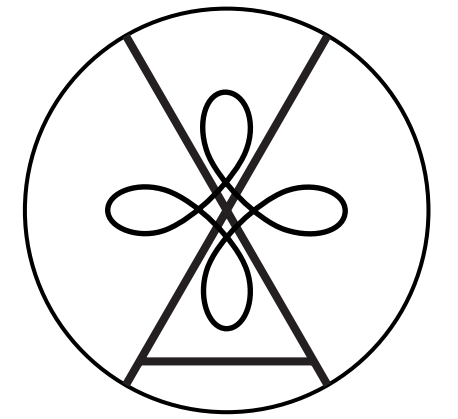


SENSING SPACE

The Sacred Here and Now

An Ecofeminist Approach to
Building a Better World



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FOREWORD

This e-book is an introduction to a practice I call **Deep Design**, an ecofeminist perspective on how to build the New Earth, a new paradigm of global sustainability. **Sensing Space** presents a new vision for conscious living so that we can effectively shift the course of human evolution toward wisdom, justice, and peace.

My hope is that by sharing this framework for birthing a New Earth, you will be supported in realizing your own power as an agent for change. Equality, justice, respect, and abundance for all are inherent aspects of a sustainable world, and they are qualities we must consciously develop if we hope to affect positive change in the face of the many crises we now collectively face.

Sensing Space is a compendium of perspectives and practical tools which can be used to bridge the gap between your internal and external realities, so that no matter who or where you are you can find your way back home to the Sacred Here and Now where our true power lies.

Since birth I have been highly sensitive, empathic, and intuitive with an inclination toward the spiritual; until recently these things have made life more difficult than wonderful. This book is my first attempt to articulate on a large scale the insights and perspective of the softer, more gentle wisdom of sensing, as opposed to doing.

Since 2007, when I began my journey to study and practice architecture, I have been guided by a deep sense of presence. I began to practice mindfulness in the tradition of Plum Village without any real understanding of the deep trauma which this practice would help me heal. Besides the great buddha, Mother Earth, Thich Nhat Hanh has been my greatest teacher.

In 2010, because of a life-long journey with fibromyalgia which completely alienated me from my body, I was introduced to the practice of yoga. Chronic pain has been my other great teacher, it has informed my approach to life and embodiment in all ways and continues to initiate me into fuller presence.

What I love to do in all aspects of life is create experiences of the sacred. As you read, skim, or flip through **Sensing Space**, I invite you to envision yourself within the most basic sacred technology, a circle, surrounded by and connected to peers, neighbors, and ancestors.

As you enter the space inside these pages, you may choose to let your whole body, mind, and spirit be engaged with this act of creating a new world as you absorb the awareness that you are not alone in this process.

I invite you to follow your breath and connect with your own inner knowing which allows us to resonate with and embody truth.

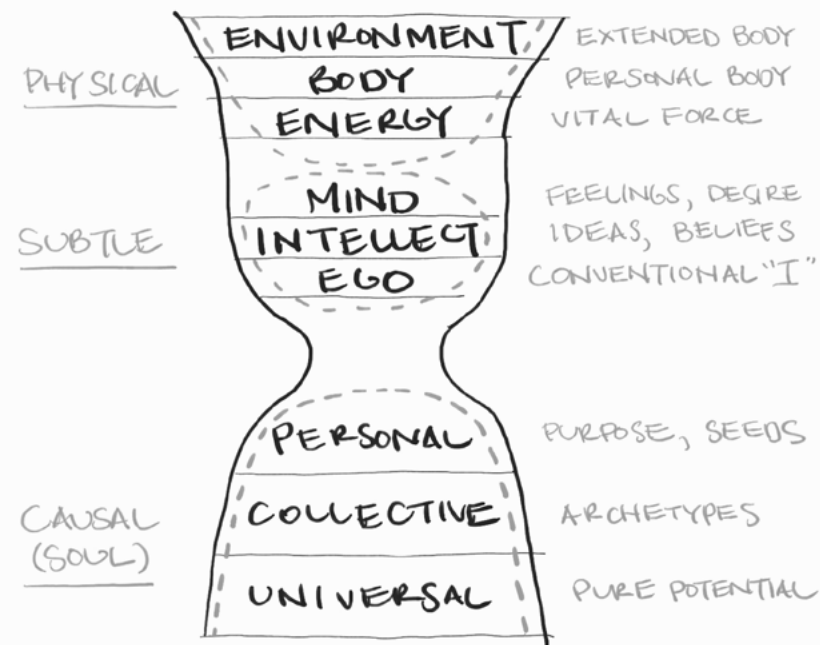
The light in me honors the light in you.



*Veronica Anderson
June 21, 2020
Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica*



THE LAYERS OF LIFE



I arrived at the yoga studio for the first time because I was 19 and perpetually in too much pain to climb a flight of stairs. The vicodin I was prescribed for the pain left over from a traumatic surgery only further alienated me from my body and the world. The friends who purchased me a year of unlimited yoga unknowingly saved my life.

What no one realized was that as a result of growing up a sensitive girl in an abusive home and oppressive society I was suffering from Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) and fibromyalgia.

Like so many people today, who are anxious, depressed, stressed, overwhelmed, and burnt-out, I felt hopeless. Still, very deep down inside,

I knew there had to be another way.

I arrived to that studio feeling completely skeptical and abandoned by life. I could not even bring myself to say the word God despite a life-long sense of love for the Divine. What I discovered on that mat over many sweaty, tearful hours was the divinity within me, or rather, the way into the divinity of All That Is.

Yoga means "union." It is a noun, a verb, and "a state of being in which the elements and forces that comprise your biological organism are in harmonious interaction with the elements of the cosmos."* I learned to come home to myself.

