

Creating Fields of Belonging

The group is always in process, changing, moving, transforming in the ocean of awareness. Individuals certainly influence a group's consciousness, but in turn, the larger group fields that we participate in influence us all. If the group is in peril, or thinks it is, it will act in certain predictable, mostly defensive ways. If the group operates within a certain range of safety and challenge, it will act with a greater instinct for innovation, from curiosity, and even with a willingness to risk its identity. How can we find ways, or amplify existing ways, to aid a group's health and rejuvenative powers? What more important question is there? Indeed, it is through healthy groups, families, communities, and organizations that we cultivate healthy individuals, who in return contribute their best selves to the group. Healing environments free us from the destructive emotions that can fester in groups and direct our attention to a positive future. Bringing this possibility to group consciousness is an invitation for being, to paraphrase the words of poet David Whyte, the ancestors of our future happiness.

Healing derives from the Old English word *haelan*, the root word for *heal*, *whole*, and *holy*. These interrelated words provide us a clue to positive growth in groups. Healing is a process that aims to make us whole, to unify the discordant chords of life into a