

EDGE OF THE WILD WORKSHOP 2014 PROGRAMME : FRIDAY 18TH JULY

These 13 workshops explore the 2014 theme of Outside Language in intriguing, creative and diverse ways. Practical and experiential, these interactive sessions involve both mind and body, and relate to specificity of the place in which we are gathering and the other-than-human beings that live there.

Please note this programme is subject to change.

11.30am – 1pm **6 workshops**

1. Rachel Morrell - Strength, Connection and Communication - Outside Language

In a culture focused on the written and spoken word, our bodies can become neglected and our core strength becomes forgotten. Based on Pilates stretches and exercises this workshop aims to reconnect delegates with their core strength: a strength that once meant everything, when we lived by the land. This outdoor workshop will begin with deep stretches and breathing; connecting with the sky. This will be followed by strength work on the ground; connecting with the earth. Attendees will then be invited to wander, and using free movement; communicate and connect with the other than human in our surroundings. This connection will then be shared with the other delegates in a non-verbal exercise. Finally, we will all re-group for open reflection and discussion around what we perceived the other to be communicating, and what we felt we were communicating. This workshop will be suitable for all skills and abilities, those who are able, will be pushed to find deep strength with technical support and guidance. Others will be supported to comfortably find their core strength and nurture it. All will be connecting to the earth and sky using their bodies to communicate outside of language. Injuries and individual needs will be discussed at the beginning of the workshop and activities adapted accordingly.

How does it relate to the theme?

The language of the human body is ancient, primitive and cross cultural. Today, the written and spoken word is celebrated in our culture. The constant bombardment of noise and visual stimulation from this form of language, leaves our body's strength and subtlety stunted and overlooked. This workshop aims to allow delegates to nurture the strength they hold within, and explore how they can use this to connect and communicate with the outside world. The open discussion will unearth the benefits and indeed the difficulties of communicating non-verbally. Some may feel this non-verbal communication to be outside of language, others will believe the two are intrinsically linked. And how does this relate to our connection with the other than human?

Bio

I am Rachel Morrell, aged 23. I graduated Psychology last year with a 2:1 from Bournemouth University. In my final year I was fortunate enough to study Ecopsychology. Under the guidance of Paul Stevens I was able to achieve 92% for the module's reflective journal coursework. Since graduating I attended The Edge of The Wild Gathering last year and I am currently on a graduate scheme with a Housing Association. In the future, I hope to incorporate the principles of Ecopsychology into my career – creating activities and supported housing environments for people with mental health problems that nurtures their connections to the other than human and with the primitive self.

2. Julia Wright - Ecopsychology and Agriculture: when discussion doesn't work

What concepts and tools can we apply to enable change toward more sustainable farming?

Whilst ecopsychology clearly addresses the relationship between humans and nature and its application in relation to our external environment, few of the cases addressed focus specifically on agricultural land management and farming practices. Within the agricultural sector, there is scant acknowledgement of the psychological factors that drive behaviour. Instead, there continues to be a prevalent approach of technology development and top-down transfer of knowledge to farmers, and of control of nature. No amount of discussion or presentation of 'scientific evidence' in favour of more sustainable approaches makes an impact. What would make a difference that is outside of language? How can we use ecopsychology to influence processes that encourage pro- ecological behaviour in the farming community? What is beyond behavioural change? Can approaches such as the Works that Reconnects, environmental constellations and environmental behavioural change be applied to farming? This session aims to encourage discussion of the issues and to identify some tools and techniques that may be applicable. It encourages contributors to demonstrate techniques with role play. Opportunities for collaboration over experimental research will also be discussed.

How does it relate to the theme?

No amount of 'scientific evidence' and logical discourse may suffice in changing behaviour in the agricultural sector toward more sustainable practices. Are there other forms of verbal communication that might make a difference, or does the answer lie completely outside language, in the realms of ritual, enabling a connection to feeling, or touching some other part of being human?

