

Session 10 Guide
Deepening Practices and Questions
Chapter 9: A New Tribalism and a New Republic of the Heart

This week focuses on **Chapter 9** of *A New Republic of the Heart*. As always, there are more questions here than you'll have time to discuss, so I suggest you select a manageable few to deeply consider, journal about and/or discuss.

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In addition to the “inner work” described in Chapters 6 and 7, and the “outer work” described in Chapter 8, Chapter 9 and 10 focus on the “inter(personal)-work” of human relationships and communication. So we take a deep look at what it takes to deepen and uplift the interpersonal aspects of practice. We examine the powerful synergies unleashed by communities of practice (as already glimpsed in the mycelium metaphor introduced in chapter 8), and we look at what can be learned from the integral community’s experiments with “we-space” and some of the practices through which we can create higher shared states of consciousness and truly productive evolutionary dialogue. It is a rich and detailed delineation of mutual awakening and mutual deepening as a whole “field” of practice.

Deepening Questions:

1. Most of us recognize the importance of good communication, but we seldom imagine the possibility of a profound transformation of our own ways of being in conversation. This chapter explores how new and different ways of communicating can heal dissociation, open deeper resonance, stabilize freedom from entrancement and denial, create deep mutual support and safety, generate creativity and new ideas, and activate social agreements and leadership. *In what ways does this chapter clarify how you can learn new ways of communicating? What opportunities for meaningful communications do you see opening up in your life? How can you take advantage of them?* (See pages 261–63.)
2. “Our intensifying global predicament...will force us into unprecedented levels of cooperation—and communication. I often point out that interventions are called for, analogous to an addict’s family sitting him or her down for a life- changing conversation. As a human collective, we are getting a signal that asks us to a “new sobriety” as we rapidly change our lifestyles, our economy, our very ways of being “civilized” human beings. We are beginning to have this intervention conversation among ourselves. Our impulse to deny, avoid, or hide from our predicament is becoming untenable. Some of us are beginning to get real, to speak with one another about the elephant in the room.” (See page 262) In a real way, the whole book is my attempt to have such a conversation with my reader. *Have you been able to have such conversations with others? How deeply have those*

conversations gone? What limits do you encounter (in others and in yourself)? What are you learning about the deep work of having such conversations?

3. “Intersubjectivity” (pages 265–66) is a category of experience and growth often overlooked. It refers to our “shared interiors”—areas where mutual understanding and “agreement space” take place. It is directly implicated by our larger crisis, when I argue that it calls for *collective* heroism, as pointed to by Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh when he declared, “the next Buddha may very well be a sangha [community].” *Do you agree that we’re called to collective heroism? What opportunities do you see to uplift the character of “we-space” in your direct experience? In what ways can you co-create a higher intersubjectivity? What obstacles must be overcome? What qualities might you need to develop in order to become a fully-responsible citizen of a Buddha-like community of practice? How can you build those capacities in this moment?*
4. Tribalism, defined by ancient divisions between our in-group and the out-group “other”, has always defined human experience. As humans fail to address global challenges due to powerful tribal rivalries, the dangers of tribalism are widely viewed as the key problem. In this book, I use the word “tribal” in a different sense — to point to human-scale relations and collective dialogue with a large, but small-enough group of people that we can actually relate to. Tribally-oriented social instincts are woven very deeply into our underlying neuropsychology, so they cannot be dismissed or eliminated altogether. *Can we make our way into a new kind of tribal affiliation that is also a genuine “community of practice”? Is this part of what we are attempting as we relate to one another in the context of this course? How will our ways of relating with each other have to deepen and grow and expand to be a truly new, heroic kind of “tribalism”? Reread pages 266–71, and consider the profundity of a new, more enlightened tribal politics. Consider (a) what will it take for intra-tribal relations to forge next-level communities of practice? and (b) What might it require for inter-tribal dialogue and negotiation to create a new basis for “politics”? How might the universal human tendency toward tribal relations function as a path toward social coherence in a planetary era?*
5. Consider this particularly provocative comment from page 268 of this chapter: “What will happen when white evolutionaries start showing up at white identitarian gatherings, sincerely acknowledging their tribal connection and even brotherhood with their racial cousins? Instead of rejecting and refusing to participate with “racists,” they might begin to reknit some deep divisions in the fabric of their broken extended families.” I wonder whether my appreciation for and solidarity with people of color causes me to feel a tribal bond *only* with my globalist tribes, preventing me from participating actively in my identity and connection with other “white” Americans. *Have progressives “ceded the white tribal territory” to racists? It can be argued that Trump and his supporters are selling out the long term well-being of white Americans for short term gains, sacrificing our children and grandchildren for the sugar high of hyped economic growth, and increasing global resentment in ways for which we and ours will ultimately pay. Consider: Is there any way to effectively stake a claim for the soul of white America, speaking to and embodying the noble qualities that are best in the character of white Americans? If there is, will the effort be*

