

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART



**Nurturing the capacity
for a generative Practice of Care**

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE

Program: Master of Arts in Design Systems

**Betsy Lance
April 29, 2021**

Contents

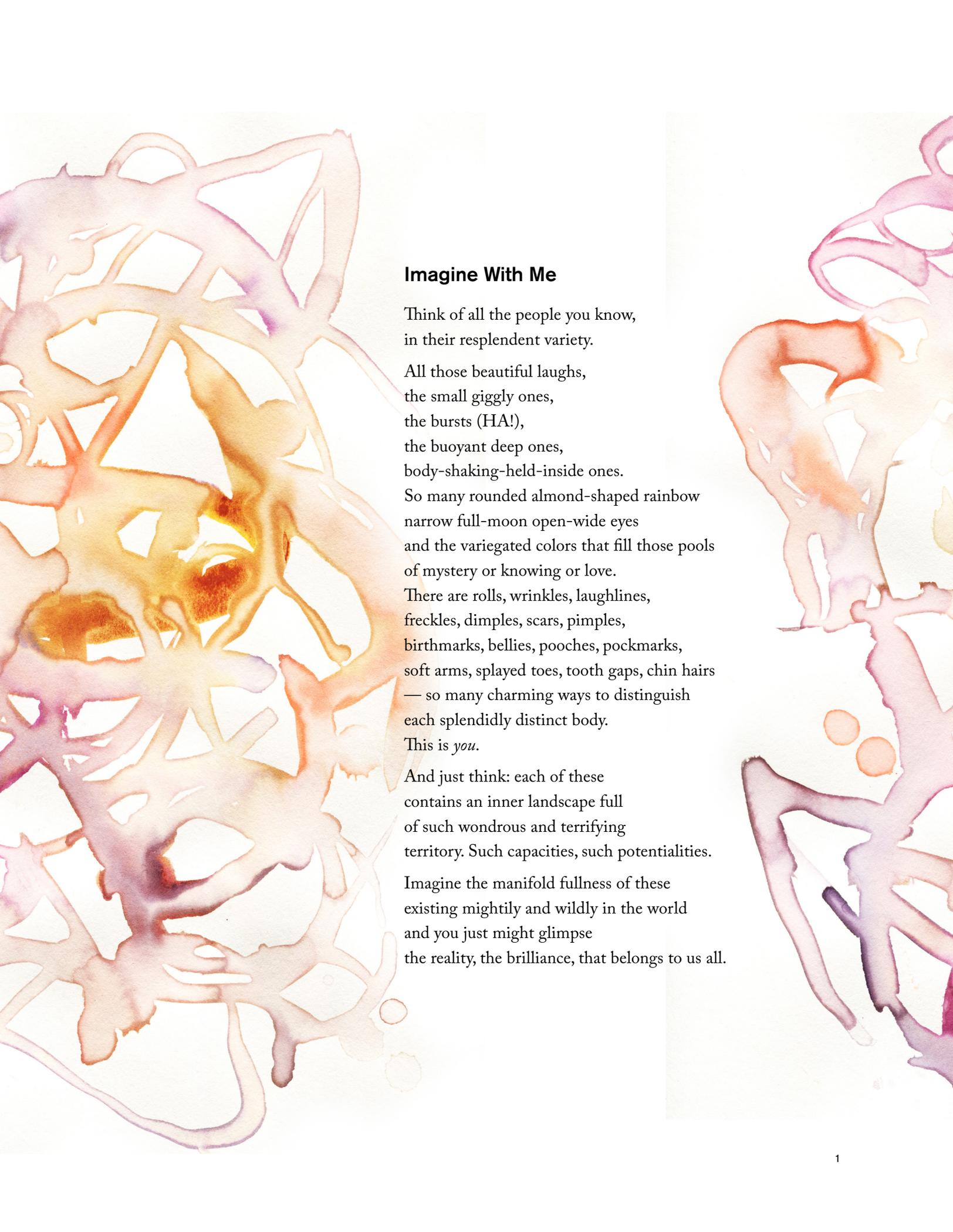
<i>Poetry: Imagine With Me</i>	1
NOW IS THE TIME.	2
Fractured Relationships	3
A Culture of Care-lessness	3
CARE AS A PRACTICE	6
What is Care? What is a Practice?	7
MY RESEARCH JOURNEY	10
The Beginning of a Practice	11
Starting in My Place	12
<i>Poetry: Walk Sounds</i>	15
Layers of Place	16
Mapping Invitation	17
The Ecosystem of Care	20
A PRACTICE OF CARE	24
Mapping the Journey of Care	25
From the Mind to the Body	27
Not Perfection, but Growth	28
Relationships of Care	29
THEORY INTO PRACTICE	31
<i>Poetry: Where We Begin</i>	32
Developing an Approach	33
Care Club: Workshop + Conversation	34
Care Package: A Kit for Personal Reflection	36
WHAT CARE CAN DO.	39
Practicing Care is Essential	40
This Is Only the Beginning	41
<i>Poetry: The Promise</i>	44
Thank you, thank you, thank you!	45
Index of Images	46
Bibliography	47



Abstract

Care is one of those words, like love, that has many vague meanings, but at its deepest, it speaks of relationship and interconnectedness between people, places, and our kin in the natural world. How might we grow in our understanding of care, and lean into its challenges as well as its blessings? What might happen if we took seriously the call to care, on an individual and societal level?

This thesis explores the possibilities of an ongoing, engaged Practice of Care. Practicing care takes us through a cycle of cultivating attention, developing intention, and taking action. With a focus on the first step, cultivating attention, this thesis project invites folks into a posture of listening and noticing that creates a fertile foundation for later steps along the journey of care. By activating our senses, holding space for reflection, and sharing honestly in community, we can become better practitioners of care as we participate in the messy, beautiful, challenging, imperfect, heartbreaking, joyous work of living together.



Imagine With Me

Think of all the people you know,
in their resplendent variety.

All those beautiful laughs,
the small giggly ones,
the bursts (HA!),
the buoyant deep ones,
body-shaking-held-inside ones.

So many rounded almond-shaped rainbow
narrow full-moon open-wide eyes
and the variegated colors that fill those pools
of mystery or knowing or love.

There are rolls, wrinkles, laughlines,
freckles, dimples, scars, pimples,
birthmarks, bellies, pooches, pockmarks,
soft arms, splayed toes, tooth gaps, chin hairs
— so many charming ways to distinguish
each splendidly distinct body.

This is *you*.

And just think: each of these
contains an inner landscape full
of such wondrous and terrifying
territory. Such capacities, such potentialities.

Imagine the manifold fullness of these
existing mightily and wildly in the world
and you just might glimpse
the reality, the brilliance, that belongs to us all.

Now is
the Time



FRACTURED RELATIONSHIPS

The ways we relate to places, people, and the natural world are changing in a dramatic way. As the world shifts to being more globalized and digitally connected, more of our personal relationships are conducted remotely and a sense of locality is less concrete. There are more and more “placeless places” as box chains, corporate groceries, and absentee land developers homogenize, standardize, and shape cities in ways unrelated to any particular geography or culture. Media and marketing bombard us from all directions, constantly vying for our attention in ways hidden, subtle, and overt.

With a 24-hour news cycle, instant updates on social media, and smartphones always at hand, each day is permeated with a continuous stream of tragedies, disasters, admonishments, to-dos, “upgrades” to your life, and reminders of not-enoughness. It’s no wonder mental illness is increasing in the U.S.¹ A quick scan of the top news headlines and most frequent internet searches of the past few years reveal the state of life today: coronavirus pandemic, unemployment, wildfires, voter suppression, racism, police shootings, gun violence, global warming, hurricanes, riots, government shutdown, U.S. Capital takeover, protest, and impeachment.² There’s more information available about what’s going on in our nation and world, but, with the focus on sensationalism, tragedy, and “click-worthy” stories, this content may be causing more anxiety than awareness.



A CULTURE OF CARE-LESSNESS

Although these shifts may have both positive and negative consequences, the fact is that it’s impossible to care well for what is distant, generic, or obscured. This societal turn away from locality, embodiment, agency, and nuance have led to a pervasive sense of detachment, or *care-lessness*, that enables—even encourages—exploitation, apathy, and isolation. Some examples:

1 Mental Health America, “The State of Mental Health in America,” Accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>.

2 Google Trends, “Explore what the world is searching,” Accessed March 27, 2021, [https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US](https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US;).; Julie Kracov, “The year in review: Top news stories of 2020 month-by-month,” CBS News, December 27, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2020-the-year-in-review-top-news-stories-month-by-month/>.

- The overworked and underpaid social worker burns out as they are unable to care for themselves even as they care for communities most in need.
- The ubiquity of uniform, all-season strawberries makes it easy to forget the underpaid, overworked migrant agricultural laborers.³
- The convenience of shrink-wrapped chicken parts encourages us to ignore that we're eating chickens bred to be too fat to even stand on their legs.⁴
- The pressures experienced by a single parent working two jobs leaves little time to attend PTA meetings to fundraise for their kids' elementary school.

Even those who desire to show up in care find themselves swept along and inhibited by this culture of care-lessness. As it's put in *The Care Manifesto*, "It is not that most of us actively enjoy seeing others left without the care they need, or that we share sadistic and destructive impulses. And yet we are failing to challenge the limits being placed upon our caring capacities, practices and imaginations."⁵

The coronavirus pandemic has been a catalyst in revealing more plainly this culture of care-lessness. Indigenous, black, brown, and poor communities have all known this lack of care, and experienced its harm, since before the U.S. was founded. But what once was obscured from or dismissed by mainstream and privileged society has been hard to ignore over this past year. Architect and designer Liz Ogbu talks about 2020 as being an *apocalypse*, using the Greek word for *uncovering* or *unveiling*. The world got "quiet enough to see the oppression," which has caused a wider awareness that our systems are "working as designed"—that is, in service of white supremacy and unfettered capitalism.⁶

3 Laura Navitsky and Ariel Iannone Román, "Indigenous Migrant Farmworkers," *Cultural Survivor*, October 3, 2020, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/indigenous-migrant-farmworkers-face-harsh-conditions-during-covid-19>.

4 Lorraine Murray, "Factory-Farmed Chickens," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/explore/savingearth/the-difficult-lives-and-deaths-of-factory-farmed-chickens>.

5 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2020) 5.

6 Ogbu, Liz, "Re-imagining Portland: Parks, Public Space, Memory, Creativity, and Spatial Justice," 2021.

In my interview with community organizer Mary Jaron Kelley from North Portland Neighborhood Services, she described a shift that's occurred since quarantine in many of the communities she's working with. "The pandemic has been pretty awful," she says. "But there's some strange opportunity out there that has opened up a world for many people. I'm seeing a lot of people who really want to help their neighbors, and not just the neighbors down the block, but other people who are facing bigger issues. They want to feel like what they're doing actually matters."⁷

Could the pandemic be the force that generates enough public awareness and political will to fundamentally restructure our systems? What might happen if care—deep, radical, ongoing, inclusive care—was a central tenet of this restructuring?

For this to happen, we need more than single acts of care. We need people and organizations to commit to their own specific, ongoing, engaged Practice of Care. To this end, helping people get clear about and feel more engaged in their own Practices of Care is the focus of my thesis.

⁷ Mary Jaron Kelley, Zoom conversation, March 3, 2021.

