

2021 PROGRAM GUIDE

COURAGE OF CARE

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF COMPASSIONATE, TRUTH-
TELLING, HEALING-CENTERED AND VISIONARY PRACTICE



SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM

WWW.COURAGEOFCARE.ORG

COURAGE OF CARE

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF
PRACTICE SINCE 2016



Our mission is courageous, caring and simple:
to help build a more loving, liberated, and just
world.

We are an intergenerational, multi-racial, and
mixed class collective with varying spiritual
lineages and professional backgrounds.
Through hands-on workshops, online courses,
our popular summer intensive, and consulting
work, we support and train individuals,
organizations, and communities to build and
nurture cultures of compassionate, truth-
telling, healing-centered, visionary and
transformative practice.

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WHAT WE OFFER

In addition to workshops, webinars, retreats, and summer intensive, we offer tailored consultations and trainings that include:

- *An in-depth compassionate systems assessment,

- *Hands-on capacity building, and

- *A customized plan for building cultures of practice.

ON COMMUNITY

“[W]ithout community there is certainly no liberation, no future, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between me and my oppression.”
— Audre Lorde

We focus on building cultures of practice because we believe that healing is communal and liberation is collective. Spiritual activism involves more than just adding a social justice lens to our meditation course, or adding a mindfulness component to our social justice training: it takes courage and community. We are called to nurture authentic, non-transactional relationships with one another, to get to know each other in our beauty and our messiness, to learn more about what motivates and sustains us, and to break bread together. When we co-create cultures of practice, we are shaped and transformed by the very act itself; we begin to live into our visions of a more just and loving world now. Beloved community is for all and by all. Founded on safety, belonging, care, and sacredness, it is fostered through anti-oppressive and decolonized principles and practices. The work of building the beloved community is nowhere else but right here.

WHO WE ARE

We are a diverse, multi-racial, multi-faith, multi-generational, and multi-disciplinary team with decades of experience in education, organizing, activism, climate justice, health care, trauma-informed care, and contemplative and embodied practice.

CONNECT WITH US

Learn more at
www.courageofcare.org

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Vimeo and join our newsletter to stay updated on events.

OUR APPROACH

Today's converging social and ecological crises are the result of centuries of broken relationships produced by systems of oppression. The fundamental sense of separation and "othering" endemic to systems of capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy is collapsing under the weight of its dysfunction.

Because we understand the roots of these crises to be fundamentally relational in nature, our work centers on nurturing and strengthening the relational tissue within our communities, organizations and movements for justice and liberation.

We focus on supporting various theories of change by building a broad community of interest, a deep community of practice, and compelling trajectories of trainings that help individuals, organizations and movements strengthen their relational capacity.

All of these efforts are in support of building a tradition of relational practice grounded in our framework, CourageRISE.




BUILDING STRONG MYCELIAL NETWORKS OF PRACTICE



ORGANIZATIONAL PATHWAYS

BUILDING RELATIONAL CULTURES



Like all systems, organizations need to be nurtured.

Too often, organizations—which are committed to caring for others and our world—struggle to maintain the same ethos internally. In a time of strained resources within capitalism it is easy for organizations to get caught in survival mode and reinforce behaviors and expectations that unintentionally contribute to employee burnout, cynicism or despair.

We may also notice that organizations with deep commitments to justice and equity also struggle to address issues of diversity, inclusion and toxic power-imbalances within their team. Or, we may notice that in spite of an organization's best intentions, the work is not making the impact we envisaged it would make in the world.

We are committed to helping organizations foster regenerative, healing environments that help all people realize their highest potential in service of all.

We offer three core programs for organizations. These include:

Embodied Equity, Justice and Leadership Institute

- An intensive program for non profit teams which includes a 1) compassionate system assessment of your organization; 2) a two-day online training that covers the core theory and practice of our CourageRISE framework; and 3) a five-week capacity building seminar.

Radical Communion

- An affinity-based, healing centered course designed to give participants tools to support meaningful collaboration across identity-groups in service of justice, joy, love and liberation.

Courageous Leaders Program

- A train-the-trainer program that equips facilitators with tools to carry the work forward for the long-haul.

