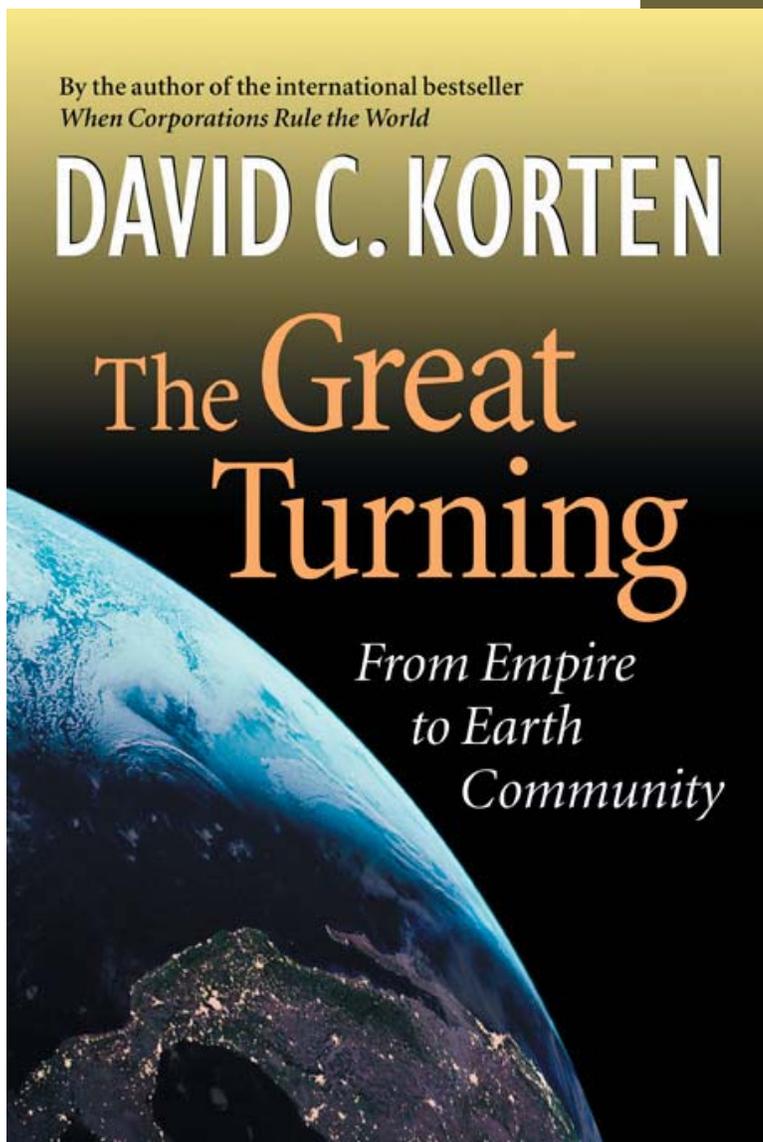


Break the silence, end the isolation,
change the story...



Discussion Guide

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

—The Earth Charter (2000)

Dear Reader:

Thank you for your decision to organize a discussion group based on *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. One of the book's underlying arguments is that a key to changing the human course is to break the silence that prevails when truth remains unspoken, reach out to one another to end the isolation that Empire imposes, and change the stories that define the prevailing culture.



The worker rights, civil rights, women's, and environmental rights movements all began with a few people coming together in small groups to share their deepest hopes for the world that might be. Through dialogue, they affirmed their sanity, learned that they were not alone, and gained the courage to reach out beyond their small circle to actualize possibilities articulated in new stories.

Writing *The Great Turning* drew me ever deeper into challenging conventional cultural wisdom on everything from the lessons of history and the nature of civilization to the limits of human possibility and the nature and meaning of creation. The point of *The Great Turning* discussion group is not to recite my answers; it is to engage the questions from the perspective of each participant's life experience and to do it at a feeling as well as intellectual level.