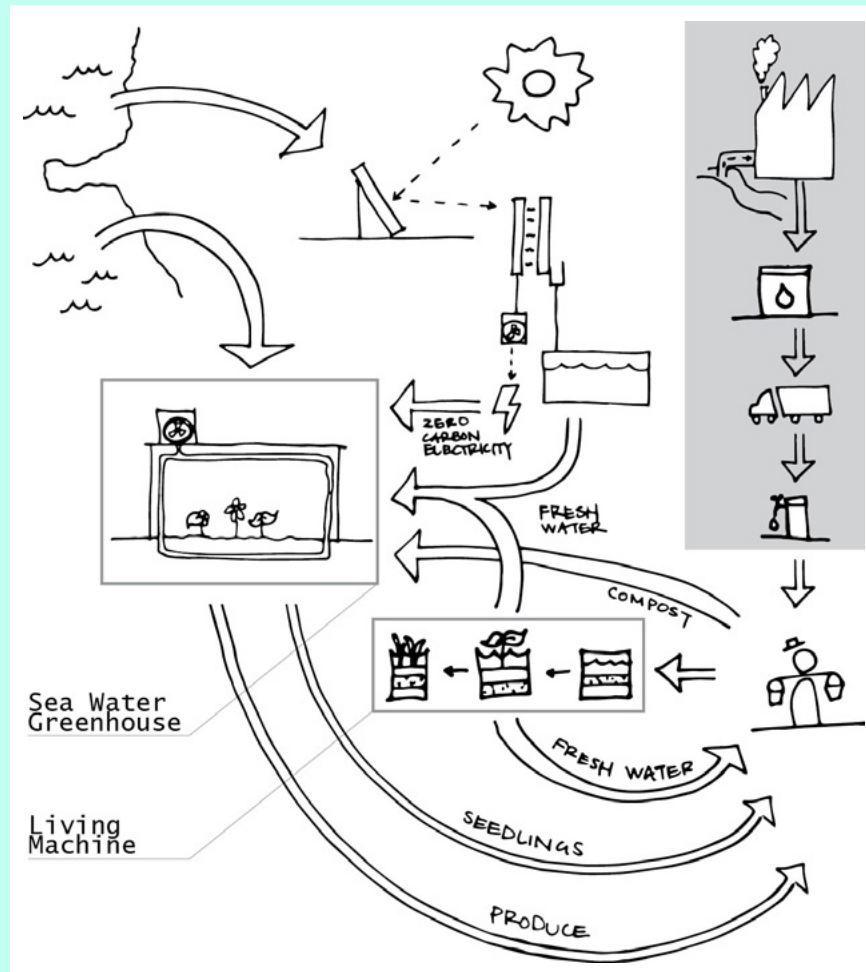
As we birth a new paradigm we are asked to change our minds and emotions, access the wisdom of life, and to continuously open to new possibilities. Practicing yoga can expose us to the wisdom of the body which exists in an ever-changing world, as we are now called to do.

Yogis are "dynamic and creative forces for positive change."*

* Quotes from The Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga by Deepak Chopra



Yoga and Architecture: Complimentary Practices



Lima is the second most extensive desert city in the world and it faces significant water scarcity issues. There are also four million people who live in slums without access to city infrastructure at all. This is a plan for using natural technologies to recycle water, creating jobs and uplifting families through better community spaces and greater quality of life.

The intersection between yoga and architecture is the human body, a complex organism which is infinitesimally sensitive.

I grew up as an architect during a time when how to define sustainability was still a question. The United Nations put that discussion to bed in 2012 when it ratified Agenda 2030 which includes seventeen goals for sustainable development.

A year later, when I presented my first professional thesis on an ecological water treatment system to stimulate the economic health and social wellbeing of slums in Lima, Peru, along with a proprietary system to diagnose and increase the resiliency of cities, I was laughed at and harshly criticized. Older architects were not ready to take on their role in shaping the future.

Winston Churchill famously said that we shape our buildings and later they shape us. Most of the world lives in urban areas, places where pavement and glass are more familiar than birds and grass. As a result, we face mounting public health crises including “sick building syndrome” from too much time spent indoors.

In yoga postures, we learn about the structure

of our body, enhance our balance, and open up rigid or stuck places in our joints, muscles and fascia.

In buildings that make us sick, we forget what it means to be human, to feel air and sunlight on our skin and move freely in our bodies like the rivers and oceans which keep us and our planet alive.

In yoga practice, we learn to unite our mind and body by witnessing all the ways our ego tries to trick us out of staying still, whether in meditation or in a deep stretch.

In buildings that make us well, we are connected with the planet, the ever-changing weather and life which teaches us how to soften and adapt to change.

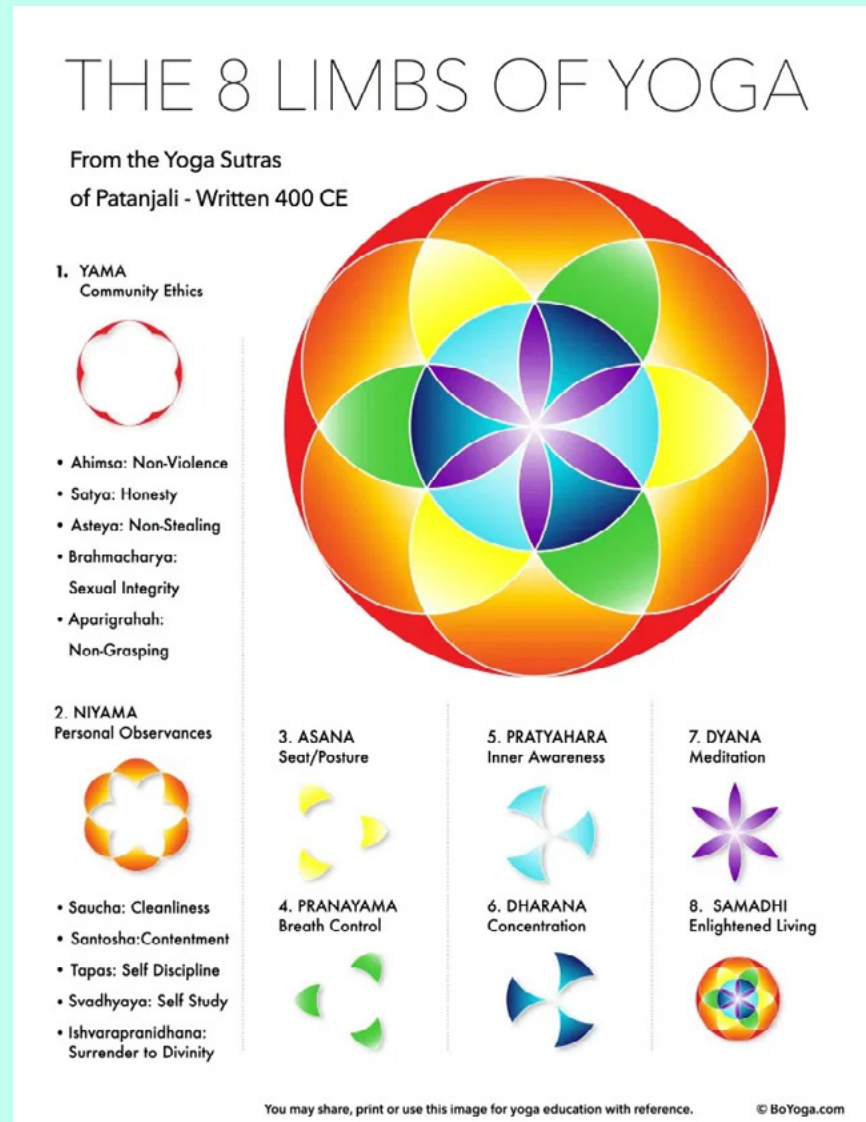
Yoga and architecture are both healing practices, they are regenerative and connective.