We are also available for tailored consultations, coaching, strategic planning and curricular reviews.



INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS

*A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE
AS TOLD BY ANDREW SIMMONS*

JOIN OUR GROWING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE!

We are committed to nurturing a network of practitioners committed to strengthening the relational tissue of their communities, organizations and movements.

We welcome educators, parents, healers, counselors, activists, care-workers and all who care about our world to join our movement to build fiercely loving, tender relational culture.



We offer two core programs for individual. These include:

Radical Communion

- An affinity-based, healing centered course designed to give participants tools to support meaningful collaboration across identity-groups in service of justice, joy, love and liberation.

Courageous Leaders Program

- A train-the-trainer program that equips facilitators with tools to carry the work forward for the long-haul.

We also offer **free monthly RelationSHIFT practice sessions** and a growing **Courage Kin membership community** open to folks who have completed our Radical Communion Course.

MOVEMENT PATHWAYS

*STRENGTHENING RELATIONAL
TISSUE WITHIN AND BETWEEN
OUR MOVEMENTS FOR JUSTICE*

In addition to our Embodied Equity Institute, our Radical Communion Course and our Courageous Leaders Program, we offer a **free toolkit to help movements build relational culture.**

Additionally, we offer a **free online course for climate activists.**

Our team is available for direct consulting and training with movements that share our political vision and commitment.

We are at a decisive moment in human history. Unbridled greed and consumption of the earth's natural resources, fueled by conquest and interlocking systems of oppression have contributed to cascading social, economic and environmental crises. Without sustainable and regenerative alternatives to the global order, we are headed for civilizational collapse.

While this moment requires urgent action, it also calls for deep reflection and new ways of living and being together.

A truly regenerative transformation requires we develop new ways of being in relationship with each other. While we believe we need mass political and legislative change, we also need to build regenerative cultures.

Dominant cultural practices of exploitation, extractivism, human supremacy and separation from earth and nature have shaped our minds, bodies, institutions and social practices. Without consciously crafting new cultures, we are likely to continue to reproduce these systems within our political movements, even in the name of justice.

The invitation to join us in building regenerative cultures is an invitation to co-create the world in which we want to live.

OUR MODEL COURAGE RISE

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

At Courage of Care we focus on building compassion-based, anti-oppressive, healing-centered, transformational and visionary practice communities.

Rather than addressing only systems change or personal change alone, we support our communities in developing multi-level transformative approaches that integrate contemplative practice with sustainable action. CoC believes that systems of oppression live in our bodies and our cultural practices, and thus we cannot simply legislate--or meditate--our way forward. Justice is a practice. Anti-racism is a practice. Beloved Community is a practice.

Our approach leverages spiritual, contemplative, psychological, philosophical and somatic lineages to support our practice of building “Beloved Community.”

Captured by the acronym **CourageRISE**, Courage’s blueprint for nurturing communities of practice begins with love (the Latin root of Courage, *cor*, means heart). We see love and care as the foundation of any beloved community, for sensing that we are held in community--and therefore not alone in the work--empowers our courage.

Following this grounding, we resource ourselves so that we may:

- **R**eveal the systems that cause and perpetuate injustice and oppression;
- **I**nitiate reparative, restorative, healing;
- **S**ense into alternative possibilities for a more just world; and
- **E**mbody Beloved Community via transformative cultures of practice.

These five **CourageRISE** training modules are woven in and through all of our education, training and consulting work. Below we describe each module in more detail.

COURAGE

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” —Rumi

A **crisis of separation** lies at the root of many of our current social and ecological challenges. Empathy is in decline; hatred, violence and apathy are on the rise. We urgently need tools that help us reconnect in relational and non-instrumental ways. This is why our approach begins with love.

Love and compassion—and their umbrella term, care—are motivational stances that orient our way of being in the world. Compassion, which is the capacity to be with and attend to suffering, harm or hurt, and love, which is the capacity to connect and nurture life-giving qualities like friendliness and joy, are both critical to our project of justice and liberation. When **understood and practiced relationally**, they **protect us against burnout**.