The larger goal is to engage all segments of one's town, city, or state in defining and realizing a positive, shared vision for the future grounded in stories that celebrate the possibilities of Earth Community. Larger initiatives of this nature are already underway in a number of localities. Others are just beginning. We refer to them by the generic name Earth Community Dialogues.

There are no precise rules or guidelines for Earth Community Dialogues. They necessarily begin with the formulation of shared visions of possibility that gain energy as people mobilize to turn them into action. Often beginning with an emphasis on food and energy self-reliance, green building, and patronizing locally owned businesses, the initial leadership may come from a church, a local nonprofit or socially responsible business, a local government or college, or simply a group of concerned citizens.

As the circle of engagement grows, the dialogue extends into ever-larger community forums and creates a body of best practices from which communities everywhere can learn. Our expectation is that as Earth Community Dialogues continue to expand in their reach through engaging the full range of print and electronic media, the many individual conversations and community actions will begin to merge into a larger national and global movement with the power to change the course of the human future. To learn more about Earth Community Dialogues and find supporting resources, visit www.greatturning.org.

David Korten
April 2006

VERSION 06.1: Developed by David Korten and Neva Welton with vital input and feedback from a variety of people. Special thanks to Sharon Negri, Positive Futures Network, Praxis Peace Institute, and Bob Stigler.

There are many ways to facilitate a deeper discussion of the ideas presented in *The Great Turning*. Our hope is that your discussions not only plumb the intellectual understanding of the ideas in *The Great Turning*, but also connect participants to their personal experiences of the larger influences of Empire, and create new stories based on the principles of Earth Community.

FORMAT

This guide is designed for a five-meeting, two-hour session format. The sessions are aligned with each of the five parts in the book. Each session includes: a synopsis of the major ideas within the chapters, whole group discussion questions to explore intellectually, and questions for dyads (groups of two) to explore more personally. We have provided several questions for each session, but with the amount of time allocated, it is likely your group will not be able to address each one. We encourage you to decide, with the help of your group, which of the questions provided will produce the most stimulating discussion or, if you prefer, create your own questions.

We realize that five sessions has its limits, especially given the richness of the ideas presented in *The Great Turning*. In order to address this issue, our intention, with the help of our readers, is to create more in-depth discussion guides that focus on particular themes in the book. These modules will be made available on www.greatturning.org as they are developed and will be an evolving work-in-progress. We will also be adding supplement pages to this guide as readers share how *The Great Turning* has influenced their thinking and actions.

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Getting the discussion group started will take the effort of at least one primary person or persons. Along with figuring out logistics such as publicity and location, you'll have to decide if one person will facilitate the group throughout the five weeks or, if you prefer, assign facilitation duties to a different person each session. We like the idea of passing the facilitation baton, as it exemplifies shared leadership and allows everyone to participate fully. Guidelines for facilitation include:

- Be the timekeeper. Start and end on time.
- Make sure ground rules for discussion are respected.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to talk.
- Don't allow anyone to monopolize the discussion.

FIRST SESSION

At your first meeting, take time to reach agreement on effective, respectful practices for speaking and listening, and introduce participants to each other in a creative way. Both of these exercises will help to build trust within your group and put people at ease. Here are a few suggestions for group agreements:

- Listen compassionately.
- Honor and respect each person's contribution.
- Speak from your own experience.
- Avoid criticism and persuasion.
- Agree to disagree.
- Be aware of how often and long you speak.
- Seek to understand and learn.

For introductions, go around the room clockwise (always start with the facilitator) and have each participant address the following: Tell a story about your name. Where does it come from? Who were you named for? What do you like or not like about your name? Allow one or two minutes depending on the size of your group.

SESSION FORMAT

The guide makes room for many possible session formats. You may decide to use a combination of whole group questions and dyad questions or you may decide to go with one or the other; you could also use the dyad questions as whole group discussions and vice versa! Here is one example of how you might structure your time:

Welcome (5 minutes): A simple ritual at the beginning of the session can help to set a welcome tone and center participants. It could be several minutes of silence, a sharing of hopes and expectations for the discussion, and a candle lighting ceremony.

