a copy of their holy book that has the initiates' name inscribed.

The context for these symbols requires attention, for they are only meaningful when they are tied to that which they are symbols of. Leaders will want to endow these ornaments with an understanding of the decisions youth have made and the promises they are making to the community and the community to them.

## Honors Personal & Group Victories

This ritual is about honoring both the individual participant and the group. We have used quilts, made of patches which each youth has created. This quilt becomes a wall hanging on which each youth's name inscribed along with the year of the initiation.

The exchange of symbolic gifts between the mentor and the youth can be simple items. We have used walking sticks, which the mentors have decorated. Rocks, a shield, or a "T-shirt" can be painted with the symbols created by the youth (which is also on their quilt) can be used as gifts to mentors. We also suggest that each youth and mentor exchange letters which include words of thanks and challenge.

## Joyous & Fun

This is a joyous time for the community and the youth. We suggest a banquet or desert after the formal ceremony (which might take place as a worship service) Toasts to the initiates, and telling stories about humorous happenings during the program will add humor to the event.

In fact, the use of fun and humor during the entire program will make the program attractive.

# *Empowering Story*

*Values  
Based*

*Community  
Connected*

*Future  
Directed*

*Reinforcing  
Symbols*



*The Family and  
Coming of Age*

# The Role of Parents in Initiation

by Stan Crow, Director, ICA Rite of Passage Programs



**I**n traditional societies, the community provided the initiations. These initiations marked the start of new lives when the child was accepted into the adult society as a unique individual --becoming hunters, taking a spouse, entering intense training to become a religious teacher, etc.

Initiation is about individuation! It is about the death of one life style and a transition into a new one.

It is the intent of initiation rites to shake up the child's comfortable situation, to:

- enlarge h/is/er world beyond that of the parents;
- create ties to the clan or extended family;
- provide a context for continuity with the history of the larger community; and to
- call the young person to take a new relationship to h/is/er life.

Parents play a special role in allowing their offspring to become individuated. Parents in traditional societies had a few years to give their children basic survival skills and self confidence and then it was over! Skills were imparted by involving their children in the day to day struggles, and in informal apprenticeships to the father or mother — observing and practicing their parents' skills.

Dr. Angeles Arrien, trans-cultural anthropologist, tells the story of her own rite of passage as the first-born child of a Basque family in the Pyrenees. At age 16, after 4 years of study in the traditions of her culture and wilderness survival skills, she set off, alone, on her one year "walk" in an uninhabited area of the mountains. Her parents, according to tradition, walked the first day with her and then said goodbye. After 10 months, they began to wait everyday for her return. Five months later they were still watching, hoping against hope, when she finally returned.

Arnold van Gennep, who coined the phrase "rite of passage", described the three phases of a rite of initiation as:

**Severance** — being taken from the comfort of family and childhood,

**Threshold** — encountering new contexts and challenges which enable one to make the crossing or transition, and

**Incorporation** — returning from the journey, challenged to live as a new being in old familiar surroundings.

As in the story of Dr. Arrien, parents have a role to play in the first and last acts of this drama, but not during the core of the experience.

**Walking the first way ...** as we grow and mature, there is an opportunity for a continual process of *little severances* beginning with the severing of the umbilical cord. The role of the parent is to prepare the child for the final severance when they are no longer available. Parents have the chance to lay the ground work for the expansion of children's horizons, encouraging them to learn new skills and explore what it means to be an individual, not "so and so's son or daughter". In our society, these preparations can take the form of the first "sleep-over" at another child's house; a several-day trip during which the parents leave the child with a relative or neighbor; times when the child is provided increased options for making decisions and required to live with the consequences.

In traditional societies, parents lost their role as transmitter of community wisdom *at puberty*. North American society has an ambivalence regarding when severance should take place. We have not really decided how one enters nor leaves the stage we call "youth" nor what is required of the young person who crosses through the portals. Some parents choose to create the opportunity, others wait for life to decide. In either case, severance happens. When parents choose, there is a greater possibility for growth. When youth decide, they may find options which are not the healthiest either for the youth or for society — gangs, alcohol, and sex offer tempting opportunities to demonstrate an ability to "do" adult things.

When the time for severance came in traditional societies, parents understood their role — to let go of their child in the accepted



ritual patterns. The men, dressed in costumes, came for the son, or the women came for the daughter and the mother pleaded, "Don't take h/er/im from me, s/he's not old enough!" The other adults responded, "Yes, s/he is!" the mother pleaded and cried until they had taken her daughter/son to the initiation ground. The parents were playing ancient roles, but, they were also afraid, for many boys and girls died during the initiation rites, especially when infection from circumcision, feats of skill such as killing a lion, or surviving for a year in the wilderness were involved.

Today, as frightening as it may be, parents *must let go* or they will discover they have lost their hold on their youth anyway.

**Threshold** ... literally should be a crossing over.

Ideally, a threshold involves making choices, accepting responsibility and gaining a new sense of one's own role in society. When I was in the Marshall Islands, I learned that the culture allowed youth, at around the time of puberty, to chose new "parents" to live with. Frequently, they even took on the surname of the "new family". This was not a rebellion, but a possibility for growth. Their birth parents blessed the arrangements and there was no sense of being abandoned. Rather, there was an expansion of the responsibilities required of the youth by a widened circle of society. From that point on, whenever either the birth parents or the new parents required help, the youth was expected to respond.

Threshold offers youth the opportunity to break out of the ordinary, to be honored by the community, to prove oneself worthy of the trust and respect of the community, and permission to wipe clean the slate and create a new persona.

One of the most helpful aspects of the initiation, I find, is the adult mentor or guide. Grandparents, uncles, and aunts tend to live at an inconvenient distance to fulfill this role, and neighbors who have time to talk and share are few. (We also find ourselves afraid of who might live next door.) A mentor is an adult who is willing to listen, to share different points of view, to encourage an examination of the young person's attitudes and behaviors rather than judging them -- providing a perspective for becoming more centered and balanced. This presence of another adult in a young person's life is all too missing in our day. Churches, men's and women's circles, ethnic organizations and others must take up the challenge of providing mentors for their members' young people.

Threshold is finally about being transported into a different space and relationship. It is there that the youth encounters life as a wonderful mystery. The space, the ritual drama, the contexts and the challenges need to be unfamiliar (not family). In traditional cultures, parents were not a part of the group which performed the initiation. They were frequently present at closing rituals, but they did not perform them. We will share more about Threshold in another issue.

### Incorporation

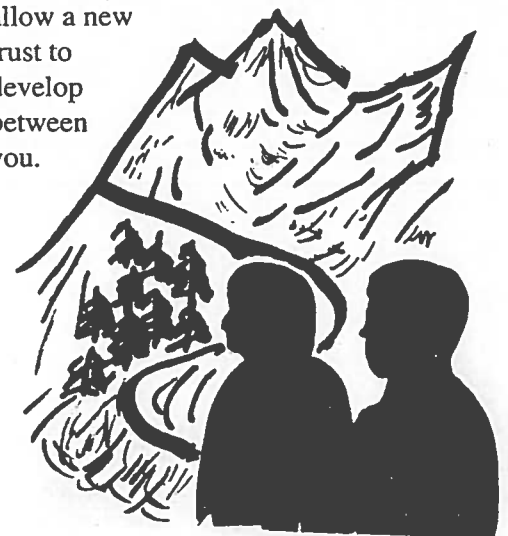
Indigenous societies mark their youth during initiation to signify that this is a different human being than the one who went away. An initiate today must figure out how to let h/er/is family know that they

are encountering a different person.

Daniel J Levinson, in *The Seasons of a Man's Life* states,

"The developmental task is not to end the relationship [*to the parents*] altogether. Rather, [*the youth*] has to reject certain aspects (for instance, those in which he is the submissive or defiant child relating to all-controlling parents), to sustain other aspects and to build in new qualities such as mutual respect between distinctive individuals who have separate as well as shared interests. Neither the young adult nor the parents find this an easy task."

As a parent, your role is to **wait at the journey's end**, not knowing what has or will happen. What will be different, and what will be the same? Much will appear the same. Your task is now harder than before, for you must look for the opportunities to create new relationships with this human being, who, no matter how hard you work at it, you will still see as *your child*, but who is *no longer*. Here you must be the creator of the story about who has returned — you must rehearse the story and behave as if you believe it (even at times when it is pretty unbelievable). You must work to remind yourselves that this youth requires different responses than you do. You and your new youth must create the opportunities to allow a new trust to develop between you.



# Persephone Rides Off on a Dark Horse: What Should Demeter Do Now?

by Corla B. Varney

When my daughter Jessica was twelve years old, I had this dream:

*I am at a retreat center with Jessica and a group of her girlfriends. early one morning she asks me, "Can I go horseback riding?" I give her the okay but ask her to wait, saying, "Give me a few minutes to get up and get dressed." I decide to have my morning cup of coffee first before meeting her at the stables. I arrive to discover she has already ridden off--alone on a dark horse. I can't go after her, because I don't know which direction she is headed. I am stricken with grief -- I can't go where she has gone -- I can only wait for her to return.*

I awoke heavy hearted. "So this is how Demeter felt," I thought, "when Persephone left for the underworld!" I reminded myself, "she is not lost, she will return someday, even if she will not be my same little girl anymore."

This dream clearly brought to consciousness my fear of Jessica's emerging adolescence. Whether or not I was ready, her childhood and my role as doting mother were quickly being left in the dust as she rode off on the dark horse of adolescence. I also recognized that her coming-of-age would require a balanced effort between her need to become her own person and my responsibility to protect her. But I didn't know how I could best support her growth and development. What was my new role?

Our society tries to deny adolescents their time to prove themselves and find their potential -- their rightful ride on the dark horse. We want to tame *them* and fear they are too spirited. We're afraid they'll fall off and get hurt, or we want them to ride *our* way. We try to deny their dark time, but our failure mocks us in the form of vandalism, drug abuse and gangs. Maybe it's inevitable, this attraction of the dark, and we grown-ups are in denial about the necessity of passage through its murky depths to reach the prize: adulthood. Not formally initiated ourselves, perhaps we fear we haven't successfully navigated this watery tomb.

I didn't want to hold Jessica back, but I couldn't help worrying about her. Would she have a firm grasp on the reins, determining which direction was best for her interests? What would be the best way to strengthen her self-confidence and prepare her for occasional falls and mishaps she would surely experience?

After talking with Jessica, I contacted the Institute of Cultural Affairs in Bothell, Washington and signed her up for their three week *Coming-of-Age Journey*. This program focuses on the transition from child to youth and provides challenges for youth groups—including team building exercises on a Ropes course, backpacking in the Cascades, sweatlodge ceremony and mask making.

I saw this coming of age journey as an opportunity for Jessica leave her "comfort zone"—get dirty, go hungry, be cold and

uncomfortable -- which would force her to see things from a different perspective. She would need to push up against her perceived limits and call forth all of her reserves, and, most importantly, she would be required to use her intuition as well as her thinking capabilities. In this way Jessica would have an opportunity to dig deeply into the far reaches of her psyche and claim jewels she could treasure for the rest of her life.

I planned to reflect on my own coming-of-age experiences while my daughter was gone. Were they similar or different from what she would experience? Had I processed all the hurts and let downs from that period in my life so that I could support Jessica's development without their interferences? Did I understand the current cultural pressure and stress she would be subjected to entering middle school? I also wanted to read or review several books during this time. I had no idea what a powerful journey this would be for myself—let alone for Jessica—for unlike Demeter, I was not going to sit around mournfully waiting for my daughter's return!

I started by reading *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, by Mary Pipher. I suspected that graduating to middle school and becoming thirteen would signal not only big changes for Jessica, but also an all-out assault on her sense of self-worth. Pipher confirmed this concern:

*As children go through school, boys do better and feel better about themselves and girl's self-esteem, opinions of their sex and scores on standardized achievement tests all decline. Girls are more likely than boys to say that they are not smart enough for their dream careers. They emerge from adolescence with a diminished sense of their self worth as individuals.*

## A Mother's Experience

My own experiences coming-of-age in the 1960's mirrored this view. I had been popular and did well in school, but somewhere along the way my confidence was



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pinched back. Anytime I was too much of anything—too exuberant, too eager to learn, too talented—I received a thorough pruning. When I did a remarkable drawing and envisioned myself as an artist, I was quickly told I wouldn't be able to support myself on "art."

When I excelled in water-skiing, I was told I wouldn't want to end up with hefty thighs. "Be a good girl" and "think about what others will think" seemed to be what was most important. Since I did my best to appear happy, not wanting to burden my parents who had financial and health problems, they had no idea how stressful and tumultuous those years were for me. Pipher supports this observation when she warns us that: "Parents who send their daughters the message that they'll be overwhelmed by problems aren't likely to hear what's really happening."

My next endeavor was to read Emily Hancock's *The Girl Within*. Hancock's research indicates that women take a more circular approach to individuation than the more linear trail taken by men. She explains: "Instead of crystallizing an identity during adolescence, women as adults, reach back to girlhood to retrieve an original sense of self. Each woman's identity -- the identity each felt was authentic, real, and true to who and what she was -- had been present, intact, in the earliest part of her life and had in the meantime been obscured."

It wasn't hard for me to see how I had lost a great many pieces of myself in the process of growing up. At the age of nine, I loved to wander off alone in the woods where I drew sustenance from the wildness I encountered there. How long had it taken me as an adult to recognize that I had to return to the wilds periodically, to find clarity and peace of mind? I realized how important it was for me to help Jessica remember what held her passion at the age of nine and ten, before the onslaught of acculturation. She had loved to read and write and absolutely glowed while in the spotlight — at any podium or on any stage. Would she discount or disqualify this later?

As I read more, I wondered whether or not the format of a coming-of-age journey

based on the Hero's Myth was really optimum for girls as well as boys. In *A Bridge to Wholeness: A Feminine Alternative to the Hero Myth*, Jean Benedict Raffa also focuses on the differences between the female and the male journey to individuation. Raffa explained how the heroine's quest is different from the hero's in that it usually does not begin in the outer world. For a male, "the primary task was outer work, and he needed to develop and test his personal skills in the outer realm before he would be able to generate a connection with the inner world." But for a female, "the opposite was true: inner work was the primary task before [one] could acquire a meaningful connection with the outer world." A female can of course do all the things a male does in the outer world, but this will not assure that she achieves wholeness. Unless she begins her inner work first she will be "doomed to frustration."

Raffa's description of her youthful fixation with the black stallion, which she described as "the epitome of powerful masculine energy, combined with dark, feminine, instinctive passion" reminded me of my dream of Jessica on the dark horse. Suddenly I realized what I feared most: Jessica's emerging sexuality. I was worried about what kind of impact her beauty would have at this stage in her life. *Reviving Ophelia* had seemed focused on the problems of ugly-duckling girls, but said nothing about the young beauty, the twelve year old mistaken for seventeen -- coveted and feared at the same time by boys of her own age, while encountering blatant sexual advances by older boys. I also worried about the double-standard still apparent in society that says "nice girls don't, but you know, boys will be boys."

I remembered an incident which happened to me in the first grade, that I had never talked about, and denied blatantly at the time. One day during morning recess, I went out to the far end of the playground with a little boy, and we pulled down our pants to show each other what was between our legs. Innocent enough. At lunch recess my best friend Vicki came rushing up to me with a look of absolute disgust on her face saying, "I can't believe you would do that!" I denied it completely. I will never forget how smug Tommy was, and how no one seemed to think less of him for his part in our little "secret." Of course I would feel the sting of the inequity of this double-standard many times again, but I remember how this first incident had hit me in the gut like a shovel, the pain muddying my sense of my inherent goodness and making me wish I would be buried somewhere. I didn't want to tell my mother about it, and that night I agonized in the bathtub about what an ugly thing I had done.

In Human Development classes, sixth and seventh graders are now being informed about AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the mechanics of the male and female bodies, and how babies are conceived and develop. All this information is worthy and important, but what kind of value judgment is being extended along with it? Although there are discussions about birth control practices, abstaining from sex until one is married still seems to be the overt conclusion for "good girls." At the same time there is an onslaught of messages and images from our consumer culture to look and be sexy. What does a mix of fear of disease, fear of sex, desire to be sexy, and desire to be popular do to an

## Persephone Rides off (Continued)

adolescent's view of herself? Without conscious help from mothers and other older women to honor and celebrate the physical and emotional changes they are going through, how can girls grow comfortably into their womanhood and see female sexuality as truly beautiful?

In *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Rituals of Women's Initiation*, Bruce Lincoln raises an interesting question: "Who is it that initiates young women when they come of age?" Although he is referring to the five traditional societies within his study, his question raises many serious issues about our modern culture. Lincoln argues that if it is men who initiate the women, then the focus is on "indoctrination" and "subjugation," and quite possibly involves an assault. Whereas, if it is women who initiate women, the focus is on "affirmation," "commiseration" and "unity." In many cultures young female initiates experience both oppression from males and support from females, taking on the "totality of the social order." Therefore the rites take on the battle of the sexes present in the broader society.

Since in our culture there are no clear rites of passage for girls (or boys), I fear the result is the same as if there were -- in the end, girls are indoctrinated and subjugated according to the views of the broader society. In our case, society is clearly patriarchal and negates feminine attributes, such as emotion, intuition, and the need for relationship. This all screams at the seriousness of our present situation. We must act. We may not be able to administer appropriate rites of passage for all youth, but with the help of our daughters we can spend conscious time and effort developing ways to counteract, or at least balance out the social order. With a strong dose of affirmation of what it is to be female we can strive for full human potential, for everyone's sake.

## A Daughter's Return

Jessica returned from her journey with "insightful" descriptions of her experience like "backpacking was mass hard" and "the sweat lodge was way cool!" And predictably, she displayed a renewed appreciation for small things, like clean sheets, pizza, Mr Pibb and her younger sister. More importantly though, she returned with a greater sense of herself, of her boundaries and her permeability. She shared intimations of this in her journal. She wrote, "I will not sit on a cloud with wings and white clothes draped around me like an angel, I will run with deer along the winding river to feel the meaning of life." I was also heartened to hear she intends to be nobody's darling. Her future plans include starring as the lead in a femi-

nist movie by age twenty. Then she wants to go to Harvard and study politics so she can fight for the rights of *all* people. Ah yes, a sense of responsibility to her community is emerging as well.

## Finding the Parents Role

I would highly recommend this experience to parents and youth alike -- but it isn't the end-all solution. As parents, Jessica's father and I can't place all the responsibility for her education on the teachers and administrators at her school. We need to play an active role in her initiation as well. Since she isn't returning to a culture that recognizes the change in her and will honor her sacred position as a woman, she will still need our ongoing attention to help resist unconscious cultural influences. The trick of course will be to find a balance, between her need to become her own person and our responsibility to protect her.

Jessica's return brought the realization that initiation is just as much for parents as it is for initiates. Parents need to spend this time in reflection as well, focusing on what they might rather not look at: their own childhood and adolescence, things they prefer not to admit, and unrealized or forgotten dreams. It's a time to do some thorough house cleaning in those dusky, dark corners of the soul. Parents should be as free as possible of any static from past experiences, fully present and ready to receive their returning youth with open arms and open ears. This is the role of parents in initiation.

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- Pipher, Mary *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*; Ballentine Press; New York; 1994
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- Raffa, Jean Benedict *The Bridge to Wholeness: A Feminine Alternative to the Hero Myth*; LuraMedia; San Diego; 1992
- Lincoln, Bruce *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Rituals of Women's Initiation*; Oxford University Press; New York; 1991

Corla Bertrand Varney is the director of *Raven Dawn Rites*, which offers adults empowering eight day wilderness Rites of Passage. She has apprenticed with Sedonia Cahill of the Great Round and with Stephen Foster and Meredith Little at the School of Lost Borders. Corla has a BA in Cross-cultural Approaches to Healing and Spirituality from Western Washington University. For Information from *Raven Dawn Rites*, call (360)428-8089.



The Daughter, participating in a trust game during her Coming-of-Age Journey

# The Quilt

by Kathy Masarie



The Quilt which was made as a coming of age symbol by female friends and mentors

For Kaitlin's thirteenth birthday her female adult friends and relatives contributed quilt squares which were sewn together into a quilt. The quilt was presented to her, at a celebration with all the participants. Each person described what their quilt square meant and made a promise of how they would help her through her adolescence

The idea of this quilt came from Mary Pipher when she came to Portland in February of 1996 and talked about a story from her new book *The Shelter Of Each Other* (page 254).

