

# THE FIELD OF AWAKENING

## Basics for Practice, part 1

### The Agreements:

#### 1) **I Claim 100% Responsibility for My Own Experience**

This means: I am empowered to go after and create what I want

This means: I have choice over my perceptions and responses

This means: No blaming others, no complaining, no playing victim

#### 2) **Totality**

This means: I am here, the whole time, with my whole self

This means: I am willing to risk being transparent, to reveal my internal experience to others

This means: I am willing to look at my shadow, and hear reflections and perceptions from others

#### 3) **Extend Regard**

This means: I care about you and your experience, and take that into consideration

This means: I honor you and I as equally valuable unique expressions of source

This means: I am committed to supporting each of us to live our best life possible

### The Principles:

#### 1) **Presence**

- ➔ Being present with Self, with Other, with the Group, and with the Space between us
- ➔ Having attention on our internal experience, sensations, emotions, energies, essence and soul while simultaneously having attention on our external environment and on each other

#### 2) **Connection**

- ➔ Being aware of and deepening the experience of the group as a single living organism
- ➔ Noticing the inter-relatedness of us – with each other, with all life, and with all of existence
- ➔ Being aware of our shared source, the undefinable ineffable infinite inner space from which we and everything we experience emerge from and return to in every moment

#### 3) **Surrender**

- ➔ Being open to and inviting non-mental intelligences to inform and move us – e.g. listening to instinct, intuition, body sensation, emotion, spirit, soul, imaginal realms, etc... and listen for what is in alignment with our whole being
- ➔ Removing the Mental Body from the driver's seat; dropping into consciousness itself as our center of being
- ➔ Welcoming the unknown. Dancing with the mystery. Allow the evolutionary impulse, the universal intelligence arising from source/void to inform and move us

We also understand that within us are life intelligences which are the product of millions of years of continuous living wisdom and evolution, and we trust that those intelligences still have highly valuable information for us... our mammalian intelligence, reptilian intelligence, even amoebic intelligence...all these are still very much alive within us, and are even represented within us by their respective 'brains'. We are far more than just our prefrontal cortex, even though that's a super valuable newly evolved part of us. To believe these other intelligences have nothing valuable or critical to contribute to our lives seems a bit arrogant and ignorant. Embracing these ancient intelligences is to embrace our animal nature.

Simultaneously we aim for expansion and ascension into non-dual universal unity experiences. From our perspective, it is a false choice to choose only one direction. Rather, to be whole beings we embrace both flesh and spirit, both animal and transcendental oneness. And our true Self lies right in the middle, cultivating a healthy relationship to both!

# **THE FIELD OF AWAKENING**

## **Basics for Practice, part 2**

### **The Process:**

#### **Context –**

We hold an intention to support each other in living our best and most fulfilling lives possible, including expanding into our potential, and confronting and healing that which is in the way of our fulfillment (e.g. wounds and shadow).

We aim for the Field of Awakening (FoA) become a supportive practice for developing and deepening not only our personal level of aliveness, but our sense of community beyond the container of practice sessions. Adopting these principles into our daily lives, and to extent possible sharing a 24/7/365 immersion in this paradigm with people who become our friends and companions, and even extended family, our tribe, our sangha... we become a sacred community.

Until we get to a full realization of that possibility, we do this practice within a set container because we want to be as whole and as healthy and fulfilled as we sense we have the potential to be, we want the support of others and to offer our support, and we need to learn and create the capacity within us to bring the practice into our lives. We do not accept that living just a mundane uninspired life is all there is. And, even as we experience great expansion and bliss, we honor that our development is a never ending ongoing journey – there is always a next step. We want to explore the frontiers of emerging consciousness, particularly including what is possible in the “we-spaces” of shared experience and consciousness. We trust that with the help of friends, beloveds, group synergy and a shared intention we can achieve these aims.