Whole Group Discussion (45 minutes): Set a tone by reminding participants of the group agreements (having them written on a large piece of paper or white board is recommended). Your discussions can be conducted as a back and forth dialogue or by going around the circle clockwise and having each person express their ideas while others listen. You can also go "popcorn" style, which allows people to speak when they are ready.

Dyad Discussions (45 minutes): Ask the group to break up in groups of two, and to choose someone new each session. We suggest that this time not be for dialogue, but instead as a time of focused listening. Allow at least 5 minutes per person, per question, depending on which questions you choose. This should give you enough time for 3 to 4 questions and requires some good timekeeping on behalf of the facilitator. We suggest giving participants 30 seconds notice when it is time to switch speakers.

Debrief (20 minutes): As a whole group, use this time to cull the learning that has come from the evening's exploration of both whole group discussions and dyads.

Closing (5 minutes): End much the way you started with some silent time, words of appreciation, and blowing out the candles.

SESSION ONE

PART I: CHOOSING OUR FUTURE (CHAPTERS 1-4)

The defining choice before us is between two contrasting models for organizing human affairs referred to in The Great Turning as Empire and Earth Community. Empire organizes by domination at all levels, from relations among nations to relations among family members. For five thousand years, Empire has brought fortune to the few, condemned the majority of humanity to misery and servitude, suppressed the creative potential of the species, and appropriated much of the productive surplus of human societies to maintain the institutions of domination. Earth Community, by contrast, features organization by partnership, unleashes the human potential for creative cooperation, and gives priority in allocating the productive surplus of society to growing the generative potential of the whole. Supporting evidence of these potentials comes from sources as varied as evolutionary theory, developmental psychology, and religious teachings.

CHAPTER 1: THE CHOICE

A convergence of imperative and opportunity unique to the present moment in the human experience sets the stage for an intentional collective choice to put the way of Empire behind us as we live into being a new era of Earth Community. Although our personal circumstances may limit our individual choices, human circumstances are often collective human creations and thereby subject to collective choice.

CHAPTER 2: THE POSSIBILITY

The defenders of Empire teach that we humans are by nature limited to a self-centered and ultimately self-destructive narcissism. In fact, Empire suppresses development of the higher orders of human consciousness thereby creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. The lower orders of Magical and Imperial Consciousness produce a culture of Empire. The higher orders of Cultural and Spiritual Consciousness produce a culture of Earth Community. The Socialized Consciousness from which most people operate is capable of adapting to the values and expectations of either Empire or Earth Community, depending on which culture prevails. Ultimately, we humans are the architects of our own nature, and thereby of our future.

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPERATIVE

Empire has reached the limits of the social and environmental exploitation that people and Earth will sustain. A mounting perfect economic storm born of a convergence of peak oil, climate change, and unsustainable U.S. trade deficits will bring a dramatic restructuring of every aspect of modern life. It is ours to choose, however, whether the consequences play out as a terminal crisis or an epic opportunity.

CHAPTER 4: THE OPPORTUNITY

The capacity to anticipate and choose our future is a defining characteristic of the human species. The recent global spread of communications technologies has combined with a confrontation with planetary limits to present us with a unique opportunity, and the necessity, to use that capacity with conscious collective intent.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

How does the framework of Empire and Earth Community help us understand the world we live in?

Empire's hierarchy of dominance creates an illusion of order and security. How do you see that playing out in today's world?

What do you think about the idea that we live in a "cultural trance" fabricated by a falsified culture that evokes fear, alienation, and the dependence of the individual on imperial rule?

What ways can global communication or the various modes of technology move us away from Empire to Earth Community?

Who are the leaders of today that exemplify Earth Community?

DYADS

How does your life, as you live it, contribute to an Earth Community model or an Empire dominator model?