This is **not a call to put on rose-colored glasses**. We have a natural capacity for care, but we can also be violently harmful to one another and our planet. We hold that our essential nature—when we feel safe, held and seen—is caring. When we feel threatened, unvalued and alone, our propensity for selfishness, competitiveness, othering and greed surfaces. A stance of love invites us to call each other into new relational ways of being that support all of us in realising our deepest potential. We therefore emphasize **love** because we see it as foundational and also as redemptive—**it is the force of healing**.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Love and compassion require we learn to turn toward and engage with each other in healing and ethically responsive ways. The ability to turn toward requires that we develop competencies like **attention, mindfulness, distress tolerance and empathy**. Ethical responsiveness requires that we develop qualities like **wisdom, courage, creativity and complexity capacity or systems-thinking**.

Our **Courage modules** are designed to help us strengthen all of these skills in sustainable, relational ways. In them, participants also learn:

- The **science of compassion, love and attachment**
- Tools for **avoiding empathic fatigue and burnout**
- Relational tools for cultivating the building blocks of love and compassion based on **our model of receiving, extending and deep self care**
- Practices for **navigating obstacles to love and compassion** in our relationships, communities and organizations

R: REVEAL TRUTHS

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." - James Baldwin

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In order to move toward a more just, caring, inclusive society, we need to **understand the roots of the current social, economic and ecological crises** that we face. To do that, we need to understand the systems and structures that perpetuate competition, inequity, injustice and systemic forms of oppression, like racism, sexism, classism, ableism and so on that affect all of us, albeit in differing ways.

We believe that **training in love and compassion are important but alone are not sufficient** in helping us realize a more compassionate world. We also need a social justice framework that helps us **situate our personal transformation within a broader context of collective liberation**.

Often—especially in times of stress—we get caught in habitual patterns of reacting to events, putting out fires and applying band-aids to our problems. Sometimes, of course, this is all we can do with the resources that we have and the urgency of that which we face. But if we are interested in **sustainable, transformative change**, we need to develop the courage and capacity to **get to the root of our pain and suffering**.

Our **Reveal Truths modules** are designed to help us develop new ways of being—new cultures of practice that support love and liberation for all. They offer us a way of considering the importance of both personal and social transformation in our work, by helping us develop a common analysis of the forces that inhibit our capacity for justice and awakening. They also help us recognize the need for us to stay grounded in our practices of love, care and compassion in our work for social justice, so at the very least we do not reproduce the very systems which we seek to transform.

Participants also learn:

- The **science of trauma** and basic tools for recognizing and healing personal and social trauma
- Tools for **systems thinking**
- To **recognize systems of domination and oppression** and understand how they are maintained
- The ways in which **oppression harms all** of us
- The ways in which our **personal and collective liberation are linked**

I: INVEST IN HEALING

Even in the darkest of times, we have the right to expect some illumination from the uncertain flickering, and often weak light that some [people] in their lives and works will kindle under almost all circumstances.” — Hannah Arendt

Healing is a critical stage of **sustainable, transformative justice work**. Yet so often, we feel pressured to rush the process of healing in the name of getting things done or “fixing” what seems to be broken or not working. Or, we totally overlook the process of healing altogether, unaware that **healing is not a privilege**—it is a necessity for sustainable change.

We see **healing as a stance**, not as a fixed end goal. Like the concept of resilience, healing involves being able to adapt to our world, to take in new information, to restore, to repair, to reconcile. In its most basic sense, we understand healing to be about **restoring and transforming relationship**--with ourselves, each other, and our world.

We also are aware that the ways in which we approach healing are bound up in what we think it is and what it should be—or what we think health or wellness or even freedom should be. In our view, the idea that “healing” requires total freedom from pain or suffering can contribute to more pain and confusion. **We see the ability to dance with joy and suffering and change as the challenge and the path of healing.**

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

We are remarkably resilient and capable of recovering, repairing and restoring ourselves. Decades of research on resilience and peace and conflict resolution demonstrate that healing requires multiple capacities, including the ability to 1) build relationships; 2) embrace complexity and maintain curiosity; 3) maintain hope, even in dark times; and 4) the willingness to risk.