Typically we meet in the FoA container for 3 hours, which includes the opening and closing circles. We do not take any official breaks as that can discharge what is already happening. People are free to take care of body needs (i.e. bathroom, water) while keeping themselves in the energy of the practice, thereby making taking care of such needs part of the actual practice. We meet for 3 hours because it takes ample time to unwind the stresses and tensions in our bodies, and even to discover and address shock and trauma that may be lingering in us (we all have some...). And it also allows for deeper layers and multiple movements throughout the evening, much like the movements in a symphony.

We also commit to being sober for practice, having not taken alcohol, psychedelics, marijuana or other substances that induce altered states on that day. We aim rather to be open to altered states happening without such substances (or having side affects), which we generally experience as substantially more satisfying and transformative in a lasting way.

#### **Arrival –**

This is sacred time and sacred space in a world where there is often little to be found. This means we honor this practice by committing to be there the whole time (and arriving on time – often there will be a “doors locked” time, such as 5 minutes after scheduled start time), by turning off our cell phones, and being present with and honoring what arises. So, rather than arriving and chatting about “what’s up”, we begin to drop into our experience, slowing down and tuning in to what is here. It doesn’t mean you can’t speak to others, but we are aiming to be less chatty, less in daily-mind mode, and more deeply present. Consider that the process has begun even before you arrive to the location!

#### **Welcome Circle –**

We begin officially by forming a circle where everyone can see everyone else. Unlike some modalities that may have the very same procedure every meeting, even in this phase we are in a deeper listening for what will most serve this particular group, this very moment... often we may have a few minutes of silence... we often will do some form of sharing names and a brief check-in going around the circle, which could be a general check-in, or sharing intentions or desires for the practice, or sometimes using a sentence stem....but

sometimes we don't do any of that. Our aim here is to welcome everyone into the room, and to do and say what needs to be said and done to transition to being fully in the room and in the practice, and to begin to receive and attune to each other more fully.

### **Guided Meditation –**

This is highly recommended especially for people new to the practice, but not required. In the FoA we are being present and aware, using attention and intention, and exploring aspects of consciousness that are not typically explored in our common day-to-day lives. Having an experienced leader (or possibly a recording) guide the group in some aspect of this consciousness exploration will help each person to learn how to use their awareness and attention, etc... in ways that support their own development, and also help the group drop in to The Field...finding aligned attunement...where we are no longer just a bunch of individuals in the same room, but rather we are individuals that are part of the unified group...we have become as one organism, and we listen from that awareness to the health of the whole, of the group system of which we are an integral part. We listen for what would help to build health, vitality, and for what might be in the way of our growth, expansion and fulfillment, individually and collectively, so that we may attend to and heal whatever is in the way.

### **The Practice – What is Alive?**

After the guided meditation and/or whatever 'drop-in' elements are employed, the 'floor' is open... the Agreements and Principles are in full effect, and we are all **in** the practice, in the cosmic sandbox. As much as possible, we are now listening to whatever the life force coming through us is saying – what is our own evolutionary impulse in this moment? Here silence and stillness are okay, even encouraged... because we are aiming to move away from reactive-busyness and toward being more essential... so we wait until we are 'quaked' as the Quakers would say... wait until something deeper, more essential moves us to speak, to ask a question, to share an observation or a desire, or move our bodies, to interact....

We are moving away from following the guidance coming from outside of us and rather listening to life itself emerge in our own system, through our own bodies. And yet, if the leader/elder (or anyone, really) notices that the group is no longer in The Field and has drifted into day-to-day mind-chatter, then that person has the responsibility to do what is needed (with love and care) to bring the group back to presence and cohesion, thereby serving the health and wholeness of the group. After all, if we are one organism, then we are each responsible for the whole, for the collective experience. "The one who has the most awareness has the most responsibility," is something to consider from this vantage point. Resetting the group may mean having a minute of silence, or another guided meditation, or some group movement exercises...whatever most serves that group in that particular moment.

We stay together as one group in the beginning. It takes time for dropping in and tuning in as a group, and to connect. Also, to percolate in our experience for a period of time is very useful. Sometimes we set a minimum amount of time for staying as one group, especially if it's a group that tends to move into subgrouping too early. This period could be 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or even longer. Sometimes the whole practice time. The goal is not to get to subgrouping, but to be authentically with what is and what most serves.