A friend of mine who is a single parent planned a coming-of-age ceremony for her daughter's thirteenth birthday. In the spring, she sent all her women friends who had known her daughter quilt pieces and asked them to stitch or draw a picture on the piece. The picture was to depict an experience the woman had with the daughter. In the summer all of these women met the mother and daughter for a weekend of camping, biking and feasting.

Saturday night around the fire there was a ceremony. Each woman showed and explained her picture. Then, they gave the girl a gift—a promise of one way she would help the daughter grow up. One woman said she would teach the daughter to garden, another offered to help her write papers and college applications another could teach her French and another could help her learn to sail. The girl sat in the middle of the circle beside the fire. She listened to the stories and the offers. The women gave her hugs and congratulations. The next morning in the sunlight they sewed the quilt together.

After Kaitlin heard this story she told her mother she would like one of those quilts. She made a list of the women she thought she would like to have make her a quilt square. No more was said of this. Six months later as she was nearing 13 the process was started as a surprise. Two six and a half inch muslin squares (one extra in case of mistakes) were sent out ten weeks before the party to about twenty eight women including her second to seventh grade teachers. They were allowed to use anything but puff paint to fill the six inch center. Twenty-five of these women returned the squares using quilt patterns, tie-dye, permanent markers, calligraphied

beads and photo collages xeroxed right onto the material. To make the square complete, some squares were cut out of her baby blanket and sheets. Kaitlin's aunt sewed most of the squares together with 2 inch spacers and her mother sewed the edge and backing.

Eleven of these friends and relatives were able to attend the coming of age ceremony. After the quilt was presented, each person told what their quilt square represented and made a promise to help her in the future. Those that couldn't be present wrote notes to her that were read. Her sewing teacher promised to help with a sewing crisis, her piano teacher promised to take her to recitals, a friend promised to help her understand the value of female friendships, her aunt promised to share creativity and her grandma's promised unconditional love. As these stories were being told each woman made one tie on the quilt. Most of us were teary eyed the whole time. Now Kaitlin has a community of women interested in her growing up, each with ties to her through their commitments in addition to their friendship. Afterward, everyone shared cake and laughter.

Kathy Masarie, MD, is the founder of *Full Esteem Ahead*, an organization dedicated to encouraging and preserving healthy self-esteem in teens, and girls specifically, as they enter and move through adolescence.

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[kmasarie@fulleesteemahead.org](mailto:kmasarie@fulleesteemahead.org)



Dear Parents,

Our 30th Year

We are pleased to welcome your new youth to the Coming of Age Journey 1997!

Enclosed, please find a registration form, a parents confidential questionnaire, waivers, a medical form and receipt for monies paid. Also, please note in the youth packet, an equipment list and some helpful hints from Backpacker magazine on selecting a pack. Some of this gear can be borrowed. Remember that this is primarily a camping/hiking trip, so don't get expensive clothing, as things can get stained and/or torn.

**We begin Sunday Night with the Send out by Parents.** Please plan to arrive with your son or daughter no later than 6 pm (Map enclosed for Northwest participants). If at least one significant adult cannot be present at this event, we urge you to plan a family send out before leaving for the trip. We can send you a "Script" if you cannot be present.

We urge parents to participate in the **Incorporation Weekend** at the conclusion of the program. We recognize that this may be a problem for those who live at a distance from Seattle. If neither parent can attend, we suggest a surrogate (aunt, uncle, grandparent). If this is not possible, a staff member will act as a surrogate.

**ir travel information postcards** are provided to those who live at a distance from Seattle. Air travelers should plan to arrive at Sea-Tac airport. If airline schedules do not permit Sunday-before-4 pm arrival, we can meet planes Saturday evening. We can meet youth at the gate. We will give parents the name of the adult who will meet them closer to the arrival date. Parents arriving for the Incorporation weekend, we will also pick you up if you get us the arrival information.

In traditional rites of passages, the family and community have always played crucial roles. We recommend that your family and community (friends, extended family, spiritual community, etc.) **begin the Journey now:**

1. have conversations about what it means to become a "youth", talk about what new privileges and responsibilities your "new youth" might enjoy after the trip (or acknowledge those which have already been bestowed).
2. plan a "welcome home" *celebration* for the "youth" who returns.
3. do a little "family research" on family members (past or present) who had a "rite of passage" experience (this might include activities which recognized their "coming of age", ancestors who took on adult responsibilities while still a youth, or even "generic" ancestors who immigrated, escaped from poverty, oppression, etc.). Have a conversation about what this might have been like.
4. Purchase a Rite of Passage Story for your youth to read before the trip. Some recommendations are enclosed.

We join you in looking forward to the journey.

Sincerely,

Stanley Crow  
te of Passage Coordinator



# Forging a Family Covenant

*This workshop (actually 3 related exercises) were created when we discovered that the parents needed as much or more help changing images than the youth. Johnny or Sara finished the Coming-of-Age program, came home, and Mom and/or Dad said, "Go, clean your room!" There were no changes in family patterns and no expectations from the parents that anything could change, despite the fact that we had just put an incredible amount of time helping their child see the possibilities for change that were available to them.*

## Life Journey Exercise

1. Each individual(youth and parent(s)) fills out the following form (20 Minutes)  
(The remainder of the exercise should take no more than an hour - most won't get done)

2. Youth and parents get together to compare their lists.

They are to:

Mark the commonalities \*

Mark the differences ✓

Mark ones which will be difficult to resolve Δ

Plot on the timeline at the bottom of the page the commonalities

What responsibilities and privileges will be given when --over the next 6 years, until graduation from high school

For example when youth turns 16 can get driver's license-- tied to " must pay for insurance"

3. Next, begin to work on the differences and add as many compromises as possible in the time allotted

The Mentors or Staff should be contexted to observe & comment when appropriate, especially to raise questions which help point out communication problems.

### Reflective Questions

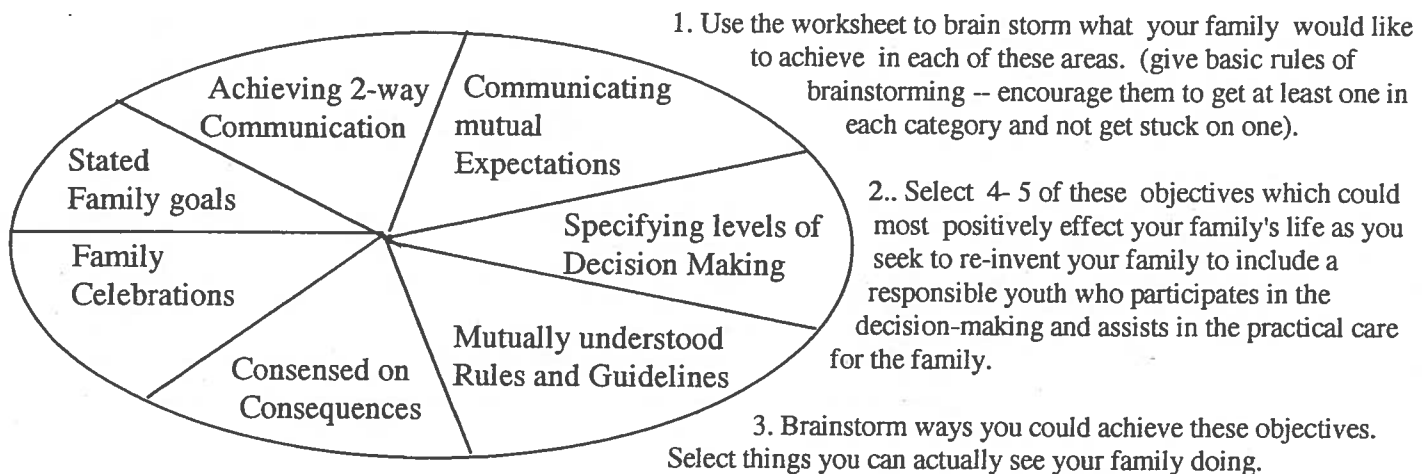
O Share the unusual expectations

R On a scale of 1 to 10 how difficult was the workshop

I Share insights -- what did you learn (use talking stick)

D Where are you going to put it

## Establishing Family Patterns Exercise



4. Create a covenant, using the form provided, that includes your 4-5 objectives and how you will achieve them. For instance, "In order to keep communications open, we will post a communications board in the kitchen so we can let each other know about things which are happening and where we will be."

5. Families read their covenants in unison to the group. The group should acknowledge the work and promise with applause or other affirmation.

6. Do an ORID conversation pushing on the Decisions necessary to carry out these promises they hove made to each other.

# Life Journey Workshop

## New privileges

1.

## New Responsibilities

1.

## Timeline

1994

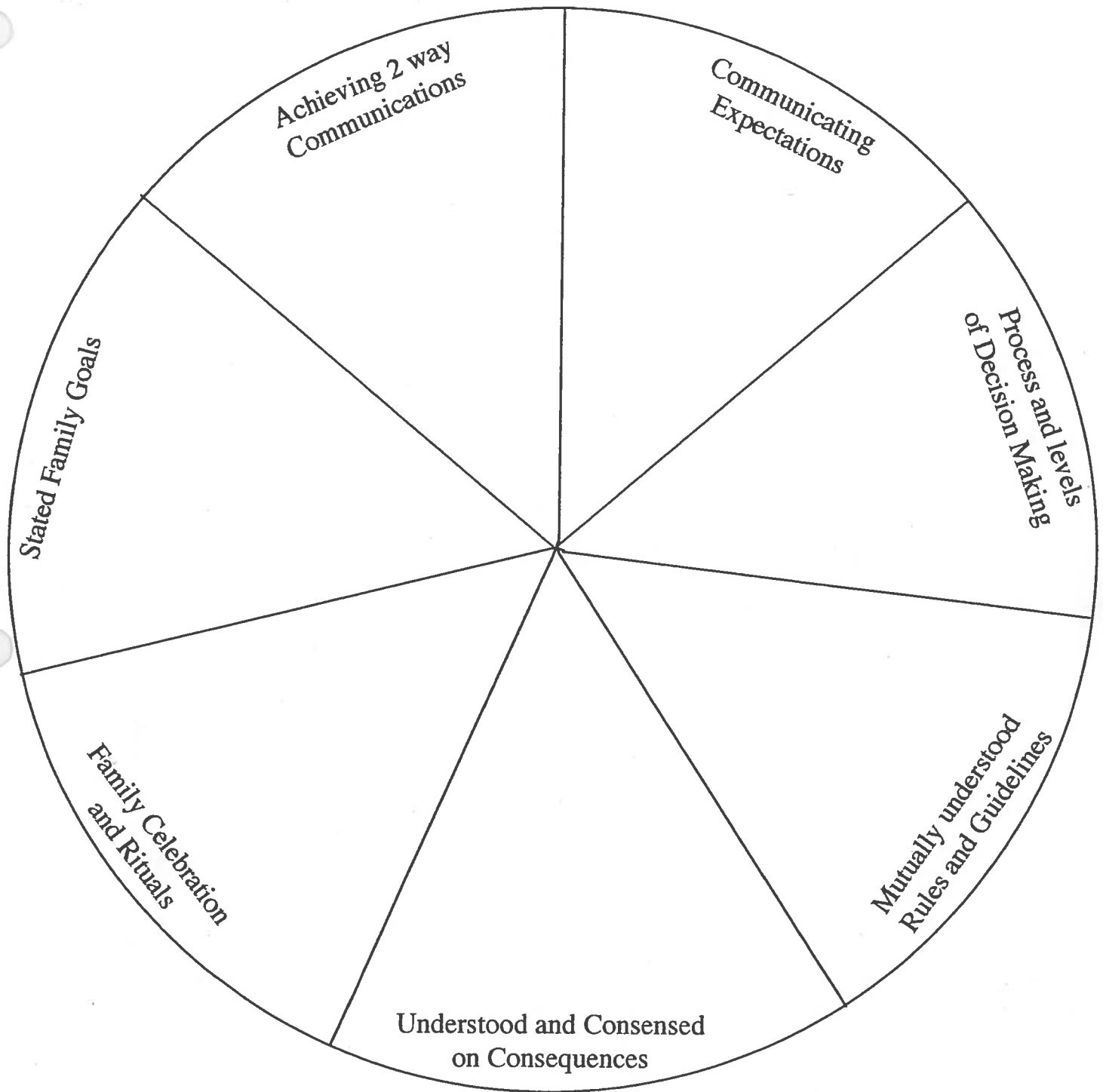
1995

1996/1997

1998/1999



# Forging The Covenant



# The \_\_\_\_\_ Family Covenant

This covenant is made between \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_. This \_\_\_\_th Day of \_\_\_\_\_ 199\_\_

In order to

We Will

Signed

*Appendix A*  
*The Woodinville*  
*Experience*

# The Woodinville Experience

by Stan Crow

In October of 1992, parents at the Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church came to me asking for help in designing a comprehensive coming of age program for the youth group.

The task was a challenge, but fun. We worked to identify how we could include all the elements of a traditional Rite of Initiation in the program.

In January, 1996, we brought in our second group of 15 youth to participate in the program, and are continuing to revise the program and clarify the roles.

During the past few months, several people have asked me to tell the story -- what we designed and how it worked. This is for those who asked and anyone else who'd like to know.

ICA's Rite of Passage Journeys are designed around four stages -- *Mentored Learning, Practical Testing, Enacted Ritual, and Community Celebration*. The structure is based on a cross-cultural understanding of elements of traditional Rites of Initiation.

The program at Woodinville used the same approach, and I shall share the program with you under those categories.

## Mentored Learning

There were three different types of mentors for the program -- each youth had a personal same gender mentor. In addition, those of us in the overall leadership acted as mentors as did the minister.

Choosing personal mentors was important. We encouraged men and women who would be willing to spend time with the youth, could easily form bonds with them, and were capable of sharing their own religious understandings with the youth.

The minister and leadership team created a list of potential mentors and sent a letter to them, explaining the program. The youth were given the list of 40 possible mentors and with their parents, selected first, second, and third choices. Then working out the overlaps, the leadership invited those chosen to be mentors. All youth got one of their three choices.

Mentors were asked to spend at least 4 significant blocks of time -- one to one -- with their youth. At least three sessions were for getting to know each other and dialoguing about values and beliefs. In the mentor training, we offered guidelines and ideas for this dialogue in an attempt to assure two-way communication. The fourth session was a community service project.

There was also a Mentor's retreat (the 15 partici-

pants in this year's class were grouped into 4 age-similar groups -- participants ranged in age from 12 to 16). These weekend retreats included role playing stories of church history and a time for each youth to create her/his own "credo" (This is what I believe).

Mentors also participated in two additional weekend events which I will describe later.

The leadership team met with the youth and parents in initial orientation sessions. They also led a Values Clarification workshop -- an afternoon of role-playing and games meant to push each youth to take positions on difficult situations where there are no clear answers. The team was the hosts for the Ropes Challenge event which was facilitated by a professional facilitator at a certified course.

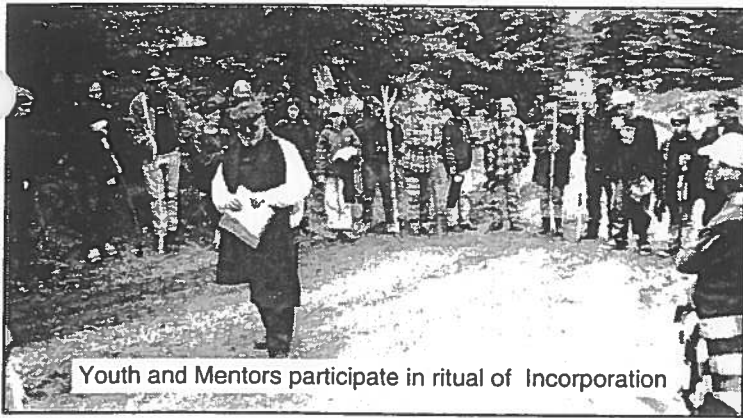
With the minister, we designed two sessions, held with the youth on Sundays over lunch after the morning services. The topics for these two sessions were, "Why belong to a church?" and "What do you believe?" These sessions were designed as interactive sessions with physical activity, food, and a chance to dialogue with the minister.

## Practical Testing

The first testing came in the writing of the "Credos". These statements became the basis for a conversation with the minister. In hour to hour and a half meetings, the youth had a chance to dialogue about their beliefs. In a supportive setting they were encouraged to explore their values.

The Ropes Challenge course, described in this issue of *Journeys* on page

*"This program is your church's plan to help youth explore what it means to move fully out of childhood and into the journey-time called youth. This can be a positive growth time for you to ask important questions about life, meaning, spirituality, and relationships. It is meant to help you think about issues, and to form your own opinion and values." -- from the context to participants.*



Youth and Mentors participate in ritual of Incorporation

14, might be considered as a second test, even though the course provides many other benefits as well. The test is related to one's ability to trust others and to take risks (even though intellectually one knows things are very safe) like jumping off of a 20 foot high pole while wearing a parachute harness connected to a rope and pulley system.

The final testing took place in May during an event we called the Initiation weekend, a Friday evening 'til Sunday evening. We chose the most natural setting available to us, a densely wooded hillside down miles of dirt roads, yet not too far from the church. On Saturday, from dawn until late afternoon, the youth sat a private vision quest in an isolated setting. They were each challenged to create the story of their life – looking back from the year 2056. For some, being alone for an extended period of time may have been harder than writing their story.

When they returned to the central campsite, they sat with a Council of Elders (2 or 3 personal mentors including their own, a member of the leadership team and in the 1996 program, a senior high youth who was in the program in 1993). Here, they told the story of their future life (with permission not to share the very private stuff). They were then affirmed and given challenges by those who heard the story.

## Enacted Ritual

The initiation weekend was filled with ritual. It began with a "Ritual of Severance" in which parents and youth

were symbolically separated and then parents gave their "children" permission to take a journey from childhood to become responsible youth..

They then participated in a Native American style Sweatlodge as a preparation for their vigil the next morning. Early in the morning, they participated in a ritual of commitment to the day-long vigil. After the vigil and the Council of Elders, participants chose a name which reflected the story of their future life in a ritual of accepting a new story about themselves.

The following morning the young men joined the *Men's Society* and the young women the *Women's Society* (not on-going groups) for discussions about what it means to be responsible men and women in today's world. They were received into these societies as equals, each able to share from their own life experiences.

Youth were then sent out to prepare themselves to be received as responsible members of the church community (not as church members, as that is a decision to be made individually, and was not a requirement to participate in the program). During the preparation, they each created symbols of their Coming of Age. Among them was a quilt piece with their own symbol which, when pieced together, became part of a quilt which now hangs at the church beside the quilt from 1993.

During this time of preparation, the personal mentors were putting finishing touches on staffs made of tree limbs and decorated with feathers, beads, and other special items which were presented during the Initiation ceremony.

The ceremony included a time for each youth to share an insight or decision they had made about their life and something about one of the symbols they had created.. They were then received by the community representatives as responsible youth and welcomed as fellow journeyors. Their faces were decorated, a variation from the tradition of scarification.

## Community Celebration

The first part of the Community Celebration happened when parents and the minister arrived at 1 pm on Sunday afternoon. There was a formal presentation of the new Youth of the Church. This was followed by a series of activities between parents, youth and mentors including the creation of a family covenant. At the closing ceremony, the youth washed their parents feet as a symbol of a new relationship.

The final celebration took place at a regular worship service of the church during which the youth led a portion of the service, sharing parts of their belief statements. There was an exchange of personal letters and symbolic gifts between mentors and youth. This was followed by a reception during which the congregation congratulated each youth for their accomplishments.

## 1.0 MISSION STATEMENT

Our sixth and seventh grade youth are starting to leave their childhood and the members of our youth group are a bit further along in this change. This is an important passage in the journeys of their lives. While these youth are still maturing physically and emotionally, they have reached a stage of mental development that gives them full reasoning powers. We believe that it is our mission as adults in our church community to help them:

- Assume responsibility for their own physical, mental, and spiritual being,
- Gain a sense of self confidence and realize that their feelings are valid and that their opinions matter,
- Expand their vision of the world by allowing them to encounter differing views, cultures, and life experiences,
- Understand they have an important role in their church, local and world communities,
- Develop a personal value system, and
- Realize they are totally and non-judgementally accepted in our church community; that it is their sanctuary.

This program has been developed as an attempt to provide these things to our youth and to mark their passage out of childhood.

*Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church  
Coming of Age Program 2000*

*Participant Agreement*

I am making the commitment to participate in the Coming of Age Program and to fulfill all of the required steps. I understand that I must complete 15 of the 16 events which make up the program (3 which must be done on the scheduled dates, 5 of which 4 must be completed on the scheduled dates and 7 which can be rescheduled. if either the mentor or youth have conflicts. It is hoped that youth will make every effort to attend on scheduled dates).

Youth Signature

date

Parent's Signature

date

Dates that could be a problem for me are.....

*Please list date and what the conflict is. Check school calendars, especially in April and May before you turn in this agreement.*

*Mentor Selection Worksheet*

The mentor plays an important role in the coming of age program. Youth and mentors will dialogue about many things. They may expand your view by sharing ideas and opinions you may not be familiar with. It is our hope that the mentor will become a special adult friend for you.

On this form, we are asking you to list ideas, which will help us recruit a mentor for you. (We will make the final selection, as several of you may want the same mentor.) The adults you consider should be of your own gender.

We have sent letters to about 40 people in the church who we think would make good mentors. They are not committed to be mentors, but we hope if one of you asks for them, they will say yes. Please seek advice from your parents if you do not know many of them!

A list of our suggested mentors who have received letters is attached.

Things I would like the mentor to know about me:

The Ideal Mentor for me would be: (Qualities)

My recommendation of Mentors for me would be: (list at least 3 church members)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A SUMMARY OF THE COMING OF AGE PROGRAM AT  
WOODINVILLE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH 2000

SELECTING AND WORKING WITH A MENTOR\*\*

Youth and their mentors have dialogued on values, faith, and a variety of world views

WIZARD OF OZ RETREAT\*\*

This "Hero's Journey" story is a metaphor for the journey of our own lives. The weekend involved the movie, games and rich dialogue.

MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTER (Alan Taylor)\*\*

two dinner discussions on "why do we need church and faith" and individual meetings to discuss the credos which the youth created

MONTHLY MOVIE NIGHTS+

a series of six movies which raised difficult questions of values and social justice  
VALUES CLARIFICATION

six dialogues+ with program leaders and a day-long retreat\*\* on what values are really important to the youth at this point of their journey.

MENTOR RETREAT\*\*

a weekend in which mentors supported the youth's creation of their own "first drafts" of their CREDOS (We're all only writing drafts, no matter how many we do)

SERVICE PROJECTS\*\*

youth and mentors participated in service to the community through such projects as cleaning up Cottage Lake park and service to the church by ushering at Sunday services

ROPES CHALLENGE COURSE\*\*

group games which require teamwork from the whole group to solve physical and mental problems

SWEATLODGE\*\*

the experience of an ancient spiritual ceremony which calls youth to attention about the role of ritual and requires intention to remain in the heat of the lodge  
INITIATION WEEKEND\*\*

beginning with a ceremony in which the youth are released from childhood by their parents, youth spend time alone writing a story of their future life, reflect on their lives with adult mentors and are ceremonially received by representatives of the church as fellow journeyers.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION\*\*

tonight's service and your affirmation of these young people's journey.

\*\* required to be full part of the program - youth participated in a minimum of 14 events during the program (about 2 times a month)




+ optional activities on alternative Sundays were intended to enhance the program



# Coming of Age 1999-2000 Schedule of Activities

October 2, 1999

	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May June
Coming of Age Program 1st week	3 COA Introduction & Orientation 6:30 pm	7 Mentor-Youth Meeting	8 Mentor-Youth Meeting  Chanukkah (4th)	2 No Meeting	6 Mentor-Youth Meeting	4 Values Clarification 1:30 - 8:30	2 Service Project	7 Sweatlodge
All MSG 2nd week	10 Middle School CON @ Camp Sealath	14 MOVIE Lord of the Flies	Ramadan (11th) 12 MOVIE Breathing Lessons	9 MOVIE Karate Kid BYOT for Mentors	13 MOVIE Power of One	12 MOVIE Education of Little Tree	9 ROPES Course	14 MOVIE The Mission
COA & Parent's Group Meeting 3rd week	17 Sign-up deadline & Kickoff meeting	19-20 Wizard of Oz Retreat	18 Dinner with Minister ..... Winter Break Dec. 20 - Jan 3	18 Dinner With Minister ..... BYOT for Mentors	20 Fish Bowls (Open to All) ..... MidWinter Break Feb. 21-25	19 Mentor Retreat	16 MOVIE Four Little Girls ..... Spring Break Apr. 17 - 21	19-21 Initiation Weekend
All MSG 4th week	24 Tough Choices Mentor Training	28 How Can I Know What to Believe	26 No Meeting	23 How Can I Know What to Believe	27 Tough Choices	26 How Can I Know What to Believe	23 Tough Choices	28 How Can I Know What to Believe
Group Outing 5th week	31 MSG Activity (Halloween)	Youth Choosing not to participate in the Coming of Age Program are invited to participate in the 2nd 4th and 5th week activities		30 MSG Activity	Interviews with Minister Feb. 20 - May 13		30 MSG Activity	4/11 Plan & Do COA/Youth Recognition Service

 Need to be at all these  
 Must do 4 of 5  
 May Make these up

## Values Clarification Timeline

- 10:00 Context -  
         Want to have fun  
         Roleplay& talk about questions raised  
         Business  
                 all paperwork & \$\$ in  
                 dates of future events
- 10:30 Yurt Circle  
         Group Juggling
- 11:00 15 people in a life boat
- 12:00 Dinner
- 12:45 Game - Ice Berg Crossing
- 1:30 Values Situation Role play #2
- 2:00 Trust Falls  
         Blade of Grass
- 3:00 Values Situation Role play #3
- 3:25 Processing the Day  
         O - What happened today? (What did we do?)  
         R - Where Angry? Frustrated? Laughed?  
                 - What were you reminded of in own experience?  
         I - What were your Aha's?,  
                 - Caught short & had to re-think?  
                 - Learnings?  
         D - What some things might have effect on your  
                 Credo?  
                 - Writing book,.What name put on today's Chapter?
- 3:50 Closing Ritual  
         TWEEU's, What will you do with that gift?  
         Bowl of water. pebbles what ripple would you like to  
         create with your one life?  
         Sing "*This little life of mine*"

## Processing the Experience

Each activity and puzzle to be solved needs to be reflected upon.-- even if all of the day's activities are not completed.

Questions built around the ORID conversation method can be most helpful. Here area few to begin your list.

- Objective: - What happened?  
               - Who spoke most? Least?  
               - What were the options you were considering?
- Reflective: - What Emotions did you experience?  
               - What caught you by surprise? (Surprised you?)  
               - What personal life experiences... remind you of?
- Interpretive: - What were issues you personally struggled with?  
                   - If you actually encountered this situation or one  
                                 like it, do you feel you know what you'd do?  
                   - What other type of situations can you think of  
                                 which similar decisions might be called for?
- Decisional: - If real life could you voluntarily let your life be  
                                 taken for the greater good?  
                   - If Real... feel responsible if X committed suicide?  
                   - If Real... someone else is killed because you didn't  
                   - So, it's alright if you're not caught?  
                   - So, what you feel is right is to not get involved?  
                   - So, each person has responsibility for own life and  
                                 you shouldn't meddle?

## Role Play #1

You are in a space ship, headed toward an uninhabited planet with a mission to colonize it. (Each of you plays a role starting with # 1 and going as far down the list as you have players).

**Situation:** Your oxygen supply has been damaged. There is not enough oxygen to get all of you to your destination. Unless 4 of you stop using air, you will all die before reaching the planet. You are past the half-way mark. Your command center on earth tells you you must decide among yourselves which 4 of you will take lethal injections so that the remaining members can survive to form the colony. Decide among yourselves who lives and who dies.

**The Crew:**

Number	Age	Sex	Background
1	44	M	Captain of the ship: intelligent, but very critical of others.
2	36	M	Ship's engineer: Sterile, Racist,
3.	40	F/M	Nuclear physicist: was responsible for oxygen shortage.
4	26	F	Wife of #5, pregnant, is obviously abusing drugs and self destructive
5	38	M	Navigator: Second in command: Wilderness Survival skills, Male Chauvinist, playboy
6	70	M	Non-denominational minister: Wilderness Survival skills
7	50	M/F	Physician: has cancer all know it, but only he has any idea how long he might live
8.	29	F	Botanist:-- foreign born-- has difficulty communicating in English (which is only language others speak)
9.	48	F	Pharmacist, radical feminist who gets into arguments with men and can't work with them
10.	52	M/F	Architect/Builder -- believes God called him to convert everyone
11.	17	F	brought aboard by #5 at last minute when another woman became too ill to travel -- Dr knows she has genital herpes and could have AIDS
12	21	M	Was a professional athlete: strong, intelligent, gay
13	34	F	PhD Clinical Psychologist --informed # 4, 5, and 11 she believes they never belonged on the expedition. They will suspect her of prejudice.
14	72	F	Noted Geologist who has been on previous mission to moon: volunteered to come on this trip knowing that a terminal illness will claim her life within 4 years of arrival..
15	12	M/F	Child of #3: uncooperative, refuses to do the work tasks assigned. complains about hardships, didn't want to come continually promises to make things miserable for everyone

## Role Play # 2

Setting: Your School... at the lockers

The person who has the locker next to you is a bully -- always threatening you and your friends. He has been suspended from school on 2 occasions -- once for pulling a knife on a girl who refused to go out with him.

One day for no apparent reason, he gets in your face (literally) and threatens to kill you if you don't stay out of his way. He then produces a gun from his locker and points it at you saying this is how he'll kill you. He also threatens to kill your whole family if you tell he has the gun. You have little doubt that he is capable of such an act.

You know that it is against the law to have a gun at school and know that the school has been very aggressive in expelling students who bring guns to school.

What is your response to him while he is threatening you?

What do you do after he leaves?

Do you share the incident with your friends?

Do you go to the principal?

to your parents?

to the police?

## Role Play # 3

A "sort-of" friend at school who has few friends has chosen you to confide in. He/she comes from a well off family -- always wears very nice clothes -- has been promised a car as soon as turns 16.

One afternoon he/she says needs to talk with you -- asks you to promise not to share what tells you with anyone. You promise!

Facts he/she shares with you :

- parents divorced and each remarried...none have time for her/him
- lives with mother
- hates mother and step father who give money, but no affection
- mother and father sent her/him to a 2 therapists -- had a "very bad experience with both and he/ she won't go to another therapist
- is having recurrent nightmares that the therapist and parents are going to hurt him/her.
- therefore, is having trouble sleeping --
- when falls to sleep, wakes in terror, frequently screaming, crying, trembling with terror.
- is getting very run down, but won't go see a doctor
- has tried suicide 2 times before -- which you have suspected
- hates self, thinking about suicide again.

Asks you to give opinion-- isn't it unfair that he/she is in such pain? Is Suicide always bad? (After all Dr. Kavorkian helps people in real pain commit suicide.) You believe that he/she really intends to go through with it this time.

What arguments would you use to try to stop suicide?

If you felt the friend might try despite your arguments, would you break your promise not to tell anyone?

## Role Play #4

You have an afternoon job at a small deli/gas station. You are the only employee on duty from 5pm until 7 pm when the night manager comes in.

One evening, a burglar wearing a ski mask comes in and holds you up. He hands you a bag to put the money in. You gather all the money from the tray in the drawer, (1's, 5's, 10's, and 20's) but do not lift the tray where there are more 20's, 50's, and 100's. The burglar makes you lay down on the floor and then runs from the store. You are proud that you tricked him and that he only got about \$500 when he could have had another \$1,000. When the burglar is gone, you call 911.

Before they arrive, it occurs to you that you could take a few of the \$50 bills and no one would ever know. You could still be recognized as a clever employee, maybe even given a reward.

What would you do?

What are the values here?

# Lord of the Flies

## The Conversation -

### Rationale Objective:

To pool individual's experience of the movie

You do not need to ask all the questions. If you're getting good responses on one level of the conversation, let it flow then move on to the next level... I

Remember that you need to give people time to think, don't ask the next question too quickly. Give time to answer. Don't answer a question yourself, ask it another way.

**Objective Questions:** Go around the circle and ask each one to respond to the basic facts of the story. Let every voice be heard on this first series of questions.

Where do you see this movie going on in your own life? is the key Question if you get flip answers on this, you will probably have to go around the circle, but be casual about it, lest people feel you are punishing them for flippancy.

Use a "Sharing bowl" (Like a talking stick) to begin to enforce the one person at a time practice. -- When a person is holding the bowl, he/she has the floor and every one else listens while she/he fills the bowl with her/his ideas, then passes the bowl and listens to the next person. Sharing should be spoken from the heart, not make-fun-of or be-critical-of any one else, use "I think or I feel" words.

**Beginning Context:** "You & I know that a regular movie conversation can go like: "I liked it, did you?" "Well, it was OK, but I hated the actress who played..." But a good movie conversation can go a long way past likes and dislikes. So let's see what we can get out of the movie we just all witnessed"

### Objective Level:

- What scenes do you remember? (Be sure everyone is clear on the scene)
- Who were The main characters?
- What Noises or music do you remember?
- What objects do you remember
- What were some of the lines of dialogue that stick with you?

### Reflective Level:

- What were some of the places you saw emotion on the screen?
- Were there any places where emotion was absent or being stifled?
- What emotions did you experience during this movie?
- What emotions were you experiencing at the end of the movie?
- Who did you identify with?
- Who did you really identify with that you really didn't want to identify with?

### Interpretive Level:

- What were the issues this movie deals with?
- What situations in our world does this movie address (point to)?
- Where do you see this movie going on in your life?** (key question!)
- (another way -- What does this movie remind you of in your experience?)
- (or What situation is your own life experience does this movie address?)
- What was the movie about really?
- What is the meaning of the title "Lord of the Flies"

### Decisional Level:

- Which of our UU principles are addressed in this movie?
- What does this movie have to say about your life?
- If this movie came without a title, and we rule out "Lord of the Flies" what would you name it?

## The Role of Church in Our Lives

*Many people ask me the question, "Why should I come to church? What difference does it make to have a church in my life? What is a church anyway?" The following is a shorthand response to those questions.*

Caring  
Hopeful  
Understanding  
Religious  
Committed  
Helping

A church is a place where people **care** for one another. In our world today, we often live in neighborhoods where we don't even know the people next door. We spend a lot of time in our cars away from other people. Many of us are lonely. A church is a place where people care about you. Where you can get to know people on a deep level. Where, if you get sick, someone will come over and check on you or bring you dinner. A church is a caring place.

A church is a place of **hope**. Unitarian Universalism values the inherent worth and dignity of every person. That's a very hopeful belief! In our church we challenge each other not to give up but to have hope in ourselves, in each other, and in our world. Even when things get pretty bad, the church can be a place where we can return to find hope again.

A Church is a place where we can learn to **understand** and respect differences. Unitarian Universalism particularly values the many religious beliefs that are a part of the human community. One good reason our church exists is to teach young people and adults about other religions. We seek not only to learn about them but to respect the beliefs and the people who hold those beliefs. A church is a good place to learn how to be understanding.

A church is a **religious** community. The roots of the word "religion" come from ancient words being "to bind together." Our religion is based on principles that hold us together. The seven principles we have on the back of our Order of Service each week are there to remind us that we share a common heritage and a religious perspective. While our church allows us to explore our own beliefs, it is still a religion in that it challenges us to live up to our potential and to find the connection that bind all of life together.

A Church is a place where people make **commitments**. A community invites us to stick with it even if we're mad or upset with someone. When we become a part of a church we become a part of something bigger than ourselves. Other people rely on us to live up to our principles, to serve the church and the community, to provide time and resources as we're able. Our Puritan ancestors called this commitment a covenant, which means a promise. At our church, we make promises and commitments to each other that help us and the church to stay strong.

A church is a place where we **help** others. Sometimes it seems like there is so much need in the world that it is too much to do all by ourselves. When we are a part of a church community we have others around us who can help us when we need it and who we can offer service to when they're in need. Together, we can also provide support and care to the community we live in ways we might not be able to do alone. A church is a place where helping others becomes a natural and easy thing to do.

*I hope this helps you understand why I'm glad to be a part of this church. I hope you'll want to continue your involvement in a church throughout your lives.*

Coming of Age Program  
Woodinville UU Church  
January 28, 1996  
Barbara Wells, Minister

## Mentoring in the *COMING OF AGE PROGRAM*

*Enlightened People do not judge. Those who Judge are not enlightened.  
The Way of the Tao does not distinguish and works without division and conflict.*

YOUTH in the context of this *Coming of Age* program is a time of life during which individuals take a self-conscious Journey from CHILDHOOD toward becoming responsible citizens.

A MENTOR for this program is a guide for a youth. The task is to *encourage the youth to think* about her/his values and beliefs, *but not to direct* their thinking. We recommend a minimum of 4 sessions which might be seen, generally as 1). Creating a Covenant, 2) get acquainted, 3). dialogue about social issues, and 4). dialogue about values and beliefs. The objective of this dialogue is to help the youth process ideas, concerns, learned familial and societal operating beliefs in order to write a *statement of belief* or "credo" at the end of a retreat in March.

The Retreat will be a further exploration into values and beliefs. Mentors will utilize brief biographies of famous Unitarians and Universalists as well as their own life experience to dialogue with the youth on the importance of *owning your own beliefs*. It is not our intent to encourage anyone to be a UU just because their parent is. This is a step on a journey toward a personal faith. The retreats will end with the creation of each youth's *first draft* of a personal faith statement or Credo.

Youth will be initiated into the collegiality of other journeyers-in-faith, not into the church. That choice, if it comes, will be a separate step on the journey, and not a requirement in order to complete this program.