Bio

Julia Wright is Deputy Director of the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, at Coventry University. She has thirty years of experience in international agricultural development with a focus on organic and sustainable systems, participatory research, working for the Department for International Development, international research centres, the UN and NGOs. All along, she was seeking to find out why these organisations were not promoting organic/agroecological farming – and found no good reason. Her doctoral studies took her to Cuba where she looked at the coping strategies of the farming and food sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1990s. Why did Cuban agriculture not 'go organic'? There she identified underlying fears of lack of food and loss of control. Is the answer to alleviate these fears? For the last ten years Julia has been working in the UK, leading the International Development Programme at Garden Organic (formerly the Henry Doubleday Research Association) and currently close by at Coventry University. All the socio-economic research of the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience is concerned with change, be it of citizen behaviour, of farming systems, of policies, etc, and current research includes working with farmers to enable behaviour change in the face of climate change.

3. Sarah Hinds - Weaving your experience

The workshop will begin with a brief look at the cultural, spiritual and therapeutic significance of weaving followed by an exercise exploring connection and relationship by making a physical weaving using thread between the participants. This will be followed by making small, hand held, simple individual weavings (on individual frames rather than looms). These might be an exploration or expression of the experience of being at the ecopsychology gathering or an exploration in themselves such as a meditative process. Materials will be provided but participants can also use natural materials gathered from the site or materials from the gathering such as journal pages or personal notes, drawings etc. Example weavings will be provided as an illustration of the ideas.

How does it relate to the theme?

Weaving has been used as a form of expression and communication of cultural and spiritual beliefs in ways that go beyond written or spoken language. The first exercise explores relating and connecting without spoken language. The rhythm of weaving has been seen as a representation of the rhythm of creation, as a method of meditation or a sacred act. Woven fabrics are used to communicate spiritual symbolism and used in many rituals and significant life events such as birth

and death. Pattern, motif and dyes can have symbolic meaning and weaving has been associated with altered states of consciousness and the ability to connect with other realms or experiences. This workshop will begin to explore the significance of weaving to the individual taking part. Participants will find their own expression in the weaving which may be about the action of weaving, the personal symbolism of pattern or colour or personal expression relating to the objects placed into the weaving. In all these ways the participant moves outside spoken and written language as a form of communication or expression.

Bio

I currently work full time as a humanistic student counsellor at Swansea University. I have worked as a counsellor and lecturer/tutor in various settings since 1998 and am passionate about counselling having a basis in relationship, creativity and soul. Before retraining as a counsellor I studied Fine Art and whilst working as a counsellor I also ran a business called 'Inner Ocean' at Banks Mill Studios in Derby. There I created weavings and boxes that had personal significance or symbolism to the customer e.g. memory boxes, boxes for ritual or for keeping poetry or positive affirmations inside and weaving made from objects from places of significance to an individual.

4. Matthew Henson - Beyond Human Dialogue

The limits of my language are the limits of my world' - Wittgenstein

In this workshop we will explore the importance of relational dialogue within the context of ecopsychology, through a gentle experiential process of being-with-the-other-than-human.

Psychotherapy has historically been conceived of as a process between humans (clients and therapists). The premiss of this workshop is that effective therapy involves a relational dialogue between clients and therapists. To this end, many therapists (some explicitly, some implicitly) draw upon the practice of phenomenology, in an attempt to 'be with' their clients' lived experiences. A phenomenological approach to psychotherapy stands opposed to dualism, such as the artificial splitting of mind/body, language/thought. Whilst words are an important element in the therapeutic dialogue, words cannot in themselves capture the essence of existence. An embodied approach to relationship is required, which broadens the notion of dialogue to include information intuited through all of our senses. In this context, therapy can be seen as the 'by products' of a process of genuine phenomenological dialogue.

How does it relate to the theme?

In keeping with the theme of this gathering, 'Outside Language', we will look to apply the principles of phenomenological dialogue to an experience of being-with-the-other-than-human. In a simplistic way, we will be taking the therapeutic dialogue 'outside' of the therapy room. More importantly, we will be aiming to broaden the scope of the therapeutic dialogue beyond a process occurring only between humans.