Many of us live in both worlds, sometimes of the Empire and sometimes of the Earth. How do these worlds show up in you and how do you hold the tension between them?

How do you relate to the five-stage map of the development of human consciousness? Can you identify what stage or stages you are in?

Any "human rebirth" will include a dying away of what many of us in the global north now know. What do you fear in this dying? What do you hope for in this rebirth?

Describe your own journey of cultural and/or spiritual awakening? How has it effected those around you?

SESSION TWO

PART 2: SORROWS OF EMPIRE (CHAPTERS 5-8)

To liberate ourselves from Empire’s self-limiting patterns of domination we must understand their dynamics, acknowledge their destructive consequences, and embrace the truth of the human possibilities that Empire has long denied. By the accounts of Empire’s historians, civilization, history and human progress began with the consolidation of dominator power in the first great Empires. Much is made of the glorious accomplishments and heroic battles of the rise and fall of subsequent imperial civilizations. Rather less is said about the brutalization of the slaves who built the great monuments, the racism, the suppression of women, the conversion of free farmers into serfs or landless laborers, the carnage of the battles, and the hopes and lives destroyed by wave after wave of invasion, pillage, and gratuitous devastation of the vanquished. These are among the sorrows of Empire.

CHAPTER 5: WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN

One of history’s best-kept secrets is the evidence that the most significant advances on the path to the actualization of our distinctive humanity came during a period when human relationships with one another and Earth were in relative balance and people worshipped the nurturant power of the Goddess. The era of Empire not only upset the healthy balance of the generative and nurturant power associated with the feminine and the more assertive dominance power associated with the masculine, it actively deprecated and denied the feminine, resulting in a violent human assault against life itself.

CHAPTER 6: ANCIENT EMPIRE

Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Rome were three of history’s most celebrated empires. Each had its moments of greatness, but at an enormous cost in lives, natural wealth, and human possibility, as vain and violent rulers played out the drama of Empire’s inexorable play-or-die, rule-or-be-ruled, kill-or-be-killed logic. Empire built great civilizations, but then swept them away in successive waves of violence and destruction as jealous winners sought to erase the memory of those they vanquished.

CHAPTER 7: MODERN EMPIRE

The gradual transition to political democracy during the last half of the second millennium stimulated a corresponding transition from imperial rule by the power of the sword to imperial rule by the power of money. The new rulers donned business suits rather than imperial robes and embraced more subtle tactics as they deftly circumvented the democratic challenge to their power and privilege. By controlling the creation and allocation of money, the ruling class maintains near total control over the lives of ordinary people and the resources of the planet.

CHAPTER 8: ATHENIAN EXPERIMENT

Between the time of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian empires and the time of the American Revolution, the era of Empire was punctuated by two celebrated human encounters with egalitarian greatness. The first was Egypt’s golden age (1990–1786 BCE). The second, and better known, was centered in ancient Athens, a Greek city-state known for the graceful beauty of its art and architecture, its belief in the nobility of human achievement, and its devotion to human freedom. Unfortunately, Athenian democracy never matured and ultimately succumbed to imperial ambitions.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

How do you think US politics would be different if more women held leadership positions at the highest levels of government?

What are the similarities between the ancient empires and today’s current political climate?

How does our current financial system favor the ruling class?

Identify modern political, cultural, or economic systems that reflect a mature democracy.

How does Empire impose a cultural context that suppresses the development of mature human consciousness?

DYADS

What is your definition of power? What does power look like from a masculine lens? From a feminine lens?

What is your relationship with money? Does it support the principles of Empire or Earth Community?

How do you feel about the amount of resources you consume? How do the institution of Empire make it difficult to consume less?

Do you have a competitive nature? Do you see it as healthy or unhealthy behavior?

How do you contribute to today’s corporate culture?

How can you reduce your dependency on corporations?