Biophilic architecture is the term used to describe spaces that are designed to produce and inspire a love of life. As we will see in the following pages, practicing yoga is to be in tune with all the different dimensions of life.

Loving life, is a choice each one of us has to make in order to create a better world.



The 8 Limbed Path to Evolution



The Eight Limbs are the central yogic teaching of a path and a way forward to conscious living. They are cumulative but each is also integrally important to the whole. Enlightenment is reached through mastery of each level or part of the mandala.

Yama

The majority of mainstream sustainability rhetoric focuses on critical basic elements to resiliency such as zero waste, regenerative practices, good governance, social justice, conservation and preservation. These are like *yamas*, the foundational ethics and areas to practice restraint that create enlightened communities.

Niyama

Niyamas refocus attention inwards and increase self awareness, fulfilment, discipline, faith, all aspects of the true self. Evolving beyond basic ethical development asks us to consider the true motivation for a development and carefully inquire if the utilization and consumption of the resources is for the good of all or just a few. Environmental cleanups are an example of humanity moving forward in evolution through this limb of the path.

Asana

This limb of the yogic path teaches us to be present in our physical form and become aware of the world around us. After considering with the mind all these aspects of the path to

enlightened living, we turn to the body, a place we must all learn to feel at home. *Asanas* are scientifically proven to uniquely activate the brain in ways that stimulate awareness and consciousness.

Pranayama

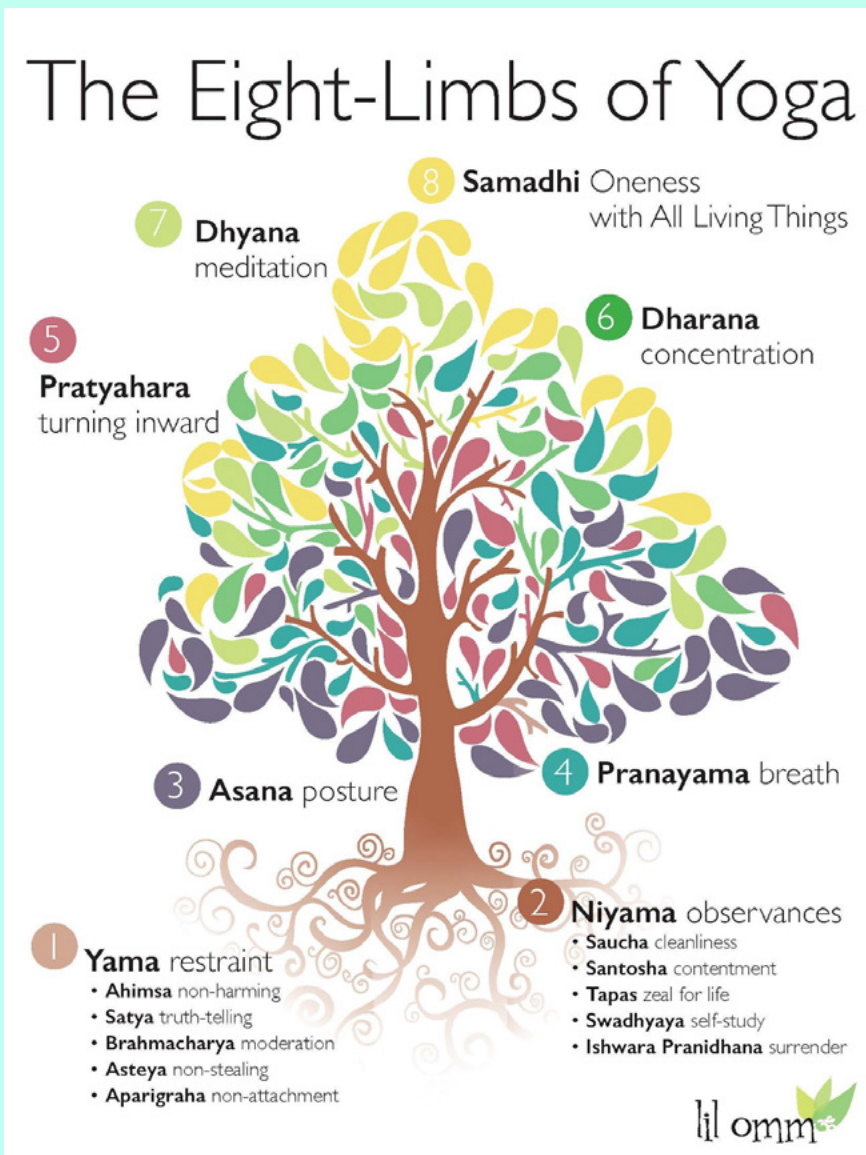
Pranayama is the practice of being in touch with the flow of life, breath is a feedback loop, a physical experience which correlates to the mental. Breath is a constant reminder of the only constant in life which is change and how ultimately we are given all we need to survive without asking. As long as we have stressed people designing our world, cities and spaces will continue to make us sick.