### Screen of Possible Topics for Mentoring Dialogues

Social	Emotional	Spiritual	7 Principles
War	Trust	God	.. Individual worth & dignity of every person
Poverty	Fear	Jesus	.. Justice, equity & compassion in Human Relations
Homelessness	Love	Buddah	.. acceptance of each other/ encourage spiritual growth
Discrimination	Hate	Mohamed	.. free & responsible search for truth & meaning
Political	Anger	Other Religions	.. right of conscience & use of democratic process in our
Repression	Hopelessness	Sacred Writings	congregations & society at large
Heterosexism	Depression	(including Bible)	.. goal: world community with peace, liberty & justice
Aids & Cancer	Empathy	Life after Death	for all
The Environment	Sympathy	Prayer	.. respect interdependent web of all existence



## Coming of Age Mentor's Retreat

<i>Saturday</i>		<i>Sunday</i>	
<b>Morning</b>		<b>Breakfast</b>	8:30 am
Arrive and Set-up	9:30 am	Current events conversation	
<i>GAMES</i>	10:00	First draft writing of personal statements	10 am
Brainstorming Session	11:15	Review with mentor	10:45
First team prepares lunch -- free time for others		Break while team prepares lunch	11:15
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>12:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>11:45</b>
<i>UU's Whose Lives Made a Difference</i>		Second draft writing	12:30
Team presentation preparation	1:30	Mentor review	1:15 pm
Presentation(s) -- 2 or 3	2:15	<b>Talking Stick Ritual</b>	2:00
<i>GAMES</i>	3:00	Head for Home	3:00 pm
Presentations -- 2	4:30		
team prepares dinner	5:30		
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>6:00</b>		
<i>Camp fire</i> -- singing, storytelling, dialogue	7:15		
<i>Myths of gender roles</i>			

## Coming of Age Mentor's Retreat

Meals	Brainstorming Values
<p>We suggest that one meal be handled by each mentoring team. Each team can decide what they'd like to fix TOGETHER. You can buy the meals by team or pool money and have one person buy the food. In groups with only 3 teams, you may want to bring sack lunches for the first meal or figure out another scheme to get the fourth meal prepared.</p> <p>Depending on location, you may need to figure out how you'll cook and with what.</p> <p><b>Meal rituals:</b> We urge you to make your meals intentional. Sing a song or two, talk about the importance of food have a grace. We suggest either singing a grace or dedicating the meal to some group or cause.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> "Let's dedicate this meal to your parents who have brought you to this point on your journey and to each youth in the Coming of Age program who is exploring what it means to assume more responsibility for their own journey." or "Let's eat this meal on behalf of those who live their lives never having adequate food or housing." or "As we eat this meal, let's remember Susan B Anthony whose dedication to assuring an equal role for women has opened many doors for young women today."</p>	<p>Materials: Paper &amp; pencils, Butcher paper &amp; markers A poster " Rules for Brainstorming"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write down every idea -- be creative</li> <li>2. All items are accepted -- no judgements</li> </ol> <p>Intent: to seed the ideas which may work their way into the faith statements.</p> <p>Instructions: One mentor leads the brainstorm, all others participate with the youth. <u>Unlike other brainstorming you may have done, this process calls for youth to tryout their own brainstorm first. This allows limited risk and allows the shy ones to participate fully.</u></p> <p><u>Begin by reviewing the rules for brainstorming.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On your own paper, write a list of things you feel are important, things you are concerned about, and things you believe are hard to answer (or may not have any one answer). Write down as many things as you can.</li> <li>2. Star the 3 items which you feel strongest about, the 2 items you consider most important and the 1 item you feel must get onto the group list.</li> <li>3. <u>The leader now should write on the butcher paper. Go around the room and ask each person to give one item... continue, 1 item at a time until a complete list is up. If someone says "all mine are up there" in the second or third round, ask them to choose one they didn't star.</u></li> <li>4. "As you look at the list, what items did you not put up, but expected to be there? are you surprised to see? Which did you say "Oh, I want to add that one to my list".</li> <li>5. We'll be working with this more tomorrow.</li> </ol>

## Coming of Age Mentor's Retreat

UU's Whose lives Made a difference	Campfire
<p>Materials: Copies of historical vignettes of famous UU's</p> <p>Intent: to dialogue about how one decides what is important in life and what is important enough to take action over -- this is meant to take historical situations and relate them to things we face today.</p> <p>Preparation: each mentor/mentee team chooses a story from the materials provided, about a famous UU, and <b>prepares a short presentation</b> for the other teams -- a playlet in the form of a drama or mock interview, a song (perhaps written to a tune you already know), a rap, or poem.</p> <p>Each team presents their "Drama", then one of the mentors (not the presenter) asks questions. (The progression of questions should be followed, but questions may be modified and not all questions in each section must be asked. Add related questions if appropriate. Let the conversation flow. Use your own phrasing, and make them gender specific). Bold print indicates the emphasis of the conversation -- where you want to spend the most time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lets rehearse the facts that the drama was based on. (who were the characters?, what happened? what was the issue?)</li> <li>2. What other situation or issue does this remind you of? What situation or issue in your own life might be like this?</li> <li>3. <b>Why were these important issues? Are they still now? If not, are there related issues? What does it require to take a stand (take action, speak out) on an issue like this?</b></li> <li>4. What can we learn from the way this real person handled this situation? What does this tell us about being a responsible adult?</li> </ol>	<p>Intent: To occasion dialogue about <b>the role of Women/Men in our society</b>. To reflect on <b>"expectations" as the popular culture presents them</b>. To create an opportunity for the mentors to share personal experiences with the youth. To have fun.</p> <p>Suggested activities: Singing, joke telling, storytelling and dialoguing.</p> <p>Storytelling: Girls -- Baba Yaga (in "Women Who Run with Wolves") Boys -- Michael Mead Tape "The Boy who Married an Eagle" or from Tom Brown Jr.'s The Vision "Killing the Deer" (attached)</p> <p>Whenever possible, one of the mentors should prepare the story ahead of time to tell it vs. read it. Tell it with enthusiasm.</p> <p>A second mentor begins the questioning with a rehearsal of the story:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who were the characters? What words or phrases do you remember? What sounds did you hear? What were the main points of the story?</li> <li>2. Which characters did you identify with? How did you feel about (choose a character who was loveable or hateable)? What well known story(ies) does this remind you of?*( important ?) How do these sort of values get communicated today?</li> <li>3. <b>What do you think the author's idea of a "real Girl/Boy" was? How is this different from today's popular images? not different?</b></li> <li>4. How can we avoid getting trapped in values we haven't really thought about? (accepting the values portrayed in movies, etc). How can you be faithful to your own values?</li> </ol>

## Coming of Age Mentor's Retreat

### Alternative Campfire

Intent: To occasion dialogue about **the role of Initiation in our society**. To reflect on "**expectations**" as the **popular culture presents them**. To create an opportunity for the mentors to share personal experiences with the youth. To have fun.

Suggested activities: Singing, joke telling, storytelling and dialoguing.

Storytelling: The Story of a Nootka Girl's Coming of Age  
(printed to the right)

Whenever possible, one of the mentors should prepare the story ahead of time to tell it vs. read it. Tell it with enthusiasm.

A second mentor begins the questioning with a rehearsal of the story:

1. What words or phrases do you remember? What sounds did you hear? What were the main points of the story?
2. How did you feel about someone having to do something like that to demonstrate their coming of Age? What did this remind you about (either in our society or other societies)?
3. What kinds of challenges are young people in our culture (society) expected to perform to demonstrate they've come of age? How does our society (America) recognize young people (acknowledge their coming of age)? How do these sort of values get communicated today?
4. What will your participation in this Coming of Age program enable you to demonstrate (accomplish)? Who do you want to know that you are coming of Age?

### The Story of a Nootka Girl's Coming of Age

*CONTEXT: Renewal through ritual act was recognized by tribal societies as meaningful not only for the individual child or group of children but for the whole society. On the occasion of puberty rites, the entire society is plunged back into the mythical times of origin and therefore emerges rejuvenated." All members had an opportunity to relive their own initiation and thereby to strengthen the deeper significance of such rites, which is transformation. What was witnessed was a particular instance of the continuous process of change. What was celebrated was new life. A rite for girls among the Nootka people of Vancouver Island, B.C., in which each emerging young woman is left far out in the ocean alone to swim to shore by herself. During this test she gives up her form as a child. Through this act of courage she is 'purified' and 'reborn' from the water as a woman. Here the water is the element of transformation.*

STORY: 'And you had to learn or you weren't a woman. It isn't easy becomin' a woman, it's not somethin' that just happens because you've been stand' around in one place for a long time, or because your body's started doin' certain things. A woman has to know patience, and a woman has to know how to stick it out, and a woman has to know all kinds of things that don't just come to you like a gift. There was always a reason for the things we hadda learn, and sometimes you'd been a woman for a long time before you found out for yourself what the reason was. But if you hadn't learned, you couldn't get married or have children, because you just weren't ready, you didn't know what needed to be known to do it right.

When you'd learned everythin' you had to learn, and the Time was right, and you'd had your first bleedin' time and been to the waitin' house, there was a big party. You were a woman. And people would come from other places, uncles and aunts and cousins and friends, and there'd be singin' and dancin' and lots of food. Then they'd take you in a special dugout, all decorated up with water-bird down, the finest feathers off the breast of a bird, and you'd stand up there so proud and happy. And they'd chant a special chant, and the old woman would lead them, and they'd take you a certain distance. When the chant ended the old woman would sing a special prayer, and take off all your clothes and you'd dive into the water, and the dugout would go home . . . And you'd be out there in the water all by yourself, and you had to swim back to the village.

The people would watch for you, and they'd light fires on the beach, and when they finally saw you they'd start to sing a victory song about how a girl went for a swim and a woman came home, and you'd make it to the beach and your legs would feel like they were made of rocks or somethin'. You'd try to stand up and you'd shake all over, just plain wore out. And then the old woman, she'd come up and put her cape over you and you'd feel just fine. And after than, you were a woman, and if you wanted to marry up with someone, you could, and if you wanted to have children, you could, because you'd be able to take care of them the pmpber way.'

## Coming of Age Mentor's Retreat

Current Events Conversation	Talking Stick Ritual
<p>Intent: To stimulate thinking regarding what is important to the youth.</p> <p>Bring the first sections/news of several days newspapers during the preceding week (Not entertainment, food, fashion, etc) and give each Mentor/Mentee team a section. Each team selects an article about an injustice that is going on today. Write down or underline the basic facts of the story.</p> <p>One of the Mentors should lead this conversation. It is important that the other mentors participate, but sparingly. Encourage youth to talk. Keep the style low key.</p> <p>"We want to talk about some of the things going on in the world today. There are many places where injustice is evident, people are hurting, prejudice is keeping people victims"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. make sure everyone knows the basic facts of each news items.</li> <li>2. (Pick one or two and focus on them). How does this make you feel? What have you heard other people about this? How do people feel about this issue(are there differing feelings)?</li> <li>3. What do you think are some of the issues this happening raises? What implications does this raise for society? What are the sides people take in this type of situation?</li> </ol>	<p>Materials: votive or other candle, interesting stick or feather</p> <p>Intent: To bring closure to the weekend.</p> <p>Sit in a circle, preferably on the floor. Have an altar in the center -- perhaps an interesting rock, piece of bark, pebbles, feathers, scarf along with a candle.</p> <p>Mentor leading the circle gives instructions to sit then explains:</p> <p>Rules for a talking circle are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. speak openly and from the heart.</li> <li>2. make no statements which attack someone else</li> <li>3. when you have the stick, you may talk</li> <li>4. when you don't, you give the speaker full attention.</li> <li>5. don't talk unless you have the stick.</li> </ol> <p>The first time around the circle, we want to talk about the retreat -- how you feel about it, what you think it accomplished, or any other comment you'd like to make about it. You may say as much or as little as you wish, as long as you hold the stick.</p> <p><i>After all have spoken, say:</i></p> <p>Now we want to give affirmations or thanks to each other. As we go around the circle, look at each person and express a thank you or compliment to each one in turn.</p>

## Coming of Age Program Retreat

### Faith Statement Worksheet

Review the brainstorm lists from Saturday Morning (your's and the group's). Think about the issues you saw in the movies we've seen. How about the conversations with your mentors -- Where did you put yourself on the line? What were issues in the UU history playlets, the campfire, and the news conversation -- list some of the ones you felt were important. Now make yourself a list of the things you feel are important, are concerned about, and things you believe are hard to answer (or may not have any one answer).

Use these items as a springboard to **create a statement of your "faith"** -- things you may want to include are:

Things I believe are true.

Things I believe are important.

What do I believe about how we as human creatures, treat each other?

What I believe about spiritual life, religion, church.

On my journey, I intend to ....

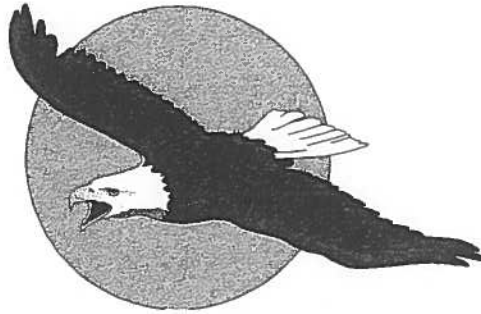
Questions I will explore on my journey.

Remember this is a draft statement. No matter how many you write in your life, they'll always be drafts... and that's great... you have full permission from life to change your mind. Just take a "snapshot of what you believe now!"

Choose your style, but write in a way that other people can understand where you're standing. The clearer your statements now, the more useful this exercise will be to you in the future.

# *Schedule for Coming of Age Initiation Weekend*

## *May 19 - 21, 2000*



### *Friday Evening, May 19*

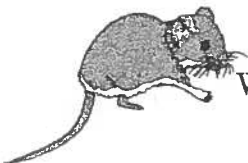
**6:30 PM.** -- Parents, Youth, Guides and some Mentors Gather at NUCC, 18900 168th Ave. NE, Woodinville for Ritual of Severance (Parents free to go after Ritual -- Youth will proceed with guides to Vigil Site)  
Set up campsite and do Ritual of Severance

### *Saturday, May 20*

**4:30 AM** -- Take youth to their sites as the Sun comes up  
**Noon** -- Mentors who did not arrive Friday evening arrive at site  
(remember there's about a 1 hour drive time)  
Prepare for Councils, Begin making Gift "(Staffs) for your youth  
**4:00 PM** -- Begin Councils  
**7:00 PM** -- Feast  
**8:00 PM** -- Naming Ceremony  
**10:30 PM** Sleep

### *Sunday, May 21*

**6:00 AM** -- Breakfast  
**6:30 AM** -- Men's & Women's Societies  
**9:00 AM** -- Creation of the Symbols  
**9:45 AM** -- Acceptance of the Initiation  
**10:15 AM** -- Pack personal gear  
**11:00 AM.** -- Parents join us at Chuck Bean's Back Acreage  
for ritual of recognition followed by lunch, family workshop and  
"New Family" ritual.  
**2:30 PM.** --New Youth leave for home with their parents.



Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church, Coming of Age Program  
P.O. Box 111, Woodinville, WA 98072 425 / 486-5164

## Severance

Before Ritual, Youth put all gear into vans to leave immediately after the ritual.

## The Drama

**Youth:** My parents have been my guides for the first part of my journey! However, I must now move to a larger circle. I am no longer a child, I am a Youth. I demand that the apron strings be cut -- Aaargh!!! -- Do I really, it is comfortable being attached! I must stand before my parents and my community and announce that I wish to be recognized as more than a child, that I am ready to embark on a journey toward adulthood.

**Leader:** In Aboriginal societies, children were prepared by their community to come of age. Depending on the size of the tribe, Initiation might take place every year, or every 2 or 3. Younger children did not know exactly what was happening, because it was secret. Perhaps, it happened during the night. you went to sleep and when you woke up, your older sister was gone. AND WHEN YOU ASKED WHERE SHE WAS, NO ADULT WOULD TELL YOU. But then you found out that other children in the village were missing too.

And when it came your time, they came for you in costume or painted with bright colors, or with bodies covered with mud. They took you to the initiation grounds where you spent an extended period of time, perhaps as much as two years in training, testing and ritual. You returned only after the initiation was completed.

Parents knew this was most important, for a person was a child until initiated, no matter age they were. This act, for them, was a time of conflicting emotions. Proud that you were of age, yet fearful. Parents had no idea if they'd ever see their child again. Died of infection, lost in jungle, eaten by a lion. In many cultures, it was considered good form for a mother to wail and cry when they came for her child. This allowed for these mixed emotions to be seen as a part of the ritual of letting go.

*(Coyote enters with tissues for every parent)*

**Leader:** The teaching has already taken place, as well as much of the testing. We are now entering the final initiation phase -- a time of purification and reflection prior to being recognized by the community as having come of age -- YOUTH, ready to begin the last phase of their journey into adulthood.

**Ritualist:** It is now time to symbolize this shift. Will each family take a ribbon. Each of you take it in your hand, parents at one end, youth at the other.

Child, Face your parents!

Parents, Face your child!

Child, Repeat after me:

Mother, Father, I take my leave of you!

I go away now to see a vision of my future

When I return, I will be your child no more!

Parents, Repeat after me:

Daughter/son, I release you

From your role as my child.

I send you out to see your future.

Go!, See all you can see, do not fear

either what you see or what fails to appear.

Child: Mother, Father, I thank you for your counsel.

When I return we will create new ties and love

Parent:

Son/ Daughter, I will always cherish your childhood

When you return, we will create new ties and love

I look forward to our journey together as you journey

**through Your Youth** toward your passage

into full adult status.

<Hug>

Ribbon is cut. Youth move into the center of the circle as cut.

Youth Leave, Parents remain behind until youth have driven away.



## Initiation Weekend

## Death of the Old Self &amp; Quest for the Rebirth

Gather at site -- A fire is going. Make sure all watches are collected.

Youth: My life is my own! I can blame no one else for it. I decide which path to take and by so doing, eliminate others. I must symbolize for myself that I am intending to make a passage... to come of age. I will keep this Vision Quest as a talisman to myself and others that I am trustworthy.

Ritualist: Ritual of Greeting the new Day -- Based upon the four directions.

Story of Jumping Mouse from 7 Arrows

Leader 1: *(Give instructions for. Youth to Draw a picture of their Family on a paper plate. Add names of other people in Life such as teachers, friends, relatives, coaches etc.)*

A New wind is blowing... It brings closure to this phase of your life, open yourself to the NEW... the Relationships you have developed as a child are now limiting. As you grow, you have the option of remaining stuck in limiting relationships or you can pare them back to the basic love to be found there and open yourself to new opportunity.-- We're not talking about people, we're talking about the relationships you've had with people. Up til now, it has been other people, primarily, who have defined relationships with you - - you are being called to take responsibility for all your relationships.

Ritualist: I ask you now to declare yourself responsible for your own relationships.

*(One at a time they throw the plate into the fire and say:)*

Today, I give up the relationships I have developed in my life.

I will open myself to ways to resurrect these relationships through new eyes.

Coyote Do you guys know what you just said? You just decided to die! That was about the death of how you deal with other people... Well, you've done it now!

Leader 2: Well, he's right you know. That's what this is all about. Deciding to die as a child and to be reborn as a new person -- A chance to reinvent yourself! When some one dies we usually are sad, but this is a death to celebrate, if you intend to participate in the birth of this new being, not just resurrect the old you, because it is easier.

Jumping mouse was only reborn when he gave away everything he had -- his whole self.. This is that kind of death, you choose it.

Birth is something to prepare for. In many countries, the family gathers to await the anticipated birth... This morning is your time to bemiwife to your own rebirth. Your job is to both anticipate what you are giving birth to and what its life -- your life -- will be like.

Leader 1: You are about to enter into a vigil.. Your job during the next 8 - 9 hours is to foresee the future. When shamans divine the future, they take themselves away from everything that might distract them. Like the food -- that's the reason for the fast -- and away from everybody -- this is why we have brought you here -- away from the busy-ness of our world into the natural world.

Coyote: Don't let them kid you, It's all the same world!

Leader 2: To seek a vision of one's own future, to stand before the source of your power and of your limits, and to rejoice in the fullness of that vision with all its joy and pain, is the charge given to those who embark on a vision quest.. Listening: Are you a good listener? I doubt it! Our society is made up of poor listeners! Listening is an active role.... most of us see it as a passive one! During the next 36 hours we challenge you to practice your listening skills. Pay attention to what everyone says, but most important, pay attention to yourself!

Ritualist: Context: Tell a Myth about foretelling future... The Fortune Teller".  
A Magical appearance

Leader 1: Our society doesn't really believe that one can see into the future. The Cosmology of many traditions held this to be not only possible, but necessary. What we foretell, if done sincerely can shape our real future. Personal Myth guides us all. We intend to look today into our futures. Create the first telling of our own epic tales.

Coyote: Pass out Candied Ginger  
**Save this candy for later. It's sweet but its strange! It will serve as a symbol that life in its sweetness can have bitterness.**

## Greeting the Sun

**Leader 2:** In a few minutes, one of us will take you out into the woods. Your task is to set up a sheltered site where you can spend the time doing two major things  
 First is to create a charh of the history of your life to date.  
 Second, is to write the story of your life from now until 2058.

**Coyote:** Quick, how old will you be?

**Leader 2:** You need to take pen and paper with you.

**Leader 1:** As you participate in this vigil, you may begin by thinking "This is going to be boring it will be so long." Then a little later, you will wonder "When will this be over?"  
 OR, you can decide to go ahead and write your life story and the time will go quickly. You will have no idea of what time it is with no watch and no sun... So, don't think about it. allow yourself to be fully engaged in the story writing. It is a way of participating in creating your future.

**Ritualist:**

We will now begin by asking you to use a ritual similar to the one you used at the ROPES course.

*(Each Youth says one at a time & is responded to)*

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I choose to go on this Vision Quest willingly.. to remain alone and in silence.*

*Will you support me?*

*Yes!*

Now will you please stand behind \_\_\_\_\_ (leader) -- prepare to go to your vigil

*Leaders take their 3 youth toward their vigil sites, Do the introductory exercise -give each youth emergency whistle & context for it.*

**Introductory exercise:** T/L of life to date... go through and discuss.

Assignment: Define Space w/ cairns and stay put for Day, allow your mind to shut out other people...

Imagine year 2058-- 58 years from now). Write a story about your life. (use worksheet for generating ideas) What have been your accomplishments, joys, sorrows, disappointments? What are you proud of, regrets? Who has taken the journey with you? Children? World events which have effected your life?

Guides take youth to their sites.

## Council of Elders

Presenting ones self to the elders of the community as a candidate for initiation is something which must be taken seriously. One accepts responsibility for one's own life as the elders pose questions and share their wisdom.

Three or four adults gather in a small circle with several candles and perhaps an interesting "altar" laid out with natural items like rocks, sticks, flowers, etc.

The youth is welcomed to a council of elders.

" We're glad to see you and are looking forward to our time together.

"This is not a time of trial, but a time to become a member of a council where all are equals and we welcome the addition of your wisdom to the council. This is a time of sharing. We ask that it follow the following format:

You share the story you created during this Vision Quest

Other members of the council will ask you questions

You may ask us questions

Others may share from their heart with you.

You may share from your heart with us.

We will close the circle."

"This council has heard your story tonight. Thank you for your wisdom.

Thank you for your courage.

You have deepened our lives through your sharing.

We welcome you to this council as a fellow journeyor."