Care as a Practice



WHAT IS CARE? WHAT IS A PRACTICE?

Care has many meanings. Like the word *love*, it can be used to describe either trivial matters or the things most important to us. It can be used as a noun or a verb. It can speak of anxieties and concerns, maintenance and attention, or responsibility and supervision.⁸ Care speaks of relationships—between people, environments, or objects.⁹ In their article “Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times,” Hi’ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese describe care as “connective tissue between an inner self and an outer world” that “constitutes a feeling with, rather than a feeling for, others.”¹⁰ This beautiful description echoes the South African philosophy of Ubuntu which proposes a relational way of being, as each person exists *because* of others around them, including plants, animals, earth, and ancestors.¹¹ Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes it this way: “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours.”¹²



These definitions suggest that care is less about a moment or a feeling, and more about one’s relationship with and attitude toward others, the natural world, and oneself. According to *The Care Manifesto*,

“Care is our individual and common ability to provide the political, social, material, and emotional conditions that allow the vast majority of people and living creatures on this planet to thrive—along with the planet itself.”¹³ This generative, relational type of care is a repeating cycle between action and intent toward others and personal inner growth and self-actualization.¹⁴ The interdependence and mutuality of care is one of its most profound characteristics.

Though the promise of care is abundant, I’d like to be clear here: this kind of care is extremely difficult. Of his work as a conflict

8 Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary. s.v. “care.”

9 Hi’ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese, “Radical Care,” *Social Text* 38, no. 1 (March 2020), 2.

10 Hobart and Kneese, “Radical Care,” 2.

11 James Ogude, Steve Paulson, and Anne Strainchamps, “I Am Because You Are,” *The Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes*, June 21, 2019, <https://chcinet-work.org/ideas/i-am-because-you-are-an-interview-with-james-ogude>.

12 Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Image, 2000).

13 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto*, 6.

14 Milton Mayeroff, *On Caring* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1971).

facilitator, Arnold Mindell writes, “Learning to get along with others is an easily stated ideal...You must face situations so surprising and people so different from you that at first all you can do is wonder, despair, or be shocked.”¹⁵ The feel-good use of care in public dialog as a sentimental catch-all for sympathetic, warm feelings undermines the grit, empathy, sorrow, and stamina needed to show up with care when a loved one is dying or a community has lost another youth to gun violence.

Romanticizing care also ignores the cultural, historical, and socio-political contexts that allow or prevent access to care. Again from Hobart and Kneese: “Care is unevenly distributed and cannot be disentangled from structural racism and inequality.”¹⁶ Care that shows itself only to a select group or purposefully denies or dehumanizes another is at the core of privilege and discrimination.

In addition to preventing many from *receiving* care, our systems and culture have made people less able to *provide* care as well: “We have, for a very long time, been rendered less capable of caring for people even in our most intimate spheres, while being energetically encouraged to restrict our care for strangers and distant others.”¹⁷

This is where the *practice* comes in. An ongoing, developing, engaged Practice of Care invites us into a longevity that can endure (and, often, is strengthened from) the sorrow, tension, healing, and growth that care can provide, both inward and



FIG 1. Essential elements of a Practice of Care

¹⁵ Arnold Mindell, *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity* (San Francisco: Deep Democracy Exchange, 1995) 47.

¹⁶ Hobart and Kneese, "Radical Care", 7.

¹⁷ The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto*, 4.

outward, over time. In her book *All About Love*, writer and activist bell hooks notes, “The word ‘love’ is most often defined as a noun, yet...we would all love better if we used it as a verb.”¹⁸ Perhaps care is the verb she’s looking for—the *action* of love. She later describes the difficulty of learning to love: “We are not born knowing how to love anyone, either ourselves or somebody else. However, we are born to respond to care. As we grow, we can give and receive attention, affection, and joy.”¹⁹ This speaks of a need for practice. We begin life by receiving care and gradually are able to reciprocate it.

I would suggest that this practice of learning how to better care for ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, and our world is a lifelong process that would benefit by being named as such. It is the messy, beautiful, challenging, imperfect, joyous, heartbreaking work of living together. These spaces of tension are not to be avoided, but instead they are where we move across thresholds into new life. As Arnold Mindell writes, “Community is not only your worst problem but also your most sacred teacher.”²⁰

18 bell hooks, *All About Love* (New York: William Morrow, 2001), 4.

19 hooks, *All About Love*, 53.

20 Mindell, *Sitting in the Fire*, 47.

My Research Journey



THE BEGINNING OF A PRACTICE

The research for this thesis began long before I started grad school, when I moved into the Arbor Lodge neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, into a mustard yellow house with four friends and two cats in 2010. Something shifted with that move. For the first time in my adult life, I felt a part of some-place instead of the transitory traveler and explorer I had been before. I also now had the maturity and mindset to think more outside myself. I was no longer just curious about *my* people, but about *people*. Who were the others that shared this piece of land we now called Arbor Lodge? What were their stories, why were they here? Would they share cookies, or lawnmowers, or iris bulbs? What did they know about this place that I didn't? What did they know about life that I didn't?

Introverted as I was, I started reaching out to neighbors under the wing of one of my more outgoing housemates, Katie. We went door to door giving out holiday cookies, attended Neighborhood Association meetings, passed out buttons that said, "Know Your Neighbor," and hosted block parties. She was bolder than I, fearlessly knocking on any neighbor's door, and more articulate in her clear desire to impact the neighborhood. At times I thought she was a bit nosey, wanting to get the dish on each and every neighbor. Now, I'd reframe that and say she was know-sy—wanting to *know* each and every neighbor, including their needs and struggles, because she might have some piece of help or healing to offer.

Over the years since this initiation, building neighborhood community through gathering and hospitality is the practice I return to over and over to show care for my community. I love welcoming people in, sparking conversation, provoking curiosity, and sharing food.

This is evident in the ways I engage with my communities: I started hosting a monthly event called Neighbor Brunch every summer, where I put up posters on telephone poles along my street inviting everyone to gather in my backyard for a potluck brunch. In the fall and winter, I curate and host Nerdsday Thursday, a gathering where friends and colleagues are invited

over for snacks and a celebration of learning. Two guests are invited to share a short presentation about their own “nerdery,” everything from backyard beekeeping to family chai recipes to singing sea shanties. This background motivated the beginnings of my research.



FIG 2. Neighbor Brunch, a monthly gathering hosted at my home

STARTING IN MY PLACE

Given my interest in building relational capital in my local communities by inviting folks to come together, I wanted to explore this area in depth for my thesis. However, just as research was getting underway a huge event shifted the way I would need to approach this project—the coronavirus pandemic. Quarantine restrictions introduced a new constraint around how I could connect with neighbors and how receptive they would be of me. With group gatherings off the table and interactions with neighbors extremely limited, I turned my research toward the subjects I had the most access to: myself and my physical environment.

I took inspiration from artist Richard McGuire’s graphic novel, *Here*, which is a beautiful book of layered illustrations of the exact same place over a span of thousands of years. I revisited architect Christopher Alexander’s *Pattern Language* and *The Timeless Way of Building* and finally read urban planner Jane Jacobs’ classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. I was delighted by designer Ellen Lupton’s *The Senses: Design Beyond Vision*, which explores the possibility and variety that exists when accessibility is seen as a design tool rather than a constraint.

The momentum of these and other secondary sources had me wondering how I could get to know my neighborhood in a new way, at different scales and different times in history. As a framework, I developed the following criteria for my initial research and explorations:

- **Both personal reflection and collaboration with others:** revolve between asking, How do I know my place? and How do you know your place?
- **Somatic and sensory exploration:** stay rooted in the body through listening, touching, noticing, smelling, seeing, walking, having conversations
- **Multi-scaled and layered:** examine concepts across distance and time scales, and integrate the presence of physical, psychological, emotional, and historical layers



FIG 3. *Hosting Place*, a collage of rubbings from my backyard

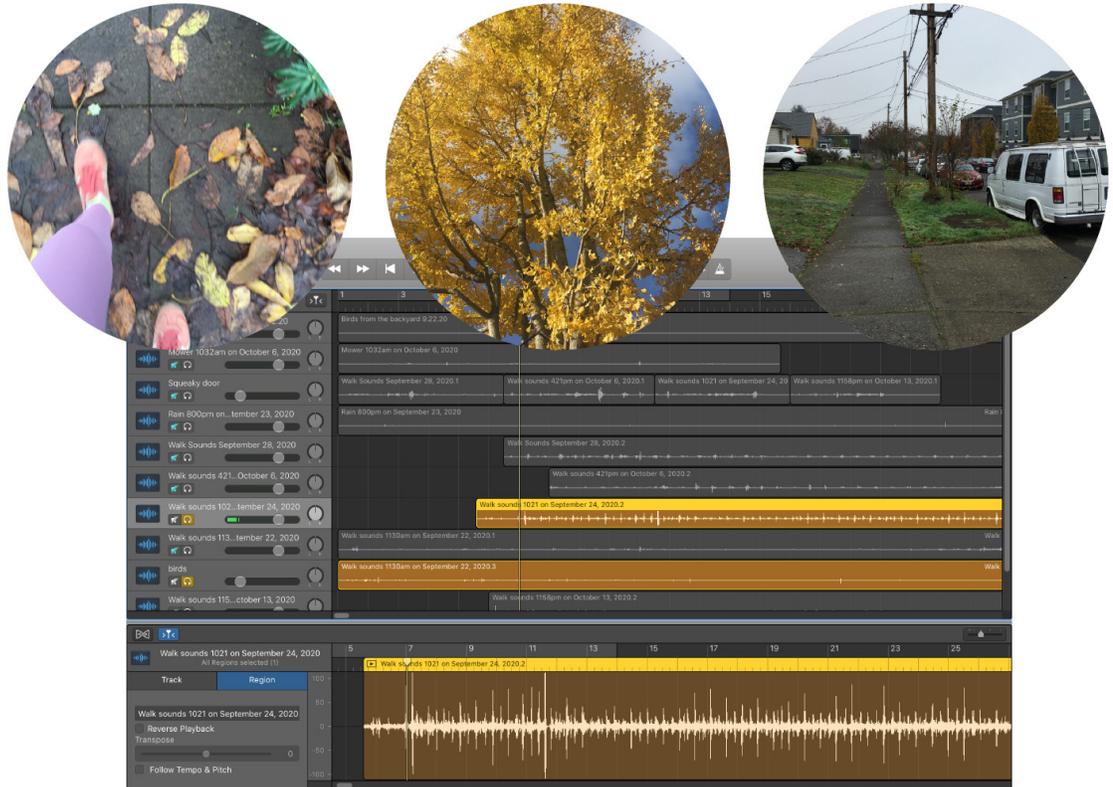


FIG 4. *Walk Sounds*, a series of recordings from my neighborhood

Researching via my senses, I created artifacts and artworks as a way to get to know the place where I live. I explored what the area around my home *feels* like by collaging a series of rubbings to capture textures. I explored what my neighborhood *sounds* like by recording my walks through the summer and fall and layering the sounds on top of one another. I wrote poems, which I've integrated throughout this paper, as another lens for exploring the ideas and experiences of this research.