### **Subgrouping –**

One of the sublime joys of the Field of Awakening is when we are all dropped into the Field, and a moment comes unplanned and unscripted when the large group moves into subgroups – that is, one person may be drawn to interact with this other person, and those 4 people over there are drawn to explore something together, etc... This is life intelligence doing what it does best... what serves each of us the most tends to emerge almost as by magic. We aren't making mental thoughts about how to subgroup, we aren't being directed or counting off or splitting the room in any way... rather by spending time dropped in together as one group, our awarenesses and energies are co-mingling, and we learn to trust our spectrum of

intelligences (de-prioritizing the mental body) to guide us to where we need to be...and then somehow, in some way, we end up there.

So, before we start subgrouping we may experience an impulse yet not follow it... this also has value... we don't have to follow every impulse that arises. Continue to pay attention, see if that impulse gets stronger or goes away, or if another arises... and we can see that we have an awareness of the impulse – that **we** are **not** the impulse itself! And then, in subgrouping we get to see what happens when we follow the impulse. When we are sitting with an impulse, we can listen to where the impulse is coming from, we develop a *relationship to impulse*. Is it just a reactive thought of the mind? Or, is it our gut-instinct? Is it intuition or spirit? Having a greater awareness of our system and from where a specific impulse arises will greatly aid us in our development; indeed, expanding that awareness **is** a significant part of our development.

Subgrouping also offers an opportunity for each of us to stretch our normal spectrum of attention and awareness. Normally most of us tend to have a kind of tunnel-vision with the person(s) we are with... much to the exclusion of the rest of the room and our greater environment. In TFoA we invite you to expand your awareness and attention... to somehow still be 100% with the person(s) you are with while simultaneously expanding your awareness to include the whole environment and the other people in it. You may notice how the vibration of your voice is impacting others not in your subgroup; and you may notice a level of listening, an awareness of how the sounds and energies of others in the room are impacting you. You may find yourself impacted by sounds of traffic or nature in the distance. Even though you are connecting in a subgroup, you still can feel everyone in the room as part of a larger single organism. You can still have a sense of how everyone is impacting everyone else, and how we are either supporting or distracting each other from going deeper, expanding further and becoming more whole and fulfilled.

### **Closing Circle –**

We always leave time at the end for a closing circle. Often about 15-25 minutes, though that duration may be adjusted depending on the size and experience and mood of the group.

This is a time to come to completion, to begin integration, to share appreciations, as well as share comments or ask questions about the form, debrief what happened, and to prepare for the transition back to being able to drive a car and getting to where we are going next safely.

This is usually done 'popcorn' style, allowing shares to arise naturally as each person is moved to share something. It's nice, and highly preferable, to hear everyone's voice during the closing circle – in part because it is nice to practice transparency, for others to hear how you are and how you have been impacted...and it is also helpful to each person to integrate what has happened in the non-mental realms with the mental body. Sometimes we don't even recognize that something profound happened until we reflect on it and articulate it! That being said, also leave space for silence, and the possibility that someone is not ready to share something as they are still processing or integrating. A trained and skilled leader can artfully navigate these territories.

Shares are largely about what the experience was like for each person during the event, yet can also included be an appreciation to an individual, a question about format, sharing what was challenging, or what one want's more of, a favorite moment, a profound insight, or anything else that helps one feel complete.

One nice way to close the evening (after the 'popcorn' shares) is to go around the circle with a sentence stem, such as, "I'm leaving with..." or, "I am grateful for..." or whatever creative stem appears.

While the closing circle may seem to some less important because we are not 'in the practice', we have found that this time for integration, completion and transition is extremely valuable and essential. It is in fact part of the practice, and we aim to still be sharing from within our sense of group space even as we bring more attention to our individual experience and prepare to transition to what's next.

