

Returning to True Nature

With Gina Cenciose



Meister Eckhart

Love Poems from God

WHEN I WAS THE FOREST

When I was the stream, when I was the forest, when I was still the field, when I was every hoof, every foot, fin and wing, when I was the sky itself, no one ever asked me did I have a purpose, no one ever wondered was there anything I might need, for there was nothing I could not love.

It was when I left all we once were, that the agony began, the fear and questions came, and I wept, I wept.

And tears I had never known before.

So I returned to the river, I returned to the mountains.

I asked for their hand in marriage again, I begged-I begged to wed every object and creature, and when they accepted, God was ever present in my arms.

And he did not say, "where have you been?"

For then I knew my soul-every soul-has always held him.

Coming in September, 2012

A Multi-year program designed to remove the blocks to your true nature. Facilitated by Gina Cenciose with assistance from Shulamit Day Berlevtov, Julie Champagne, John Myser and others

Look Inside – there is more to come...

Email: embodyingempathy@gmail.com

The *Returning to True Nature* NVC program consists of 2 areas of concentration:

- **Practices for Whole Hearted Living (coming back to life) inside of oneself**
 - includes different NVC practices
 - Inner Relationship and Whole Body Focusing
 - Meditative Inquiry
 - Belief work (including Byron Katie's *The Work*)
 - Reconnecting with Nature
 - Singing and movement.
- **Practices for Whole Hearted Living (coming back to life) with others includes–**
 - Dialogue Circles and councils
 - Collaborative Leadership Processes
 - Conflict Transformation with Restorative Circles
 - Group Facilitation and Decision Making Skills with NVC

Developing a deeper relation to Nature is an important part of *Coming back to life in this program*

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST AN APPLICATION

Email: embodyingempathy@gmail.com

The Container for *Returning to True Nature* FIRST YEAR:

- 3 Residential Retreats near Toronto, Ontario, Canada
The Ecology Retreat Centre, Orangeville, Ontario
<http://ecologyretreatcentre.com/retreatcentre.htm>
 - Sept 25 – 30, 2012
 - April 23-28, 2013
 - September 24-29, 2013
- Tele-classes between Retreats (ending 90 days after the last retreat)
- Ongoing mentoring and peer support
- Opportunities for in depth learning by living conflict transformation circles
- Focusing Partnerships
- Creating Communities of practice
 - We encourage people to attend in pairs from their respective communities so that they can bring this out to others in their communities together

Continued learning and leadership opportunities for 2nd year participants

2nd year participants can apply to participate as assistants and mentors to the new 1st year participants.

The retreats for the 2nd year are at:

The Ecology Retreat Centre, Orangeville, Ontario
<http://ecologyretreatcentre.com/retreatcentre.htm>

- April 29 - May 4, 2014
- Sept 23-28, 2014
- April 28-May 3, 2015



Discover your true gifts,
passions and vision

Develop new skills and
behaviors that are aligned with
this vision

Create a way of living and
leading that moves you toward
your dreams for yourself and
the world

Design and implement a self-
inspired project, giving you the
opportunity to practice new
leadership skills while making a
difference in your community

Explore your patterns of belief,
behavior and thought and
determine which ones serve
you and which can be released
and 'composted'

Receive structured coaching,
inspiration and support from
your peers between workshops

Adopt practices that help you
embody your TRUE NATURE
and your ideals, moment by
moment

Nurture a regional leadership
circle that will continue to
serve and support you on your
leadership journey after the
formal component of the
program ends

Are you ready to build a more meaningful relationship with the earth, your community and yourself?

The Returning to True Nature Program is an **advanced** 12-month to 24-month program (the 2nd year is optional and highly encouraged!) based in NVC consciousness and skills that focuses on shared leadership, deep transformation of habitual ways of showing up in the world and in having moment to moment access to our inner True Nature and to the fullness of the Natural world.

Through this program you will experience what is naturally yours – an intimate relationship with the natural world, your bodies wisdom, your psyche, and with the many aspects of being human. We will take a deep dive into RELATIONSHIPS in all of its forms. You will learn to source your leadership from this connection and stay attuned to the patterns in your own life, creating a new level of effectiveness and awareness in your leadership, your relationships and your life. We are coming together to co create how we want to live in the world, on the Earth and with each other.