Walk Sounds

The birds were having a party
when I stepped out the door
for my midday walk. A chattery,
flitty-flighty, busy-body, wing-flappy
cocktail party, as far as I could discern.
I mean, there are always birds,
amidst the low constant brrrrrr of new construction,
traffic buzzing down Rosa Parks,
the MAX train ding ding ding at every signal.
But today, the bird song was so
aggressively pleasant,
so sweet and varied
in its high-pitched cacophony,
I actually noticed it.
Following the sound
led me to that gigantic pine
a block over — the one, no doubt,
any neighbor can see within a quarter mile —
where birds swooped in and out,
in and out from other nearby trees.
Were they eating? Playing? Mating?
Gossiping, perhaps. With such an energetic
frenzy they went about their communal business.
I watched for minutes, forgot about
the brrrrr, the buzz, the ding ding ding,
as those birds made their incessant here-ness known.

LAYERS OF PLACE

Using a technique called psychogeographic mapping, I created layered maps of my block that included not just street names and structures but trees past and present, the years when homes were built, and stories of all the neighbors who I've known during my 11-year tenure here.

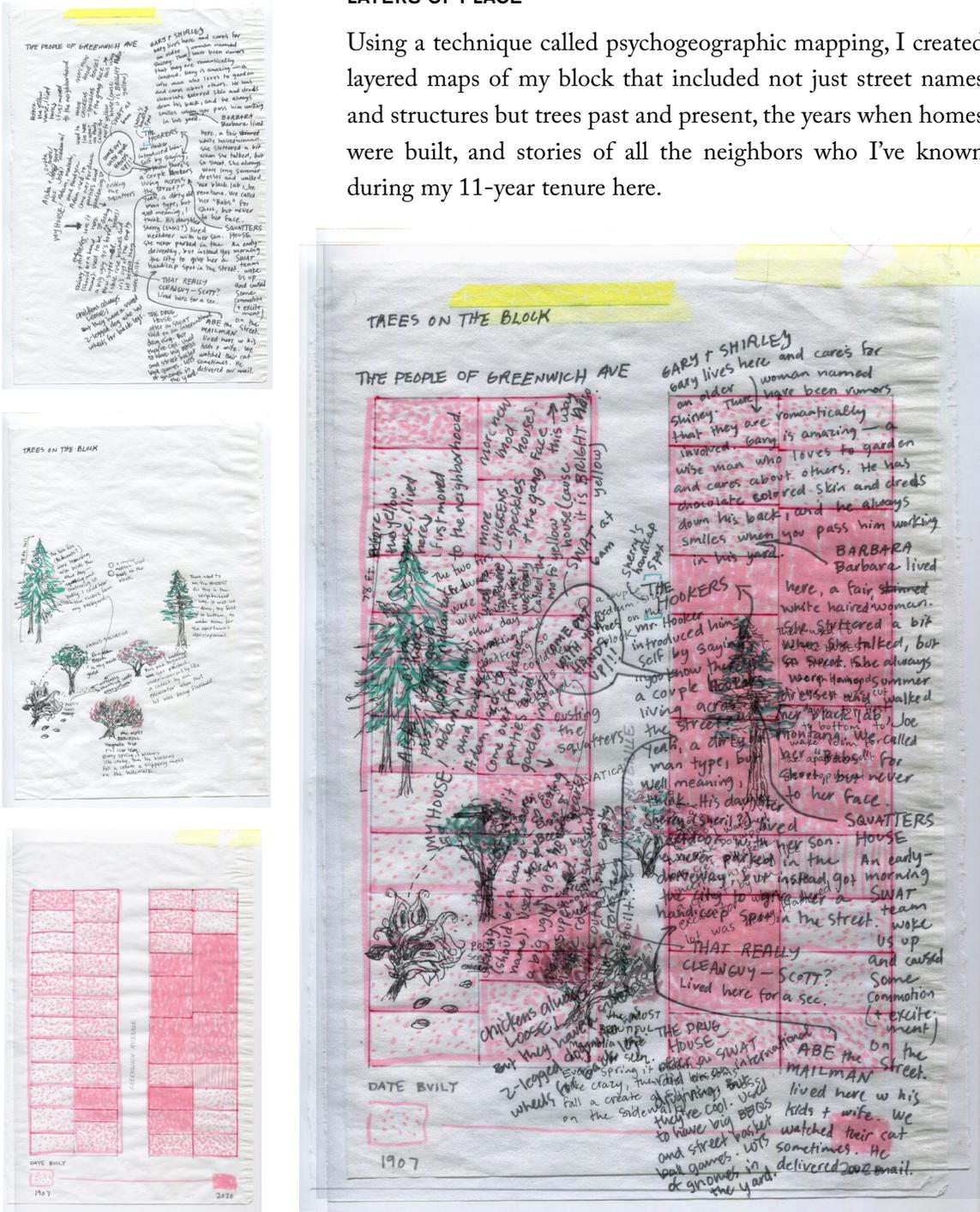


FIG 5. Greenwich Avenue, a psychogeographic map of my street, layered together (right) and separate layers (left)

I learned that before my home was built and the land was colonized into the city of Portland, this area was stewarded by the Clackamas and Cowlitz tribes and the Chinuk Wawa and Kalapuya languages were spoken throughout the original,

wild land.²¹ Researching historical documents and newspapers, I learned about the first recorded owner of my home, Alex Kudella, who was a lieutenant in the Navy during WWII and bought the house in 1953. He had one daughter who inherited the house in 1995, presumably after her parents passed away, then sold it that same year to the owners before me.

These ways of getting to know my place allowed me to access new perspectives on my neighborhood. I started noticing more. I remembered people and stories I had tucked away in my memory. I wondered what stories and insights would arise if I invited others into this new way of engaging with their place.

A joint interview with archaeologist Celia Moret Crockett and historian David Hedberg confirmed the importance of these hidden aspects of a city. They both spoke about the latent psychological effects of past historical trauma, the inherited built environment, and displacement at the hands of city planners. Although the history of a specific place has a very real impact, mainstream culture denies much connection to place. Celia and David want to change that. When asked, “What is the one thing you would want people to know about the places they live in?” Celia replied, “You’re not the only one who’s been here.”²²

MAPPING INVITATION

Following my design criteria, I moved from personal reflection into a collaborative invitation. I created a survey with a prompt asking participants to create their own psychogeographic maps for their home, land, neighborhood, or city. My goal was to gather maps from my own neighborhood as well as ones from my network of friends, family, and colleagues.

I printed 75 prompt cards and dropped them on the doorstep of nearly every house up and down my street, four blocks total. But this was a futile exercise—I received zero replies from my neighbors. I was surprised by this, knowing I have gotten engagement from neighbors in the past. Whether it was because of the stress of quarantine or something didn’t resonate in the prompt, it seems that an invitation from a stranger wasn’t the way people wanted to connect.



FIG 6. Passing out mapping prompts to neighbors

21 Native Land. “Welcome.” Accessed October 13, 2020. <https://native-land.ca/>.

22 Celia Moret Crockett and David Hedberg, Zoom conversation, October 7, 2020.

Despite this setback, I did get 25 responses from family and friends via an email I sent and an Instagram stories posted on my account, implying that folks were more open to a personal and/or digital invitation. Participants ranged in age from 6 to 75 and spanned urban and rural places along the west coast. The results were beautiful and diverse. Each one told a story not just of a place, but of how the person related to that place.



FIG 7. A selection of maps from participants

*Comments from
mapping participants:*

**“Brought back many
memories of special
blessings over the years.”**

Mike, age 75

**“It was really lovely to realize
how much I have already
noticed about this small
spot of land across all the
senses...and also how little
I know!”**

Leah, age 35

**“It was fun. It made me
remember why we moved
here and how I love our
neighborhood.”**

Tracey, age 66

In order to gather insights from all the maps, I coded them using a method loosely based on Grounded Theory, a coding methodology often used for qualitative research.²³ I tagged them according to what types of things were mentioned in each map, then grouped those tags into themes. At the highest level, the maps depicted the following:

- **Nature:** parks, trees, lakes, gardens, animals
- **Activity:** walking, running, and biking routes, playing areas, gardening plots, gathering places, eating spots
- **People:** neighbors, family, friends, teachers
- **Memories:** childhood pastimes, coming-of-age moments, family time when the kids were younger, neighbors who long since moved

Although these themes aren't particularly surprising, they did lead to some insights about the ways people relate to their homes, neighborhoods, and towns. Participants overwhelmingly shared positive things about their places. The occasional grumpy neighbor or undesirable smell was mentioned, but it seems that, when reflecting on our environments through writing and art, people focused on what made them feel happy.

This ability to filter out what makes us feel bad is an essential coping mechanism for moving about the world. However, it can have a harmful and segregating effect as well. The impulse we may have to filter out the negative feelings that arise from encountering suffering, pain, or hardship can prevent us from taking action when it is most needed. Something minor, like trash in the gutters along your block, or something heart-breaking, like the increase of houseless neighbors near your home, can elicit both a response of blindness and shutdown.

The maps also revealed how we orient to our surroundings through the lens of self. Our relationships with neighbors, the natural world, and the built environment are filtered through what we prioritize, value, and notice. Making some assumptions from the maps created by people I knew personally, it seemed that a social person's map would center around neighbors, whereas an introverted person's map might revolve around their

23 Diana Lizarraga, "Grounded Theory | Overview," February 25, 2017, video, 10:54, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXh7Y9yIEBE>.

own home space or their daily routines. This implies that the way we show care is highly influenced by the way we perceive the world.

THE ECOSYSTEM OF CARE

Care has a long history and a robust presence today. Unique forms of care emerge as powerful medicine for the various experiences of harm, isolation, and detachment that many communities go through. During my research, I collected a large list of organizations, writers, artists, practitioners, spiritual practices, and ethical frameworks that exemplify a Practice of Care. Through affinity mapping, certain categories of care emerged.

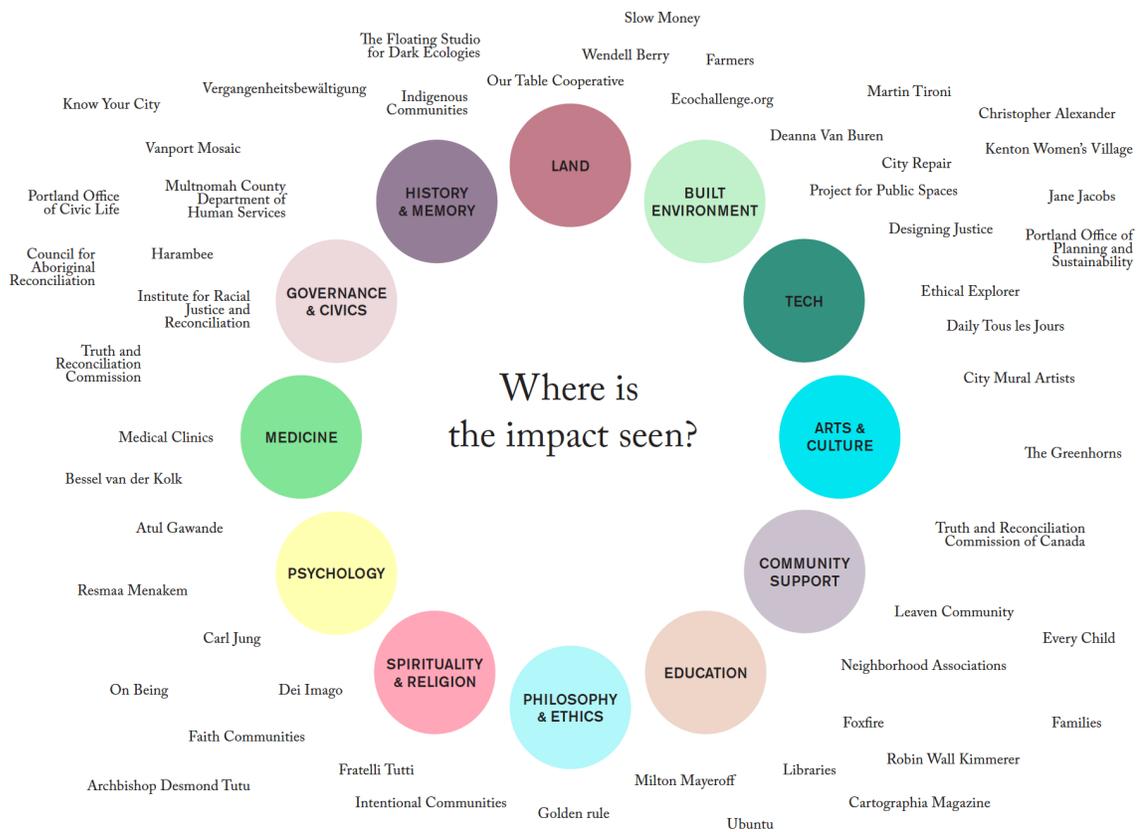


FIG 8. Affinity mapping the ecosystem of care

While each of these entities had a primary focus category, most of them existed in more than one sector, creating an elaborate web of influence. A small sample from each category illustrates the immense variety and breadth that is possible within a cultural framework of care:

● LAND

- Robin Wall Kimmerer's idea of the honorable harvest, which respects and values the beauty, abundance, and limits of the land²⁴
- Our Table Cooperative, creating a local, relational model for a new, sustainable food system²⁵

● BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Deanna Van Buren, promoting restorative justice through building alternatives to prisons²⁶
- Liz Ogbu, integrating healing and care into city development projects in an effort toward fostering right relationship with impacted communities²⁷

● TECH

- Artist and technologist Taeyoon Choi's project The Distributed Web of Care, proposing communication infrastructure centered around care²⁸
- Ethical Explorer question cards, exploring the role of care in digital development and technology²⁹

● ARTS & CULTURE

- Artist Wendy Red Star's project, Care Syllabus, using forms of care to help repair the physical and emotional distance between displaced indigenous objects and records and their peoples³⁰
- Larissa Fassler's psychogeographic maps that beautifully depict the layers of place³¹

24 Robin Wall Kimmerer, "What Does the Earth Ask of Us?" *Confluence*, uploaded on November 20, 2020, Vimeo video, 1:33:15 min, <https://vimeo.com/481885313>.

25 Our Table Cooperative, "Our Farm in Sherwood, Oregon," accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.ourtable.us/our-farm.html>.

26 Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, "Our Mission," accessed March 13, 2021, <https://designingjustice.org/about/>.

27 Ogbu, "Re-imagining Portland."

28 Taeyoon Choi, "Distributed Web of Care," *Taeyoon Choi*, accessed February, 12 2021, <http://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>.

29 Ethical Explorer, "Responsible Tech," accessed November 11, 2020, <https://ethicalexplorer.org/>.

30 Wendy Red Star, "Reconnecting Objects with Their Homes," *Care Syllabus*, Accessed February 3, 2021, <https://www.caresyllabus.org/reconnecting-objects-with-their-homes/>.

31 Larissa Fassler, "Work on Place," *Larissa Fassler*, accessed September 12, 2020, <http://www.larissafassler.com/startside.html>.

● COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Leaven Community, working at the intersection of spiritual wisdom, accompaniment, and political action³²
- The Contingent, a non-profit filling gaps in government human services³³

● EDUCATION

- Three professors of social work, anthropology, and psychology at Rutgers University initiating On Caring | The Project as a trans-disciplinary forum³⁴
- Create More, Fear Less, an organization supporting social-emotional learning for youth in schools and at home³⁵

● PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS

- The South African philosophy, ubuntu, proposing a relational way of being, each person existing because of others around them, including plants, animals, earth, and ancestors³⁶
- Vergangenheitsbewältigung, a German approach to communally and societally addressing traumatic events of the past³⁷

● SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION

- *The On Being Project*, pursuing deep thinking, moral imagination, social courage, and joy, to renew inner life, outer life, and life together³⁸
- Tricia Hersey, theologian, activist, and founder of The Nap Ministry, making space for rest as activism³⁹

32 Leaven Community, "Our Mission and Values," accessed April 12, 2021, <https://www.leaven.org/about-us>.

33 The Contingent, "Initiatives," accessed January 26, 2021, <https://thecontingent.org/initiatives/>.

34 On Caring: The Project, "Home," accessed November 13, 2020, <https://oncaring.org/>.

35 Create More, Fear Less, "About," accessed April 19, 2021, <https://createmorefearless.org/about/>.

36 Ogude, Paulson, and Strainchamps, "I Am Because You Are".

37 Wikipedia contributors, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung," accessed January 26, 2021, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vergangenheitsbew%C3%A4ltigung&oldid=1002678488>.

38 The On Being Project, "Home," accessed on April 19, 2021, <https://onbeing.org/>.

39 Brittany Packnett Cunningham, "A Historic Day..." *Distracted*, podcast audio, January 21, 2021, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/historic-day-why-nap-bishop-believes-rest-is-radical/id1534591370?i=1000506032638>.

● PSYCHOLOGY

- Carl Jung, in the early to mid 1900s, imploring a rapidly technologizing U.S. to tend to the increasing disconnect from the body, instinct, and natural world⁴⁰
- Therapist Resmaa Menakem, addressing the internalization and embodiment of “white-body supremacy” through his framework of Somatic Abolitionism⁴¹

● MEDICINE

- Atul Gawande, reflecting on contemporary end-of-life care, inviting medical practitioners not to merely postpone death, but to consider the kind of life that ushers one to it⁴²

● GOVERNANCE & CIVICS

- Multnomah Idea Lab, a county government learning lab studying and testing innovative approaches to fighting poverty and racism⁴³
- Portland Office of Community and Civic Life, activating and supporting communities to have agency in the creation of the city in which they live⁴⁴

● HISTORY & MEMORY

- The Vanport Mosaic, a “memory-activism” platform, amplifying and preserving the silenced histories in order to understand and create our present⁴⁵

How impactful would it be if even more people and organizations were equipped to actively embrace their own unique and powerful Practice of Care? While the pandemic has made plain the brokenness of our systems of support, it is also creating opportunities for the emergence of newly imagined, equitable, flexible, sustainable models for social programs, public life, and the built environment that are centered around care.

40 C.G. Jung, *The Earth Has a Soul: C.G. Jung on Nature, Technology & Modern Life*, edited by Meredith Sabini (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2002).

41 Resmaa Menakem, “What Somatic Abolitionism Is,” *Resmaa Menakem*, accessed November 2, 2020, <https://www.resmaa.com/movement>.

42 Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).

43 Multnomah County, “Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL) | Innovation in Government,” accessed March 24, 2021, <https://multco.us/multnomah-idea-lab-mil-innovation-government>.

44 City of Portland Website, “About Civic Life,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.portland.gov/civic/about/mission-goals-values>.

45 The Vanport Mosaic, “About Us,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.vanportmosaic.org/about-us>.

A Practice of Care



MAPPING THE JOURNEY OF CARE

So what are the steps to developing a Practice of Care for an individual? I created a journey map to represent this varied and nuanced process. The map references this wonderful quote from botanist and Indigenous science advocate Robin Wall Kimmerer (emphasis mine): “*Attention* focuses us in a way that creates intention. And *intention* is what leads to *action*. Paying attention is a sacred act.”⁴⁶

The stages of *attention*, *intention*, and *action* are a helpful framework for how care develops. In the journey map on the next page, these stages are each represented with a different type of line, gaining more solidity as commitment and knowledge grows. Each stage is broken up into sub-stages, illuminating a more detailed process:

- attention* [• Notice
- attention* [• Give Attention
- intention* [• Reflect Internally
- intention* [• Cultivate Awareness
- intention* [• Recognize Assets
- action* [• Build a Relationship
- action* [• Sustain the Practice

Although this journey map portrays care as a step-by-step process (albeit, a winding one), it’s really more like a dance. You might go back and forth between steps, need to stay on one step for a while, or even skip ahead.

You’ll likely need to cycle through the loop over and over as you grow, challenging your initial understanding of the issue. This framework, called Double-Loop Learning by the publication *The Systems Thinker*, allows us to dig deeper into a problem to uncover more fundamental solutions: “We must assess our beliefs about why we value the intended outcome and why we assumed the previous strategy would work...This is difficult work. When participants perceive issues as threatening or embarrassing, defensive routines may kick in, resulting in denial of responsibility, cynicism, or blame, all of which hinder learning.”⁴⁷

46 Kimmerer, “What Does the Earth Ask of Us?”

47 Hinken, Brian, “Working in High-leverage Zones.”

START
HERE

Notice

You begin to see an issue you overlooked before. Once the noticing starts, you might see that thing repeated everywhere.

“A plastic bag and soft drink cup found their way into my front yard, and I noticed there was smaller litter on the sidewalk and in the gutter.”

Give Attention

As you notice more and more, the issue gains importance in your mind. You start to make connections and create context around it.

“Now when I go on a walk, I see trash, big and small, all along my block and in my neighborhood.”

Reflect Internally

You ask questions about the issue, and may wonder what your role is in perpetuating or addressing it.

“Should I clean up more than my own yard? How could I make a difference here?”

Cultivate Awareness

You learn more about the issue, find books to read, listen to those affected most by the issue, look up the history, find organizations addressing it, etc.

“There’s an organization called SOLVE that meets up regularly to pick up trash around the city, and one on the coast. There’s also one called Adopt One Block that asks people to pick up trash regularly on their block.”

Recognize Assets

As you get closer to action, you take an account of what you have to offer. This could be money, time, professional support, raising awareness in your community, etc.

“I can’t make the SOLVE meetup times, but Adopt One Block sounds doable. I can do that with my kids, too. I also have money to donate toward the bigger city cleanups with SOLVE.”

Build a Relationship

You begin an active relationship with the issue where you show up in some way. Often this means entering into the community working on the issue.

“Every other Sunday, I pick up trash on my block with my kids. We have lots of conversations with our neighbors and some of them have adopted blocks, too. I post on the Adopt One Block Facebook page to encourage others in the group.”

Sustain the Practice

Over time, you gain skill and knowledge around the issue, and become more integrated in the community. You’ll need to iterate— involvement may ebb and flow as circumstances change, and you may need to shift your thinking and behavior as you gain more awareness.

“I’ve been noticing that many of my houseless and unsheltered neighbors are in need of trash pickup. I found a group called Neighbors Helping Neighbors and expanded my involvement to include a biweekly trash pickup at a camp near me. I’ll need to take a break to recover from a surgery next month.”

- ATTENTION
- INTENTION
- ACTION
- REFLECTION

There's one more key element on the map: the line showing *reflection*. Thinking of care as a practice means that we will improve upon what we learn and strive to further embody the behaviors of our practice. Care is an iterative process. Even if you consider yourself an “expert carer” it can be useful to revisit the foundational experiences of noticing and giving attention that started you on the journey. This remembrance may shed light on some misconceptions about the issue that have gotten baked into your understanding, or reconnect you to what you found compelling or urgent in the first place in order to stay engaged over time.