SESSION THREE

PART 3: AMERICA, THE UNFINISHED PROJECT (CHAPTERS 9-14)

Of all the nations of the world, few confront a greater challenge in facing up to the imperatives of the Great Turning than the United States of America. Mature democracy, a defining condition of Earth Community, can only be achieved by acknowledging the gap between our idealized self-image and our troubled historical reality. We must take an unflinching look at the realities and implications of our national imperial legacy, the imperfections of our democracy, our reckless relationship with the natural environment, and the real and inspiring struggles for justice of people of color, women, and working people to whom justice has long been denied. Our history exposes the deep cultural and institutional roots of the challenges we citizens of the United States now face in birthing the mature democracy of Earth Community.

CHAPTER 9: INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

The American colonies replicated the imperial social structures of plutocracy and theocracy of the European nations that created them. Early settlements were operated as privately owned company estates ruled by their overseers. Parishes were ruled as theocracies by preachers who believed democracy to be contrary to the will of God. Colonial economies depended on slaves and bonded labor, and the family structure placed women in a condition of indentured servitude. The lands the colonies occupied were acquired by genocide, and their social structures embodied deep racial and class divisions. The history of the United States of America underscores the harsh reality that a declaration of liberty and a new constitution promising tranquility, liberty, and prosperity for all do not suddenly wipe away the cultural and institutional legacy of five thousand years of Empire.

CHAPTER 10: PEOPLE POWER REBELLION

Accustomed to being the subjects of arbitrary rule by those in positions of power, many of the colonists had no particular reason to consider the law as anything other than a means by which the few exploit the many. Yet for all their diversity and lack of experience with organized self-rule, the grassroots rebels who initiated and led the revolution in its earliest manifestations demonstrated a remarkable capacity to express the popular will through self-organizing groups and networks—long one of democracy’s most meaningful and effective forms of expression.

CHAPTER 11: EMPIRE’S VICTORY

Once independence was won, the colonial elites turned their attention to securing their hold on the institutions of government. The principle that all men are born equal and enjoy a natural right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness so elegantly articulated in the Declaration of Independence, fell by the wayside. The focus shifted to securing the interests of industrialists, bankers, and slave-owning plantation owners and assuring that the powers of government would remain in the hands of white men of means. Empire morphed once again into a new form but remained true to the essential organizing principle of domination. What the founders brought forth is best described as a constitutional plutocracy (rule by people of wealth) with an agenda of imperial expansion.

CHAPTER 12: STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

All the disparate popular struggles of our history to achieve justice for workers, women, and people of color, as well as the struggles for peace and the environment, are subtexts of a larger meta-struggle against the cultural mindset and institutions of Empire. The owning classes have long recognized that their imperial class privilege is placed at risk by a unification of the oppressed. The claims of identity politics based on race, gender, and occupational specialization are tolerable to Empire because they emphasize and perpetuate division. Discussion of class, however, is forbidden, because it exposes common interests and deeper structural issues with a potential to lead to a unified resistance.

CHAPTER 13: WAKE-UP CALL

The devastating policy failures visited on the United States in the opening years of the twenty-first century speak to more than the sins of a corrupt and incompetent administration intent on rolling back the post–World War II economic and political gains of the U.S. middle class and asserting global imperial rule by military force. They speak to a five-thousand-year imperial legacy, a plutocracy posing as a democracy, and a wounded national psyche in denial of the shadow side of our national story.

CHAPTER 14: PRISONS OF THE MIND

Those who control the stories that define the culture of a society control its politics and its economy. True believers of the New Right gained power not by their numbers, which are relatively small, but by their ability to control the stories that answer three basic questions: How do we prosper? How do we maintain order and keep ourselves secure? How do we find a sense of meaning and purpose in life? The New Right has carefully honed and incessantly retold imperial versions of these stories to legitimate, even celebrate, the ordering of society by hierarchies of domination. Stories are the key. To redirect the course of humanity, change the stories by which we live.