This learning community is an invitation to remember our natural inheritance as an intricate part of the larger unfolding web of life. The opportunity is to begin to shift our center of gravity: out of what is conditioned and separate into what is ever becoming and connected to all life. Through intimate and conscious encounters – with each other, our own depth of body wisdom, the known and unknown aspects of ourselves and with the larger earth community that awaits – we will learn to listen and respond to the way life continually evokes us forward. By re-remembering our place within the unfolding fabric, we support our ability to live in a more conscious and mutually enhancing way with all life.

Realizing and having direct experiences with our own INNER TRUE NATURE through commitment to practicing the INNER RELATIONSHIP, we will come to know in our bodies heart and minds that we are not separate from nature but are beings in process, evolving side by side with the rhythms and cycles of the rest of life. Weaving group process, inner transformation practices and nature immersion, each experience will inform and guide the next step, supporting us in staying attuned to the unique movement that seeks to express through each of us.

The opportunity of this yearlong (to 2 year) program is to support the sustained and embodied shift necessary to meet the next step into movement forward, as individuals and as living systems. We will come together in 3 5-day sessions each year. Between our gatherings, you will be invited to ground and deepen all that is unfolding by creating and working with core routines and practices, through regular check-ins with a transformation buddy, group mentoring calls and tele-classes. Individual mentoring is also available and encouraged!

Mentoring and Collaboration During the second year of your journey, we invite you to choose a specific area of focus within the options available. Within this framework we invite you to help co create the teachings of the 2nd year around that specific area of concentration, to mentor new participants in their learning journeys, and to take on more leadership roles. During the second year we also encourage you to start your own groups back home, building communities of PRACTICE in learning new ways of being together. This could be a social change project, an empathy group, a place to practice facilitation of circle styles, a practice group for Restorative Circles, Nonviolent Communication, Inner Relationship Focusing, a support group for people, a café for conversations, the sky is the limit! That is why we encourage you, wherever it is possible to come with someone from your area.

For the first and second years, we will have a Buddy System with peers who will coach and mentor each other to build a deep container of inspiration, creativity and collaboration-supporting each other in establishing communities of practice and in co creating new living systems.

The 5 Wings of the Program

Nature Connection :

Enjoyment, like praise, is one of the most beneficially healing and naturally occurring states. You only have to watch a child or an animal to find that out! Having relationships with non-human beings is an important part of life. Being in tune with all the aspects of the life around us is deeply nourishing and invigorating. All of the basic life healing practices in wisdom traditions, such as Native American life practice and Traditional Chinese Medicine, have a solid link and grounded practice in nature connection. Nature is always present and we have an easy way of being present and relaxed and happy if we tune into it! This is a way of being and doing that pervades everyday life. Enjoyment, like praise, is one of the most beneficially healing and naturally occurring states. We will aim to come back to more aliveness in nature, experiencing the present moment alone and in group settings outside, beside a brook or a fire. It has been a huge part of our personal healing.

Renewing creativity :

In our experience, relating inside of ourselves and with others in ways other than just speaking, using other forms of expression, is a nourishing and healing way of connection to our nature. The full expression of our creativity can also include many things such as: film making, different forms of visual art, theatre, creating rituals, etc. We will be exploring singing, music, dance and drawing more specifically, as Gina has many years experience in leading peace dances, sharing different dance forms, and in creating living circles of chant, weaving song and voice with drums in community. We may also explore how to celebrate and offer our great fullness to all that is within and around us, through experiential exercises sometimes referred to as rituals.

Mentoring and Communities of Practice

In healthy, traditional cultures, mentoring is the primary method of facilitating learning and connection - everyone is a mentor, everyone has many mentors - for the length of life's journey. The mentoring model is a universal heritage; we respond quickly to its loving touch. This wing of the program provides you with opportunities for individual mentoring and communities of practice mentoring.

Communities of people who learn together from engaging in shared inquiries into issues of their shared practice is as old as humanity itself. It is just that now we are becoming conscious of it.

Developing new individual and collective capabilities together, we also develop friendships that, in turn, provide the emotional energy of sustained and generous attention to one another. When that attention is there, the joy of shared discovery and understanding flows freely among friends and through the community.

