

## Playing with Perspectives, states of awareness 30 mins

### Intro 5mins

Working with perspective taking in sustainability – is a tool to expand and deepen capacities and skills for working effectively with diverse viewpoints, can also be a contemplative tool for self understanding and self awareness, to expand empathy and compassion.

Going to work with 3 different perspectives or states of awareness that are relevant to contemplating climate change and other environmental/sustainability challenges.

See what you can learn about yourself – your own tendencies, which is more challenging, and what is liberated by each perspective or awareness. As well as what it might be like to hold all three simultaneously.

J Macy does an exercise around “I don’t care” helps to create greater wholeness, honesty and integration

Not to promote any one of these 3 perspectives, but to practice holding all three as a dynamic whole

Be honest and sincere – don’t pretend, really see if you can find this voice in yourself

### Intention

- Learn about yourself
- Understand others
- expand your perspective taking or awareness of different states of being,
- Integrate or learn to work with all 3 – move from either or, to both and to one within the other thinking
- Develop new approaches to communicating and advocating for a position

### **Things are getting worse, Things are getting better and Things are simply what they are.**

Divide into groups of 3. Sit together in close enough proximity that you can really hear each other and aren’t distracted by other groups. Choose an ecological issue that really concerns you. Take a few minutes to sink into your feelings and thoughts about this issue – what is happening, what do you fear will happen, how might this affect you and others that you love, what’s happening?

#### **1) Things are getting worse and worse (5 mins):**

Take turns (2 minutes each) to share about your issue from the perspective that things are getting worse and worse. Allow yourself to really sink into this perspective. Be certain to include both your thoughts and your feelings. Really listen to one another (mostly in silence) and yourself as you share.

What arises for you as you listen to others? How does this perspective inform your choices? How does it feel? Does it miss anything? Or distort in any way?

Take a few deep breaths, breathing all of this in through your heart, what others shared, what you shared, the thoughts and feelings and let it go as you exhale.

#### **2) Things are getting better and better (5 minutes):**

Take a minute to find in yourself the possibility that are some aspects of our current circumstances in which things have been getting better and better. Find your own authentic voice in this. Don’t fake it. Do what you need to find this – even if it means extending your timeline to all of humanity...

And take a few deep breaths. How did it feel to hold this perspective, what does it offer? What did it inspire or catalyze in you? What was missing?

**3) Things are simply what they are – you could even say there is a perfection in all of this (5 mins)**

Holding all that you have heard, felt and spoken, allow yourself to begin to feel into the perspective that everything is simply is what it is – neither bad nor good. Just what it is...

find a resting place in this perfection. Let yourself be it.

**Reflections:** This view is timeless or outside of time. It is a view of the planet as the Great Perfection, the result of wisdom and compassion co-joined in embodied awareness. In this view wisdom reveals that there is nothing to protect and compassion that everything must be protected. This can't be grasped by the rational mind, it only occurs in transrational modes of awareness. "There is only One Thing happening, not some things that are good and others that are bad. This includes fragrant ecosystems, fresh and unsullied wilderness on spring mornings, and it includes urban industrial megagrid, ghettos and famine zones and the extinction of wild species. Life and death. Even television". John McClellan from *Nondual Ecology*

"Knowing that nothing need be done, is where we begin to move from" Gary Snyder

**10 mins:**

What did you learn about yourself? Resistances, new insights? Preferences? Anything that you would like to give more room for? New possibilities?

What did you notice? Is it possible to hold all three simultaneously? Do you have a preference for one over the other? Did you learn anything about yourself in the process? Did the exercise offer you new insights or awarenesses?

**15 mins: Discussion and closing**

Can we surrender to all the destruction and beauty arising throughout the Earth and vow to be in nonattached service to all organisms and ecological processes as well as humanity and civilization? (Hargens, *Integral Ecology*).

"We need to engage a way of being in the world that can find peace below the pain, that can see clarity through confusion, and that can skillfully act beyond the fear-based reaction and paralysis that is so rampant." Barret Brown

"When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.  
I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.  
For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free." Wendell Berry