*Notes: This is about welcoming the youth into the adult circle.*

*Adults take notes on story, looking for holes in the list of questions. ask what they think might be the answer to them.*

*When Youth ask question, answer it honestly or if you do not wish to divulge something you feel is "too private" say so.*

*Sharing from the heart is advice, but do not belabor a point, and if possible, make sure to include an affirmation in the statement.*

*Close with a group or individual hugs.*

## Initiation Weekend

## Recognition of Initiates

Ritualist: *(Drums are playing as youth enter)*  
*Gather in a Circle after the Prayer Vigil*  
 Chant -- The Earth, The Air, The Fire, The Water  
 Call in the four directions

Leader 1: When one is initiated, there is always a visible symbol of the the new person. Were we in Africa, I might take a knife and cut your face and body, then I'd rub ashes into the wounds. This would not be a punishment, but a gift, for it would mark you as one whom your community had given its trust and had declared its expectation that you were ready to take on responsibility for the community -- it would not be done lightly. Those communities require their initiates to stand before the community and to declare a willingness to be a responsible part of the community.

Leader2: We invite each youth to come to the center of the circle with your symbol and pouch.  
*(They are seated on a seat of honor)*  
 Please share with the group something about your symbol, its meaning, what it symbolizes, or what role they play in your Coming of Age  
*(After they are completed ask:)*  
 Please share one insight you have had during the weekend and one resolution you have made.

*Their Mentor or soggate and the celebrants perform the following ritual.*

*They Kneel and are asked to declare themselves:*

My name is \_\_\_\_ and I choose to be called "Youth"

I accept responsibility for my decisions.

I accept responsibility for the re-creation of my relationships

Will you support me in my resolves?

*The community responds:*

We offer you the support of this community .

Ritualist: *(SING) "The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water, Return, Return, Return."*

*Before the ritualist are 3 bowls. In one each, the ritualist gathers Dirt, a burning ember, water*

the Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water  
 the Earth, from earth we come, and to earth we shall return  
 the Air, composed of 2 major elements CO2 which alone would kill us  
 and Oxygen which both keeps us alive and eventually burns us up.  
 the Fire, the visible oxygenation of substances, What oxygen does to  
 this wood rapidly, it does much more slowly to everything  
 the Water, A different combination of Oxygen and a second substance.  
 A major portion of our body is water.

The ancients, while not understanding the chemical composition of these elements understood their basic relationship to all of life.

*The Ritualist Marks the first youth saying:*

Today, we recognize a new (name)

We celebrate your decision to join us on the journey.

Mentor:

*The Mentor presents a staff to the youth.*

This staff is a symbol of our trust as a community in you and a symbol of the special time the two of us have spent together on this journey.

*(Mentor shares anything else regarding special meaning or special recognition)*

*(When the last has been Marked,)*

Send out of the 4 Directions

sing "The Earth, The Air, The Fire, The Water"

## Receiving by The Community

The community of Mentors and Parents gathers first**Ritualist gives context:**

Stories of traditional severances and incorporations --

16 yr walk,

tribal societies in the bush,

Aboriginal mother's chase from village

Three days ago, you sent your child away from you.--

Has been on the initiation ground.

During last 40 hours, been tried and tested by members of our community.

He/she has made new decisions and resolves.

Now, incorporation.

Tricky -- either to return/ life as usual or create new relationships.

Aboriginal mother has an easy time of it. plays role, grateful he's still alive and doesn't have to relate to him/her again -- you on the other hand must.

What will you do to remember she/he has made a commitment which should be honored? How will you honor?

This is a wonderful opportunity to see your relationship differently and act on that belief, even when it seems pretty unbelievable.

**Ritualist:** The child is dead. In Aboriginal communities, a front tooth was knocked out so everyone would know this was not the same person. These new people. These resurrected spirits are now ready to be presented to the community.

*Welcome Youth (youth from previous class usher the new youth to be presented.)*

**Leader 1:** We now want to introduce you to the new youth of the Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church.

*Youth enter as name is called and join a line in front of those gathered.*

Presenting Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

We ask you \_\_\_\_\_ to declare yourself before those gathered.

*Youth makes a brief statement and holds up symbol of event. Concluding with:* This, symbol of my vision quest and this staff will remind me of the decisions I have willingly made. Will you support me in my decisions.  
Congregation: We will.

**Leader 2:** This afternoon, we will be doing several exercises to help your family see each other in a different light. Yesterday, your young person participated in a ritual of giving up old relationships and being open to discovering new ways of relating.

## Final Ceremony

**Leader 3:** There are 3 elements to this final ceremony.  
The first is the reading of your covenants  
The second is the washing of the parents feet  
The third is the tying of the ribbons

**Leader 2** We now ask each family to stand together and read in unison, your covenant to the rest of the community. When each has completed their statement, we ask you to say  
"We offer you our support in this vision. May it be so!"

*Each family stands in turn as Youth Leader calls their first names (John, Sarah and Earl) and reads their covenant and all gathered respond.*

**Leader 1:** A rite of initiation is about learning and testing.  
This program has put us all to the test.  
It has reminded us all, youth and adult alike that we are members of one community and as such, we are all called on to build the relationships necessary to sustain community.

This covenant is a symbol of that.. Perhaps that symbol could find a place in your home.. Type it up and frame it. Tape it to the refrigerator. Allow this to remind you of your decisions to value your family.

**Leader 2:** The work you've done here this afternoon of developing new communication patterns goes beyond families, it is incumbent on all of us to continue to strive for healthier relationships throughout society.

We celebrate all the accomplishments of youth, parents and mentors and the gift these new connections will bring to the health of our church community.

# Initiation Weekend

## Final Ceremony

**Leader 3:** As a symbol that there is a new order of relationship with your new youth, we ask you to allow your son or daughter to care for you by washing your feet.

Parents called on to step forward.  
Youth take bucket, towel and wash parents feet.

**Leader** We are now ready for our final ceremony.  
At the opening ceremony, you each held a ribbon with other family members and at an appropriate moment, that ribbon was cut, which symbolically allowed the youth freedom to take a new relationship to family. Now we invite you to create a symbol of your decision to choose this family to form a new relationship with..  
Please take the cut ribbon pieces and tie them together, symbolizing a newly created family.

**Ritualist:** Repeat after me:  
Repeat after me:  
Each family faces each other in a small circle  
(one family at a time and say:  
1. I am me \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) , an individual  
2. I choose to be a part of this family willingly  
I take responsibility for forming a new relationship with them.  
Then tie ribbon together in a circle  
family hug  
group hug singing chants and or songs

Now, will the families form a circle, overlapping ribbons so that every ribbon end is held by the family next to you, all of you holding a ribbon.

**Liturgist 1:**

Will the Mentors and program team stand behind this circle symbolically forming another circle that symbolizes the larger community.  
Let us sing "*We are a circle within a circle*"

**Liturgist 2:**

Youth, your journey toward adulthood is just begun, journey well and with courage  
Parents, your child is no more... A youth has taken that place... Don't forget to use new eyes to observe the journey. New Families.... Be new... avoid old habits... old stereotypes and old arguments.... use what you've created here and when something else is needed, create new patterns TOGETHER

Now, will the families form a circle, overlapping ribbons so that every ribbon end is held by the family next to you, all of you holding a ribbon.

Will the Mentors and program team stand behind this circle symbolically forming another circle that symbolizes our church community and the larger community.  
Let us sing "*We are a circle within a circle*"

I Send us out to create new relationships as responsible travelers on this journey together.

Go in Peace

## Naming Ceremony

Rumpelstiltskin had power because no one knew his true name. The Celtic peoples believed strongly in the power of a name. One's true name was known only to a few who you chose to entrust it to. It was a symbol of your personal power and the gift of sharing it with a true friend made one truly vulnerable.

Before the naming ceremony, the adults must clarify their own "names", and get clear about the rules of this activity.

Context: the Navajos understand the power of a word. Their own personal names are words which help to describe "who" the person is. Choosing words which describe your "Life-energy" will empower you. Tonight, we are going to act as Navajos and not put value judgements on how we talk about ourselves -- No Bad/Good or Desirable/Undesirable -- We want to talk about who we are, not how we wish we were... It is in our being who we are that we will find our strength, not in trying to look like everyone else. *Adults share their secret names.*

Sitting in a circle, one youth begins by talking about her/him/self.

What am I like?                      What have I done in my life?  
 What are my struggles?          What do I like to do?  
 What quality gets me the furthest?  
 What quality gets me in the most trouble?  
 What about me is most attractive to others?  
 What about me do most people have difficulty with?

Other participants listen, then respond with suggestions of possible descriptive names... youth listens until s/he hears either a name that strikes a chord or is able to put two or more ideas together and create another name.

The youth shall then say: I choose to be called \_\_\_\_\_

The rest of the group then does a group hug and says "Welcome \_\_\_\_\_"

This continues until all have chosen names.

"We have been privileged to be a part of this special ceremony! We respect your vulnerability in sharing your secret name with us.

## The Preparation for

"Knights of old" Kept a VIGIL during the Night before they were to be Knighted by the King. This was a time of taking the learnings of their life to this point and reflecting on them in a spirit of prayer. It was also a time of resolving to live their lives in accord with the "high calling they had chosen".

Youth will be sent out to create 2 symbols of their vision-- a public one, and a private one.

They will be given: An embroidery hoop,

Fabric to fill the hoop which is for the quilt.

Acrylic Paints

Glue

a canvas pouch

-- to be decorated which will hide your private symbol and name

This public symbol will be used to present to the circle during the *Receiving by the Community*.

## Preparation of the Staffs

While Youth are preparing their shields, Mentors will be creating Staffs to present to the youth. They will be decorated with :

cording

beads

feathers

paint

carving

## Initiation Weekend

## Men's Society

**Context:** When the Traditional Men's societies took the boys to the initiation ground, they had many things to teach -- the traditions, the expected behavior of a man, how to treat women, the society's rituals and cultural truths. Their ritual was done in a context of mystery. Today, Men share little of themselves with other men. They have few places to turn for guidance or support. The purpose of this society is to welcome the Boys into the society of the Men of the Church and to share with them the wisdom of their elders in the community.

This is a talking circle. As in the Council of Elders last night, we are all men here. You are challenged to enter this council with the intentionality of men, to participate fully, openly, and honestly,

We ask that everyone respond from the heart, with no intent to harm or shame anyone here and to speak from your own life experience.

We will use a talking stick. **On the first round**, we ask everyone to speak about a concern you have about what it means to be a responsible male today or to ask a question about being a responsible male. We ask everyone to ask a question, even if you are only repeating a question already asked.

On the second Round, we will give sparks (responses which were generated by a question. Once a question has been responded to, we will focus on that question for a while before moving on to another question.

## Women's Society

**Context:** Traditional Societies had specific expectations of its young people, that they would rise from their initiation to take leadership roles in the community. These expectations were communicated through the secret societies which set the context for what was expected of a Woman. Women today seek a definition of their roles in a society which has blurred the traditional lines and sometimes even demands that there be NO Difference. The woman's society will seek to share wisdom from the elders of the community with these Initiates and to welcome them into the circle of the Women of the church and to share with them the wisdom of their elders in the community.

This is a talking circle. As in the Council of Elders last night, we are all women here. You are challenged to enter this council with the intentionality of women, to participate fully, openly, and honestly,

We ask that everyone respond from the heart, with no intent to harm or shame anyone here and to speak from your own life experience.

We will use a talking stick. **On the first round**, we ask everyone to speak about a concern you have about what it means to be a responsible female today or to ask a question about being a responsible woman. We ask everyone to ask a question, even if you are only repeating a question already asked.

On the second Round, we will give sparks (responses which were generated by a question. Once a question has been responded to, we will focus on that question for a while before moving on to another question.

## The Vision Quest

### What to do as you spend the day alone

Vision Quests take time. You will not foresee your life in a moment? You have the day for your quest, your first of many possible quests.

1. Begin your quest by **tying your life journey cards onto trees to designate your trail and location. Then build 4 cairns or markers (like a rock pile or a tipi of sticks) at the four corners of the space you will use for your quest** and, except for a limited number of bathroom breaks where you will remain for the day.
2. Read through the questions on the back of this page, then do something different, walk, draw, doodle, meditate, but do not force an answer to any question.
3. As the day grows toward mid day, answer as many of the questions as you can, Not forcing the answers.
4. Fill out the FUTURE Timeline in much the same way as you did the PAST Life Cards. The year (in the future and what happened in that year. What do you believe could happen? What do you want to happen? USE your INTUITION!
5. During the afternoon, **write a story of your life**, as it might look to you in an autobiography in the year 2058.

You may write it as a story, an epic poem, a ballad, a comic book, or other artform. Be creative, and work in the answers to the questions to the right and the material from the timeline. However, this is not just transcribing these ideas into a story, let them be the basis for your story, but let your creativity and intuition be your guiding sources of inspiration. Enjoy this visioning... There are no right answers to **your story**.

When you return to the campsite you will be asked to share (tell) your story with a small of leaders and mentors. (You may choose to leave out any really private stuff, so don't hold back on your creativity.)



Coming of Age Program  
2000

Begin writing your story by answering the following questions:

**I am now in the year 2058 and am looking back on my life,**

1. What have been my most significant accomplishments in my life.?
2. What have been your joys?
3. What have been your sorrows?
4. What disappointments have come your way?
5. What are you proud of?
6. Who has taken your life journey with you?
7. Did you have children?
8. How has being a Woman/Man influenced your life journey?
9. What world events effected your life?
10. What was the biggest risk you took?
11. How has your life effected larger events (City, state, nation, world)?
12. What has been the source of your power and strength?
13. What have you done to take care of yourself?
14. Which of your principles (beliefs) have you remained most true to?

## The FUTURE Life and Times of

IV. My Name for my life

III. Names for the  
sections of my life

I. The Years of my Life

2000

2010

2020

2030

2040

2050

2058

II. The major events  
of my life

This is the the Creation  
of a Story! - Be Wild!!!  
Where will you go?  
What will you do?  
What will you do for  
your life's work?  
What will you have  
accomplished by age 30?  
40? 50?

# Litany of Community Support

**Leader:** I present to you youth who have come of age in our community, and I ask you to welcome them.

**Congregation:** We welcome you as youth of this community.

**Youth:** We the new youth of the Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church stand before you as individuals who have learned from adult mentors in this congregation. We have examined our beliefs, have dialogued with our mentors, our minister and others about our values. We have decided to be responsible participants in this congregation and in the larger community.

**Congregation:** We rejoice in this phase of your journey.

**Youth:** We, as a group have built bonds of trust among ourselves and with our mentors. We have pledged ourselves to take responsibility for our own decisions and for the recreation of all of our relationships. We give thanks to the members of this congregation.

**Congregation:** We rejoice in your decisions and your demonstration of becoming responsible for your own decisions. We celebrate the gift that you are to this congregation and to the world.

**Youth:** We ask your continued support in the next phase of our journey.

**Congregation:** We pledge ourselves to be of support to you on your journey, and ask you to support us on our journey.

**Youth:** We, too, pledge our support of you on your journey.

**Leader:** Let us pray.

*Appendix B*  
*Being in*  
*Nature*

# *The Earth as Mentor or How the Earth Teaches*

by David Moskowitz

When I was 15, I fell head-over-heels in love with the natural world. Learning about and being in nature became an obsession, one that led me to drop out of high school so that I could spend all of my time outdoors. Being able to escape to the oak woodland-covered hills of central California when I was a teenager helped me cope with this challenging time of life. While I was wandering through the woods, friends were also dropping out of school but they were getting addicted to drugs, and even committing suicide. I found a great deal of healing for myself through time spent alone in the natural world.

It was from these experiences that I came to work with other people in the wilderness. I strongly believe that in our modern world there is something sick within all of us. It longs for a connection with nature. A modern rite of passage experience is powerful in part because it connects the participant with nature and provides an atmosphere conducive to recognizing relationship between their environment and themselves. However, in a world increasingly dominated by the fast paced and flashy, nature often appears boring. How do we -- educators, guides, and mentors, create the opportunities for young people to discover these connections?

One answer to this question can be found in a wide variety of books written on nature activities and environmental education. There are many activities designed to engage students and teach them about the importance of the natural world and their connection to it through fun games and initiatives (problem solving activities). Many of these activities are fun and useful, but to me they have often seemed contrived and lacking of a sense of authenticity. This may come from my initiation into nature. I didn't learn about the meaning of a food web from a game where everyone pretends to be a different plant or animal and holds onto a long piece of rope next to the thing that they eat or are eaten by. I went into the woods without food and foraged for my meals. This is not to say that games and initiatives are not a valuable tools for teaching. They can be engaging and fun, especially for younger audiences. But their game-like quality is also limiting. How seriously is someone going to take a game, anyway?

A deeper learning comes from direct experience of the natural world. You can be sure that I understood the relationship between my life and the lives of other parts of the environment after feeding myself from things I gathered in the wild. But I also learned a great deal more than

that. I learned empathy, awareness, ingenuity, and self-reliance from that same experience. I learned to appreciate the gifts given to me by other living beings, including the gifts from the people who had provided



for me for many years.

I am not saying that we need to take people into nature and make them eat only what they can find. I'm saying we can use activities in the outdoors from which students learn directly from their interactions in and with nature, not just from games. This might be taking their wristwatch and sending them to wander around aimlessly along a stream until we come and get them at some unspecified time later in the day.

In some ways this seems easy: put them in a natural setting and they will learn something. While you never know exactly what the learning outcomes for any experience are going to be, you can design experiences with particular objectives in mind. Self-awareness, self-reliance, awareness of the envi-

B -1

ronment, team work, and compassion are all things which can be learned through experiences in the natural world. The more "real" the experience, the deeper the learning derived from it can be. A student who really gets lost and can't find her way back to camp for a time will feel in her gut her dependence on her family and society. This experience will probably have a much greater impact than if you just asked her to imagine this experience. Besides creating the appropriate activity, a leader should also be able to frame the experience beforehand and to process it afterwards. This helps prepare participants for the activity and for reflection and analyzing the experience afterwards.

Taking people into the wilderness and creating a safe container for their experiences is often all the leader may need to do. The power of the beauty and rawness of the natural world can be more influential on students than any number of planned activities. I experienced this during the backpacking portion of the Wilderness Quest several years ago. We had just finished a grueling day of climbing up to a camp above tree line. We were all together around the camp stoves as water heated. The sun was setting over the mountains to our west, lighting up the horizon and making the huge glaciers on Glacier Peak and the other mountains surrounding us glow with a pinkish hue. After a few minutes of this, one of the students (someone who usually was more interested in talking about video games or anarchy)

out of the blue said, "I had no idea that there was anything like this in the world. This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen in my life." Other students followed with other comments about how this campsite was unbelievable and made them realize just how important wilderness is and how good they felt about being able to make it there. One student mentioned that if they didn't realize that this existed just 50 miles from where they had lived all their lives, there must be an infinite number of other things in the world which were even more beautiful and amazing to be discovered. At the end of the trip, several students brought up this camp and the sunset as one of the highlights of the trip. For the leaders, it had just been a practical spot to camp to keep on schedule for the trip. After doing all sorts of discussions, activities, and telling stories to try to get the students to realize these things, it was just camping in an amazing spot that really opened them up.

As a leader I now try to think of myself as a student, or a follower, of the natural world. Since my passion for the wilderness first blossomed as a teenager, I have studied the natural world and outdoors skills from a wide variety of perspectives and in several different contexts: from living in a bark hut to academic college classes. But of all the things I have read and human teachers I have worked with, none of them have taught me as much as my direct experience — living, working and playing in the wild.