"The regular practice of yoga naturally generates a healthy belief system based upon your direct experience of the world through a more flexible nervous system." - Deepak Chopra

Pratyahara

Pratyahara is the practice of observing our inner experience, the previous four limbs culminate here. The way we shape the landscape reflects our inner landscape. To sense space, one must be established in this practice of observing





It can help to view these principles as a kind of hierarchy which emphasizes the value of working on fundamental aspects to ensure the proper integrity of the whole.

internally. Cities and homes are ultimately spaces for bodies, our ability to sense space will allow us to create places that reflect our inner awareness of shared values like connection, kindness, authenticity, and equality. What and how we build shows what we value and believe in. To evolve toward sustainability we must each look inside to see if we want a society that values quick and cheap, big profit for the owner but dangerous for everyone else, 60% of public space given to cars while public transit is ignored.

"The white man, when he dies, wishes to leave money to his children. The Indian, he wants to give them trees." - Native American Saying

Dharana

Concentrating on the problem and its varied aspects from an awareness of these five previous levels leads us into contemplation, *dharana*. In the practice of architecture we contemplate the purpose of the development, the needs of the local community, the benefit to the owner, long term life of the space, the spirit of the land and idiosyncracies of the landscape/ecology, the culture and history of what is already there. This is where mapping

demographics and diagramming program come into the sustainable design practice.

Dhyana

Dhyana is the practice of meditation which is at the heart of the yogic path. The planning, design, and development processes can all begin as meditations, intuitively at first feeling into the best way to equally satisfy the needs of a community, blending their voices with the expertise of designers, scientists, and innovative technologies. Creating a solution which is respectful of people, profit, planet, and place takes a certain presence which is best generated by the previous six levels of consciousness.

Samadhi

When we are able to materialize or manifest our evolved understanding of the natural world, one in which we aren't just related to nature, but are a part of it, we achieve *samadhi*, enlightened living. Biophilic design connects us to the deeper meaning of what it is to be human.

"In yoga - in union with spirit - your desires and the desires of nature are one." - Deepak Chopra





The body is our connection to the communal and the global. Think global, act local, be internal. Body wisdom is slower than mental concepts, the body speaks in feelings and symbols, for example, the gut knowing which tells you whether a street is dangerous or not.

Architecture and design can either separate us from or connect us to nature and the Earth by making our bodies a safe and pleasurable place to be, or asking us to dissociate from these meat sacks in order to tolerate our external environment.

In general, modern design is brutal, harsh, sharp, and machinist, there is little allowance for the softness and rest a body requires to thrive and feel good. Walk down the average street and count the number of benches and shady places to rest you will find. Pleasure is often

eschewed in our society to the point that our nervous systems are perpetually stressed and overwhelmed creating disease and ultimately death.

In nature, ninety degree angles are rare, in fact, most life is built out of the geometry of the spiral. You might ask yourself why we humans surround ourselves with unnatural shapes and materials, then; any builder would tell you it is cheaper to build with quadrilinear modules. Standardized materials are cheaper to produce, and curves are difficult to standardize. The capitalistic notion that financial cost is an accurate indicator of value is what keeps us separate from an authentic experience of being human, that is, having a body and moving through space.

Coming back home to the body, leaving behind the ruminations of the external world and feeling the infinity which dwells inside is belonging to yourself. It is a radical act in a world that asks us to prove our worth by fitting into the machinist society of capitalism.



Our Bodies & The Planet



Each of us has something to contribute, gifts to give, blessings to offer to our community and planet. We are all integral aspects of a whole planetary body, and yet, when we feel broken and hollow inside, we cannot fulfil our role, and must therefore heal.

The practice of yoga brings us home to the body, we learn to observe the mind, breathe through difficult feelings, steady the muscles, and open our hearts to spiritual experiences. This is how we become aware of how “the body” is actually made up of at least four layers; the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies. In the yogic tradition, there are five bodies, or *koshas*, in this context, the fifth body is our planetary body.

Architecture also has the power to initiate us into different layers of our being. Spaces can either keep us engaged in the present moment or bore us senseless, sometimes spaces can be brutal and painfully harsh. You know these well, they are the open-plan office buildings full of artificial materials which kill the spirit immediately upon entering, they are the paved parking lots and sidewalks which radiate heat upwards and provide no relief.

Today, standardized architectural and urban design makes your average town feel dull and monotonous, encounters with nature are limited to the occasional squirrel and pigeon, rare is the lilting bird song or cheeky flower bed which uplift the spirit and soothe the mind.

Why are our urban spaces so deadening? For most of human history we have been helpless against any number of natural disasters, flood, famine, disease, drought, fire, predatory beasts, and plagues. Humanity has worked for centuries to separate itself from nature, trying to avoid the precariousness of mortality. Historians consider the urge to evolve and develop technology as an effort to control nature.

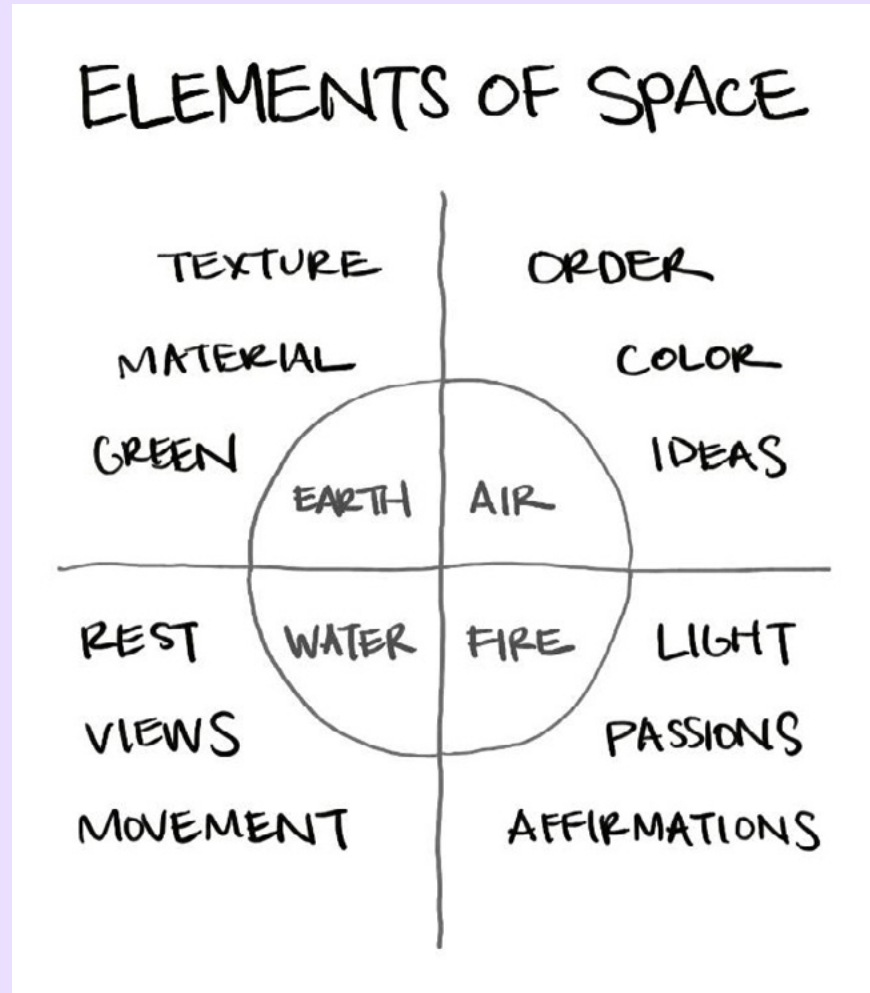
Why have we been attempting to dominate into submission and separate ourselves from our planetary body for thousands of years.