You will be invited to spend time with the other (and more)-than-human. You will be encouraged to adopt a phenomenological attitude, staying at a descriptive level, focusing your awareness upon physical sensations and any feelings, thoughts, memories, etc that are triggered. We will then meet as a group or small groups to discuss the experience.

This workshop fits with the conference theme as it looks to broaden the language of therapy to include a genuine relational dialogue between humans and the other-than-human and more-than-human.

The workshop could be tailored for 90 or 120 minutes as appropriate.

Bio

Matthew Henson – brief biography Having graduated from Regent's College in 2006, I have practised since then as an existential psychotherapist, privately and in the not-for-profit sector. In 2012 I completed a one year ecopsychology training, Wild Therapy. I am currently employed as a therapist

and trainer of counselling students by The Counselling Centre, a community based project in Cork, where I live with my family. My current interests include the application of existential-phenomenology within the context of ecopsychology.

5. Alistair Duncan - The Wisdom of Trees

Adventures in the woods, exploring transformative ways of experiencing and connecting with the silent language of the natural world. Building on practices that were well known to our ancestors and setting them in the context of contemporary psychology and neuroscience, the workshop will explore a number of whole body awareness techniques for experiencing the world around us, time for reflection on our experiences and some background behind the practices and their application.

How does it relate to the theme?

The workshop will explore how we experience and encounter the natural world when we shift our perceptual filters to allow information from and connection with the more-than-human world, that we are not normally aware of. This language beyond language is not experienced by us in our cognitive, rational mind but as impressions in our unconscious and our sensing body.

Bio

My partner and I run an organisation called Where Two Rivers Meet. We work to connect people with the best in themselves, their communities and the natural world. We bring a transformative blend of modern personal development technologies and ancient nature-based wisdom to our work. I have a Masters degree in Phenomenology and am a Master Practitioner in a highly somatic and artistic form of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

6. Gemma Burford - Four Directions Design: using the language of the elements to design holistic projects

This interactive workshop is based on a 'Four Directions' design model, which uses the four compass directions and the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water as metaphors for different perspectives on project design. Earth / North is linked to evaluating and improving individual behaviours, as well as skills, performance and knowledge; Air / East to understanding and enhancing positive impacts at the level of systems; Fire / South to revealing and co-creating supportive, inspirational cultures; and Water / West to eliciting and transforming personal life experiences. The model also offers an optional space for honouring 'Spirit' or 'Mystery' at the Centre, through ritual, ceremony or meditative practice.

Through physical movement, visual arts activities and discussion, we will explore ways in which the language of directions and elements can inspire holistic project design and creative evaluation. We will map participants' existing projects and therapeutic interventions on to the 'Four Directions', thus helping them to connect with approaches complementary to their own, and potentially to build new collaborations.

How does it relate to the theme?

Evaluation and program design are typically discussed in a very abstract way - program theory, outputs, processes, outcomes, etc. The approach I will pilot in this workshop - based on a synthesis of Integral Theory and sustainable design literature, on the one hand, with Indigenous 'Four Directions' and 'Medicine Wheel' traditions, on the other - translates these concepts effectively into the 'outside language' of four cardinal directions and four essential elements (earth, air, fire, and water).

Weather permitting, I will conduct part of the workshop outside, using natural materials to mark out a large quadrated circle aligned with the compass directions. Participants will move physically from one quadrant to another as they reflect on different aspects of evaluation and program design in

relation to the respective elements, thus translating these concepts into 'outside language' in a deeply experiential and embodied way.

Bio

Gemma Burford is currently Research Fellow in the Values and Sustainability Research Group at the University of Brighton. She is the co-author of several recently published papers on evaluation, participation, intercultural education and sustainable design. Gemma is also a Co-Director of the Global Initiative for Traditional Systems (GIFTS) of Health and has written, co-authored or co-edited numerous publications on traditional / complementary approaches to health and wellness, including two books. She holds an MBiochem (Hons) in Biochemistry from the University of Oxford, and an MSc in Environmental Anthropology from Kent, and is currently working towards a PhD in Sustainable Design focusing on the 'Four Directions' evaluation model.