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# *The Teachings Of Nature*

*by Kevin Riley*



*Boys on their way to meet a bear*

*What's that noise?*

*There it is again.*

*We all sat quietly and listened.*

*We heard the steady purr of a distant waterfall, the assertive call of the wren, the wind gliding through the lodge pole pines. Behind and in between and through it all was that most rare of sounds...silence.*

*I sat in a circle with six 13-year-old boys in a meadow near the Low Divide in the Olympic National Park. Chris, the other mentor on the trip, was leading us through a guided meditation. He asked us to close our eyes and focus on our other senses. What did we smell? What did we feel? And, what did we hear?*

*The idea of looking for silence while hanging out with a pack of teenage boys may seem like an exercise in futility. It is, however, an often overlooked strength of the Coming of Age Journey.*

*The boys on this coming of age trip (along with the rest of us) spend most of their lives in a noisy world. Whether in the city or the suburbs, they have long ago succumbed to the cacophony of our modern age. The roar of the jumbo jet, the screaming jackhammer and the dull drone of the interstate keep most of us from*

*hearing the gentle symphonies of the natural world. In some houses, the TV screams almost 24 hours a day. How many of us would drive 3 blocks without the radio on?*

*For these young people, the silence out here in the woods is startling at first. The boys usually notice it on their first night. Voices get swallowed up in the quiet darkness and*

*kids stay close to camp.*

*On the journey, we use the silence like a sweet medicine that induces introspection. It provokes a calm and creates a space for the boys to take a look inside. As the noise outside recedes, the voices in the back of all our heads start to shout. These are the voices that ask big questions. What kind of man do I want to be? What do I want to do on this planet before I leave it? Of course, just in case the voices aren't loud enough, the mentors encourage them by asking those questions during evening circles.*

*The silence is also crucial as we discuss our relationship to spirit world. Spiritual connection is a big part of Coming of Age Journeys. The silence inside the pitch black sweat lodge can be deafening. Staring up quietly at a sky littered with stars usually brings talk of our place in the universe.*

B-3



Of course, silence is also a challenge for these boys. The distractions at home keep us from feeling the full weight of the inevitable pain involved in human life. Sometimes we don't have answers for those voices and so we turn on our Walkman to keep them away. And so out in the meadow giggling ensues.

Boys are suddenly afflicted with tubercular coughing fits. For many of these guys, sitting quietly in a meadow with no distractions and thinking solitary thoughts is a harder task than carrying the 40-pound pack up the hill we just conquered.

Peter Jennings recently did a story on a man who has spent many years of his life searching for just such silence. Gordon Hempton lives near the Olympic National Park and spends a lot of his time in this and other national parks. He carries audio recording equipment around to national parks and records the sounds that are revealed when the human world quiets down. He calls his project "Square Inch of Silence" and that is what he seeks. Little cells of space among trees or desert or sand where no jets fly overhead and no logging trucks rumble past. It is in those spots that he records the babbling brooks and the waves crashing and other natural serenades. Mr. Hempton hopes to record these places before they are lost. He believes that there is an intrinsic value in places where the natural world still speaks the loudest.

As we continue to sit, the nervous laughter and excessive sneezing subside, and a peaceful energy falls over the group.

After 20 minutes of waterfalls and birds, we are presented with a new sound that bursts out of the silence.



2000 Boy's COA trip at the Ropes Course

I hear some branches breaking behind me. Marshall stares past me with eyes bigger than the top to his water bottle. About 20 yards behind me, a black bear sits casually chewing on the bark of young tree saplings. We move to a more comfortable distance and watch the bear. It is remarkable the rewards that will present themselves if we quiet down for a little while.

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Kevin Riley, MSW has led programs for ICA Journeys for three seasons. He has been a part of the Journeys leadership team as well as program coordinator for the Boy's Coming of Age Journey.



# Aimless Wandering: The Power of the Medicine Walk

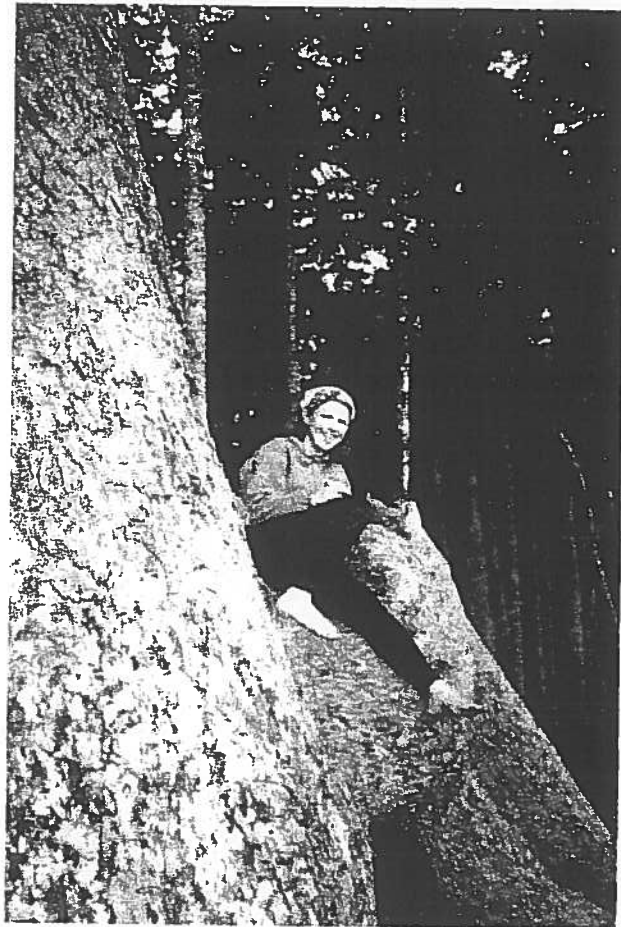
by David Moskowitz

*When I was a teenager I learned something very valuable about learning...that it doesn't just happen in a classroom. One of the things I learned outside of the classroom was the value of solitary time in Nature. Time spent alone outside teaches many things, especially about oneself. Over the evolution of human cultures this has been recognized again and again. Given half a chance, many children stumble across these same lessons on their own. How many of us have memories of special "secret spots" that we would visit in order to escape adults, or just to be there for its own right?*

*What is a medicine walk?*

Different cultures have designed rituals and traditions which draw on the powerful educational, therapeutic, and spiritual power of solitary time in the natural world. Solitary time in nature is a vital component of all Journeys' rites of passage programs. The medicine walk<sup>1</sup> is one of the activities we use to help students prepare for and process the lessons of a vision fast. It is also used in its own right to encourage students to explore their personal relationship with the natural world, learn to listen to their instincts, gain self confidence, promote curiosity, and explore and challenge their fears.

There are many variations to the medicine walk, but in its simplest form, I like to think of it as "aimless wandering". The goal of the walk is to be without a goal. Watches get left at home, in camp, or in the car. Students are encouraged to go where ever they want to (within reason, see safety precautions below), to wander off trails, through the brush, along streams, where ever seems interesting. They are encouraged to let go of the worries and concerns of daily



Pausing on the medicine walk to explore an ancient tree

life and to focus on the present moment —each moment. Wandering slowly across the landscape, exploring interesting trees, taking a moment to reflect on a stream, following a deer trail through the brush, students become engulfed in the world around them, losing themselves in the stream of the present moment. The experience can be incredibly joyous and relaxing.

*Where does the insight and learning come from?*

Humans learn experientially. The learning that comes out of a medicine walk might

come from physical experiences that the student has during their walk such as getting lost for a time, watching fish feed along the edge of a stream, discovering the tracks of a bobcat, or watching the sun move through the sky as the day progresses. Students learn about the physical world around them, learn about their own physical and mental abilities, and learn to be more acute observers.

The human mind and psyche seem to work in mysterious ways. Often insight and awareness are preceded by a "letting go" of the problem or concern. Shutting down our rational mind, while at the same time flooding our senses with the beauty of nature might be a catalyst for innovative insights into deep seated concerns a person might have. Many people talk about experiencing things on a medicine walk and then realizing that the experience was a metaphor for an issue in their life. This realization often leads to new insight about how to approach this issue.

*Is wandering around alone in Nature safe?*

The medicine walk can be a very powerful experience. Its power stems in part from its simplicity. However, it should not be approached without

preparation and awareness. There are no set rules about the "right way" or the "safest way" to facilitate a medicine walk, there are areas that one should take into consideration. As a guide, responsible for the safety and well being of program participants, there are several things that I pay very close attention to:

- The skills and capabilities of the participants (how I set up a medicine walk for a group of adults with experience in the outdoors, is very different from how I set it up for children).
- The physical hazards of the landscape in which the walk will occur (Is the area a safe one for this activity to be run? Some places are not).
- My own skills and capabilities to deal with problems which might arise from the activity (such as a student turning an ankle and needing assistance to get back to camp).
- The learning objectives which are driving me to do this activity.

Some things which I often do in order to ensure a safe experience for participants include:

- Requiring walkers to wear a whistle around their neck and making sure that their whistle will be heard by others wherever they might end up during their walk.
- Setting clear boundaries for where participants can and cannot go so as to ensure I



Position yourself to get a broad view

know where to look for them should they not show up at the predetermined meeting spot.

- Choose an area in which participants are to walk which will not pose difficulties they will not be able to deal with in a safe way.
- Make the meeting destination obvious and large enough to people to get to with ease (a dirt road often works well: "Down hill to the road, down stream to the camp").

This is by no means an exhaustive list of safety concerns or precautions. It is up to the guide to assess each individual situation, landscape, and participant in order to determine a safe method to facilitate the experience.

#### *Why are we doing this? Framing and Debriefing a Medicine Walk Experience.*

Before I send participants off to wander, I want them to understand what the experience is about. I might want to choose a guiding theme that sets the stage for the experience. With a group of youths on a coming of age program who are preparing for a solo vision fast experience I might pose a question relating to family relationships, recent or upcoming changes in their lives. As a group we might discuss their thoughts on the subject. This sets the wheels turning in their heads and can help shape their experiences and their interpretation of their experiences on the walk.

I try to bring students together in a way which will allow us a smooth transition from being alone to being together as a whole group again, as opposed to people straggling in and beginning to discuss their experiences informally before everyone has returned. Once all together again, we discuss as a group people's experiences, starting with interesting stories of animals people saw, or an exceptionally beautiful flower or tranquil grove of trees. I then might guide the conversation about how they felt out there: free, scared, bored, etc. Eventually I try to bring participants to focus on insights they might have had, or to make

meaning out their feelings and experiences through reflection and personal interpretation. It is not uncommon for one person in a group to have an incredibly moving experience and for some one else to claim that it was totally boring and uneventful for them. As a guide I try to help them find meaning in both of these cases. "Why was it so boring for you?" "Why do you think you didn't notice anything 'interesting'?"

Since I first discovered the art of aimless wandering as a teenager, I have done hundreds of informal and formal medicine walks in many different places and in many contexts. Each experience is different and insightful in a new way, whether it is the discovery of a plant I have never seen before, insight into why I have been so frustrated at home lately, or just a refreshing breather from the daily grind. For me, and many others, wandering aimlessly in nature really is good medicine for the soul!

#### **Note:**

1 The term "Medicine Walk" is commonly used in Wilderness work. I first saw the term in print in Steven Foster & Meredith Little's, *The Book of the Vision Quest*, Prentice-Hall Press, New York, 1988, P. 34.

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# *How the Earth Teaches:*

## Ecological Education Curriculum

By David Moskowitz

Bellow is a list of topics and a brief discussion of each. These topics represent a variety of ideas and activities that one might wish to address with participants of a guided experience in the natural world. Many of these topics are woven into programs at ICA Journeys.

### Curriculum Components:

1. Natural History
2. Outdoors Skills
3. Ecology
4. Cultural and Community Studies
5. The environmental crisis
6. Taking Action
7. Aesthetics and Spirit

#### 1. Natural History:

Natural history learning involves studying the different parts of the natural world, including plants, animals, birds, geology, meteorology, and astronomy. Focus will be on local bio-regional natural history.

#### 2. Outdoors Skills:

Learning outdoors skills is done in order to expose students to the natural world as well as to give them tools to spend time in and learn about the natural world. Skills covered include: sensory awareness, tracking, other aboriginal living skills, backpacking, snow camping, and mountaineering. Incorporation of practical life skills whenever possible.

#### 3. Ecology:

Studying ecology is vital for bringing the pieces of the puzzle together in ecological education. Topics such as ecosystems, food webs, niche, and relationships between the biotic and abiotic world help bring together topics covered in natural history. Ecology studies also provide a forum for integrating human cultural studies into the larger systems of the natural world. This can lead into topics of ethics as the group reflects on the disparity of resources consumed in various parts of the world.

#### 4. Cultural and Community Studies:

Addressing the cultural issues that have contributed to the current environmental crisis is critical for creating a sustainable future. Learning in this section is three fold: 1. analyzing current cultural characteristics which are destructive (hu-

man-nature dichotomy, individualism, faith in progress, lack of intergenerational contact and sustainable tradition); 2. exploration of the cultural characteristics and traditions of ecologically centered indigenous cultures; 3. ideas for evolving western cultural character into a sustainable form including philosophies such as Deep Ecology, bio-regionalism, and re-inhabitation. Practical skills and the experience of living in a community setting which the participants help to create are also a key part of this section.

#### 5. The Environmental Crisis:

An awareness of environmental problems such as global warming, the hole in the ozone layer, and a wide variety of local and regional issues is fairly ubiquitous in the modern world. However there is a lot of misinformation, and contradictory ideas presented. Here students are presented with solid information and conservation based perspectives on recognizing and addressing environmental issues. The leader's challenge is to balance the depressing awareness of our current state of affairs with a vision for positive change and a sustainable future. Local environmental issues will be addressed in order to encourage students to get involved in their local community and bio-region.



#### 6. Taking Action:

Ecological Education must give students tools to continue learning and to make changes in their lives and the human community around them. Topics covered include relationships between urban life and natural resource uses, lifestyle choices which can reduce negative impacts, community building and communication skills, and exposure to local activist groups and research resources.

#### 7. Aesthetics and Spirit:

Reaching beyond a logical, rational understanding of the environment and humanities role within it is also key. This section focuses on recognizing the beauty, and more than physical relationships between humans and nature. Activities include solitary time in nature, thanksgiving addresses, use of expressive arts (drawing, storytelling, dancing) and travel through intact natural areas.

# Wilderness Emergency Procedures

By David Moskowitz

Unfortunately many of us today find the natural world an unusual place to be. We are not used to being distant from modern conveniences and services. Like any other activity, travel in the wilderness has risks and dangers. Unlike in the city where modern emergency response is but a phone call away, in the wilderness it might take an extended time period to get outside help. Because of this, it is vital as an organizer of institutional experiences to *PLAN AHEAD* and *BE PREPARED*.

Planning ahead means knowing where your going, what your doing, and who is doing it. What are the hazards in the area you are going to? How would you get help there if you needed it? What are the potential risks of the activities you are planning? Do the participants coming on the experience have any medical issues (such as allergies to bee stings) that could become an issue? What do you need



to safely handle an accident should it occur? What resources in the group or in other leaders do you have? What liabilities? These are some of the questions that should be addressed long before hiking shoes ever hit the trail to help ensure the safest experience possible for participants.

Being prepared means having what you need to deal with an incident in an acceptable manner should one occur. This includes having leaders with sufficient outdoors skills, and the ability to deal with stressful situations calmly and efficiently. It means having the right equipment and emergency gear necessary. Things such as sufficient water, clothing, emergency shelter, first aid kit, and leaders trained in first aid are all items which should be considered essential for a safe trip to be possible.

Wilderness medical training has become a standard requirement for most outdoors programs that take participants into inaccessible locations, even just for the day. There are several fine schools which offer training around the country and through out the year. If you are taking people into the outdoors and they are looking to you to take care of them then consider taking such training.

Taking people into the wilderness should not be done without the appropriate preparation. Take the time to do the research and planning you need to create a safe experience. It will be worth it in the end.



# *Appendix C*

## *Bibliographies*

# Rites of Initiation Bibliography

for leaders of Rites of Initiation, Context, Ritual and Story

Author	Title	Publisher City Year
<b><u>Eleven Books to start your library</u></b>		
Beck, Renee with Sydney Metrick	<i>Art of Ritual, The</i>	Celestial Arts, Berkley, 1990
Cahill, Sedonia with Joshua Halpern	<i>Ceremonial Circle</i>	HarperSanFrancisco, New York, 1992
Foster, Stephen with Meredith Little	<i>Book of the Vision Qnest, The</i>	Prentice Hall, New York, 1988
Fulghum, Robert	<i>From Beginning to End: The Rituals</i>	VillardBooks, NewYork, 1995
Gurian, Michael	<i>Good Son, The</i>	Tarcher/Putnam, New York, 1999
	<i>Wonder of Girls, The</i>	Pocket Books, New York, 2002
Lysne, Robin Heerens	<i>Dancing up the Moon</i>	Conari Press, Berkeley, 1995
Mahdi, ed Louise C. w\ Stephen Foster	<i>Betwixt &amp; Between</i>	Open Court, LaSalle, IL, 1987
Mahdi, ed. Louise C. w\ Mchael Meade	<i>Crossroads</i>	Open Court, La Salle, IL, 1996
Pipher, Mary	<i>Shelter of Each Other, The</i>	Grossen/Putnam, NewYork, 1996
Roberts, Elizabeth, with Elias Amidon	<i>Earth Prayers</i>	HarperSanFrancisco, 1991
Rohnke, Karl	<i>Silver Bullets</i>	Project Adventure, Hamilton, MA 1984
<b><u>A Second Round on Ritual</u></b>		
Arrien, Angeles	<i>Four-Fold Way, The</i>	Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1993
Bear, Sun with Wabun Wind,	<i>Dancing With the Wheel</i>	Prentice Hall, New York, 1991
Black, Imber	<i>Rituals for our Time</i>	Harper Perennial, 1997
Blood, Peter with Annie Patterson	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>	Sing Out Corp., Bethlehem, PA, 1992
Bly, Robert, editor	<i>Soul is Here for Its own Joy, The</i>	Ecco Press, Hopewell, NJ, 1995
Eliade, Mircea	<i>Rites and Symbols of Initiation</i>	Harper Torchbooks, NewYork, 1995
Ferguson, Diana	<i>Magickal Year, The</i>	Quality Paperback, Camp Hill PA, 1996
Johnson, Julie Tallard	<i>The Thundering Years</i>	Bindu Bookn, Rochester, VT 2001
Houston, Jean	<i>The Hero and the Goddess</i>	Ballentine, New York, 1992
Roberts, Elizabeth	<i>Life Prayers</i>	HarperSanFrancisco, 1996
Some', Malidoma	<i>Of Water and the Spirit</i>	Tarcher Putnam, NewYork, 994
Some', Malidoma	<i>Ritual:Power, Healing &amp; Community</i>	Swan/Raven, Portland, 1993
Walker, Barbara G.	<i>Woman's Dictionary of Symbols</i>	HarperSanFrancisco, NewYork, 1988
Weiner, Bernard	<i>Boy into Man</i>	Transformation Press, San Francisco 1992
<b><u>Stories for reading, telling &amp; contexting</u></b>		
Bentsen, Cheryl	<i>Maasi Days</i>	Anchor Doubleday, New York, 1989
Beebee Hill, Ruth,	<i>Hanta Yo</i>	
Brown, Dee	<i>Folktales of the Native American</i>	Henry Holt, New York, 1993
Brown, Jr, Tom	<i>Awakening Spirits</i>	Berkley, New York, 1994
Brown, Jr, Tom	<i>Grandfather</i>	Berkley, New York, 1993
Brown, jr, Tom	<i>Way of The Scout, The</i>	Berkley, New York, 1980
Campbell, Joseph	<i>Hero with a Thousand Faces</i>	Princeton Univ, Princeton, 1968
Campbell, Joseph	<i>Myths to Live By</i>	Viking, NewYork, 1972
Campbell, Joseph with Bill Moyers	<i>Power of Myth, The</i>	Doubleday, NewYork, 1988
Coelho, Paulo	<i>The Alchemist</i>	Harper Flamingo, 1998
Erdoes, Richard with Alfonso Ortiz	<i>American Indian Myths &amp; Legends</i>	Pantheon Books, NewYork, 1984
Erdoes, Richard with Alfonso Ortiz	<i>American Indian Trickster Tales</i>	Viking, New York, 1998
Estes, Clarissa P.	<i>Women Who Run With Wolves</i>	Ballentine, NewYork, 1992
Jones, Terry	<i>Fairy Tales</i>	Viking Penguin, New York, 1981
Lopez, Barry	<i>Crow &amp; Weasel</i>	Northpoint Press, San Francisco, 1990
Neihardt, John	<i>Black Elk Speaks</i>	Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1961
Silko, Leslie M.	<i>Ceremony</i>	Penguin Books, NewYork, 1977
Storm, Hyemeyohsts	<i>Seven Arrows</i>	Balentine, New York, 1972



### **Books for Preparation We Recommend to COA Participants**

Bradbury, Ray  
Brown Jr., Tom  
Carter, Forrest  
Panshin, Alexi  
Rowling, J.K.