Intergenerational trauma and pain have been passed down, unaddressed, from times long forgotten. When women's voices stopped being heard, during the approximately 7,000 years of patriarchy, we lost touch with the nurturing and benevolent nature of Nature. There are mysteries which we cannot understand or grasp, and we have been conditioned to fear the lack of control in this void.

How do we experience this in our lives today? Shame, fear of not being good enough, guilt for taking up space and having needs, alienation from our physical bodies and feelings.



Permaculture



It's important for humans to have at least some regular contact with all the elements. Survey your home to see if you are missing any elemental support. Maybe your space does not use much texture, natural materials, or have any plants either inside or viewed through windows. It is helpful to have at least one of each of the three examples given here, but there are lots of other ways to call upon the healing power of the elements.

Architecture which follows permaculture principles allows us to observe and interact with Nature. Permaculture is the indigenous practice of creating a culture of permanence, in other words, a life which revolves around humanity's relationship to Nature and the elements. In this worldview, harmony with natural cycles is leveraged to make life easier and more abundant for humans.

We are not separate from the planet, this is the central premise of what scientists call the Gaia Hypothesis, and of what generations of humans have known to be true. In contrast to the indigenous perspective, modern man believes the health of our planet is none of our concern because he sees himself as above and outside of nature.

Societies which are out of balance with planetary boundaries (i.e. unsustainable) are a result of not listening to what feels truly right and good inside of our bodies. Superficial pleasures and mental distractions are what keep us in a consumerist, separatist paradigm where resources are disposable.

The human body yearns to be in contact with the elements. Just think of the way you feel

after a day at the beach, a walk in the forest, when the season's first snowfall arrives, or when you wake up to a perfect blue sky.

Through a yoga practice one learns to find and sense into alignment, discovers the feeling of flowing through resistance and into balance.

Connecting with the Earth shows us how to live sustainably because She is the one who sustains us in every way. We need Her in order to breathe, to nourish, to drink, to be protected from the heat of the sun. If our spaces prevent us from breathing fresh air, eating fresh food, drinking pure water, or feeling sunlight because of pollution, design, access, and proximity, how can we appreciate the way Nature sustains us?

Good design is a right, it is a public health and a social justice issue.

To the right is an example of how the four elements can guide us to a holistic model for making spaces which nourish wellbeing. The elements can vact as lenses through which to view your spaces (work, living, play) and identify ways they can support a sense of wholeness.

Wholeness is what we feel when we are connected with what sustains and supports us.



Ecofeminism: How to Human



Rest and self-care are devalued in a capitalistic, patriarchal paradigm. In an indigenous, permaculture paradigm they are considered essential and valuable points in the cycle of life. Connecting with the sacred here and now asks us to practice stillness as a form of peace activism.

* Source: <http://www.wloe.org/what-is-ecofeminism.76.0.html>
Accessed June 25, 2020.

Design that is inspired by life makes living with nature easy. Investing energy into regenerating what helps us feel good has immediate visible benefit when we are connected to our planetary body. We do it for the pure joy and fulfillment of communing with that which sustains us.

Politicizing sustainability with regulations and policies will do nothing if we do not individually understand a culture of regeneration for the love of the entire web of life. Care for generations to come is a natural outcome of a deep connection to the source of sustenance and nurturance.

Ecofeminism “is a new term for an ancient wisdom.”* Women teach us how to be human, women bring life to this world, and in the most developed countries on Earth we have only been granted legal personhood for the last one hundred years. Gender equality has still not made its way into the culture of some of the most “advanced” human society.

No human is free from the suffering of women, for each and every single one of us comes from a womb, that deeply dark and mysterious place which represents all that cannot be tamed, controlled, and understood. Everything

that is associated with this mystery has been demonized out of fear of the unknown; rest, sensitivity, receptivity, each has been devalued for its association with the essence of the feminine.

And that is why we are stuck in inequality and oppression, because the full power of what it means to be human has been cut off at its root.