Our **Invest in Healing modules** are organized around these core capacities. In them, participants learn:

- The **science of resilience**
- Tools for **building, sustaining and repairing relationships**, with loved ones and so-called “adversaries”
- Practices for engaging **generative conflict**
- Approaches to **healing from various forms of oppression** at an organizational and systemic level
- Practices for **optimal healing** drawn from diverse traditions

S. SENSE ALTERNATIVES

“Look well to the growing edge...It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung, the one more thing to try when all else has failed, the upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavor. This is the basis of hope in moments of despair, the incentive to carry on when times are out of joint...the source of confidence when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash...Look well to the growing edge.” – Howard Thurman

Dystopias are everywhere. If you watch TV or follow political commentary or ever log into social media, you may be convinced the end of days are near. So much of our news and entertainment (and to be honest, quite a bit of our social justice rhetoric) is framed in terms of oppression, death and destruction. **It is amazing any of us have any hope left at all!**

In this sea of despair, it is important to remember and lift up the stories of healing, repair and transformation that are all around us. New worlds are being built all the time. Movements are succeeding. Change is happening. **The resistance is alive and well.**

Creative visioning is a key part of our culture of transformative practice—we have to practice sensing that something else is always possible. The current systems of destruction and domination—of which we are all affected—don’t encourage this sort of generativity or thinking outside the box. It’s not in their service. But it is key for us to move from reactive survival stances to more responsive, resilient ways of being.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Loving, seeing and healing are important stages in the process of transformation. But for radical transformation to occur, we have to move from a stance of fixing what is broken to cultivating what could be. In other words, we need to move from a critical or deconstructive stance to a constructive or reconstructive stance. This shift involves a capacity for even more radical openness, generosity and creativity.

We see this type of visionary capacity to be the foundation of “caring systems” thinking; the ultimate form of “resilience” and resistance. Our **Sense Alternatives modules** are designed to help us strengthen our visionary capacities. Participants also learn to:

- **Center love, joy and creativity** in their work
- Reclaim their creative, **visionary capacities**
- Recognize and challenge limiting frameworks and narratives
- Strengthen **cognitive flexibility**
- **Move toward and embody** visions for a more caring, just world.

E. EMBODY BELOVED COMMUNITY

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." -Angela Davis

We can begin **shaping the compassionate, just world that we know is possible right here and now**—we need not wait for the perfect time or the right conditions. We can build this world by shaping and creating new cultural norms, institutional practices, and healthier more loving ways of being with each other.

To sustain in our work, we need to develop a stance that helps us continue even in the face of seeming hopelessness, despair, and even defeat. **Action requires an element of risk and of hopefulness**: it requires we continue to show up even when there are no guarantees of success. We are empowered to act when we deeply sense our connection to all others, and when we develop the courage to act as we learn of the extraordinary vision and strength of all who have come before us who have worked for a better world.

We need be in community to do the work—we need to learn with and from others about the best course of action, to co-consider desired goals, the intended or unintended consequences of our actions on ourselves, each other and the world. We cannot see all sides of every issue, and there is not one method, one approach, one answer to our problems. Nor is there one singular answer to the question, "What is the good life?"

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As we wake up to the sense that our world is not fixed and that the ways we think act and relate to one another matter, we realize that **we have profound potential to effect change**. This is the heart of transformative practice as we see it.

That is the heart of the work and the meaning behind our name, Courage of Care: as we deepen in our sense of connection, or sense of relatedness, we touch in on our natural capacity for care. **From that care—that sense of being held, connected, truly inter-dependent—we awaken the Courage to show up, to see, to heal, to envision, and to act**. Our final **module** helps participants integrate the key learnings of all prior modules in a sustainable path of transformation. In addition, participants learn:

- To identify deepest aspirations and intentions and to **clarify their commitments**
- To **embody a courageous, caring stance** supportive of realizing their deepest aspirations
- To make a **regular commitment to practice** in service of their deepest commitments without attachment to outcomes
- To be a **force of healing** in their life and work.

COURAGE OF CARE

OAKLAND, CA

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