FROM THE MIND TO THE BODY

Repetition is important for an embodied practice. Our body learns through subtle influence to default to certain behaviors—to smile at people or look away, to stay present for a needed difficult discussion or physically retreat. Right down to our nervous systems, we may need to pause, pay attention, and start practicing how to approach a difficult area of care.

Therapist and trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem gives us a powerful example of this through Somatic Abolitionism, which he defines as “living, embodied anti-racist practice and cultural building.”⁴⁸ He invites us all to recognize the primacy of the body, and has different physical practices for black and brown bodies and white bodies. For every practice, he emphasizes repetition as an essential element to embodiment:

“That’s why the reps around race are so important, because as you get more reps in about it, all of a sudden, other things start to become important that weren’t important, because now your brain is saying, ‘Oh, I need to read that. Oh, I need to pay attention to that...Oh, I need to understand that. Oh, I need to ask questions about...’ Right? And now those things become attracted to you, which creates more angst, which forces you to transform.”⁴⁹

Again, we see this pattern of *attention* (“those things become attracted to you” as your noticing increases), *intention* (“which

48 Menakem, “What Somatic Abolitionism Is.”

49 Resmaa Menakem, “Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence,” interview with Krista Tippett, *On Being*, podcast audio, June 4, 2020, <https://onbeing.org/programs/resmaa-menakem-notice-the-rage-notice-the-silence/>.

creates more angst”—in other words, a desire to change), and *action* (“which forces you to transform”, to embody the behavior you want to see in the world).

The previous map works well to represent a developing Practice of Care around one concern, but one individual’s practice likely revolves around multiple issues and/or communities at once. At any moment in time, this journey is layered—attention, intention, and action around a variety of issues live together at different stages.

NOT PERFECTION, BUT GROWTH

A note on this process of developing a Practice of Care: it requires compassion and grace. Perfection is not an option. Particularly when we are talking about rewiring our default reactions, unlearning years or decades of conditioning, or addressing personal or ancestral trauma, this does not happen overnight. In her beautiful book, *All About Love*, bell hooks says of love, “It requires a conscious practice, a willingness to unite the way we think with the way we act.”⁵⁰ One of the benefits of naming ongoing care as a *practice* is that it implies skill-building and growth—which means we start at a place of less skill, in need of growth. This model from The NeuroLearning Institute (NLI) shows the progression of learning a new skill, habit, or way of thinking—including care.⁵¹



FIG 9. The progression of learning, based on a model from the NeuroLeadership Institute

⁵⁰ hooks, *All About Love*, 77.

⁵¹ NeuroLeadership Institute, *Brain-Based Conversation Skills Participant Manual* (Sydney: NeuroLeadership Institute, 2015) 16.

This empathy must extend to self as well as others. As difficult as it is, we must hold the tension between a fierce desire for justice with a spirit of grace in order to reach this place of skillful care together. I find the NLI model helpful when I'm frustrated or angry about other's lack of awareness. Changing judgement into curiosity, I ask: Where might that frustrating person be on this spectrum? Was I once in that same spot? If so, what changed me? How could I be a catalyst for helping folks level up?

RELATIONSHIPS OF CARE

One more critical part of care is the relationship between the one offering care and the person, place, or other earthly kin receiving care. This could be a thesis on its own, but it's worth briefly touching on some aspects of this dynamic. At its best, care creates a mutuality of experience in which both parties benefit, whether it's through tangible support, a sense of community with one another, or a sense of self-affirmation and alignment to one's values. At its worst, care creates a power dynamic that leaves the most vulnerable open to manipulation and abuse. Entering into a care relationship brings with it what any relationship does—the presence of power, rank, and privilege. Without awareness of this dynamic, carers can be at risk of exploiting this dynamic without even knowing it.

There are tensions here around how the receiver of care wants to be cared for and how the carer wants to give care. The diagram below shows the space of mutuality in the middle, but this area is often more difficult to find than we'd like.

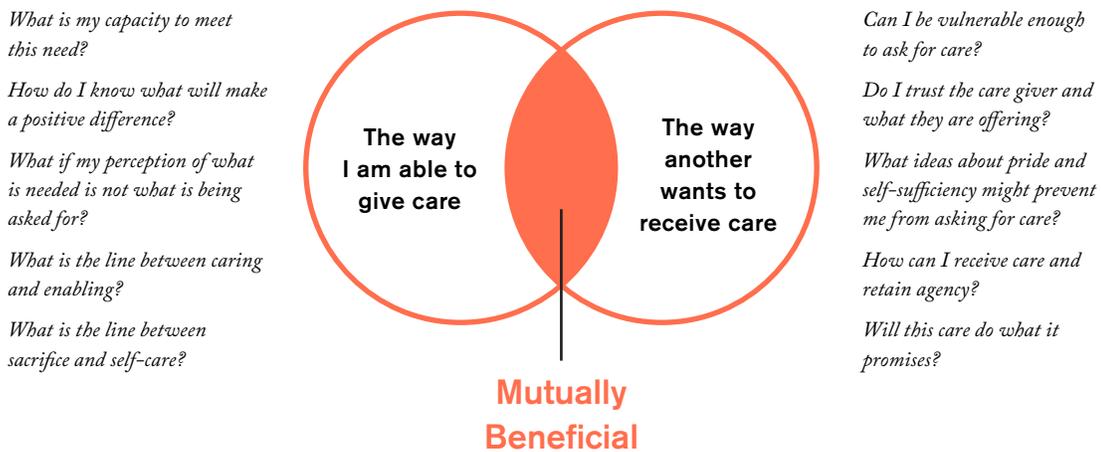


FIG 10. The relationship between the caregiver and care receiver

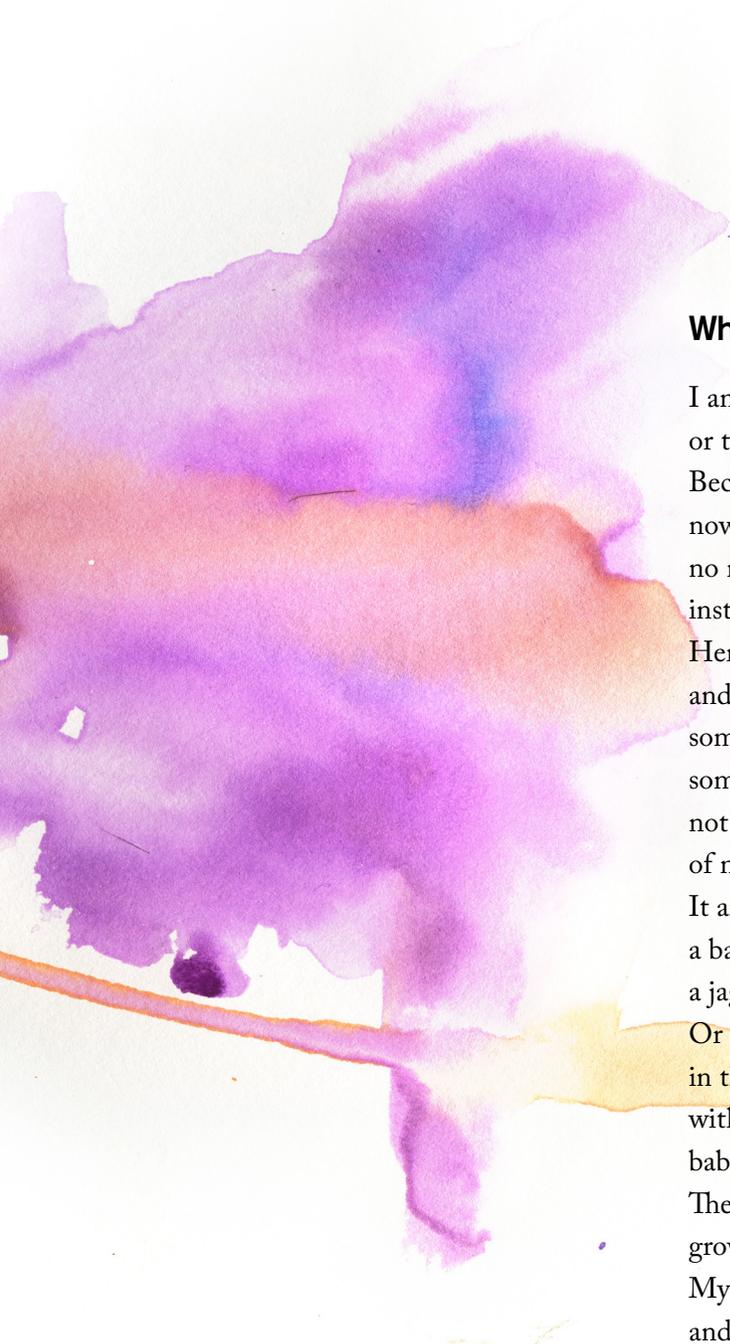
The carer has the potential to be in a position of power, so giving care must be approached with humility. Although the caregiver often sees themselves as the “protagonist” of the relationship, this can be a harmful mentality. Approaching care as a listener who responds to the guidance of the person or community in need diffuses that imbalance of power. Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, a grassroots disaster relief network, puts it succinctly: “Solidarity not charity.”⁵²

While bringing our full selves, our experiences, skills, and resources is necessary for caring well, care is often uncomfortable and pushes us into new territory—on both the giving and receiving side. It requires trust and vulnerability. When we enter into a relationship of care, we acknowledge our interconnectedness.

52 Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, “Core Values,” accessed April 13, 2021, <https://mutualaiddisasterrelief.org/core-values/>.

Theory into Practice





Where We Begin

I am allowed to mourn the loss of a dream,
or the changing of it.
Because even as the dream comes to me,
now clothed all in reality,
no more ethereality but,
instead, the fleshy frailty of becoming.
Here it is now, real, fruit of labor,
and yet sometimes bruised,
sometimes misshapen,
sometimes wholly unexpected,
not the uniformity plastic perfection
of my supermarket-shiny vision.
It arrives as but a miniscule seed,
a bag of raw and rough-cut wool,
a jagged stone slab or felled tree.
Or like a wrinkly brown baby arriving small
in the manger of my world. And yet
within it, within that seed wool stone tree —
baby. Bursts the stuff of life!
The full becoming of beauty, art, new wild
growth, wow, oh my, in humble package.
My dream was birthed through death
and decomposition
(only here can life begin).
And now, the work.



