

RECONNECTING WITH PURPOSE, FALL 2023 EVALUATION

Important Benefits: I feel like I have greater unification of my inner and professional selves, which is a great feeling!

Support Connection to Self/Others: I didn't expect such deep and heartfelt connections with a new group of people. It was great medicine. It also felt good to be seen, and to feel validated in being very much myself. That led to some good self-love.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I've had good training in moving my work towards my sense of purpose in the past, otherwise I'm sure this would have helped me to do that. However, I feel more empowered to seek what I deserve from my position rather than waiting to be acknowledged. I also feel empowered to take on only the amount that is healthy for me, rather than every rock that rolls my way which I believe in.

Improvements? It was just about perfect. I could go crazy and say I wish it were on the beach in Costa Rica, but with the constraints we face, I don't think we could have asked for more. Logistics were fantastic. I LOVED the singing, yoga, fire, and lovely early morning coffee spaces.

Anything else: Thank you so much for allowing us all to benefit from your gifts

Important Benefits: the connections I made with my new tribe friends

Support Connection to Self/Others: So deeply and completely. Authentic sharing and growing

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I am more focused and have started healthier habits since home and made changes in a relationship

Improvements? coffee available the first day and more healthy snacks at night and between meals. Allow coffee and tea along with water to leave the dining area

Anything else: Thank you so much for such a life changing experience

Important Benefits: to date- seeing the commitment of all the attendants and facilitators - the time to ponder the yet unknown

Support Connection to Self/Others: meeting other retreat attendants and seeing their willingness to jump in whole heartedly to the process has allowed me to feel open to the process as well. also having people from many backgrounds was a real treat... not all same perspectives allowed me to tap into my many interest as well.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? it has allowed me the time and permission to not necessarily have the answers yet, knowing that others don't know yet either. reminder that we are ALL searching.

Improvements? I think the tripartite facilitator team was excellent - each bringing their approach. so good! the facility was beyond expectation. well organized!

Anything else: I am so looking forward to the next 6 months and getting to know you all and myself better!

I really love that it was multigenerational mixed group!

Important Benefits: Time with people in similar fields of work as myself and being honest about our paths getting there and how we feel within these positions. I really appreciated the diversity in backgrounds and what everyone brought to the table.

Support Connection to Self/Others: I connected so well with so many of the individuals that took the step to commit to this program. I really felt a like-mindedness in this group and felt very comfortable speaking freely. There was so much time to settle in within ourselves and one another. The space held a sense of ease and not being bound to normalized structure and routine.

I had so many moments of internalized revelations and moment of reflections. I was truly honored to have them in this community setting.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I feel more limitless because of this program. I feel ready to take a risk and continue moving forward in a powerful way. Recognizing the gifts my being has to offer the world and really using that to step strongly into my purpose of being here.

Improvements? A little less breaks, and more inclusion of insightful text. Possibly a reading or something informative of models this program is based off of.

Anything else: Thank you so much for this opportunity to be apart of this group. I really appreciate what the retreat has brought in for myself and the new lenses I am able to see myself and the way purpose feels for me.

Many Blessing!

Important Benefits: I feel I have a better understanding of what I need to give and receive in my work. I also feel it was an important step in my ongoing work in becoming a more compassionate communicator.

Support Connection to Self/Others: It sounds a bit trite, but I think I am a better listener. I also think it helped me to feel better about sharing what I am feeling with others. It helped me connect with myself, primarily in my wants and needs in my work.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I came into the retreat feeling like my current job wasn't really where I could do the most good. I felt a bit underappreciated or maybe just unnoticed-- a little like I was in over my head as well. The retreat helped me see where I can make meaningful connections that align with my purpose.

Improvements? I so wish there had been an opportunity to connect with everyone at some point. There were maybe 3 or 4 people I didn't get a chance to group with. I realize there may be no solution to this because of time and logistics-- but if there is, that would be so awesome.

Anything else: Thank you all so much for the retreat-- it really is such a thoughtful, fun, productive, restful and rewarding few days.

Important Benefits: Being able to look at my past and path with positive framing helped me reconnect

with my values and see that I am where I am because I made very intentional decisions that were in line with my values.