doomed to be regarded negatively by people of color on the left? What do your answers reveal about your perceptions of tribalized America?

6. “We-space” practices often evoke and cultivate higher shared states. Some of these practices bring forth the sensed presence of an interpersonal intelligence, an intelligent “we” that seems to exceed the intelligence of any individual. *What have been your most transformative and valuable experiences of we-space? Can you describe them to others, and attempt to recreate them, in whole or in part? (Highly recommended!) How do these experiences and practices change you? How do they enhance and refine the ability to think “from the whole to the parts”? How do they affect your sense of personal identity? In what ways might such practices actually help heal humanity and the planet? (See pages 271–75.)*
7. This chapter includes a rich consideration of the boundaries needed to contain and support deep conversations (pages 275-279), what it takes to form your own “we-tribe” (pages 279-283), the paradoxes of togetherness and autonomy (pages 283-285) and the nature of the practices and shared agreements that shape any work to deepen we-space (pages 285-289). Deep results clearly require dedication and commitment over time. This may or may not have been possible for you during this course, but in your reading of this chapter and in your conversations with other members of our course community, you probably have new insights into how you can explore these possibilities. *Where do you see opportunities to deepen we-space? What kinds of support will help you succeed? Does this translate into an interest in going further with members of this community? Do you have facilitation skills you’d like to bring to bear? Are you interested in participating in a we-space experiment with a member of our course community who would like to conduct such an experiment?*
8. Thomas Steininger and Elizabeth Debold have offered five grounding statements of engaging in “emergent dialogue practice” (see pages 289–92) that have proved particularly helpful in their application to we-space practice—but are also excellent for enhancing ordinary conversations. *Read these five points aloud, and apply them in your group conversation. How does exposure to these principles influence your conversation? What did they make possible?*
9. A “new republic of the heart” (see pages 292–96) is the central metaphor of this book — pointing to a whole new pattern of human society, suggesting that we must step across a threshold into a new way of being individuals and a new way of being friends and conversation partners and fellow practitioners. *Please write a paragraph describing your intuition of what it is for you to approach a new republic of the heart as a “novice”, with humility and curiosity and dedication? Note that this metaphor is profoundly paradoxical, describing something that is (a) inevitable and already coming into being spontaneously, (b) nascent, barely beginning at the margins of society, needing your heroic leadership, (c) dependent on communities of deep practice, which will inevitably need to learn lessons, (d) urgent and immediate and mandatory. What are some of the ways you are able to actively bring a new republic of the heart into being? What are some of the ways you can bring it*

into being by surrendering the impulse to try to control the process—and regarding it as an unfolding emergent mystery?

Group Practice:

- 1) Begin your book group meeting with a reading that evokes a felt sense of contact with the spirit of we-space. Here is a passage from this week's chapter:

At the most personal and practical level, honestly relating present moment experience and feelings immediately gives your conversation partners access to your experience. That is the first building block of interpersonal intimacy. Among the simplest of we- space practices is narrating "what I'm feeling [or noticing or experiencing] right now."