Is it also essential to ceremoniously close the practice time... by group ritual, or declaration of the facilitator, or whatever way seems to be appropriate. We aim to honor the time container on all fronts, so end on time (or get group agreement to extend the time in rare cases)!

# **THE FIELD OF AWAKENING**

## **Basics for Practice, part 3**

### **Clarifications:**

#### **What we do; What FoA is:**

Interactive!  
Relational  
Get out of day-to-day-mind as driving force  
Discovering and embodying our wholeness  
Spontaneous action and expression  
Multi-dimensional  
Deeply authentic  
Stillness and silence  
Inspired movement  
Honor group as a single organism  
Shadow work  
Different every time  
Group dynamics  
Awareness of the subtle realms  
Expanded sense of Self  
Listening to divine/universal intelligence  
Resting in awareness...  
Trusting that what needs to happen will happen  
Commitment to be with what is, even if it is intense or uncomfortable  
Honoring our limits, our current capacities  
If not fully in cosmic consciousness, noticing and being with what's in the way  
Holding space and allowing the unwinding of shock and trauma  
Openness to receiving and offering healing  
Ripeness to expand to our full potential and vitality  
Increasing our capacities for what we can handle  
Maturing and evolving our self and humanity

#### **What we don't do/What FoA is not**

Cocktail chatter  
Predictability  
Philosophical talk  
Any preconceived agenda  
Killing time  
Boredom  
Repetition  
Masks  
Popularity contest  
Staying stuck  
Hidden agendas  
Power struggle  
Anything that is not fully honoring the needs of the whole

#### **What are signs that you're 'in' the group field?**

If you need to ask, you probably aren't **in**  
It's not a thought...  
There is an awareness of flow  
You sense the room as a whole, and can feel the 'rightness' or divine guidance of all that is happening

## **What are signs that you're not dropped in the group field?**

You are bored

You are judging others or what is happening

You are watching more than participating

You are thinking about what you want to do later or what you'd rather be doing

## **How is FoA similar and different from XYZ?:**

It may be helpful to get a sense of this practice by understanding some of the similarities and differences with other practices. I won't define these other practices here in detail as that would take up considerable verbiage, but you can probably extrapolate what is relevant from my comments if you are not familiar with them:

### **Meditation**

FoA is partly a meditation. In fact, it is an advanced meditation. In traditional meditation we learn to watch and be witness to our thoughts and our breath... in FoA we bring more awareness and witnessing also to our emotions, behavior, interactions, to our inter-relating, our expressions and humanness on all levels. We can then learn to more fully experience these things while at the same time having some space from them – not being fully identified with them.

It is also a meditation because we consciously develop an intimacy with the void, with nothing, the place from which we emerge from and return to every nano-second, our source of being, the great cosmic screen-less screen on which we experience this universe.... the home of dark matter, the mysterious stuff that apparently makes up 96% of the cosmos....

### **T-Group**

Both are group interactive relational practices. Ideal number of participants for FoA is 8-15, and could even be quite a bit more, or less; T-group's ideal size is 4-6 (at least as it's practiced in Boulder; and could also be more or less, but less common). In both everyone is playing/practicing/participating at the same time. Both are "live action!" In T-group no one is 'leading'; in FoA everyone is 'leading', and there is a facilitator(s) who is responsible for holding the container, spaciously. T-group focuses on sensations and emotions in present moment with no story; FoA invites all levels and aspects, including instinct, intuition, subtle energy awareness, spirit, etc...even story, as long as it's integrated/embodied, what is authentically arising and best serves the group and the people in it. T-group tends to be 1st-person centric – the focus is on "what I am experiencing." FoA is more 3<sup>rd</sup> person centric – "What are **we** experiencing," while simultaneously bringing awareness to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person perspectives ("My experience" and "your experience.")

### **Circling**

Similarly, both are interactive relational group practices. With Circling there is more structure – one person is the designated leader/Circler who is orchestrating/directing much of what happens, and one person is the receiver who gets everyone's attention. The rest of the people are 'participants'... and we aim to 'get their world' of person being 'circled.'