It was also very meaningful for me to practice receiving attention. It was uncomfortable but great to practice. There are not many moments in life when you can show up with a group of strangers, be asked to bare your soul, and then be received by them with love and support. It was very validating and helped me shine that light of love back on myself.

Support Connection to Self/Others: See above

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It affirmed for me that I am on the right path, and growing deeper relationships with people who feel connected to and curious about the earth brings me joy.

Improvements? A brief verbal intro to our rooms: that they had thermostats, windows could open, towels under bed, etc

Anything else: The facilitators did an amazing job of creating the environment that made such vulnerable sharing and tender connections possible! Thank you!

Important Benefits: Time for introspection, comrodery with like minded individuals and the restoration of hope in my current situation

Support Connection to Self/Others: We were given valuable time to discuss and interact with others at the retreat, both in a relaxed manner and in deep conversation.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I feel more connected to it. I think it was a guiding light towards being more satisfied with where I am at

Improvements? Maybe if it was one more day?

Anything else: This was transformativite

Important Benefits: Time for professional reflection and how it is(n't) aligned with personal goals/joys/fulfilling and meaningful experiences. Remove the sense of "being alone" professionally, have new trusting connections to explore problems with. Leaving with new exercises that have the potential to improve the quality of all relationships; professional, personal, and with myself.

Support Connection to Self/Others: For starters, it literally brought us together, which is very supportive of connecting with others! In addition, it created a shared, trusting space that allowed folks to be their genuine selves, and reduce barrier between participants that may have prevented connection in other circumstances (like a professional conference setting). It also helps that we all shared some common professional experiences in food/ag. - regardless of the pair of people, it always seemed like there was some common ground to make an easy connection from, and then build into a deeper connection given the setting, exercises, and aforementioned components. The retreat supported me connecting with myself by structuring in, and encouraging, self reflection as part of the program. This is helpful (to me) in a couple ways; it created a space to focus on self reflection (which I do not often make for myself), and it provide some structure for self reflection that helped me "jump in" to the work with less hesitation and fear of screwing it up.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It is a combination of calibration and energy. Calibration in the sense that it helped me adjust my internal compass back toward a direction that connects with who I am and

who I want to be. Energy in the sense that the calibration wasn't that far off, and that I should embrace the path I am on with full commitment, and trust that I am indeed moving toward a life that is genuine and fulfilling.

Improvements? Nothing comes to mind, a lovely place and experience, just took me a minute get used to the rhythm it.

Anything else: Thank you so much for making this program a reality, I'm guessing it didn't come together without some serious effort, and I think the beneficial ripples of this time together will grow and persist for a long time.

Important Benefits: I appreciate the silence and warmth--those spaces in between the breaths and posture shifts and sounds and words. Making the most extraordinary new friends!!!! Friends who encourage and support me in my learning/self-discovery just because they are so kind and loving spirits. I am happy to be included in this exemplary group.

Support Connection to Self/Others: Being in person! Listening with upmost care and receiving the gift of being listened to so earnestly. The astonishing gift of silence.

Last year's zoom experiences were rich, growth nurturing, and highly beneficial to me; our in person format comes with the fullness of face to face communication--dazzling.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? This answer is evolving: I truly desire to invest additional "self" time in my day's "schedule of doing for others" and I am eager to be outdoors more, observing and noticing the feelings I experience while listening and watching nature -- in contrast to my hurried "doing" outdoor tasks

Improvements?

Anything else: Wonderous, engaging, deep yet fun time with mostly complete strangers being loving to each other--a bit out of this world--and a poignant reflection on how far our day to day work and community life have strayed from open kindness for all--a BIG THANK YOU

Important Benefits: Learning to ask honest and open questions; connecting with other people across the state and region; having a couple of days away from the fray.

Support Connection to Self/Others: In terms of connecting with others, I made a few new friends and gained some new insights into different farm practices and personal/professional philosophies alongside the connections between these two areas of knowledge. I felt like I met other women who had gone through what I am going through now (divorce, prospect of losing a farm, questions about life after age 60). That was probably the most significant aspect of the retreat. I suspected that my struggles weren't unique, but it was heartening to meet others in one place who had had similar experiences and could share what they had gone through.