3 – 5PM

6 workshops

1. Sally Davies and Vanessa Jones - Naked Voice in Nature

Workshop by Sally Davies, Gong player and naked voice facilitator, and Vanessa Jones art psychotherapist and ecotherapist. This workshop offers the opportunity to explore, in voice, your personal connection with external nature. Drawing from the Rumi Poem, Love Dogs, we invite you to work within triads in the roles of singer, witness, and loyal friend to discover the call of your own being. We invite you to connect with your own deeper voice, in the embrace of nature herself, and to honour that communication with the creation of art.

How does it relate to the theme?

We will be offering participants the opportunity to experience and deepen their connection with nature through the use of voice not words. The intention is to support the creation of 'songs', made in relationship with nature - by listening, being with and opening towards her. This workshop is about the music of our hearts and expressing our own personal call to the natural world beyond our Self.

Bio

Vanessa Jones has been working as an art psychotherapist since 1998. She has over 15 years experience within the NHS working with adults in acute mental health services. Vanessa has been running art therapy outdoors groups for 4 years, within the NHS settings and within semi private woodland in East Sussex. She has recently completed Mindfulness teacher's training course and is currently taking part in the post graduate environmental arts course run by Ian Siddons Heginworth. www.vanessajones.orguk Sally Davies has been exploring sound healing since 2010. She did her Naked Voice training with Chloe Goodchild and graduated in 2012. She has done her gong master training with Don Conreaux and Sheila Whittaker. She regularly holds sound healing sessions in and around Pembrokeshire. She is currently studying at the Poetry Depths Mystery School with Kim Rosen.

2. Frankie Sikes - Liminality & Change

Transformative change often involves a crossing into unknown territory that challenges, not just our ability to maintain new behaviours but, also, (and more essentially), challenges our very identity, who we think we are and what we believe ourselves to be capable of.

Liminal space provides us with a passageway from one state of understanding to another, one stage of development to another, one way of being to another. The "gap" is a threshold that is stepped in to rather than over. It's a place where the initiate, (person undergoing change), can make changes at the level of who they think they are before crossing fully in to the new situation or change. Liminality

is a place where we can relax our identity, let go of who we thought we were and start to build an idea who we will become before becoming it. Liminal space is the space where change happens. Using a combination of presentation, demonstration and exercises, this workshop provides participants with a model for understanding change, clearer insight into why people struggle making changes in their lives and shows some useful ways of working with people to draw them in to liminal space and begin the work.

How does it relate to the theme?

Liminality is a recursive concept and is a useful way of describing the processes involved in change. What happens in the gap is then described by the "hero's Journey" which itself contains a further liminal space, (the abyss), that is "outside language". It is a place of pre-verbal processing that happens at a more 'felt' level which is the place where real change happens.

Bio

Frankie guides the "Walking in Spirit" silent nature- walking retreat in Somiedo Natural Park, Asturias Spain. www.walkinginspirit.co.uk

Frankie is a London based trainer and consultant delivering Motivational Interviewing training, both in- house and at scheduled events. He is committed to helping individuals, groups and organisations develop the skills to facilitate positive growth and development in the people they work with. He is available for individual consultations and as a consultant for organisations needing assistance in managing change and problem solving.

He is a founder member and trustee of Inspirit Training & Development Ltd. Inspirit are a charity based in Bethnal Green, London. Their mission is to support drug and alcohol recovery via creative and educative programmes and to support excellence in the field with quality training for substance misuse professionals.

Frankie is a qualified hypnotherapist, psychotherapist and trainer.

3. Alexandra Pope - Exploring Menstruality* the female initiatory path (A workshop for women and men)

Menstruality is a term to describe the female life dynamic of menarche, the menstrual cycle, menopause and the mature years. It gives women a way of naming and exploring the precise and multi-layered biological, psychological and spiritual process of evolution encoded within the female body. To date women have not had a word to encompass this field of experience and thus have been effectively gagged. We have been taught not to speak of the menstrual cycle; to see it as a limitation to any kind of material or spiritual success when all along the limitation was the not-speaking and not-valuing of it. As one woman said on learning about her menstruality, 'it's like being given the female alphabet'. In this workshop I will introduce you to the basic 'alphabet' of menstruality, the importance of honouring the order of the cycle and how this works as an initiatory process each menstrual month and in the arc from menarche to menopause. This understanding can rewire a woman's relationship to herself, others and the planet giving her a means of self-regulation, life management and inner work, open her to her Calling and the possibility of exquisite expanded states of consciousness at menstruation itself. Do join me to explore the richness of this topic and its relevance to both women and men, to our planet today.

