Matrifocal Orientation (9)

Because almost all contemporary societies are androcentric (male centered), women's needs, interests, ideas, and perspectives on the world are often ignored or trivialized. Androcentrism perpetuates patriarchal systems that oppress women and severely constrain (and damage) men's lives as well. Because gender oppression is ancient and ubiquitous, a conscious effort is needed to recognize the gendered dimensions of social problems. An orientation toward social change that gives voice to women's perspectives and strives to replace patriarchy with an egalitarian, matrifocal society would go a long way toward creating a just and peaceful world for all.

Matrifocal communities, real and imagined, do not challenge patriarchy by offering its mirror image, with women in positions of dominance over men. Rather, they are organized around values traditionally seen as "feminine": peace, nurturance, cooperation, and care for others. A matrifocal society would be one in which dominance over others is not supported as either an individual or a collective goal. The needs and contributions of women would be valued equally with those of men. A Matrifocal Orientation presumes that women's interests are not special interests, but rather human interests.

Written by Lori Blewett

Collective Decision Making (10)

Divided decision making is a major factor behind the disrupted personal relationships, fragmented communities, atomized specializations, and compartmentalized organizations that have become standard in Western society. In addition there is a tendency to belittle the power of the creative use of the imagination. Yet to resolve any serious issue in any community for the long term, the collective voices of individuals, the community, experts, organizations and creative thinkers are required. However, each of these contributions is issued from a distinct knowledge culture with its own preferred form of evidence, language and outcomes. While all are required for effective decisions, each knowledge culture is likely to reject the contributions of the others. To work constructively together, the set of knowledge cultures need to accept the legitimacy of each other's contribution. Tools have been developed to assist in what is a transformational change. For example, an extensive series of workshops have demonstrated that when the knowledge cultures meet in an environment of collective learning, the outcome is a synergistic solution — one that is greater than anyone could achieve alone — followed by collaborative action.

Written by Valerie Brown

Memory and Responsibility (11)

Although the evils of the past continue to haunt us in the present, society is often unable — or unwilling — to deal with historical injustice. Thus, although specific incidents of invasion, slavery, apartheid and genocide may appear to be receding into the irretrievable past, they are never altogether absent from humankind's collective memories.

The function of collective Memory and Responsibility should promote healing, to set up patterns of behavior that constructively parse history to avoid future problems and to teach each other through mistakes as well as through well-meaning struggles towards justice and compassion. The intent is not to blame or punish the descendants of people who perpetuated misdeeds but to encourage people to reason together and strive for reconciliation.

Written by Douglas Schuler

Working Class Consciousness (12)

The need for a global consciousness, solidarity, and collaboration among working people in every country of the world is a critical task for confronting the economic, political, and social challenges that the working class faces. One important tool in this process of international working-class globalization in addition to joint collective action by workers throughout the world is the use of film, art, and media technology to bring working people together. The training of workers in every industry and every country for this work is the task ahead, and the success of this project requires that this be an international phenomenon based on grassroots struggle in collaboration with regional, national, and international labor.

The international collective voices of working people have the power to overcome the different languages, cultures, and borders that now exist. This is crucial for a new renaissance of collective self-consciousness. The future reorganization of the world economy into one controlled by the working class requires the use of these tools to build this collective and democratic power. The need to defend democratic communication rights and protections is fundamental, and education and direct action are necessary to accomplish this work.

Written by Steve Zeitzer