

PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES OF INTENTIONAL CIRCLES
TO CREATE AUTHENTIC CONNECTION CULTURE
By Karen Celeste Hilfman From *The Mended Mirror*
www.AuthenticConnectionCulture

- 1) Engage from the place of authenticity and connection to the sacred; the place of wisdom deep within from which we respond to life rather than react to life.
- 2) Develop clarity within the group about action and purpose to support our call to co-create a world of wholeness and well-being for all.
- 3) Honour insights that arise from our intuitive capacity by listening deeply to our gut responses, and by speaking from our heart.
- 4) Celebrate and claim each person's unique gifts and tenderly hold each other in our limitations.
- 5) Develop an intentional agreement on how to be in community and agree to its intentions each time we meet.
- 6) Make the group a priority so that we are present and engaged as we are able.
- 7) Recognize that the wisdom of everyone is needed—individuals' contributions as well as the group wisdom that will flow through people; since every voice counts, space is created for every voice to be heard.
- 8) Include time for check-in at the beginning of each gathering so that we reconnect at a heart level through sharing brief stories or insights (with no cross-conversation). This provides opportunity to find our voices as we speak into the circle about a personal perspective or experience. This sets the tone of the gathering in which we want to hear the many perspectives and for people to share their wisdom even when it is counter to others. We are less likely to get "group speak" or one voice dominating when all voices have opened the Circle.
- 9) Commit to using the responsible "I/we" rather than using "you" statements; speaking about our own story from a personal perspective rather than a detached second-person perspective moves us out of judgment or presumptions about others and empowers us to change our reality through self-responsibility and acceptance, engaging our hearts and wisdom more fully.
- 10) Intentionally include opportunity for evaluation to enable the group to honestly assess how we are doing, so that relationships can deepen and the group is continuously revitalized.
- 11) Create a space that is life-giving and safe for the full spectrum of who we are to show up.
- 12) Challenge and shift negative energy and limiting beliefs.
- 13) Take note when people are absent, and arrange for someone to contact them. This ensures that the person who is absent and the people in the group all know that when they aren't there they are missed; people know that they belong when they will be missed.