*Dandelion Wine*  
*The Vision, The Tracker, or The Search*  
*The Education of Little Tree*  
*Rite of Passage*  
*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,*

*Bantam Books, New York.*  
*Berkley New Age, New York*  
*University of New Mexico Press,*  
*Albuquerque. Ace Books, New York.*  
*Scholastic Press, New York, 1997*

### **Books for Preparation We Recommend to Older Participants**

Asimov, Isaac  
Greenfield, Irving A.  
Heinlein, Robert A.  
McCaffrey, Anne  
Okada, John  
Potok, Chaim  
van der Post, Laurens  
Gary, Zukav

*Foundation and Empire, Second Empire, Foundation's Edge*  
*Ancient of Days*  
*Stranger in a Strange Land*  
*The Ship Who Sang*  
*No-No Boy*  
*Davita's Harp*  
*A Story Like the Wind,*  
*The Dancing Wu Li Masters*

Avon Books, New York,  
Ace Books, New York, 1987.  
Del Rey/Ballantine, New York, 1980  
University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1986.  
Fawcett Columbine, New York, 1996  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1972  
A Bantam Book, New York, 1980.

### **Practical Program Details for Leaders**

Black, Joel D.

Brown, Jr, Tom with Brandt Morgan  
Brown, Jr, Tom with Brandt Morgan  
Cockrell, editor David  
Drury, Jack K, with Bruce Bonney  
Foster, Stephen with Meredith Little  
Foster, Stephen with Meredith Little  
Foster, Stephen with Meredith Little  
Foster, Stephen with Meredith Little

Isaac, Jeff and Peter Goth  
Jastrab, Joseph with Ron Schaumburg  
Luvmour, Josette & Sambhava  
Proffoff, Ira  
Raudseep, Eugene  
Rohnke, Karl  
Sams, Jamie with David Carson  
Seed, John with Joanna Macy, et al  
Spencer, Laura  
Stanfield, Brian, editor  
Williams, R. Bruce  
Wiswell, Phil

*What Everybody needs to know about*  
*Experiential Education*

*Tom Brown's Wilderness Field Guide*  
*Tom Brown's Field Guides (7)*  
*The Wilderness Educator*  
*The Backcountry Classroom*  
*Roaring of the Sacred River, The*  
*Wilderness Rite of Passage for Youth*  
*Wilderness Questing & the 4 Shields*  
*Trail to the Sacred Mountain: A Vision*  
*Fast Handbook for Adults*

*Outward Bound Wilderness First Aid*  
*Sacred Manhood, Sacred Earth*  
*Natural Learning Rhythms*  
*At a Journal Workshop*  
*More Creative Growth Games*  
*Cowstails & Cobras II*  
*Medicine Cards*  
*Thinking Like a Mountain*  
*Winning Through Participation*  
*Art of Focused Conversation, The*  
*More than 50 ways to Build Consensus*  
*Kids Games*

Educational Leadership Dynamics 1995

Berkley, New York, 1983  
Berkley, New York,  
ICS Books, Merrillville IN, 1991  
ICS Books, Merrillville IN, 1992  
(Out of print)  
School of Lost Borders, Big Pine, CA 1987  
Univ of Idaho Wilderness Research Ctr 1996  
School of Lost Borders, Big Pine, CA 1983

Lyons & Burford, New York, 1991  
Harper Perennial, New York, 1994  
Celestial Arts, Berkeley, 1993  
Dialogue House, New York, 1975  
Perigee, New York, 1980  
Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, 1989  
Bear & Co, Drawer 28, Santa Fe. NM 1988  
New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, 1988  
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ICA Canada, Toronto, 1997  
SkyLight Training, Arlington Hts, IL 1993  
Doubleday, New York, 1987

### **Books on Culture**

Breeding, John  
Gurian, Michael  
Mander, Jerry  
Pipher, Mary  
William Pollack  
Raffa, EdD, Jean B.  
Sheehy, Gail  
Weatherford, Jack

*Wildest Colts Make the Best Horses,*  
*Fine Young Man, A*  
*In the Absence of the Sacred*  
*Reviving Ophelia*  
*Real Boys*  
*Bridge to Wholeness, the*  
*Passages*  
*Native Roots*

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1995  
Random House, New York 1998  
LuraMedia, San Diego, 1992  
Bantam, 1977  
Crown Publishers, New York, 1991

### **Periodicals**

*Circles on the Mountain,* (for Wilderness Guides) Scott Johnson. ed. 2012 Tenth St, Berkeley, CA 947102 510-843-1234

*Daughters,* (for parents & daughters), 1808 Ashwood Ave, Nashville, TN 37212-5012 1(800)829-1088

*ICA Journeys,* 22421 39th Ave SE, Bothell, WA 98021 [www.icajourneys.org](http://www.icajourneys.org)

*New Moon,*

*Wings,* from Full Esteem Ahead, 6663 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy #214, Portland, OR 97225, [www.europa.com~kmasarie](http://www.europa.com~kmasarie)



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF AGE JOURNEY

We recommend that prior to the Rite of Passage Journey, youth read a book about a young person's journey from childhood to Youth or adult. Here are some of our favorites

***RITE OF PASSAGE***, by Alexi Panshin, Ace Books, New York.

A science-fiction story of a young girl's passage from child to adult. Called from her carefree childhood games to learn the survival skills she will need to survive her initiation on a hostile planet. This Nebula Award-winning book is fun to read and filled with refreshing reflections about the journey of puberty. This book follows a young person through a whole Passage experience, and would provide a context for what the youth will be participating in. (Even though ours is not nearly as dangerous.)

***THE EDUCATION OF LITTLE TREE***, by Forrest Carter, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. A young boy is orphaned at 5 years old and goes to live with his grandparents, eastern Cherokee Hill country people who live at the margins of civilization during the 1930's depression; His grandpa teaches him about the world of nature and his grandma about the world of books. Life brings him meaningful passages. This autobiographical tale brings real meaning to the idea of Life as a Journey.

***DANDELION WINE***, by Ray Bradbury, Bantam Books, New York. Twelve year old Douglas Spaulding experiences the joys and sorrows of growing up. His encounters of the summer include the joy of new tennis shoes, a happiness machine, and the death of his grandmother. A magical tale of growing up.

***HARRY POTTER and the Sorcerer's Stone***, by J.K. Rowling, Scholastic Press, New York, 1997. Rescued from the outrageous neglect of his aunt and uncle, Harry Potter receives a call to attend the foremost school for witches and wizards. Harry, his fellow students and the groundskeeper discover a plot which could destroy the school.

***THE SEARCH, THE TRACKER, THE VISION***, by Tom Brown Jr., Berkley Books, New York. 1979, 1991, 1995. Tom Brown, jr. didn't do well in school. His best friend had a similar experience. Luckily, the friend's native American "Grandfather" adopted the boys and helped them discover their Nature Intelligence. Each of these books tell his life story through different experiences. These are the true stories of one of the most talented wilderness trackers in the world.

A Program of the Institute of Cultural Affairs

22421 39th Avenue Southeast, Bothell, Washington 98021-7941 (425) 486-5164 email [icarlc@igc.org](mailto:icarlc@igc.org)

## Dear Unitarian Universalist 8th and 9th Graders,

You are invited to participate in a very exciting "Coming of Age" program for 9th and 10th graders (as of next fall). "Coming of Age" is a term used by many UU congregations to describe the transition which teenagers make as they move from childhood to adulthood. In some cultures, thirteen year-olds are married and have children, while in our culture, 13 year olds look forward to 5-12 more years of school.

Given that "growing up" is a long and complicated task, this program doesn't make an attempt to create "grown-ups." What it does provide is a community of friends and structured experiences which will enable each of you to make choices about ways in which you want to grow up. It is a chance for you to find out about yourself: your gifts, your strengths, and your weaknesses.

### Coming of Age Program

During the course of 1993 and 1994 (August '93 - June '94), youth from a number of Minnesota and Wisconsin congregations will come together for four retreats and an optional service project. Each retreat will have a different focus but each will contribute to understanding yourself. (*Be sure to read the statements of former participants on the pink sheet*).

### WHAT THIS PROGRAM CAN OFFER YOU

#### A CHANCE TO:

- \* learn about yourself
- \* stretch your concept of who you are and what you can or can not do
- \* learn to accomplish things as a team beyond what you can do by yourself
- \* take responsibility for yourself and accept the consequences of your decisions
- \* increase self confidence
- \* form deep friendships with other teenagers who are experiencing many of the same joys and frustrations
- \* enhance your ability to communicate effectively
- \* have a say in designing your own future and in becoming more confident in your decision making

### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Each youth accepted into this program must be willing to accept full responsibility for their participation. The decision to participate must be yours, not your parents', youth advisor's, or Religious Educator's. Youth are expected to:

- \* take personal responsibility for attending each retreat
- \* participate fully in all activities and events
- \* contribute to and support others in the program
- \* be respectful of self, others and property
- \* be part of a larger team.

PARENTS CAREFULLY READ THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS AND SHARE THEM WITH YOUR 8TH OR 9TH GRADER. THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN 40 PARTICIPANTS (there are over 100 potential participants). Participation will be on a first come, first serve basis. In the next week or so one of the program's volunteer staff will call to talk with both you and your son or daughter. If you have questions between now and then call

**Dear Parents,**

We are inviting your 8th or 9th grader to participate in a Coming of Age program designed specifically for Unitarian Universalist youth. Our world is changing so rapidly that it is no longer clear how we should prepare our youth for adulthood, or protect them en route. Youth live in a world of complex issues, rapid change, pressures and stresses. Youth are bombarded by the media, exposed to drugs, violence, a deteriorating environment, and sexual issues. Our youth lack role models and mentors. The stage we call "adolescence" is a relatively new phenomenon created by changes within the past 100 years. We no longer honor a child's transition to adulthood, but hold our youth in the limbo of adolescence and do not clearly mark their passage.

**Program Purpose:** This program is designed to address your youth's passage from one stage to another. This program can offer your youth a chance to:

- learn about themselves (fears, messages which block action, their strengths and gifts)
- meet other teenagers who are experiencing many of the same trials/frustrations
- participate in a group of youth and adults who affirm and support them
- make decisions individually and as a group and take responsibility for the outcome of those decisions
- look at some of the joys and difficulties of this transition in his/her life
- celebrate their uniqueness and honor the gifts they have to contribute to the world

## COMPONENTS

### Adventure Weekend August 13,14 at Taylors Falls

This 24 hour experience will be led by professional "Outward Bound" type "High Adventure" youth workers, who will provide profoundly challenging and exciting experiences for your son or daughter. S/he will form a close bond with other UU youth from many UU churches and fellowships, expand his/her ideas about self and take responsibility for his/her life. The group will be physically, mentally and emotionally challenged. They will get dirty, tired, frustrated and challenged to go beyond how they see themselves. They will scale rock faces (professionally supervised), and tackle difficult group and individual challenges. The outcome of this experience will be an exaltant and bonded group of teenagers who will be partners for each other throughout this program and in the coming years. They will have stretched their ideas of self, and learned about service to others and building community.

### Wizard of Oz Weekend September 17th and 18th, Rochester, MN.

The Wizard of Oz is a metaphor for leaving home, finding allies, escaping the "poppy fields" or entrapments of life, encountering/meeting/conquering dangers, unmasking false gods, and returning home. We show sections of the Wizard of Oz film and then do activities that put the story in the context of their lives and experiences.

### The Medicine Wheel February 4, 5, 6 at Whitewater State Park (indoor retreat center)

The Native American Medicine Wheel is a metaphor for physical/emotional/spiritual growth, finding personal strengths within one's self, recognizing life as a cycle, and experiencing being in relationship with the universe. Each of the four directions of the medicine wheel will be experienced through activities.

**Vision Quest** May 6, 7, 8 at Whitewater State Park (primitive camping area)

The vision quest is a time alone in nature to find purpose and direction in one's life, to be receptive to the beauty and direction in one's life and that of the natural world, to find inner strengths and gifts, and to celebrate and honor what it is to be male, and what it is to be female.

**May Recognition Dinner** May 14th (tentative date)

A dinner for all participants, their parents and siblings to celebrate the completion of the program, and the changes that have taken place.

**Group Service Project** (late spring, first part of summer) Many participants of the last program spent 6 days at a camp working with physically and mentally disabled youth and adults.

## EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS AND YOUTH

To achieve the results this program provides depends on several things:

- the cooperation, good will, and commitment of each participant
- the cooperation and support of parents
- regular attendance (each component of this program is important)

Producing this year-long program for youth is demanding for our volunteer staff of 5 adults: 2 males and 3 females. We will need parental support on some of the weekends (preparing meals, assisting in setting up, running a craft project)

Ultimately the decision to participate or not **BELONGS TO THE YOUTH**. We will not accept any youth who doesn't accept full responsibility for their desire and willingness to participate. Any youth who abuses the trust of the group or violates the agreements will be suspended from the program.

## COSTS

The cost of this program will be around \$175 per youth. It is based on our estimated costs for professional consultants for the "High Adventure" weekend, facilities and program costs. The cost is minimal when contrasted with the invaluable experience and life changing learning that will take place.

The fees are non-refundable as we have no outside funding for this program and must guarantee our reservations for the "Adventure" program well in advance, based on the total number of enrolled participants. We cannot give refunds for retreats not attended. The program comes as a package. While we realize that this is a large amount for some parents, what is potentially available for your youth in this experience can't be measured in terms of dollars. If the fee is a hardship, we ask that you contact your congregation or R.E. program to work out a way to earn money for scholarships, so that no one who wants to participate is left out.

**NOTE:** Please talk about this program with your son or daughter. Let them know that one of the adult leaders will be calling to tell them more about it and answer any questions they may have. We are interested that as many UU youth as possible participate in this program but because of the numbers of potential participants, those who register first will have the greatest chance of getting in. This is the third time we have provided this program and we can promise you it will make a lifelong impression on your youth.

If you and your youth are definite about participating, fill out the application form and return it with your payment. We will still call and talk with each youth who applies.

Materials for this program --a 180 page manual  
is available for \$35

Beth Brownfield -- Rustic Lodge Press  
107 W. Rustic Lodge  
Minneapolis, MN 55409

# *Appendix D*

## *Forms*

# Confidential Information

from the parents of

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**Parents,**  
**Please help the staff to understand your child.**

While this is not a camp for children with discipline problems, it is our experience that children this age (which has been described as the age of separation or individuation) have many developmental struggles. In order to best mentor your children, we need to know things about each one which can be helpful. This information will not be shared with other campers or their parents and will be kept confidential.

## EXPECTATIONS

**What are your expectations for the results of this journey for your child?**

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**What do you understand to be your child's expectations for the journey?**

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**What do you expect to be the greatest challenge for your child on the trip? (Physical requirements, homesickness, fears or phobias, dealing with peers, relation to opposite gender peers, teamwork, reaction to authority, absence of TV/Radio/Video games/junk food?)**

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## YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD

**Describe your relationship to your child. How has the need for children to separate from their parents exhibited itself in your situation?**

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**What have you discovered to be the most effective way to maintain discipline with your child?**

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(over)

## FAMILY SITUATION

Lives With:

- ☐ Natural father & mother,  
☐ Natural mother & Step father, ☐ Natural father & step mother,  
☐ Only with Father, ☐ Only with Mother,  
☐ joint Custody arrangement (lives part-time with each natural parent),

Siblings at home:

Name

Age

Full/half/Step


In the past 5 years, has child lived with or experienced the effect of any of the following?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism in Family?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Abuse in family+               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Re-marriage of one or both parents? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death of family member, close friend or pet?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption or foster placement?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Threatening illness of Anyone close to them? |  |

## SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What types of extra-curricular activities is your child involved in? (School, Scouts, Church) What Awards has child recieved? What types of special interests/talents?


What type of student is your child? (relationship to school, types of grades, discipline issues)


## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Will there be any special travel arrangements, any relatives that may choose to visit during the summer or any other extenuating circumstances that would require pre-planning or coordination? (we must have a letter from a parent giving permission for an individual other than the parent to pick up your child!)




# Coming-Of-Age Journey Participant's Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, choose to accept the challenge of the Coming of Age Journey. I recognize that for 3 weeks I will be part of a community committed to a very special and very personal experience. I have decided to become part of this community because it is my desire to expand who I am and what I am able to do in my life.

I will help create a Journey that is respectful, fun, and celebrates myself and every member of my group.

I will honor myself and my Coming of Age Journey by agreeing to:

- Be considerate of other people's feelings,
- Refrain from cursing,
- Use only what belongs to me or ask permission to borrow anyone else's belongings,
- Respect all animal and plant life as well as the environments in which we travel,
- Work out disagreements through communication rather than violence,
- Help others and accept who they are, as I would like to be helped and accepted,
- Participate fully, to the very best of my abilities, in every activity.

I will respect the health of our community by committing to refrain from any use of drugs including tobacco and alcohol and will not engage in any intimate sexual relations.

I know that I will be spending my Journey in a natural environment where TV, radio and video do not exist. In my backpack, I will be carrying everything needed for survival — clothing, shelter, and my share of the group's food, cooking gear and/or first aid equipment.

In these rugged wilderness areas, I realize I will be without ready access to emergency rescue or medical aid, and the terrain, the weather, potential encounters with wildlife, and travel to and from the trailheads in motor vehicles all subject me to the risk of accident, injury or even death. Because of these dangers, I realize the importance of following the leaders' instructions at all times, including the preparation phases of the outing, and I agree to obey such instructions.

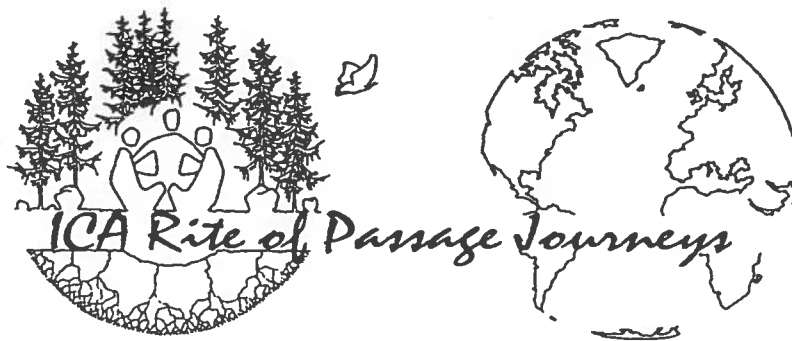
Throughout the journey, it will be up to me, as part of the community, to stay safe, cook all of our meals, set up camps, and enjoy ourselves.

I believe I have what it takes to meet these challenges. I believe it is possible to discover more about myself than I could ever have imagined.

I am ready to have one of the most important experiences of my life.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## EXPLANATION OF RISKS AND DANGERS

The danger and risks associated with this outing stem from the fact that we'll be travelling and performing part of the activities described on the attached calendar in a rugged wilderness area and will be without ready access to emergency rescue or medical aid. As on all wilderness trips, the terrain, the weather (including the possibility of unexpected storms), potential encounters with wildlife, and travel to and from the trailheads in motor vehicles all subject the participants to the risk of accident, injury, or even death. While all trip activities will be supervised by qualified and experienced personnel, and while safety will be our primary concern, it is impossible to guarantee that accidents will not happen.

## AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I, the undersigned, have read the above explanation of risks and dangers associated with The ICA Rite of Passage's Vision Quest Program and realize that my participation can be a dangerous activity involving the risk of serious injury and even death. Because of these dangers, I realize the importance of following the leaders' instructions at all times, including the preparation phase of the outing, and I agree to obey such instructions.

Moreover, I understand and expressly assume the dangers of the outing activities, as outlined above, and I hereby waive all claims arising out of these activities, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, and whether for bodily injury, property damage or loss, or otherwise, which I may have against The Institute of Cultural Affairs, its employees and Volunteers.

-----  
DATE

SIGNED

## PARENTAL PERMISSION AND LIABILITY RELEASE

STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the attached explanation of dangers and risks, and I fully understand and expressly assume the risks involved in the outing activities, risks that could result in property damage, bodily injury, and even death, and I hereby release and hold The Institute of Cultural Affairs, its employees and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, and damage of every kind and nature whatever, including negligence.