For myself, it rekindled my interest in someday teaching yoga, invigorated my joy of talking farm talk and brainstorming ideas for working with others in farming endeavors. It gave me some worksheets and tools to explore how I might direct my next phase of personal growth. It helped me see that my process of detaching myself from my marriage and this particular farm -- in a slow, attentive manner -- isn't

totally ridiculous.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It has not, particularly. It has given me some new ideas of how to channel my sense of purpose.

Improvements? A little more down time.

Anything else: Thank you for everything. I particularly liked the vegetarian (mostly vegan) diet, and alcohol-free ethos of the retreat.

Important Benefits: Making connections with other people

Support Connection to Self/Others: Provided a relaxing, safe space. Guided our interaction sessions with new communications techniques (active listening and open and honest questions) so I felt comfortable and then was able to interact at my own pace outside of the more formal sessions.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I was able to verbalize a lot of my personal frustrations that I cannot verbalize to my husband because he takes offense to them and personalizes a lot of what say. Just by getting these things off my chest, I have made peace with some of my perspectives on aspects of my personal life, thus helping me to be more focused on other aspects of my life and work.

Improvements? If other people in the group would take the new communications techniques (active listening and open and honest questions) to heart and at least try to use them instead of trying to give advice and tell their own story.

Anything else: Thank you for the opportunity to get part of this program.

Important Benefits: Helped me pause and think about the issues and challenges that have weighed on me.

Support Connection to Self/Others: I felt I made great connections with people I never would have connected with otherwise. It also helped me see how far our farm has come since the dark days of the pandemic. I hope to use the Touchstones in my daily work with small business owners making tough \$ decisions.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It hasn't changed my sense of purpose yet, but I can sense more clarity and confidence in the path forward.

Improvements? On the initial email, I missed the link to actually register. The call to action wasn't clear to me. Everything else was lovely.

Anything else: Thank you for creating a totally unique and interesting space to reflect.

Important Benefits: The spaciousness and time for reflection, journaling, drawing. Also the welcoming space.

Support Connection to Self/Others: Through details like name tags, welcome signs on the doors, individual packets, email updates, and individual check ins.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? I am aware of the questions I should ask myself when I have internal dialogue about my sense of purpose.

Improvements? It was a bit far to drive, I think next time I will carpool. Thank you for the vegetarian food, it was incredible.

Anything else: Just thank you to the facilitators and the cooks from the center for a very lovely few days.

Important Benefits: The most important benefit was connecting with like minded individuals that wish to heal and expand in the farming industry..

Support Connection to Self/Others: I was able to let down my guard being vulnerable with others. This allowed me to work through some of my own issues that kept me stagnant in my business.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It has reaffirmed my purpose and help me realize my path will not be like anyone else's and that is acceptable.

Improvements? Wifi is the only thing that could have made the experience more enjoyable as well as meat options during mealtimes.

Anything else: This was such an amazing experience I am honored and humbled to be able to discuss the future of farming with everyone I met.

Important Benefits: Time to consider my goals and share those thoughts.

Support Connection to Self/Others: Setting was conducive to focusing on what I need to do for myself and how that will ultimately serve others.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? Not in a quantifiable amount or way, however I've been thinking about that purpose a lot more since and feel progress, while slow to realize, is inevitable.

Improvements? Slightly later in year. As a farmer the biggest stress I had was leaving farm especially when I had so much in production.

Anything else: Thank you

Important Benefits: Distinctive benefits of this retreat to me, was the common feeling that this experience was needed. By each of us. Perhaps in different ways, or for different reasons. But needed and maybe more importantly, wanted by each of us. Gathering in person at Light on the Hill was moving. Being in person made it real. It was in the pure sense of the word, RETREAT. Having the opportunity to be with and share thoughts and ideas and feelings with others who have diverse backgrounds but who all seem to have so much in common in spirit as educators, farmers and change makers was an important benefit to the glue of the program.