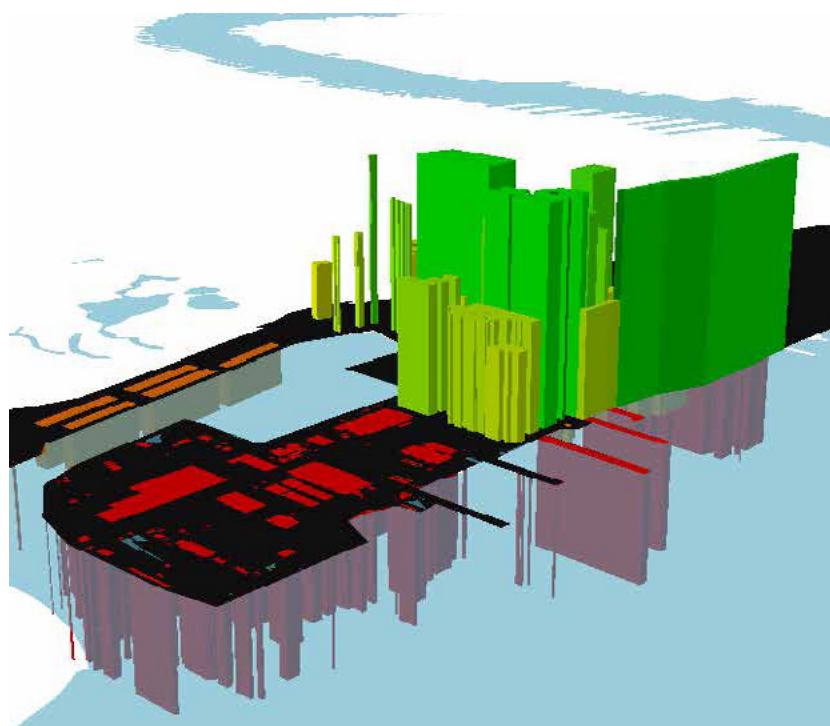
The orgasmic desire for justice moves us from the depths of love and passion to see with the eyes of Oneness and honor that which is true, good, and beautiful in all beings.

The power of the feminine, which all beings have access to, uses arousal to create within the chaos of the unknown and miraculously gives birth to newness, waiting in restful receptivity to receive the seeds of activation which will call forth the desire for new life.

This is a call to action for all conscious beings to use these new ancient technologies to seed from the heart and womb a world that works for all.

One space to do this within is the Lunar Nectar Hive where you can access resources and support for this activism. Link on the last page.





New methods of designing spaces with 3-D geospatial technology, like the kind used in the emerging field of Geodesign, allow planners to assess the experience of a place virtually and design with nature more effectively.

We can't have peace on the Earth if we don't have peace with the Earth. This subconscious conflict which humans have been engaged in for thousands of years has to come to a close, but the answer is not to destroy everything we have built, rather, to adapt and integrate biophilic principles.

Most people don't like cities and that makes sense, they are the places on earth where the real issues show, particularly inequalities. It is also a fact that at this moment in history, most people on Earth live in cities, places where only around 30% of energy goes into making and transporting goods and the rest goes into transporting and housing people. That is inherently an unsustainable situation which makes cities an energy drain on the resources of humanity and the planet.

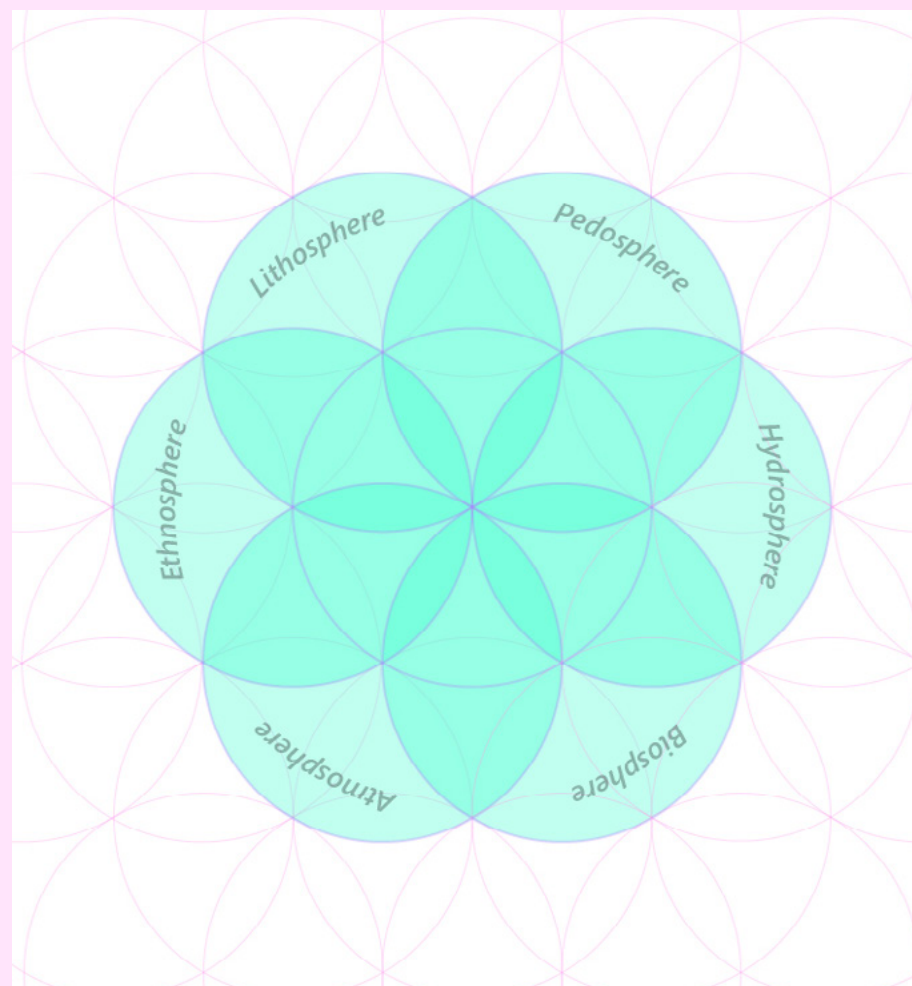
If only there were some kind of living being we could copy which had survived 3.8 billion years of evolution to show humanity how to live sustainably... Earth is really big, so it can be hard to grasp Her as a living system instead of focusing on the many separate systems, so let me help you.

Here's some quick tips on how to understand a system as a whole instead of as isolated elements. First, look for interconnectedness, then identify feedback loops and the elements which support them. Next, look for how waste in one segment is a resource in another and trace the way energy is recycled. Also, look for decentralized functions and multifunctioning elements, how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Looking at your city or town, are there ways it is functioning organically and ways it is not? What about your household? Sensing space is a multidimensional skill, we are asked to think global, act local, and be internal. It all starts with an awareness of our own true nature.



The Six Spheres of Life on Earth



This planet is alive, and like all life, it is evolving. The noosphere is a philosophical concept developed and popularized by the biogeochemist Vladimir Vernadsky, and the French philosopher and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. It can loosely be understood as the sphere of consciousness or the representation of our planetary evolution.