DEVELOPING AN APPROACH

Using this model of care and all the unique ways it can exist in the world, how might I guide others into a deeper understanding of care; a naming of and intentionality toward their own Practice of Care? Given my own inclination toward asking good questions, inspiring conversation, and thinking optimistically about what's possible, I wanted the design intervention I came up with to center around guiding others into their own creative and intuitive understanding and solution space. This also aligns with each Practice of Care being unique and specific, depending on the carer. Using the TAPS™ model below, this approach can be understood as a type of coaching.⁵³

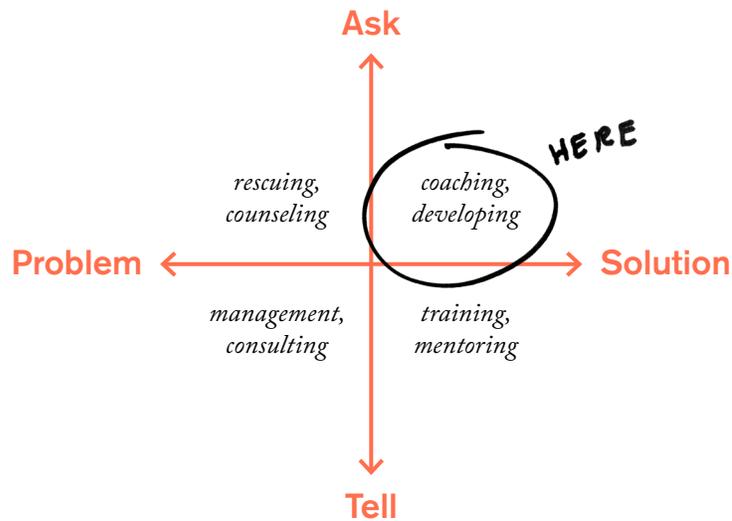


FIG 11. The TAPS™ model, from the NeuroLeadership Institute

As I considered a primary audience, I decided to focus on people in the *attention* phase of the journey of care who were poised to grow into their Practice of Care:

- People who want to show up for what's emerging in them and in the world
- People whose old models, stories, or ways of relating to others are being challenged
- People who may be overwhelmed or paralyzed by the care that is being asked of them

With this audience and my coaching approach, I did some brainstorming, had some conversations, and decided on two

⁵³ NeuroLeadership Institute, *Brain-Based Conversation Skills*, 26.

design interventions: a workshop model for group reflection and a packet of prompts for personal reflection.

CARE CLUB: WORKSHOP + CONVERSATION

I prototyped a workshop called Care Club, choosing a group workshop model for several reasons. Participants could be inspired and challenged by one another. Since talking about care so directly may feel new and potentially vulnerable, participants would be able to support each other through the challenge of finding language for something intrinsic yet complicated. Mary Jaron Kelley said it well when we spoke together: “Sometimes being in a group helps us feel strong about ourselves and supported and acknowledged. And also maybe just see it’s not that hard, you just have to show up.”⁵⁴

I also wanted to expand my own practice of facilitating conversation. Hosting an online experience would be unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory for me, but, with quarantine restrictions still in place, shifting to a digital platform was one of the few options for conducting an event like this. Given the salience of this topic and the access that a digital space affords, it felt like a great opportunity to lean into my edge around in-person vs. digital conversations.

Based on my research about both the facets of care and the psychology of personal change, I developed design criteria for the experience:

- Create a space of curiosity, not judgement⁵⁵
- Encourage self-discovery and inquiry
- Be embodied, recognize and listen to our bodies
- Explore the edges and challenges of care
- Address both the inner (personal) and outer (communal) aspects of care

The template I developed invited participants to share concrete examples of care before leading them into an individual exercise to reflect on their own Practice of Care. The rest of the time was spent sharing insights and reflections. I framed the invitation

⁵⁴ Mary Jaron Kelley, Zoom conversation, March 3, 2021.

⁵⁵ Human Systems Dynamic Institute, “After-Action Adaptive Action,” accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www.hsdinstitute.org/resources/after-action-adaptive-action.html>.

around leveraging the disruption of the pandemic as a catalyst for change in our lives. I made the workshop only 90 minutes, knowing that Zoom fatigue is real for folks already working and socializing over video calls. In order to gain greater insight about the experience, I also asked participants to fill out a feedback form after the workshop.

Because this format was new to me, I wasn't sure what to expect. The topic of care can be difficult, so I was wary of opening up the invitation to the greater public. I wanted to test the conversation space with an audience with whom I already had some level of trust. I extended the invitation to my family, friend, work, and school communities. My goals were to increase participant's awareness of care by recognizing and naming it and encourage a

*Comments from
Care Club participants:*

"I felt very comfortable bringing my whole self to the conversation."

Marisol, age 36

"Others shared perspectives that were different from my own, and helped me think outside of my own experience."

Ruthie, age 26

"How nice it was to explore these questions together—to feel how it engaged me on many levels."

Leah, age 36

"I am going to bring this question of care, what it looks like for ourselves and for others, before, during, and after the pandemic, with my family."

Ian, age 27



FIG 12. The first Care Club group

deeper engagement in their own Practice of Care. I also wanted to validate this conversational workshop method of engagement as a tool for accomplishing these goals.

The result was a series of lovely conversations. I hosted three Care Clubs for a total of 18 people. Group sizes varied; one meeting had a larger group of 10, the other two were small groups of four. All groups were intergenerational, with a range of ages from 26 to 74. Participants seemed eager to share their experiences and struggles; according to one participant it was "therapeutic." Several participants found learning from others to be one of the most valuable aspects.

The follow-up feedback was generally positive, indicating that participants found the format and content compelling. Some

participants had a fluency with the topic that indicated they already had articulated thoughts around care. Other participants found it overly abstract or difficult to recognize their own Practice of Care. The flow of conversation varied with the size of the group. In the larger group of ten, the conversation never lagged. In the smaller groups of four, there was a bigger lift required from each person that I think was less successful.

My goals of creating more awareness and depth around one's Practice of Care had mixed feedback. While many participants had a desire to continue the conversation with their family, friends, and even therapist, there was less direct reference to one's own role in care. Some participants indicated a desire to journal or keep thinking about the topic.

Overall, it seemed that participants were left with more questions than answers — not necessarily a bad place to be. One participant, Art, summed it up well: “I think a question on everyone's mind was how to be part of the solution, how to be a helper, as Mr. Rogers would say. How can that happen more in what is emerging in my life?”

If Care Club has a life after this thesis project, I'd want to explore building a curriculum, different participant configurations, and creating some kind of follow-up mechanism for impact over time. Having an ongoing curriculum would allow more time along the journey of care, leading participants through the *attention* phase, into the *intention* phase, and even making concrete steps toward the *action* phase. Trust could be built over time between both the facilitator and the participants, allowing for an even deeper engagement. I'm curious about how the size of the group and having participants with existing relationships would affect the outcomes. How does a group of co-workers or a family group change the dynamic from a group of strangers? Can a group of 30 engage in some of the same ways as a group of 10? These are all questions that could be explored in a future iteration of Care Club.

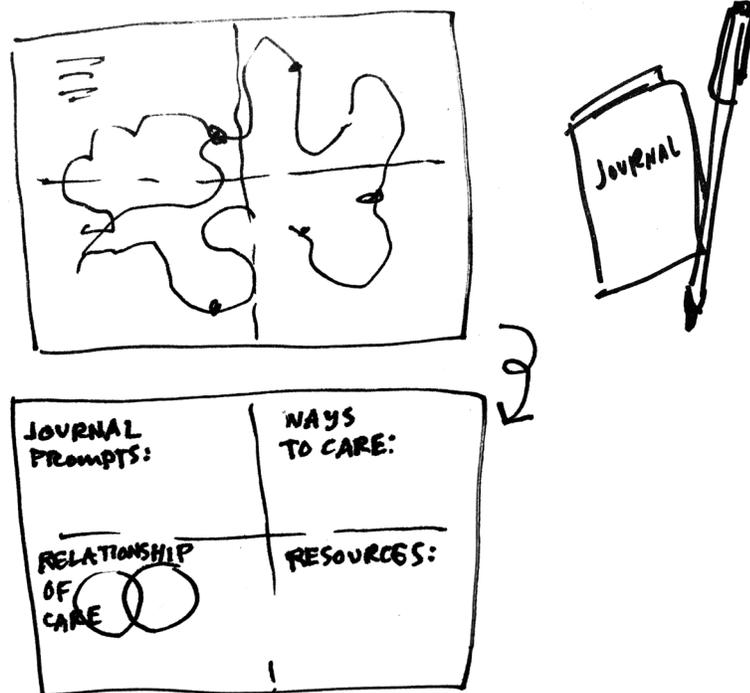
CARE PACKAGE: A KIT FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Another prototype I created is a small kit called Care Package, which will be included as part of my thesis exhibition. I chose

the form of a kit to allow for multiple methods of engagement—writing, reflecting, learning, drawing, doing. The goal here is to give people a way to engage at their own pace, in their own time.

The contents of the kit are:

- Large printout of the journey map of care (from p. 26) with instructions, resources, and prompts
- Small blank journal and pen
- Care Club button



Care Package is an invitation to explore the steps along the journey of care. Including the journey map in a large (11"x17") print format will allow folks to spend more time engaging with the process. On the back, there will be several vignettes for exploring a Practice of Care:

- A short essay on definitions of care and how it can be thought of as a practice
- One poem from this thesis
- A list of “ready-made” ways to engage in the *attention* steps of care, things like: write down every time you see care for a week; mail a letter to someone you haven’t spoken to in a

while; start a list of local organizations you really love and want to support; go for a walk, focusing on all the sounds you hear.

- Instructions for how to engage with the map, including the venn diagram on relationships of care (from p. 29) to encourage looking from the viewpoint of the recipient as well as the carer.

In the exhibition, a grid of 20-30 hooks will each have a Care Package kit hanging on them with an invitation for viewers to take one and explore the the content on their own time. An instagram feed (@hello_care_club) will post photos of the installation and kit contents, as well as allow recipients a place to engage in ongoing sharing and conversation. It's a final effort through my thesis to get care out into the world, coaching recipients along in their own Practice of Care.



Both Care Package and Care Club could easily work in tandem. The contents in the Care Package kit could live in a larger workshop setting as one activity or could be the take-home continuation of a Care Club group conversation. Likewise, the recipient of a Care Package might be interested in attending Care Club for community inspiration and support after going on their own personal journey. Each intervention facilitates a different entry point for exploring care as a practice, but together they could work to strengthen the entire process, providing a container for both personal and communal reflection.

What Care Can Do



PRACTICING CARE IS ESSENTIAL

Developing a Practice of Care may sound like a “nice to have” instead of a necessity, especially for those of us who live in cultures that value productivity, profit, and efficiency above all else. However, dedicating oneself to a Practice of Care is an essential relearning for cultures that center around capitalism. There is psychic, physical, societal, and political harm in allowing our bodies to be used solely as machines for profit or consumption.

Tricia Hersey, theologian, activist, and founder of The Nap Ministry, talks about rest as activism: “We can reclaim and take back our bodies from a system that believes they own it. This is deep, political, radical shifting of thought. It’s not some fluffy wellness idea. This is about more than that.”⁵⁶ This is a particularly potent assertion for Black communities in America who have inherited the traumas of enslavement and are living with the realities of a system built upon that institution.

Similarly, I believe committing to a Practice of Care is a radical act that subverts hatred, divisiveness, isolation, and materialism. Care asserts that we are all (humans and earth) beautifully and humbly interconnected, that we each have particular, powerful, unique gifts to offer, and that, both individually and collectively, we are strong in our ability to meet challenges and address past injustices.

This is a moment in time when we are attempting to address some of those past injustices. A strong movement of communities and organizations are leading a reckoning with the harmful narratives, practices, and cultures bred of white supremacy and unfettered capitalism. This is wonderful, good work, but it is not easy. In an interview about the realities of following the philosophy of Ubuntu, South African scholar and writer James Ogude says, “Society needs to renew itself in order to move forward, especially during moments of crisis, conflict, and trauma. You evoke values such as Ubuntu in order to constitute yourself anew, to regenerate yourself, to renew yourself. And, in that process of renewing yourself, there has to be a debate, there has to be struggle.”⁵⁷ That process of debate and struggle are part of what makes robust, resilient solutions.