SESSION THREE

PART 3: AMERICA, THE UNFINISHED PROJECT (continued)

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

How has the contemporary experiment with Democracy failed in supporting a partnership society? What are the limitations of the current structures of our democratic institutions?

As a nation, how do we deny the reality and consequences of our country's history?

What do you think of Korten's analysis that "there are those among the leaders of the most powerful U.S. institutions who pursue Empire as a holy mission and are prepared to use every means—from lies to assassinations to perpetual war—to block progress toward justice for all and to roll back the gains already achieved?"

What examples of slave conditions do you see currently existing in today's culture?

How do we make sense of the rise of extremist political forces influencing our current political climate?

What are the security, prosperity, and meaning stories echoed by the mass media?

Give examples of resources that used to maintain Empire? What is the cost to contemporary culture?

DYADS

How have you felt discriminated against or misjudged because of your social class?

What does democracy mean to you? How do you actively participate in democratic processes, institutions, systems?

Do you believe that the U.S. is the land of opportunity for all? Why or why not?

Describe your prosperity, security, and meaning stories. Where do they come from?

Describe your personal struggle for economic, political and social justice? What sustains you?

Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards.

—Theodore Zeldin

History is governed by those overarching movements that give shape and meaning to life by relating the human venture to the larger destinies of the universe. Creating such a movement might be called the Great Work of a people. . . . The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human—at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems.

—Thomas Berry

The destiny of the world is determined less by the battles that are lost and won than by the stories it loves and believes in.

—Harold Goddard

I will tell you something about stories, (he said) They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, All we have to fight off illness and death.

—Leslie Marmon Silko



SESSION FOUR

PART 4: THE GREAT TURNING (CHAPTERS 15-18)

It is now within our means to make an epic choice to put the sorrows of Empire behind us in favor of the joys of Earth Community. We have the knowledge and the technology. The remaining barriers are primarily self-limiting beliefs that have no reality beyond the human mind. The explosive advance of human knowledge in the past hundred years greatly expands not only our understanding of our nature and possibilities but also the capacity for cooperative self-organization and mutual service inherent in the very nature of life itself. To navigate successfully the turbulent waters of the Great Turning, we must revisit and update the stories by which we communicate our common understanding of our human origin, purpose, and possibility.

CHAPTER 15: BEYOND THE STRICT FATHER VERSUS AGING CLOCK

Religion and science are two contending sources of the creation stories by which we humans define ourselves, our moral codes, and the meaning of our existence. Since the beginning of the scientific revolution, religion and science have been engaged in a competition to be the exclusive purveyors and interpreters of the reigning creation story of modern life. In keeping with the win-lose dynamic of Empire, the struggle for power between the two competing establishments has trumped the search for truth.

CHAPTER 16: CREATION'S EPIC JOURNEY

Although science remains captive to the premise that reality can be explained entirely by a combination of chance and material mechanism, the story of Creation's unfolding to ever higher levels of complexity and consciousness points to the existence of a profound intelligence engaged in an epic journey of self-discovery. By giving matter the capacity to choose, life accelerates the pace of the journey. Engaged in a cooperative struggle to maintain its choice-making potential against the downward pull of entropy, life exists only in living communities of diverse and mutually interdependent species.

CHAPTER 17: JOYS OF EARTH COMMUNITY

Earth Community offers an alternative to the alienation and the sorrows of Empire, a way of living that places life values ahead of financial values and organizes by the principles of partnership rather than the principles of domination. The deeper and more mutually affirming our relationships, the richer and more distinctively human we become. The yawning gap between the integral relationships for which we yearn and the fragmentation and alienation of modern life suggests the epic proportions of the challenge before us.

CHAPTER 18: STORIES FOR A NEW ERA

The Great Turning begins with relearning how to live, which depends in turn on new life-affirming stories that celebrate the possibilities of community. The life-denying stories of Empire cannot compete with the life-affirming stories of Earth Community, which—in combination with practical demonstrations—give voice to the deep human yearning for healthy children, families, communities, and natural environments.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Do you believe that humans move through life in a conditioned mechanistic response (as theorized by B.F. Skinner) or by conscious, intelligent choice? How do you arrive at your conclusions?