Even though an inorganic, rocky zone covers the Earth's crust, what goes on beneath the *lithosphere* is anything but lifeless. The minerals from this sphere of life feed the *pedosphere*, the skin of Earth, where soil and nourishment is formed. Combine this sphere with the *hydrosphere*, the sum total of all water on Earth, and the *biosphere* is formed, which contains all life on Earth. The *atmosphere* contains it all, a layer of gases which is foundational and supportive of all other spheres, the air which sustains all life on Earth. Mixed in with it all is the *ethnosphere*, the sphere of human imagining which produces all thinking, dreaming, mythology, inspiration, and intuition.

Together, the geometry of these six spheres of life forms a new whole, a seventh sphere appears at the center. This is what some have referred to as the *noosphere*. Observing the formation of life, we cannot avoid the interconnectivity of all life on Earth, including ourselves. It becomes impossible to draw a line between one system and another, humanity is inextricably tied to the functioning of it all.

In this felt sense of connection, no longer an imagined intuition, but a visible and embodied

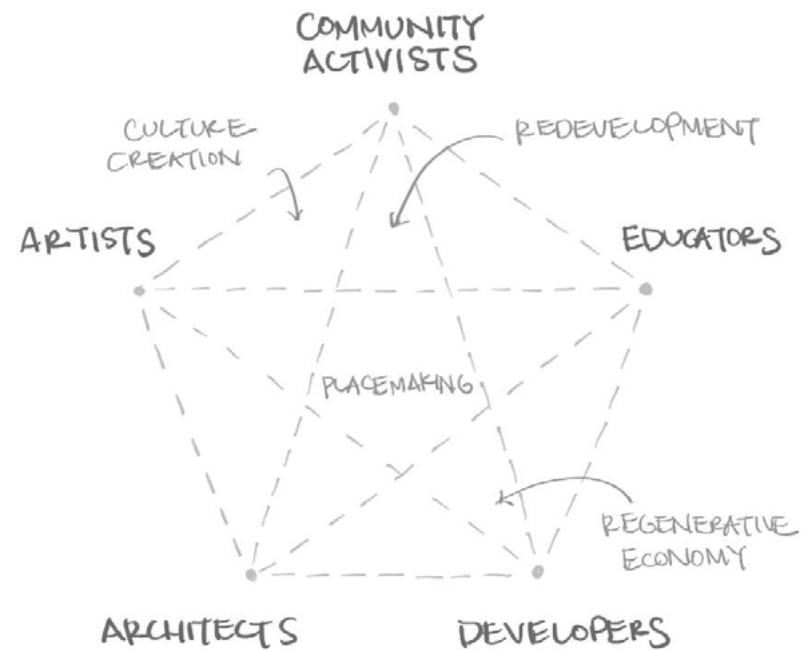
sense of interbeing with all of life, we are lifted up out of the mundane and reach the spiritual. It is from this place that we truly connect with the imperative to act on behalf of future generations of human beings to preserve the health and functioning of all spheres. From this place we also sense the imperative to act on behalf of our ancestors to continue to care for what they have left us.

Recognizing our connection to all of life on Earth is a starting point for sensing the new world which is possible. Deep inside, we know it is our birthright to have access to fresh air, water, and food. When we see our direct contact with the elements which make this access possible, we know what to do to protect this access for generations to come.

Awareness of connection and interdependency is a fundamental component of the feminine, or circular, consciousness. Observing the cycles of life taking place within and around us frees us from the grip of linear thought which dominates the current paradigm. As humanity collectively opens our eyes, hearts, and minds to the spheres of life which we interact with, our ability to be sustained grows.



CONNECTIVE LANDSCAPE



A collaborative model for community development and placemaking.

Shifting out of patriarchy into a more balanced paradigm of synarchy where masculine and feminine values are equally represented will require everyone's participation. Healing consumerism requires a strong medicine of connectivity.

Creating collaboration requires us to focus on shared values and return to them as we solve problems. Shared spaces make shared values apparent, that is why architecture and design are powerful tools in creating the New Earth.

People make places, design that speaks of place is humanitarian because it tells the story of who we are. Biophilic design celebrates life and our connection not only to Nature through plants, animals, and landscapes, but through each other.

Just like many independent ecosystems on Earth contribute to the biospheres which make up the planetary system as a whole, cities around the planet can be self-sustaining parts of a larger whole. Taking the bio-inspired approach to architecture and design means seeing cities as ecosystems and villages as gateways to preserving natural resources. In this worldview, we intentionally grow communities.

Connective landscapes take into account the spirit of a place and use it to communicate and unite, so that streets become places for creative encounters and relationship. Diversity and specificity both blossom in these landscapes because everyone is valued and has a platform for expressing their unique voice. The need to belong is strong in the human being.

To ensure the peaceful continuity of our species we can use our bodies and spaces to cohere around an intention for cultivating a new identity as an evolved human family. The shared values we can cultivate might include conflict resolution, consensus building, non-aggression, local resilience, and adaptive action.





Our practice of sensing space can help us to refine and strengthen the collective attunement to shared values we wish to cultivate. When we are in our bodies, spaces that don't feel safe or encourage peace can be identified and improved through the practice of architecture and urban planning undertaken by empathetic, trauma-informed developers.

Enlightened living is not some far-off ideal but a simple process of evolution and adaptation which humanity has been subconsciously engaging in for millennia.

As we make conscious the practice of designing a better world, one which we and the planet are collectively able to sustain, we can take the abundant crises we now face as opportunities for innovation. Using the ancient wisdom of the yogic path to create internally sustainable structures can help us build communities which are sustainable, and permaculture principles can help us build resilient infrastructure to support the growth of the new paradigm.

This is a call to become citizens of a New Earth, individuals who each contribute the power of our peace to create a unified human collective, which is resilient, diverse and dynamic.

We are called forward as visionaries, creatives, dreamers, and revolutionaries with the opportunity to heal generations of oppression

through our own bodies while correcting widespread social imbalances worldwide.

In a way that global warming could never inspire urgent action, a global pandemic has put pressure upon world leaders to act in support of a better world. It is the job of community leaders at a local scale to leverage their power to shift the system toward enlightened living, working in our own neighborhoods and cities to make a difference where we can, and sharing the lessons learned with the world as a whole.