56 Cunningham, “A Historic Day... And Why the ‘Nap Bishop’ Believes Rest is Radical!”

57 Ogude, Paulson, and Strainchamps, “I Am Because You Are”.

In that process of “regenerating ourselves,” the stories that gave us place and meaning—especially for people of privilege and social rank—are being torn down and rewritten. Journalist and critic Anand Giradharadas cites the importance of creating new narratives of belonging once the old, harmful ones have been disintegrated: “The obligation to give people a story to help them make sense of themselves and who they are and feel worthy is a collective obligation.”⁵⁸ We need to replace them or the void will be filled with the first thing that offers a new story or confirms the old one. “Defensive self-interest thrives in conditions like these since, when our very sense of security and comfort is so fragile, it becomes harder to care for ourselves, let alone for others,” observes *The Care Manifesto*.⁵⁹

Organizations and individuals oriented around a robust Practice of Care can fill these voids with new stories that include people of all kinds—all races, ethnicities, ages, abilities; on the right or left, urban or rural—in their vision for a culture of care. This vision can invite people into an understanding of “their capacity to live fully human lives and to touch the goodness inside of them, rather than call upon the part of themselves that’s not relational,” as civil rights legend Ruby Sales frames it.⁶⁰

THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

My research and conversations leave me hopeful about the possibility and power of care. Clearly there is momentum around shifting from the current dominant culture of care-lessness to a culture of care. Even up to the last keystrokes of writing this paper, I kept finding new, robust conversations about care—organizations hosting conferences, designers creating resources, artists hosting book groups, activists calling upon their communities to show up.

I talked with people from my local city and county offices who are committed to integrating care into one of the last places

58 Anand Giridharadas, “Anand Giridharadas on Philanthropy, Billionaires, Trump Supporters, and Community,” interview with Vince Emanuele, *PARC Media*, podcast audio, 2020, <https://parcmedia.castos.com/podcasts/8771/episodes/anand-giridharadas-on-philanthropy-billionaires-trump-supporters-and-community>.

59 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto*, 4.

60 Ruby Sales, “Where Does It Hurt?” interview with Krista Tippett, *On Being*, Podcast audio, January 16, 2020, <https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt/>, 00:27:52.

some might look for it: government. Ashley Tjaden from the Portland Office of Community and Civic Life spoke of the way their bureau tries to take a posture of listening, supporting communities to make the changes they need from within. “The person closest to the issue deserves to drive the solution,” she said. She also described how the bureau practices honesty and trust building within their team before expecting it from the outside community:

All of these things about who we are and what we care about, we expose ourselves on purpose to as staff and we create a very diverse environment—and I’m talking in terms of religion, age, ethnicity, national status, all of it. We create this so that we’re constantly being challenged, stretched, and getting to know one another and trusting one another. You can’t have that trust between us and the community if you don’t have it between one another.⁶¹

Frank Moscow, founder of the fledgling non-profit Adopt One Block, told me the story of his journey to find “one simple, scalable solution” to the increase in litter he noticed on his walk to work in downtown Portland. His experience in the tech industry honed his ability to focus that solution down to the essentials, putting the user experience at the center: allow participants to adopt the block they care about the most—their own—and maintain it on their own schedule, with the use of tools (a trash picker, gloves, and a bucket) sent right to their doorstep. Two thousand blocks were adopted in the first 6 months and they’ve now expanded to Washington state. Frank’s guiding question was: “How do you make it as easy as possible for people to do the right thing?”⁶²

Long-time community organizer and parks advocate Ginger Edwards reflected on her years of learning and growing in her own Practice of Care. “I looked for opportunities to follow curiosities,” she said, describing how the focus of her practice has changed over time as she encountered different circumstances, opportunities, and experiences. She described taking a leadership role in the Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association when there was a void, then gracefully stepping out of leadership when

61 Ashley Tjaden, Zoom conversation, February 16, 2021.

62 Frank Moscow, Zoom conversation, January 28, 2021.

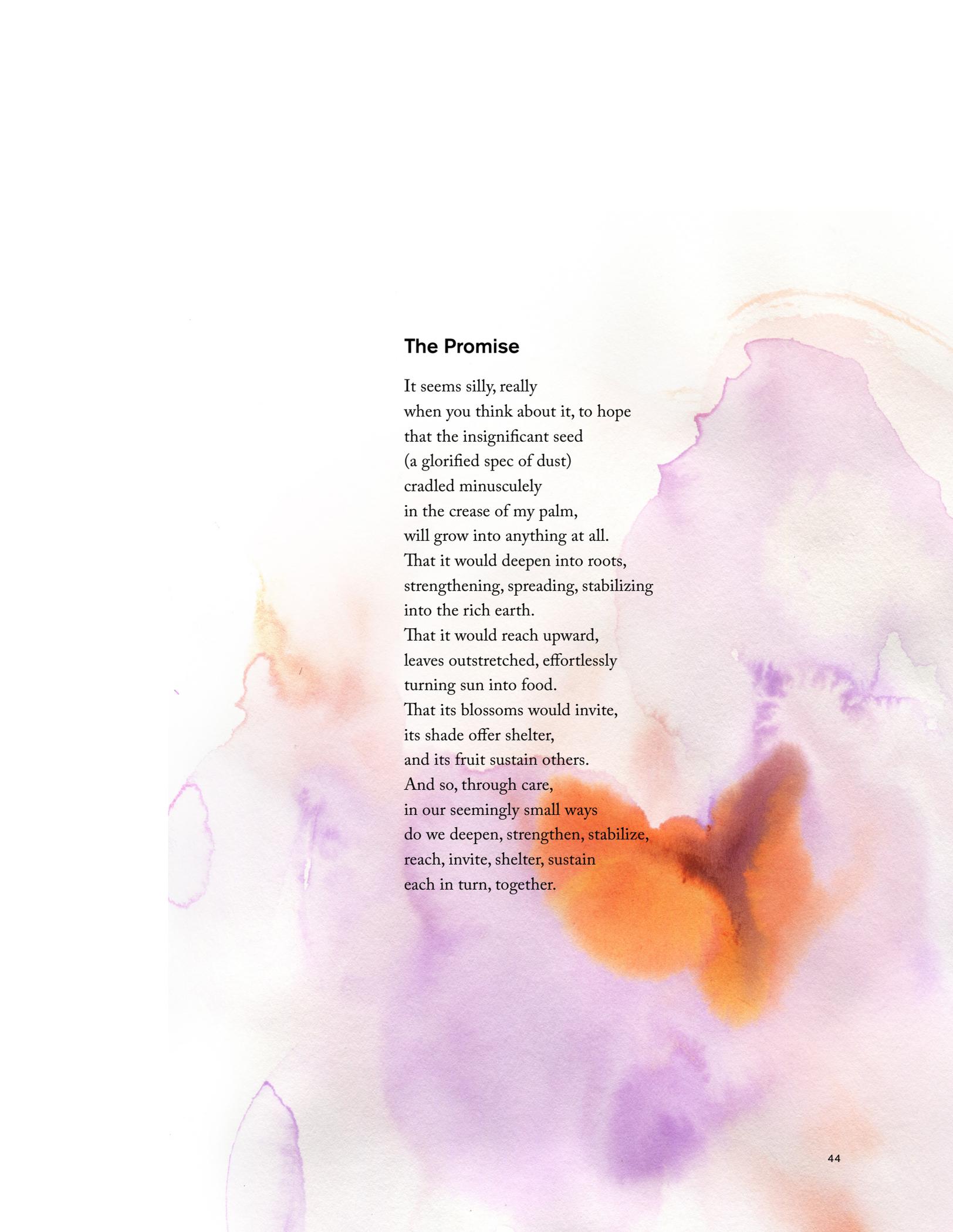
there were new people ready with new ideas. “All of us are such a combination of our life experiences, everyone views and articulates things differently,” she says. It’s the bringing together of all those experiences that gets resilient and equitable solutions. “I’m not afraid of change, I see change as an opportunity.”⁶³

There are many, many more stories of people activating their own Practice of Care in service of and relationship with their communities. As we continue in the effort to reshape our societies around a framework of care, my hope is that we will find the mutuality inherent in our relationships with one another and the natural world. Through our Practices of Care, may we embody the words of writer Parker Palmer: “As we act, we not only express what is in us and help give shape to the world; we also receive what is outside us, and reshape our inner selves.”⁶⁴



63 Ginger Edwards, Zoom conversation, November 23, 2020.

64 hooks, *All About Love*, 77.

The background of the page is a soft watercolor wash. It features a mix of light purple, lavender, and pale pink tones, with some darker, more saturated purple and orange-brown accents. The colors are blended together, creating a dreamy, ethereal atmosphere. The overall effect is gentle and artistic, complementing the poetic nature of the text.

The Promise

It seems silly, really
when you think about it, to hope
that the insignificant seed
(a glorified spec of dust)
cradled minusculely
in the crease of my palm,
will grow into anything at all.
That it would deepen into roots,
strengthening, spreading, stabilizing
into the rich earth.
That it would reach upward,
leaves outstretched, effortlessly
turning sun into food.
That its blossoms would invite,
its shade offer shelter,
and its fruit sustain others.
And so, through care,
in our seemingly small ways
do we deepen, strengthen, stabilize,
reach, invite, shelter, sustain
each in turn, together.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Huge amounts of gratitude to my mentor, Jessica Riehl, and my CD/DS cohort for the ongoing support.

Also to all the folks who welcomed me into conversation: Celia Moret Crockett, David Hedberg, Ginger Edwards, Frank Moscow, Mary Li, Ashley Tjaden, Mary Jaron Kelley, Howard Silverman, Herman D'Hooge, Mary and David Sherwin, Leah Walsh, Marisol Flores, Skye Moret, Kelsey Snook, Michelle Swinehart, Sean Reyes, and others.

Thanks to all participants of my mapping survey and Care Club, and the PSU Ideation classes—this project couldn't exist without your valuable input!

Index of Images

All illustrations and watercolors by Betsy Lance.

FIG 1. Essential elements of a Practice of Care, created by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 2. Neighbor Brunch photos by Betsy Lance, 2018-2019.

FIG 3. *Hosting Place*, collage by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 4. *Walk Sounds*, sound recordings by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 5. *Greenwich Avenue*, drawings by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 6. Passing out mapping prompts to neighbors, photos by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 7. A selection of maps from participants, various artists, 2020.

FIG 8. Affinity mapping the ecosystem of care, created by Betsy Lance, 2020.

FIG 9. The progression of learning, designed by Betsy Lance, based on a model from the NeuroLeadership Institute, *Brain-Based Conversation Skills Participant Manual* (Sydney: NeuroLeadership Institute, 2015).

FIG 10. The relationship between the caregiver and care reciever, created by Betsy Lance and Jessica Riehl, 2021.

FIG 11. The TAPS™ model, designed by Betsy Lance, based on a model from the NeuroLeadership Institute, *Brain-Based Conversation Skills Participant Manual* (Sydney: NeuroLeadership Institute, 2015).

FIG 12. The first Care Club group, screenshot, 2021.