What exactly are participants practicing and intending? It varies. In some contexts, participants sense into the felt qualities of the subtle, shared intersubjective field, while in other contexts they will orient toward expressing the intelligence emerging from expanded, shared awareness, or toward very immediate, personal emotional or interpersonal content. Some practices orient away from all content, toward awareness itself, a shared field of spaciousness, consciousness, love, or joy. There can be a progression, in which participants focus on one orienting principle, and then on another, and another.

Attention almost always shifts from the gross level of sensory experience. It may go directly to the intersubjective field, but often it is first redirected to subtle or causal levels of experience, in ways that are informed by practices of meditation and contemplation. Sometimes the injunction is to relax back into witnessing awareness, becoming attentive to—and as—awareness itself. When this is practiced authentically by a group, consciousness itself can seem to intensify palpably. Other practices involve opening awareness into subtle information fields containing intuitive information and wisdom that is normally unavailable to mental consciousness. Another widely embraced purpose is to tune in to the universal creative evolutionary impulse as it expresses itself through the subjective experience of the participants. All these higher principles can be directly experienced subjectively when practiced alone by each individual, but when individuals come together and practice them effectively in a group, they show up more powerfully in the collective field, deepen, and self- actualize.

- 2) Then, take 10 minutes to speak, as moved, "popcorn style" (pop when you're ready) noticing what's present in the field of feeling and attention for everyone, allowing you to get into touch with one another and the shared field. "What's present is decompressing from rush hour traffic"; "What's present is anxiety about such-and-such"; "What's present is curiosity about what can happen among us now"; "What's present is goodwill and a desire to trust and also a subtle fear of trusting too much"; "What's present is a sensing of the qualities of your listening, which feel soft, or round, or swirling, or [a color]". Let yourself receive and be influenced by others' sharing and let your sharing reflect a shared field that builds as you share.

- 3) Then, take turns sharing, in at least two rounds, if possible:

During your turn, speak for 5 minutes (if possible; adjust as needed) repeatedly simply completing the open sentence, "What I'm experiencing (or noticing or feeling) right now is..." Let this exercise take you into deeper and subtler levels of your experience and your contact with one another.

- 4) Then take 10 minutes to speak spontaneously, popcorn style, completing the open sentence, "What WE are experiencing now is..."
- 5) Then, five to ten minutes before your end time, take turns sharing about your experience of this we-space process.

Personal Practice

Continue to do the practices we have been doing (this mostly repeats from previous weeks, other than #1) :

1. Re-read page 281 and then, dare to open up a conversation with a smart, sincere, deep friend, in which you say something to the effect of, "I realize that it is possible for our relationship to become even more alive and fruitful, and for us to edge into something new. I greatly value our connection, and I wonder what else might be possible. Where can we go where we haven't gone before? Where are the limits here, and how can we go beyond them?" Explore what it takes to venture towards creating new depths of intimacy in a trusted relationship.
2. Expand your "Moments" practice, perhaps breathing to and from the heart in random moments throughout the day, and remembering and enjoying the radical "okayness" of existence.
3. Establish or deepen or lengthen or refresh your "Mornings" practice. Include, if possible, at least 10 minutes conscious movement and 10 more minutes of conscious stillness (meditation). Prepare space in your home and agreements with others in your household as necessary. Consider a level of commitment that you can sustain for the duration of this course.
4. Continue to engage conscious activism. Reach out and do something (however small) that is practical and concrete to positively influence politics in the place where you live.

If you live outside the USA and would like to influence US politics (which are in crisis and influence the whole world) even though you can't donate to candidates or parties, you can

consider donating to US nonprofit organizations focused on the environment, civil liberties, gun control, indigenous communities, women's rights, racial justice, and/or many other key issues.

If you are in the United States and you have no ready connection to how you can help, consider going to <https://postcardstovoters.org> and register. Or work with another such program, called [Vote Forward](#).

Do you know anyone whose vote might help make a difference but who might NOT vote? Reach out such people. See if you can get them to commit to voting formally on <https://iwillvote.com>. Make a bigger or more regular political donation than you otherwise would. In whatever ways are congruent for you, start doing something, moving your body through time and space, to make a difference to our upcoming midterm elections. This will not only make a difference in the world, it will change your relationship to the larger issues we are discussing.