Together we can overtake corruption and injustice at a global scale, but first the healing and alignment must start within ourselves, the peace inside our own hearts will be the source of real change. This is Deep Design, inner and outer architecture for a New Earth.

Please visit the links on the last page to find out more, including how you can join the Lunar Nectar Hive for more inspiration and resources.



APPENDIX

These Five Mindfulness Trainings are inspired by Plum Village and created by Marisela Gomez and Valerie Brown of ARISE Sangha (Awakening Through Race, Intersectionality and Social Equity). Visit www.arisesangha.org to learn more.

They represent a global ethic for a just, equitable, and peaceful society built around inclusivity, sensitivity, and respect. They call us toward individual and collective awakening, compassion, and peace

The First Mindfulness Training: Acknowledging Beauty as Reverence for Life

Aware of the suffering caused by oppression and generational harm based on racial, cultural, social, and ethnic inferiority and superiority and its resultant structures of injustices and harm, I acknowledge the beauty and violence inherent in life. I vow to resist being complicit in systems and structures that continue to perpetuate violence and hatred instead of reverence of life for marginalized groups. I recognize that each person contributes to my individual and our collective awakening, and the co-creation of a world that celebrates and affirms differences and similarities. All living beings can teach me something, when I remember to pause, breathe, listen deeply with a calm and open mind and heart, and ask myself: 'is there more' or 'what else is here with me'?' I honor and respect all life guided by Right View and Right Energy.

The Second Mindfulness Training: Belonging and Connecting as True Happiness

Aware of the suffering caused by ignorance and aversion of my own and other's racial, ethnic, cultural, and social history, its legacy and how this affects me whether I am aware of it or not, I am committed to connecting to these histories. I know that turning toward these histories with an open heart is my journey of awakening to true belonging. I will take the time to learn the history of the racial and ethnic group with which I identify as well as for other socially constructed racial and ethnic groups. Aware that there is no genetic or biological difference between different racial and ethnic groups, and that these identities were constructed by one group to establish dominance over others, I will turn toward racial and other forms of othering with an open heart and compassionate action. I know that this history has led to fragmentation inside and outside body and mind and brought much suffering to all beings. I vow to transform this suffering through the practice of connecting with an open heart. I will notice when emotions of belonging and othering arise and I will ask myself 'why'? Whatever feelings, perceptions, or mental formations arise, I will embrace and when needed engage with love in action. I am committed to practicing Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood so I can help relieve this legacy of racial and social suffering. I will practice looking deeply to see that true happiness is not possible without true connecting leading to belonging and understanding.

The Third Mindfulness Training: Cherishment as True Love

Aware of the suffering caused by discrimination and oppression, I vow to understand its roots within my consciousness and my body and the collective body of the sangha and larger society. I vow to recognize the ways in which I have benefitted or not-benefitted explicitly or implicitly from systems and structures that foster discrimination and injustice. I am aware of the legacy of violence, especially unlawful police violence, perpetrated against Black people, indigenous people, people of color, differently abled people, people of various gender identities and expressions and sexual orientation, and others who are marginalized. I acknowledge the lived experience of all people to deepen my capacity for understanding and for greater compassionate action. I am aware that narrowly constructed, prevalent interpretations of intimate relationships constrain how we cherish each other in our expression of love, leaving many further isolated and alienated. I am committed to looking tenderly at my suffering, knowing that I am not separate from others and that the seeds of suffering contain the seeds of joy. I am not afraid of bold love that fosters justice and belonging and tender love that seeks peace and connection. I cherish myself and my suffering without discrimination. I cherish this body and mind as an act of healing for myself and for others. I cherish this breath. I cherish this moment. I cherish the liberation of all beings guided by the wisdom and solidity of the sangha. This is my path of true love.

The Fourth Mindfulness Training: Vulnerability as Loving Speech and Deep Listening

Aware that vulnerability is the essence of our true nature, our humanness, I vow to risk listening and speaking non-judgmentally with understanding and compassion to alleviate suffering and support peace in myself and others. I vow to live with empathy, compassion, and awareness and to listen for understanding rather than disagreement. When I've hurt others through my unskillful action or speech, I vow to practice making a good apology that acknowledges what I have done and offers sincere regret, knowing that this supports the other person and me. I am committed to speaking that aligns with my highest aspiration and encourages honesty and truthfulness. I am committed to generous and courageous listening that bridges differences and supports understanding of others who may be different from me. I am committed to taking meaningful steps to become a true instrument of peace

and to help others to be the same. When I am not able to understand the experiences of others, I vow to come back to my breath and my body, and to offer myself gentle patience while learning to support myself in developing greater awareness and skill. I vow to practice awareness of my beliefs, perceptions, and feelings, aversions, and desires and to take refuge in mindful breathing and in the sangha to support greater stability, peace, and understanding. Through my practices of vulnerability, patience, forgiveness, and deeply listening, I know that my speech will be guided by love and understanding. Practicing in this way supports Right Speech and Right Action and guides me to Right Insight.

The Fifth Mindfulness Training: Welcoming as True Nourishing and Healing

Aware of the suffering caused by the consumption of an inadequate history of racial and ethnic forms of social segregation, I am committed to healing myself and the world by welcoming, and practicing with this awareness. I will notice how my thoughts, perceptions, feelings, words, and actions may have been influenced by this inaccurate history. I will look deeply to understand how both physical and mental health, for myself, my family, and my society have been influenced by embracing and denying this racial, social, and ethnic history of inferiority and superiority and its legacy of inequities and injustices. I will cultivate joy to support me toward individual and collective wholeness. I will practice mindfulness of the Four Kinds of Nutriment to become aware of how edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness are all influenced by this history. Practicing with Right Energy and Right Resolve, my Right Action of consumption will include awareness of certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books, and conversations and how they continue to foster wrong perceptions of racial, ethnic, and social injustices. My understanding of interbeing supports my conscious consumption that sustains a healthy understanding of differences, one that does not oppress or discriminate. This Right Insight will preserve peace, joy, and bring healing in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society and the Earth. To assure that my descendants do not live in a racially, ethnically, and socially unjust world, I commit to diligently practicing with true welcoming on this path to nourish and heal myself, the sangha, and society.



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