Student's Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

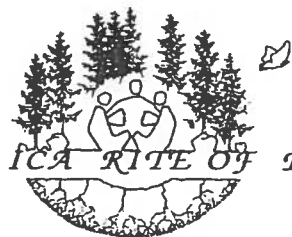
Last Tetanus Toxoid Booster \_\_\_\_\_

### AUTHORIZATION TO TREAT A MINOR

In the event that my child, a minor, becomes sick or is injured, I do hereby authorize and consent to any X-ray examination, anesthetic, medical or surgical diagnosis rendered under the general or special supervision of any member of the medical staff of any licensed hospital or medical facility in Washington or any other state. It is understood that this authorization is given to provide authority and power to render care which the aforementioned physician or medical practitioner in the exercise of his or her best judgement may deem advisable. It is understood that effort shall be made to contact the parent, but that any of the above treatment will not be withheld if the undersigned cannot be reached.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNED (Parent or Legal Guardian)



# Coming of Age Journey

## Equipment List

22421 39th Ave. E, Bothell, WA 98021

(425)486-5164

**WEIGHT** is of prime importance in both equipment and clothing! Ideally, the trail pack should weigh no more than 25% of a hiker's body weight, not more than 30%. An 80 pound youth should bring a trail pack of 15 pounds, not including boots( food for six days must also be carried). Warmth can be achieved through layering of clothing.

If it isn't on the list, please don't bring it! ICA cannot be responsible for items left at base camp which is where items not on the list must be left.

### EQUIPMENT

**backpack** -- ( external frames are cheapest but not always the most comfortable --this piece of equipment must be of appropriate size for the youth -- adult packs usually create problems unless the youth is of Adult size)

**large fanny pack** -- (or school bag )

**sleeping bag** -- (+20 degrees, lightweight synthetic fiber, -a wet downbag is useless, so must have a waterproof over sack.)

**Stuff sack for sleeping bag** -- large enough YOUTH can stuff sleeping bag into it!

**hiking boots** -- (lightweight , must fit comfortably and be water proof)

**water sox** or inexpensive Teva type **sandals**( or old tennys to wear while your boots dry out in camp)

**poncho** (preferably nylon)

**Small flashlight & extra batteries**

**water bottle(s)**

**drinking cup** with handle for hot & cold drinks

**plate, & bowl** (light metal or plastic)

**fork & spoon**

**mesh bag** (cotton or nylon -- close mesh -- for storing and sanitizing eating utensils)

**toothbrush, paste, biodegradable soap**, (in small containers)

**Sunscreen & lip salve**

**Sun glasses with keeper strap**

**Glasses (if needed) with keeper strap** instead of contacts

**mosquito repellant** (We suggest organic)

**small pocket knife** (no non-folding, switchblade or hunting types)

Women: Bring plenty of pads. Change in activity and altitude can cause irregular periods

#### **Optional:**

sleeping pad -- if weight is over, this is the first thing to cut!

Camera and film

### CLOTHING

We advocate the layering principle--several light layers rather than one heavy one to allow more flexibility as weather and workload changes. Avoid 100% cotton as it absorbs & holds moisture -- we recommend blends & quick dry clothing. (Items marked "polypro" means polypropylene, polyester, Capilene, Thermax, Procor)

#### For the trail

warm lightweight **jacket** (not down)

1 pair nylon **shells** (jogging wear) Waterproof sprayed

1 pair **longpants** (Not Cotton)

2 pair **shorts** (Quick dry)

1 set **thermal long underwear**(polypro/wool)

4 pair **underwear (not cotton)**

1 **long sleeve shirt**, polar fleece (or old wool sweater)

2 **T-shirts** (Blend)

3 pair **liner socks** (polypro/wool/silk)

3 pair **outer socks** (heavy wool/polypro, etc)

**swim suit** (Quick dry)

**towel & wash cloth**

**hat with brim**

warm stocking or ski cap

**bandana**

#### For Base camp

**small softside suitcase** for extra basecamp and traveling clothing

1 pair **Long Pants**

2 **T-shirts**

2 pair **socks, & underwear**

**Towel**

**shampoo**

pair **shorts**

**Travel clothes** if traveling by plane or train to camp

**We strongly recommend that each youth bring NO MORE THAN \$5.00 in cash for incidentals and a prepaid phone card.**

**All clothing should be clearly marked with owners name or initials.** Clothing should be functional and expendable -- due to possible loss, stain or rip. We recommend shopping at thrift shops for the clothing. Socks will probably be the exception.



# REGISTRATION FORM

Program

98.1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



ICA RITE OF PASSAGE JOURNEYS

22421 39th Ave. E, Bothell, WA 98021

(425)486-5164

e-mail: [icarlc@igc.org](mailto:icarlc@igc.org)

Grade just completed in School \_\_\_\_\_ (circle) Male Female Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Work Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (other than Parent) -- Name & Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain any physical disabilities or other characteristics that you feel we should be aware of whether they are mentioned on the Medical form or not \_\_\_\_\_

Does Participant have any allergies or health problems which require special planning? (for instance bee sting reactions, asthma, need for knee or back brace) \_\_\_\_\_

Does the Participant have any dietary restrictions (Allergies or Vegetarian)? \_\_\_\_\_

Does participant take any medications (Rx, homeopathic, over the counter)? Can they self administer? What are the consequences if they fail to take medicines? \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete this application (both sides) and mail with other forms to *ICA Journeys* Registrar--  
Health information must be received with the balance of payment 3 weeks prior to journey's start**

## CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT CARE

In the event that I am not readily available, I consent to all medical, surgical, diagnostic and hospital procedures as may be performed by a physician for my child \_\_\_\_\_  
when such treatment is immediately necessary or advisable by a physician to safeguard my child's health. I waive my right to informed consent for treatment.

I authorize qualified ICA staff or volunteers, if the need arises, to administer first aid, CPR or other treatment to my child or myself.

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

**PROPERTY LOSS** I understand that neither ICA nor the Songaia Learning Center are responsible for personal property lost, damaged, or stolen while program participants are in ICA programs or on Songaia Property.

**PHOTOGRAPH PERMISSION** I give my permission for the ICA and ICA Rite of Passage Journeys to use without limitation or obligation, photographs, film footage, or tape recordings which may include the voice or image of my child or me for purposes of promoting ICA Rite of Passage programs.

**INSURANCE** I understand it is my responsibility as a parent to provide accident and health insurance coverage for my child while she/he is participating in ICA Rite of Passage Journeys.

**ACCEPTANCE** This waiver is given on behalf of my minor child(ren) (name(s)) \_\_\_\_\_. I acknowledge the conditions stated above. If any portions of this waiver are held to be invalid, I agree that the remaining terms shall be in full legal force and effect. **I have read, or have had read to me, and voluntarily sign this waiver and release from liability.**

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of other parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

Child's Health Insurance is (Company) \_\_\_\_\_  
policy no. \_\_\_\_\_ Group no. \_\_\_\_\_ (attach a copy of Card if possible)  
• instructions for use \_\_\_\_\_

# Worksheet for Coming of Age Program

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Leader(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Does your organization currently have a program for youth? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

What is the source of interest in conducting a Rite of Initiation Program within your organization?

How would a rite of initiation program relate to, strengthen, or connect with other youth programs (within or outside of the organization?)

Would this program supplant or compete with other youth activities sponsored by your organization?

Are there outside activities which occupy the time of youth and their families which must be taken into consideration when planning and scheduling?

Who are the youth who might participate? (Or where would you recruit them from?)

What Parents are in support of/ knowledgeable of the idea of a COA program?

Are the organization's staff in support of/ knowledgeable of a COA Program?

Are the organization's leaders in support of/ knowledgeable of a COA Program?

Who are the key permission givers, and what will need to be done to get their support?

If organization support is weak, what might you do to change that situation?

Who else do you need to recruit as allies to support you in initiating the program?

Who will be the support team? (Who would you try to get commitments from?)

Co-leader \_\_\_\_\_

Co-leader \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Communications \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

Food, Sites, and equipment \_\_\_\_\_

Sites and facilities

Regular site with tables and room for physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

Place to show videos to whole group \_\_\_\_\_

Vigil \_\_\_\_\_

Lock-in Retreat(s) \_\_\_\_\_

ROPES course \_\_\_\_\_

Sweatlodge \_\_\_\_\_



# Mentored Learning

Academic Skill Enhancement

Beliefs/Credo

Cooking

Family Tree Discovery

Fire Starting

Good News Conversation

Guided Imagery

History of Tradition

Interpersonal Skills

Mentor's Circle

On-going Reflection

Practical Self Care on Journey

Regular Contexting

Repetition

Sacred Writing Study

Team/ Community Building

Learning Faith Traditions

Values Dialogue

# Practical Testing

Biking/Hiking  
Canoeing/Kayak  
Community Service  
Fasting  
Journaling  
Keeping up with own gear  
Life Story  
Minister Interview re: Credo  
Night Walks  
Poetry  
Ropes Course  
Silence  
Time in Nature  
Values Clarification  
Vigil/Vision Quest  
Witnessing to Faith

Ritual Actions	Ritual Elements	Ritual Objects
Adorning	Breathing	Altars
Affirmations	Chanting	Bells & Rattles
Anointing	Circles	Bull Roarer
Blessings	Dancing	Burning Candles
Burning the Past/	Drama	Cup, Chalice
Calling Directions	Drawing	Colors
Claiming of Promises	Drumming	Drinking Gourd,
Consecration	Eating	Death Masks
Councils of	Gift Giving	Earth -Air-Fire-Water Paste
- <i>Elders</i>	Give-away	Food
- <i>Mirrors</i>	Meditation	Icons
Death Ritual	Montages	Incense
Dream Circles	Movement	Lamps
Foot Washing	Music	Letters
Making Covenants	Planting & Harvesting	Oil & Lotions
SweatLodge	Prayer	Pins, Badges, Buttons
Symbolic Offerings	Painting,	Plants
Vigil/Vision Quest	Responsive Reading	Robes & Masks
Vows	Role Play	Shields
	Rhythm	Shells
	Sharing Wisdom	Staff /Scepter /
	Smudging	Walking Stick
	Singing	Symbols & logos
	Stories, Myths, Poetry	
	Sounds	



# Worksheet for Coming of Age Program

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Vigil \_\_\_\_\_

Lock-in Retreat(s) \_\_\_\_\_

ROPES course \_\_\_\_\_

Sweatlodge \_\_\_\_\_

# Rite of Initiation Planning Sheet

Rational Objective

Image to Shift

Experiential Objective

Anticipated Outcomes

IV. Community Celebration

I. Mentored Learning

III. Enacted Ritual

II. Practical Testing

# WHO WERE MY MENTORS

*Held  
accountability*

*Created an  
environment  
for growth*

*Fostered a  
love of  
nature*

*Listened*

*Challenged to  
be your best*

*Accepted as  
you were*

*Accessible  
counsel*

*Welcomed  
you*

*Affirmed your  
right to think  
differently*

*Set an  
example*

*Demanded  
your best*

*Challenged  
your  
world-view*

*Provided  
a space to  
be your  
gender*



Your age at the time \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Description: Age,  
occupation, relation  
to family

What did mentor do  
which spurred you to  
action?

How did mentor Affirm  
you?

What made this person a  
good mentor?

Your age at the time \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Description: Age,  
occupation, relation  
to family

What did mentor do  
which spurred you to  
action?

How did mentor Affirm  
you?

What made this person a  
good mentor?

# THE FOCUSED CONVERSATION WORKSHEET

**OPEN:** (Discuss what the conversation is about, why it is important.  
If helpful, state the focusing question.)

**OBJECTIVE**  
example questions

What happened? (FACTS - *sense* questions asking "What happened?")

- What objects did you see?
- What words/phrases do you remember?
  - What actions took place?
  - What did you notice?
- What questions were asked?

**REFLECTIVE**  
example questions

What was your response? (FEELINGS -- *heart* questions asking "What's in your gut?")

- What surprised you?
- What caused you to smile?
- What was difficult for you?
- What does it remind you of?
- What reaction do you have?

**INTERPRETIVE**  
example questions

What do you understand? (FINDINGS -- *head* questions asking "So what?")

- What's one thing you learned?
- What main insight did you gain?
- Why do you think this happened?
- What point were they trying to make?
- What explanation can you now give?

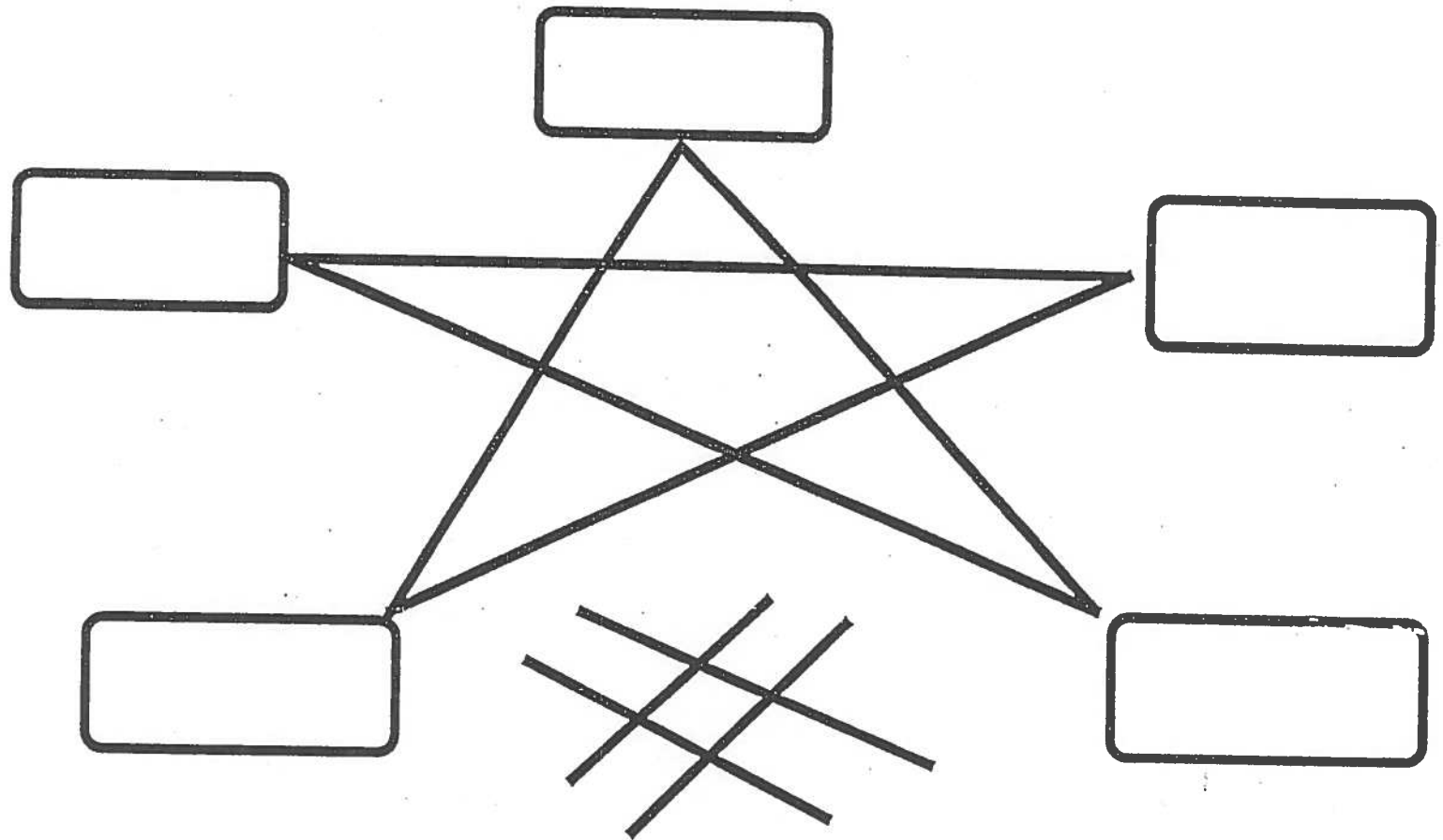
**DECISIONAL**  
example questions

What choices do you make now? (FUTURE - *action* questions asking "Now what?")

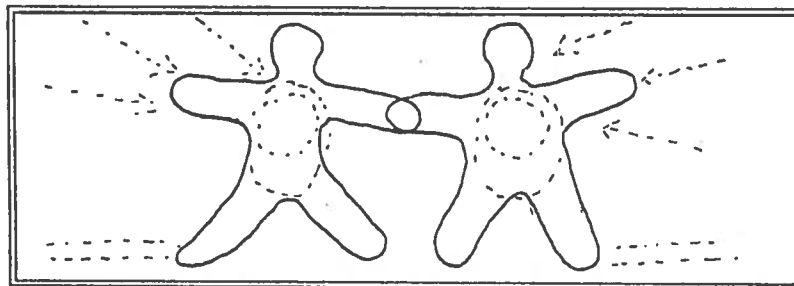
- What changes might you consider making?
- What might you do to make this worth while?
  - What next steps will you take?
- From your perspective what might the group do next?

**CLOSE:** (A statement summarizing the discussion and possibly stating what might be next.)

# Five Key Points of Image Theory



## IMAGE SHIFT EXERCISE



1. Draw the two bodies as in the illustration above. (Don't worry about imperfection).
2. Focus on yourself and your present behavior. Think of the roles that you play. Focus on your role as a (facilitator, trainer, teacher, family support worker, day care provider). Think of your present behavior that is not rooted in creativity. Write one or two of these behaviors at the bottom left by the foot.
3. Draw a circle inside of the "left body". In the circle describe the IMAGE that is responsible for that behavior (example: "A Non-Artist").
4. Think of the messages that you have received in the past (and perhaps presently) that have created this image. Write those messages on arrows pointing at the body, into the IMAGE.
5. Now consider the set of values that are locking that IMAGE into place and protecting it. Name those values (example: humility, perfection). Draw a circle around the IMAGE circle, and place those values in the "screen" that protects the blocking IMAGE.
6. Now think of the behavior that you would like to replace what has not been helpful. Describe that behavior in a short phrase on the line at the foot of the "right body".
7. Now think of THREE positive qualities that others have mentioned that you have that can help you shift the IMAGE that is limiting you. Write each of these qualities in the holding hands of the two bodies.
8. Decide on a releasing IMAGE that can generate behavior that will move you toward your vision. Draw a circle inside the "right body". Describe the IMAGE in that circle.
9. Name the values that will hold that IMAGE in place. Draw a screen over the image and write the values on that screen.
10. Now decide on messages that you can "beam" to yourself that will support those values and create the releasing IMAGE. (Think of Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic ways of doing this). Write these ideas on each of the arrows on the right.

Coming of Age Program  
**Mentor/Mentee Covenant**

This covenant is made on (month, day, year)\_\_\_\_\_ between  
\_\_\_\_\_(Mentee) and \_\_\_\_\_(Mentor).

This covenant shall conclude on (month, day, year)\_\_\_\_\_. At that time, we may renew it with new goals and activities, if we wish.

It is our intent to be co-learners together.  
During this partnership, we intend to: (Goals)

Our learning pathway shall include, but not be limited to: (activities)

It is also our intent to treat each other with respect, honor each other's time limits, and keep the confidentiality agreement (below).

Signed: Mentee\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Mentor\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Confidentiality Agreement**

We enter into this agreement as mentor and mentee. What we share with each other is confidential and each agrees not to share what we say or do with anyone without permission from the other party to this agreement. The exceptions shall be that should the mentee share anything which leads the mentor to believe that the mentee might be likely to harm herself/himself or another, or if the mentor shall be behaving in a manner which the mentee experiences as uncomfortable or inappropriate.

# Mentor/Mentee Covenant Workshop

**Instructions:** Together with your mentor, share your Life Timelines. Then, identify things which you share in common. What experiences has your mentor had which you'd like to learn more about? Brainstorm the potential goals you might have in each of the categories below and then potential things you can do together to accomplish these goals. Once you have something under each category, turn to page 2 (Mentee/Mentor Covenant) and realistically state what you anticipate you can accomplish during the time of this agreement.

**How will you get to know and feel comfortable with each other?**

**What will you do to choose your Mentee/Mentor Service Project to the community?**

**What special thing might you do together for a Church Service project?** (usher, help in the office, care for children, care for the lawn & flowers, make a new sign or something else which the church needs?)

**What will you do to prepare the mentee to write his/her Credo?**

(What subjects might you discuss? How will you identify what you as a mentee actually believe? How do your doubts enter into the discussion? How do your ideas differ from your parents? How can the two of you develop an open sharing relationship which also respects each other's boundaries?)

**What special thing would the Mentee like to learn which the Mentor will assist in the learning?**

(Examples of activities: prepare a meal together for one or both of your families; play games; watch a TV show about a problem the mentee chooses like AIDS, pollution, consumerism, child abuse, etc. and talk about how you each feel about the subject; go to a sporting event; buy 2 copies of TIME and each spend the week reading it... then get together and talk about which articles captured you attention)

## The PAST Life and Times of

IV. My Name for my life

III. Names for the  
sections of my life

I. The Years of my Life

Today's  
Date

II. The major events  
of my life

I was born