Group Life Practices :

This wing of the program begins with the exploration of the benefits of being in circle with other human beings. From there we will explore different ways of relating together in groups, participatory leadership models, and using NVC consciousness and skills to aim towards living as fully in consideration of everyone as we can, while still meeting needs for effectiveness and prioritizing energy.

Some of the practices we will explore will be:

Open space, world cafés, NVC group decision making, consensus and transformational conflict practices such as Restorative Circles. RC will be a big part of our program, and we will have our own RC learning community, with teachings, practice, and live circles.

Inner Life Practices

In this wing of our program you will explore, define and develop your relationship with your inner world - the conscious and especially the unconscious. You will be provided the tools and containers to gather the various ingredients of your whole self so that you can begin to create and live life from the consciousness and fullness of your whole being.

The specific practices we will use are:

- NVC Consciousness and Self-Empathy
- Inner Relationship Focusing
- Whole Body Focusing
- Byron Katie's "The Work"
- Presences Practices



Gina Cenciose is the creative director and root of this program: I have been living and sharing NVC intensively since 2003 and I am certified with the Center for NVC. I offer 1-3-year trainings for new NVC trainers and the general public. I also work as a certifying coordinator with the Center. My work involves going deeply with individuals and groups in realizing our full potential, living from Presence and learning to embody our most sincere ideals and dreams. I have been a social and peace activist for 30 years. I have a wonderfully nourishing meditation & contemplative practice, an uplifting musical practice and a deep relationship to the natural world, to poetry and to humor and joy! The programs I co-create and co-lead cover a broad range of topics such as facilitating open and participatory group process, learning to live with and learn from conflict and inquiring into how to co-create a more wonderful world within ourselves, in the family, at our places of work and faith. I have 15 years full time experience of working this way and enjoy working with parents, in prisons, schools, workplaces and in creating more life serving systems on all levels. I have many years of experience working with pain, trauma and the releasing of blocks to loving action that brings about more wholeness in the world.



Shulamit Day Berlevtov: As a spirit-body-mind counsellor and coach, I support women in nurturing loving relationships with themselves and the wisdom of their bodies, so that what is painful and difficult can be transformed into meaning, space and new life. Nonviolent Communication, Focusing, yoga, mindfulness, Reiki and the Tapas Acupressure Technique are all processes I use with clients. I am a certified Focusing guide and teacher, and am proud to be practicing under the direct supervision of Ann Weiser Cornell as a Featured Practitioner of Inner Relationship Focusing. I have passed my assessment for certification as an NVC trainer and am a candidate for an MA in Counselling and Spirituality (graduating in April 2012).

Embodying inner and outer nonviolence on a daily basis is at the heart of my political action. My politics are rooted in my spirituality; I identify as Jewish, and my spiritual journey is also heavily influenced by 12-step recovery, Buddhist psychology and earth-based/pagan practices, in addition to Focusing, NVC and yoga. Politically, I identify as an anarchist and feminist and see Focusing and NVC as tools to put these principles into practice.



John Myser: John graduated from the BayNVC 2007 Leadership program, Robert Gonzales' Life 2008 Program, and Linnaea Marvell's Magical Steps. In Nov 2008, he started work in Minneapolis Family Court, setting up the first Restorative Circle program to deal with family conflict. Restorative Circle provides an alternative track for families who find themselves stuck in our current legal system (an adversarial approach for families in conflict), who are seeking help to create a solution that supports divorcing families with kids, a solution that doesn't create more pain in the process. John has a passion for creating systems that are life serving.



Julie Champagne is engaged full time in social change and the transformation of consciousness, focusing on community building, deep personal transformation and environmental responsibility. She offers coaching, training, facilitation and mediation. She completed a program in micro-second degree in conflict resolution and prevention in 2011. With 10 years experience in cultural activities with youth, she founded a youth camp based on the consciousness of NVC and Living in harmony with our visions, our calling and our deepest nature. In her heart, she is fully moved to equip future generations to live in hope and authenticity. She will complete her certification in 2012 with the Center for Nonviolent Communication. She has been teaching NVC for 5 years and assisted Gina for 2 years in a number of workshops and programs. She also co leads intentional dance gatherings and ceremonies of all kinds in her community, in order to celebrate and honour the fullness of the transition points of our lives.