* The term 'menstruality' was coined by psychotherapist Jane Catherine Severn in an article entitled Menstruality: the great feminine gestalt in the Gestalt Journal of Australia and New Zealand. She was concerned that we did not have a word to describe this field. And without a word, the full power of this process could be easily ignored or dismissed. www.lunahouse.co.nz

How does it relate to the theme?

Menstruation/menstruality has not been a topic for public conversation for centuries. The silencing of this embodied intelligence has caused untold suffering for women on many levels and affected our relationships with men. Second wave feminism got as far as naming the importance of women

knowing how their bodies worked ie the physiological process, but to speak out about it beyond that was regarded as a betrayal of the sisterhood. Only now in the last 5 years has there been a shift in consciousness, a sudden awakening to menstruation's gifts beyond its baby-making function especially amongst younger women, but even here I find there is a paucity of languaging to describe what is powerful about the power of menstruation/menstruality, especially a way of speaking that meets who we are today and the world issues we must engage with. The term menstruality is a way to name this whole field of women's lived experience that currently goes under the radar with women often suffering in silence.

A woman's menstruality experience is indeed 'outside language', and, sadly, still outside the canon of psychotherapy.

Bio

I have a background as a teacher, and 20 years experience as a psychotherapist in private practice in Sydney, Australia. For over 30 years I have held a deep attention to my own and other women's lived experience of their menstrual cycle and out of that has formed a thorough and soulful framing for the female model of healing, initiation and spiritual practice. Author of *The Wild Genie: the healing power of menstruation*, *The Woman's Quest* workbook, and co-author of *The Pill: are you sure it's for you*, today I teach and coach on menstruality in UK and Europe, running public and professional workshops and a training. To learn more go to www.womensquest.org, and coming soon a new online programme at www.menstruatlityeducation.com

4. Rhonda and Michael – Reconnection to the animal body

The conversation with the other than human world is a constant sensuous, visceral experience. In our modern culture this has been so often, domesticated, forgotten and/or demonised.

This workshop will explore this conversation through a further reconnection to the animal body of us, that is always within this visceral conversation. Through embodiment sensual practices, movement and stillness an invitation will emerge to help you remember this wild dialogue. In daring to join again to this, we are offered wisdom, truth, presence, transformation and vitality. Finding again the resources of the earths dreaming, the others embrace, our own human depths and the realm of soul.

As Anna Breytenbach has stated, 'this communication with the others is our birth right'

Or as David Abram has said. "Such reciprocity is the very structure of perception. We experience the sensuous world only by rendering ourselves vulnerable to that world. Sensory perception is this ongoing interweavement: the terrain enters into us only to the extent that we allow ourselves to be taken up within that terrain." — David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*

Bio

Rhonda Brandrick Dip Couns, Tutor, Supervisor,

Rhonda has worked for twenty years supporting people in their process of individuation and healing. She has trained as an outdoor leader.

She started her work with people in nature 20 years ago and has a wild passion for the ongoing inquiry into our deeply embedded relationship with the earth. As co director of Human Nature she is committed to offering and developing nature based courses that reach as many people as possible.

Rhonda is currently training with Bill Plotkin and Animas Valley Institute as a Soul Guide.

Michael Connors BSc, PGCE, Mountain Leader UK, Adv Dip Couns and Psych, Dip Supervision.

Michael has been working in therapy, meditation, education and outdoor training for the last 20 years. He brings a wide experience in facilitation, therapeutic methods, meditation, music, poetry and soul guiding to his work with people in nature and soul. He shares the vision with Rhonda, that individuals and cultures can transform through a reconnection to earth, deepening embodiment and

through accessing the life enhancing resources of soul. He also works with people facing life threatening illness and how deep transformation can occur in connection with nature.