What do you consider to be the most important cultural, economic, and political indicators of the Earth Community we seek to create?

What are the new stories of prosperity, security and meaning grounded in Earth Community principles?

How can the life-affirming stories of Earth Community be broadcast in a way that drowns out the "New Right echo chamber?"

What are some of the ways that our culture distracts us from meaningful dialogue, civic involvement, and the taking on of leadership roles?

How do perception and belief define our reality and determine what is possible?

DYADS

What creation stories did you grow up with and how have they impacted your life?

What sources of inspiration and traditions do you draw from that inform a new creation story based on the principles of Earth Community?

Do you feel more drawn to creation stories from religion or science? How do these creation stories shape your life?

Elisabet Sahtouris says that life has characteristically learned to cooperate through experiencing the negative consequences of unbridled competition. How have you experienced this in your life?

What does community mean to you? How do you balance self-interest with the needs of community?

How do you practice and advocate for Earth Community?

SESSION FIVE

PART 5: BIRTHING EARTH COMMUNITY (CHAPTERS 19-22)

The work of the Great Turning is not to fix Empire. It is to birth a new era that makes the choice for life, gives expression to the higher potential of our nature, and restores to people, families, and communities the power that Empire has usurped. Leadership for birthing this new era will not come from those who feel comfortable with the status quo or who are intent on preserving their special privilege. It will come from the people who are feeling out of step with the beliefs and values of the imperial cultures and the institutions of contemporary life. They will live the new into being by giving practical expression to the change they seek.

CHAPTER 19: LEADING FROM BELOW

Leadership for Earth Community emerges through processes of mutual empowerment that encourage every person to recognize and express their capacities for leadership on behalf of the whole. Almost inevitably, this leadership comes from outside the institutions of Empire—from the growing millions of people with the mature consciousness that enables them to envision the possibilities of this human moment and to accept responsibility for bringing those possibilities into being.

CHAPTER 20: BUILDING A POLITICAL MAJORITY

Few contemporary nations seem more divided politically than the United States. The institutions of government and corporate power have been at odds for so long with the core values and interests of the nation that most people have given up hope of any change. Beyond the partisan rancor, however, polling data point to a broad consensus on core values and suggest that the struggle for the health and well-being of our children is potentially the unifying political issue of our time and an obvious rallying point for building an Earth Community political majority.

CHAPTER 21: LIBERATING CREATIVE POTENTIAL

Humans are an intelligent, self-aware, choice-making species participating in an epic creative journey. When Creation bestowed on us humans a capacity for wise and creative choice, it was presumably with the intention that we use this capacity to beneficial ends. The birthing of Earth Community begins with liberating the mind from the tyranny of the belief that there is no alternative to Empire. It moves forward as millions of people who glimpse possibilities long denied translate their deepening awareness into new practice. Whether our time will be known as the time of the Great Turning or the time of the Great Unraveling is a question of choice, not destiny.

CHAPTER 22: CHANGE THE STORY, CHANGE THE FUTURE

Many of us have serious doubts about the validity and values of the prevailing imperial stories. Yet because we rarely hear them challenged by credible voices, we fear ridicule if we give voice to our doubts. Truth silenced becomes truth denied. The process of change begins as those who experience an awakening of the higher orders of human consciousness find the courage to break the silence by speaking openly of the truth in their hearts. The more openly we each speak our truth, the more readily others find the courage to speak theirs. We can then more easily find one another and end our isolation as we form communities of congruence in which we share our insights, bolster our courage, and give expression to stories that demonstrate and celebrate the possibilities of Earth Community. As we learn to communicate these stories to an ever growing audience, we begin to tip the cultural balance in favor of Earth Community, thereby changing the course of the human future.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

How do we as individuals and communities contribute to exposing the contradictions of Empire and changing the prevailing stories?