Bibliography

- AI Commons*. "Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry." Accessed March 10, 2021. <https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction/>.
- Alexander, Christopher. *The Timeless Way of Building*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Alexander, Christopher, et al. *The Battle for the Life and Beauty of the Earth: A Struggle Between Two World-Systems*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Alexander, Christopher, et al. *A Pattern Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- The Artists' Grief Deck*. "Collection." Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://griefdeck.com/>.
- The Berkana Institute*. "Our Work: Pioneering a New Paradigm." Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://berkana.org/our-work/pioneering-a-new-paradigm/>.
- The Berkana Institute*. 2010. "Two Loops: How Systems Change." Uploaded on December 16, 2010. Vimeo video, 6:54 min. <https://vimeo.com/17907928>.
- Berry, Wendell. *What Matters? Economics for a Renewed Commonwealth*. Berkley: Counterpoint, 2010.
- Bird, Kely. "Systems Scribing." *Kelvy Bird*. Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://kelvybird.com/systems-scribing/>.
- The Care Collective. *The Care Manifesto*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2020.
- Choi, Taeyoon. "Distributed Web of Care." *Taeyoon Choi*. Accessed February 2021. <http://taeyoonchoi.com/soft-care/distributed-web-of-care/>.
- City of Portland Website*. "About Civic Life." Accessed April 19, 2021. <https://www.portland.gov/civic/about/mission-goals-values>.
- The Contingent*. "Initiatives." Accessed January 26, 2021. <https://thecontingent.org/initiatives/>.
- Create More, Fear Less*. "About." Accessed April 19, 2021. <https://createmorefearless.org/about/>.
- Cunningham, Brittany Packnett. "A Historic Day...And Why the 'Nap Bishop' Believes Rest is Radical". *Distracted*. Podcast audio, January 21, 2021. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/historic-day-why-nap-bishop-believes-rest-is-radical/id1534591370?i=1000506032638>.
- Death Cafe*. "Home." Accessed March 3, 2021. <https://deathcafe.com/>.
- Designing Justice + Designing Spaces*. "Our Mission." Accessed March 13, 2021. <https://designingjustice.org/about/>.

- Duckworth, Sylvia (@sylvia Duckworth). “I have seen different versions of this Power/ Privilege Wheel online...” Instagram. August 19, 2020. https://www.instagram.com/p/CEFiUShhpUT/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.
- Ethical Explorer*. “Responsible Tech.” Accessed November 11, 2020. <https://ethicalexplorer.org/>.
- Fassler, Larissa. “Work on Place.” *Larissa Fassler*. Accessed September 12, 2020. <http://www.larissafassler.com/startside.html>.
- Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. “Are You Planning to Stay?” *Next City*, September 21, 2020, <https://nextcity.org/features/view/are-you-planning-to-stay>.
- Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal*. New York: Metropolitan Books. 2014.
- Gay, Ross. “The Joy of Caring for Others,” *The New York Times*, May 18, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/18/style/caring-joy.html>.
- Gridharadas, Anand. “Anand Giridharadas on Philanthropy, Billionaires, Trump Supporters, and Community”. Interview with Vince Emanuele. *PARC Media*. Podcast audio, 2020. <https://parcmedia.castos.com/podcasts/8771/episodes/anand-giridharadas-on-philanthropy-billionaires-trump-supporters-and-community>.
- Google Trends*. “Explore what the world is searching.” Accessed March 27, 2021. <https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US>.
- Hanft, Adrian. “The Zombie-mobile,” *The Startup*, Medium, Oct 3, 2015. <https://medium.com/swlh/the-zombie-mobile-b03932ac971d>.
- Harmon, Katharine ed. *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.
- Hempton, Gordon. “Now Listen, Really Listen”. Interview with Zeno Siemens-Brega and Jacco Prantl. *The Correspondent*. Podcast audio, July 23, 2020. https://thecorrespondent.com/603/now-listen-really-listen-the-pristine-sounds-of-nature-can-change-your-life/8698012092-40bf953d?utm_source=densediscovery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter-issue-109.
- Hinken, Brian. “Working in High-leverage Zones with the Double-Loop Learning Matrix.” *The Systems Thinker*. Accessed April 22, 2021. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/working-in-high-leverage-zones-with-the-double-loop-learning-matrix/>.
- Hobart, Hi‘ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani and Tamara Kneese; “Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times.” *Social Text* 38, no. 1 (March 2020): 1–16. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-7971067>.
- hooks, bell. *All About Love*. New York: William Morrow. 2001.

- Human Systems Dynamic Institute*. "After-Action Adaptive Action." Accessed April 15, 2021. <https://www.hsdinstitute.org/resources/after-action-adaptive-action.html>.
- Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (@imirj.oregon). "The 2021 Oregon Legislative Session is in full swing..." Instagram. March 16, 2021. https://www.instagram.com/p/CMfyiWeBg-o/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.
- International Coaching Federation*. "About." Accessed March 10, 2021. <https://coachingfederation.org/about>.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.
- Jones, Kenneth and Tema Okun. "The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture." *Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)*. 2001. <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>.
- Jung, C.G. *The Earth Has a Soul: C.G. Jung on Nature, Technology & Modern Life*, edited by Meredith Sabini. Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2002.
- Kent, Corita and Jan Steward. *Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit*. 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press, 2008.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Canada: Milkweed Editions, 2013.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. "What Does the Earth Ask of Us?" *Confluence*. Uploaded on November 20, 2020. Vimeo video, 1:33:15 min. <https://vimeo.com/481885313>.
- Kracov, Julie. "The year in review: Top news stories of 2020 month-by-month," *CBS News*, December 27, 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2020-the-year-in-review-top-news-stories-month-by-month/>.
- Leaven Community*. "Our Mission and Values." Accessed April 12, 2021. <https://www.leaven.org/about-us>.
- Lizarraga, Diana. "Grounded Theory | Overview." February 25, 2017. Video, 10:54. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXh7Y9yIE8E>.
- Lupton, Ellen. *The Senses: Design Beyond Vision*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2018.
- Macdonald, Copthorne. "Review of A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality." *The Wisdom Page*. Accessed March 12, 2021. <http://www.wisdompage.com/toerevw.html>.
- Mayeroff, Milton. *On Caring*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1971.
- McGuire, Richard. *Here*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2014.

- Menakem, Resmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands*. Las Vegas: Central Recovery Press, 2017.
- Menakem, Resmaa. "Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence". Interview with Krista Tippett. *On Being*. Podcast audio, June 4, 2020. <https://onbeing.org/programs/resmaa-menakem-notice-the-rage-notice-the-silence/>.
- Menakem, Resmaa. "What Somatic Abolitionism Is." *Resmaa Menakem*. Accessed November 2, 2020. <https://www.resmaa.com/movement>.
- Mental Health America*. "The State of Mental Health in America." Accessed April 4, 2021. <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>.
- Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. s.v. "care," accessed February 19, 2021. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/care>.
- Mindell, Arnold. *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity*. San Francisco: Deep Democracy Exchange, 1995.
- Murray, Lorraine. "Factory-Farmed Chickens: Their Difficult Lives and Deaths." *Saving Earth, Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed March 17, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/explore/savingearth/the-difficult-lives-and-deaths-of-factory-farmed-chickens>
- Multnomah County*. "Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL) | Innovation in Government." Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://multco.us/multnomah-idea-lab-mil-innovation-government>.
- Mutual Aid Disaster Relief*. "Core Values." Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://mutualaiddisasterrelief.org/core-values/>.
- Nakano, Mari (@marinakano). "Got my Model of Care set today from @beyond-stickynotes." Instagram. March 26, 2021. https://www.instagram.com/p/CM5aPxdjUc3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.
- Native Land*. "Welcome." Accessed October 13, 2020. <https://native-land.ca/>.
- Navitsky, Laura and Ariel Iannone Román. "Indigenous Migrant Farmworkers Face Harsh Conditions During COVID-19." *Cultural Survivor*. October 03, 2020. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/indigenous-migrant-farmworkers-face-harsh-conditions-during-covid-19>.
- NeuroLeadership Institute. *Brain-Based Conversation Skills Participant Manual*. NeuroLeadership Institute (NLI): Sydney. 2015.
- The Northwest Earth Institute. *Discussion Course on Discovering a Sense of Place*. Portland: The Northwest Earth Institute, 2007.
- Ogbu, Liz. "Re-imagining Portland: Parks, Public Space, Memory, Creativity, and Spatial Justice," *Green Dreams* by Portland Parks Foundation, 2021.

- Ogude, James, Steve Paulson, and Anne Strainchamps. "I Am Because You Are: An interview with James Ogude," *The Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes*, June 21, 2019, <https://chcnetwork.org/ideas/i-am-because-you-are-an-interview-with-james-ogude>.
- The On Being Project*. "Home." Accessed on April 19, 2021. <https://onbeing.org/>.
- On Caring | The Project*. "Home." Accessed November 13, 2020. <https://oncaring.org/>.
- Our Table Cooperative*. "Our Farm in Sherwood, Oregon." Accessed March 23, 2021. <https://www.ourtable.us/our-farm.html>
- Presencing Institute. "Movement Building and Collective Healing for Systems Transformation - with Melanie Goodchild." June 5, 2020. Video, 1:50:55. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpucs12iAZw>.
- Reyes, Jen Delos (@jendelosreyes). "Self-Care as Community Care is an open monthly reading and support group..." Instagram. March 21, 2021. https://www.instagram.com/p/CMr-q77lAw9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.
- Rose, Daniel. "How change happens." *The Moment*. Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://www.themoment.is/how-change-happens/>.
- Sales, Ruby. "Where Does It Hurt?" Interview with Krista Tippett. *On Being*. Podcast audio, January 16, 2020. <https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt/>.
- Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)*. "White Supremacy Culture." Accessed March 2, 2021. <https://surjpoliticaledsite.weebly.com/white-supremacy-culture.html>.
- Star, Wendy Red. "Reconnecting Objects with Their Homes." *Care Syllabus*. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://www.caresyllabus.org/reconnecting-objects-with-their-homes/>.
- Strainchamps, Anne. "Why Do We Meet?". *To the Best of Our Knowledge*. Podcast audio, June 22, 2019. <https://www.ttbook.org/show/why-do-we-meet>.
- Strainchamps, Anne. "How Africans Are Building the Cities of the Future". *To the Best of Our Knowledge*. Podcast audio, December 14, 2019. <https://www.ttbook.org/show/how-africans-are-building-cities-future>.
- TED. "How urban spaces can preserve history and build community | Walter Hood." Aug 31, 2018. Video, 14:14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=762c6pFpoqg>.
- Templeton World Charity Foundation*. "Youth Radio Dialogues on Ubuntu in South Africa." December 19, 2017. Video, 12:00. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhPej7ZIBMc>.
- Tironi, Martin. "Sensing the City, Sensing the Rural," *Cumulus Conference*, 2019.
- Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. New York: Image, 2000.

van der Kolk, Bessel. "How Trauma Lodges in the Body." Interview with Krista Tippett. *On Being*. Podcast audio, July 11, 2013. <https://onbeing.org/programs/bessel-van-der-kolk-how-trauma-lodges-in-the-body/>.

van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.

The Vanport Mosaic. "About Us." Accessed April 19, 2021. <https://www.vanportmosaic.org/about-us>.

Wikipedia contributors. "Vergangenheitsbewältigung," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vergangenheitsbew%C3%A4ltigung&oldid=1002678488> (accessed January 26, 2021).

Zimmerman, Eilene. "Out of the Pandemic, Chances for Another Future," *The New York Times*, April 7, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/07/health/pandemic-crisis-opportunity.html>.