In FoA we have leaders but they are more 'holding space' for the emergent leadership as it arises than guiding things themselves. In FoA the attention of the group may shift, and even subgroups may form. Circling is basically 2nd person centric – the focus is on getting someone else's experience.

Circling begins somewhat in a paradigm of separation – 'I am trying to get 'your' world. In FoA we drop into a space of 'we', of group field, and have more emphasis on meditation and subtle awareness. We understand it is possible to be inside someone else's experience, and inside a shared experience if we are open and sensitive enough. We can start from a paradigm of we are one.

FoA is more 3<sup>rd</sup> person centric – focus is on the we spaces, the space between us as well as on 1st and 2nd person perspectives. In Circling there is a distinct and deliberate intention to NOT coach/heal/advise/therapize...but to just *be with* the other. This can be very liberating, as most people go through life with all kinds of agendas. However, it can also be quite limiting if we have an intention to help each other to heal and expand into our fullest selves. In FoA we have an intention for us to heal and support our finding fulfillment in whatever way works best.

## **Energy Healing**

This is a big one, since very few practices integrate subtle energy awareness into the form, and much is possible when there is attention placed here. Some people may perceive more than others, and that's okay. Whatever your training or experience, in FoA you are invited to stretch your awareness and intuition into more subtle realms.

While we do aim to be with each other without judgement or agenda, we also aim to listen to when a natural impulse emerges and trust in the wisdom and intelligence of our non-mental capacities. If offering energetic healing and support in some form to another is what emerges, and the other is open to receiving – there is enough space in FoA for that to happen.

We also aim to expand our very sense of Self, of “I”...becoming a bigger self, and enlarging our sphere of consideration...when we identify with the whole world and all of humanity as **Self** (rather than just our own body, or our family, or even ethnicity or nation), we make different (more healthy and holistic) choices than if we see the world and other humans (and the natural world) as something other, something outside of us.

As we become more aware of the subtle, we become more aware that we are all made of the same stuff, we all come from the same source, we are all quite literally, one – even as we maintain our unique individualism.

Hence, energy work is an integral part of FoA, though held within the larger context of authenticity, emergent intelligence, growth, and building deep, enduring and meaningful community.

## **Music**

Those of you who are musicians can probably relate to music as a form of meditation practice. Aside from learning technique, we learn the value of harmony and resonance, and even dissonance at times. There are moments when playing music that we no longer think about what beat we are on or what note or chord we are playing, but rather we drop into a flow...being with the feeling of it all... and the music is just happening, just coming through us. And when we are playing with others in the cosmic sandbox of FoA, the same can happen: if we are attuned enough there is just flow happening – I am playing my part, my unique expression within the larger whole, and the whole has its composite expression. That experience of magical flow in music is what we are bringing to being together as human beings, in all our expressions and dimensions, on all our levels and perspectives and experience within FoA... How can life itself, and all our interactions arrive at to that level of flow?

## **Contact Improvisation Dance (CI)**

In CI we share the weight of our bodies, and a moving point of contact. In FoA we dance with our shared consciousness... we share awareness, attention, intention, energy, presence...and follow the dynamic moving experience where those dimensions meet between us. In CI we lean our bodies into each other and allow a dance to unfold; in FoA we lean our consciousnesses into each other and allow life to unfurl.

## **Family/Systemic Constellations**

Both are working with group fields, and listening to and trusting the subtle impulses that arise in each of us as we feel into our part in the larger organism. Family Constellations has a facilitator who does most of the guiding, and there is focus client who everyone is serving in some way – in this way Family Constellations has a lot more structure. FoA on the other hand is very dynamic, has no fixed client, no fixed leader per se, no particular agenda... other than for each person to listen for the emergent, the subtle voice of the life force informing us what wants to happen next. FoA is more of a container than a process... within that container, other forms may appear, including Family Constellations (though it is quite rare that such a structured format would best serve the whole group, especially when the group has more than just a few people in it).