5. Harris - Coming To Our Senses: encountering the ecological self and nature

The workshop will be a taster of the full five days program which has been used for the past four years, mainly with adults with high functioning autism whilst in the Scottish Highlands. There will be almost no words used prior to and during the workshop; only a minimal set of instructions on how to perform the practices. We shall start with a grounding meditative practice in order to gently calm the mind and bring the attention to the present. After which, we will devote ten minutes to each one of the five senses, by way of taking a meditative walk around the green and away camp. At the end of the experiential practices, there will be space and time allocated for the participants to come together as an encounter group in order to reflect on the experience

Hearing: Can you hear the birds singing? Let the sounds of nature land gently on your ears. You might be able to hear the other-than-human talking to you?

Smell: Smell the air. Do you smell flowers? Wet earth?

Touch: Touch the grass. Lay your face next to a tree's bark. Maybe you can go barefoot?

Taste: Can you taste the leaf? Take a leaf and put it in your mouth; what does it taste like? There are some blueberries there; go, have one!

Sight: Look intently but gently; so many different colours; so many different shapes.

Imagination and intuition: Blindfolded, we shall wander around and try to use our imagination and intuition to make sense of our experience. We might discover a different way to encounter nature; a more intense and essential connection?

How does it relate to the theme?

The "Coming To Our Senses; Encountering the ecological self and nature" workshop aims, by using the senses, to facilitate a congruent meeting between human and nature which goes beyond the bounds of language and intellectualism. It could be seen alternatively as a nature encounter group, as it is an experiential, embodied and integrated way to reawaken communication, and foster an empathic, sensual and intimate relationship between human and nature. By immediate, sensual, non-verbal sense experience, the self is gently relocated in an ecocentric framework; the human-nature dualism fades, and one comes to his/her senses figuratively and practically speaking.

The workshop provides fundamentally the participants with an experiential framework, outside of language, to find their own ways to encounter nature and self. The experience is deeply personal and self-directed. In this context, nature truly becomes the main therapist. Participants experience a heightened sense of sensitivity which often results in new ways of seeing and being with nature.

It is a highly practical and adaptable, ecotherapeutic tool that can be applied to various groups and contexts. It can be used as a gentle way to introduce nature to people with minimal connection to it or to those with impaired language and cognitive skills.

Bio

I am a psychologist, trainee psychotherapist and organic farmer, and have been living and working in Scotland for the past 8 years. In my work, I use contemplative inquiry and experiential practices to try to break the theory-practice dualism, and to find ways to help others to heal and flourish. By my lights, healing and flourishing are directly related and dependent upon connection and relationship with nature. As an Ecopsychologist, I also see my role as facilitating an empathic encounter of the human animal with nature, so necessary in our days, in order to counteract the negative effects of our ecoamnesic post-modern civilisation.

6. Sarah Deco - Inside-Outside Tales

In the very earliest of times When both people and animals lived on the earth People could become animals if they wanted to And animals could become people..... That was a time when words were like magic... A word spoken by chance Might have strange consequences It would suddenly become alive. Nalungiak(innuit)

This will be an experiential workshop exploring liminal space and experience accessed through woodland, art making and fairy tales. Folk and fairy tales articulate our relationship to the land and a state of being in which everything is connected, animate and full of meaning. They enable us to stand on the threshold of different states of being. We will explore what it means to be 'upon a time' rather than in a time and see what journeys this leads us on, individually and as a group.

How does it relate to the theme?

Outside Language speaks to me both of the language of outsiders and also the visceral and ineffable experience which exists beyond thought and explanation. The realm of 'Faerie' is a place in our mental space in which we can hear the language of outsiders, especially the rejected, not heard and the not- human. It is an access point for the realm beyond language.

Bio

Sarah Deco is an art therapist and group analyst with a deep interest in storytelling as a means of re-balancing our relationship to each other and re- connecting with the world around us. She works freelance and in private practice. She has taught Egyptian dance for many years and her first career was as a singer songwriter.