How can we incorporate spirituality in public life while respecting the separation of Church and State?

What does Earth Community leadership look like?

How has the New Right captured the “moral high ground” even as their policies assault children, families, communities, and the environment?

How do the diffuse patterns of self-organization contribute to a vitality nearly impossible to suppress?

DYADS

How do you resist the institutions and agendas of Empire? Does it take courage? What hold you back from taking action or gives you inspiration to act?

Which Earth Community initiatives are you involved with, know of, or want to start?

How do you reach out to people with different political views to discuss common values and build consensus?

What are the stresses on your family and how can you trace the difficulties to imperial institutions?

Do you feel hopeful about the future for yourself, family, community, country, world?

FOLLOW-ON RESOURCES AND IDEAS

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EXPAND THE DIALOGUE

Study Circle Resource Center (<http://www.studycircles.org/en/index.aspx>) helping communities create strong local democracies through public dialogue and problem solving.

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (<http://www.thataway.org>) brings together and supports people, organizations, and resources in ways that expand the power of discussion to benefit society.

Conversation Cafe (<http://www.conversationcafe.org>) guidelines for creating a culture of conversation—which is a culture of intelligence, peace, and political awareness.

Circles for Change (http://www.spiritinaction.net/ezpublish/index.php/spirit/circles_of_change) a 13-session model that brings together 8 to 12 participants in their local community to deepen their work of change making.

Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream Symposium (<http://www.pachamama.org/ATD/index.htm>) helps participants grapple with the assumptions that underlie the way we see the world, our place in it, and what each of us can do — individually and cooperatively — to move the world in this new direction.

LEARN FROM COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

Willits Economic Localization Project (<http://www.willitseconomiclocalization.org>): Fostering the creation of a sustainable, local economy based on the principles of sufficiency, responsibility, and life promoting actions.

Local 2020/Port Townsend Economic Localization (http://www.foodcoop.coop/index.php?page=local_2020 and <http://www.jefferson.wsu.edu/forum/viewforum.php?f=5>): Mission: “Working together to create a thriving local culture that balances economy, ecology, and community.”

Boulder Valley Relocalization (<http://www.boulderrelocalization.org>): A citizen organization advocating the urgent development of a local response to a looming energy crisis.

Post Carbon Relocalization Network (<http://www.postcarbon.org/groups>): Links to local groups worldwide receiving guidance and electronic infrastructure from the Institute while operating autonomously.

START COMMUNITY INDICATORS AND ASSET MAPPING PROJECTS

Sustainable Communities Network (<http://www.sustainable.org/creating/indicators.html>)

Asset-Based Community Development (<http://www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=tia&ID=170>)

Redefining Progress (<http://www.rprogress.org/projects/indicators>)

International Institute for Sustainable Development (http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/communities_c4_inventory.pdf): A pdf file of “The Community Sustainable Development Action and Knowledge Inventory.”

Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Report on a Best Practice Workshop (<http://www.sup.mcgill.ca/indicators/NeighIDworkshop.pdf>): McGill University and the Urban Ecology Center, Montreal, June 10-11, 2005.

MORE IDEAS FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT AND DISCUSSION

- Start more discussion groups of *The Great Turning* and related topics. Go to www.greatturning.org and YES! Magazine at www.yesmagazine.org for more ideas and resources.
- Gather stories and storytellers for a new era of Earth Community --- and find media outlets.
- Plan a house party with the film, *The End of Suburbia* (<http://www.endofsuburbia.com>).
- Start a local BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies) chapter. Go to www.locallivingeconomies.org.
- Develop an open source interactive web site for community-building. Go to <http://civicspacelabs.org/home>.
- Create a scenario-building exercise. Go to **Great Transition Initiative** (<http://www.gtinitiative.org/default.asp?action=59>): Scenario analysis as a means to illuminate the vast range of possible futures in a structured way.