## **Men's Groups and Women's Circles**

A commitment to truth, connection, bonding and authenticity as being more important than just feeling good and being nice. FoA offers a similar frame but in a mixed gender environment. There is ample space to receive and offer authentic support, at times even within a same-gendered subgroup. We connect human-to-human, transcending gender identification, and becoming intimate with both the masculine and feminine energies within each of us. And at times also embracing the unique qualities of each gender, and/or exploring and embracing healthy external expressions of feminine and masculine energies. In all of these you are welcome as you are, in your wholeness, and are likely to find a deeper trust, safety and bonding than in other environments.

## **Humaniversity/Radical Aliveness/Cathartic Methods**

Most of our culture is emotionally and energetically shut down, suppressed, stuck and repressed on many levels. Catharsis in its various forms can provide a valuable release and opening to break through decades of stagnancy. For that is has a valuable place in the repertoire of healing and growth approaches for many people.

And as a container for whatever is most helpful in any given moment for any given group it could even show up within FoA. However it is not a specific aim within FoA to use catharsis as a means to open people up. There can be at times other effective methods which may be even safer and gentler and more graceful, and support a deeper and more lasting integration.

It's the difference between opening a bag of rice by ripping the top off by force or using scissors, or to open the bag by pulling the string in just the spot in just the right way that it just opens effortlessly, leaving the bag fully in tact.

## **Ecstatic Dance**

Both are letting go of 'mind' and 'known' to allow the unconscious to express itself and move us. FoA just includes many more dimensions and possibilities for exploration, including interacting with others in nearly infinite ways.

## **Healing and Therapy and Coaching**

So, FoA is a practice, a consciousness practice, a form of adult play where we are each responsible for our own experience. Nobody is the guru and nobody is there just to deliver a pre- determined modality. We are in FoA to share our humanity with each other, to share our love, to discover our blind spots and reveal our withholds....among other things. So, we start by being with each other, as friends, as fellow human beings... and a natural compassion and desire to support one another generally emerges. That support CAN look like healing or therapy or coaching within FoA. What it is, is only what emerges, is different every time, and is what all parties are in alignment to explore.

But it can be a tricky slope – it can be easy to take on a hat of 'healer' or 'coach', especially if it's a role we are used to and can be almost automatic... we aim to not take on such hats or identities within FoA... nonetheless, maybe spirit will guide you to rub someone's shoulders, or offer some reflections or support someone in some way...if it's your impulse, and the other is welcoming, we do not limit what you may offer within FoA. It's all about listening to what is true and most serving, and most enlivening for the whole (which **you** are a part of).

## **Mystery Schools**

FoA is also inspired by elements of mystery schools; because we aim to take Mind out of the driver's seat and welcome the Mystery/Source/Universal Intelligence to inform and move us – we at times find ourselves experiencing an amazing unfolding of circumstances that somehow speaks to the deeper soul paths we are on, patching holes in our psychic space we didn't even know we had (e.g. shadows and blind spots), and/or offering clues to where we would benefit from focusing our attention during the current and/or upcoming phase of our life.

We explore so many things that our current culture and science don't yet understand, and would probably be heavily skeptic about (which is okay – we support not believing anything that is not your direct experience).

## **Other 'We-Practices'**

There are a few other we-practices out there that are also exploring similar areas of human consciousness expansion. Most notable to us are the work of Thomas Hubl and his Mystical Principles courses, and Patricia Albere with the Mutual Awakening practice and the Evolutionary Collective. Definitely worth exploring... the main distinction is that these trainings offer mostly dyadic practices, where with FoA we are going right into the universe of the group field. Also, those practices are mostly quite structured with time and/or directives, where FoA is mostly open space which more directly invites emergence from essence.

## **In Closing:**

There are dozens more distinctions we pay attention to in the Field of Awakening, but this covers the basics to get started, and offers plenty to focus on for quite a while. Some form of course(s) or materials will be created at some point for those who want more refinement and deeper explorations. Thank you for participating in this experiment for human development and evolution. See you in 'the Field'!

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