

Getting Ready for Action — Visioning a Just and Restored Earth Community

As people concerned about climate change and its impacts on our environment and health and the future for all living beings, we are often focused on protesting what's wrong as we undertake campaigns to keep fossil fuels in the ground/ban fracking, etc. These are important to be doing. But without a clear vision of what a transformed Earth Community would look and feel like, we don't know our final destiny. And it's hard to map a route without knowing where you're going.

In Paris in December 2015 after the climate negotiations, author and climate/economic justice leader Naomi Klein said that people must see the urgency of the climate crisis and also say "yes to the world we want...Now is not the time for small steps...Now is the time for boldness." (*Common Dreams*)

My hope is that you will use the meditation and suggested art project in this section of the journaling workbook to create your personal (or group) vision and a route with bold steps to get there so that together we can make the transformation real by 2050...just over 30 years from today. I have created some chart tools that you can use to map the process as well.

These exercises can be part of a several-session workshop that uses the film and workbook together.

Step One: Watch two films. In the **Down to Earth** film and in a short companion film, which is available for download through the *Down to Earth* website [downtoearthstories](http://downtoearthstories.com), the Horch family of Brunswick, Maine, shares their efforts to put their vision for a sustainable world into practice in their home and community. Their story can be a launching pad for your visioning meditation, which is described below.

Step Two: Do the Visioning Meditation (individual or group)

I first did an imagining a world without violence/without weapons back in the 1980's. Quaker educator and feminist Elise Boulding developed this idea as she was doing Alternatives to Violence workshops with prisoners. I later led the workshop with Young Friends in Indiana. The idea was to step 30 years into the future when there were no weapons/no violence and pay attention to what that looked and felt like. Then work backwards from the vision (rather than forwards from the present) to create the pathway to that world. Later Elise led a workshop for the Maine Council of Churches on creating an environmentally sustainable community.

Like Elise, the late Donella Meadows, an ecological economist, developed a visioning meditation for a sustainable world. This grew out of her experience of realizing that people who wanted to end hunger really didn't have an exciting vision of what it would be like to live in a world where there was no hunger. Initially people were reluctant to go deep and do the visioning...wanted to get right to the solutions, the studies, the public policies, etc....after going through all the reasons not to have a vision, they came around to laying out and sharing each one's vision. And that vision has been growing.

Generalities about visioning

- Not a left-brain activity
- Need to focus on what you want, not what you think is "possible"/real.
- Path is never clear at first...just need to keep focusing and it becomes clearer/share it with others who can help give it clarity
- Stay in touch with your vision so you are not seduced by substitutes

Because we are looking at how all the movements for justice are coming together as we recognize that they are inextricably linked, I have drawn from the two concepts and created my own version...

MEDITATION

Get in a comfortable position, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Imagine you are traveling to 2050, about 30 years into the just, compassionate and sustainable world you envision. Take time to look around your home, your community, your state and country, and the Earth community. What do you see in each of these places? How does it make you feel? ? What does it feel like to wake up in this world? What are relationships like between diverse peoples and people and other living beings? How is energy produced, food grown? What kinds of work are people doing? How are governments run and by whom?

This is a meditation that can be done over many sessions. When you have completed a meditation, write down what you experienced...what you saw, what you felt.

Art Projects Ideas (individual or group)

Art activity, like meditation, is a right brain function and can move you into a creative space where you are able to explore what you really want, without being encumbered by the “realist” left side of your brain that filters ideas through a “reality check.”

Drawing: On large sheet of paper, using colored markers/crayons, begin to sketch in various elements you see. Write balloon comments to fill in details. You may wish to use symbols to indicate some of the components of this transformed Earth community.

Diorama: Use modeling clay of many colors and recycled objects to create a diorama that depicts the 2050 Just and Restored Earth Community that you envision. This can be created in a cardboard box lid, a Clementine oranges box, or whatever makes sense to you. As a group activity, this can bring together different ages to create the three-dimensional vision and individuals can play off each other’s ideas.

Suggested Background Reading for Visioning/Planning Your Action Steps *(back of workbook)*

“From Occupy to Climate Justice “ by Wen Stephenson (**The Nation**, 2/7/2014)

“Climate Activists Can Learn from Black Lives Matter” by Kate Aronoff (Dec. 30, 2015 Nation of Change online newsletter)