Support Connection to Self/Others: The Retreat really encouraged small group time to connect and communicate with others within the program. The center itself was very welcoming with beautiful areas to relax, meet up or converse. The dining area and meeting room with the expansive window views were special gathering spaces to meet up. I especially enjoyed the sitting room, where I shared moving conversations. Mother nature provided fantastic weather to enjoy the outdoor vista including the view of the rolling hills, centering within the labyrinth, chapel, walking paths, benches to enjoy alone in reflection and gratitude or share time getting to know each other. The retreat programming set a

precedent in thoughtfulness, open and honest questions and listening skills to practice with each other. The facilitators guided us with care and humor.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? Participation in this program has reiterated the importance of practice. It has helped me realign my thoughts, actions, hopes, dreams and spirit toward my sense of purpose. I feel excited about following and joining in the group activities.

Improvements? The retreat was fantastic. I enjoyed the facilitators and the wisdom they shared. The food and facility were exceptional. I feel fortunate to have been there. I really like the group photo with names and bios just to have the option to know a little bit about the participants, it may help with confidentiality concerns or conflicts. It was a full schedule, but the time was proportioned well. However, after the retreat, I had an extra day on my own, to be able to let it all sink in and resonate with me. I needed that. Life gets so busy when you return to the grind. Its easy to return and loose the lessons.

Anything else: I would like to share my gratitude for being accepted into this program and space.

Important Benefits: For me, the most important benefit was the healing and growth I experienced from the face-to-face connections with all these amazing farm/food/nutrition people, all of whom I had just met! After several grueling few years working and living in a dense urban area during COVID, I have been feeling a discombobulated mix of isolation and disconnection from my local community contrasted with new and emerging virtual connections on state and national levels (thanks Zoom!). To have multiple days to reflect, listen, laugh, cry, eat, make smores, hike, and sing with other people IRL, was priceless!

Support Connection to Self/Others: It created a beautiful container to gather and a framework to guide conversations that went way beyond surface-level networking to a place of vulnerability, reflection, and support. During both guided conversations and casual conversations, the retreat provided an opportunity, to bust through some of the outer armor, to the more meaningful, impactful sharing and listening.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? Yes, I think it has. The retreat gave me a deeper sense of knowing myself. I was reminded of the life events and personal values that have shaped and propelled me forward. I'd like to invite more (inner) guidance for my next steps, which I hope this experience will provide.

Improvements? All in all, I felt like the retreat and facilitators created a safe and welcoming environment. No comments about the facility, logistics, food, or lodging- it was all lovely!

Anything else: Thank you so to everyone from the cooks to the facilitators for making this happen!

Important Benefits: Sorry for not completing this until Nov 19! I'm sure my response may have been different immediately after, but time got away from me due to an unexpected illness that has come up. One HUGE benefit for me is that as I transform myself presently, I am listening more to my inner voice rather than the voices that surround me, and this is really important. I know I can trust my inner voice now, because in the past when it has spoken to me it has been, if not always RIGHT, an important aspect of who I am and what I value that I feel the need to not only acknowledge, but manifest to the world in my day to day presence on this planet. So that the retreat is emphasizing how important this is, and

teaching us to stop trying to fix or help others, I have a very very strong feeling that what will come in my personal transformation is going to be quite amazing, by which I mean not award-winning, but it is going to settle me into my own skin better so that I may contribute meaningfully and FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS at the same time, because it will be a true reflection of my values. After all, what I value DOES have meaning not only to me but to my family and my community. So for this, I thank everyone for giving me this opportunity.

Support Connection to Self/Others: With others: By introducing myself to an amazing group of what I'd like to call 'like-minded' people, even if our professions are quite different! With self: By enabling me to feel more comfortable among others, as I'm an introvert. The times to myself were helpful to, as I was able to connect with nature which I need daily anyhow, and also connect with my inner thoughts away from my normal daily routine.

Changed your Sense of Purpose? It is helping me to recreate this for myself. I'm in transition and this retreat is perfect for this, because noone is telling me what to do. I see such positive value in it. For example, talking out loud to my circle yesterday I was commenting on how I'm so good at 'running away' which I've learned is a trait of ADHD which I was diagnosed with a couple years ago. Reframing this last evening, I can see that running away is the same as running TOWARDS something else, and that can have positive features it isn't all negative. I feel so much better to have come to this realization! It is truly transformative.

Improvements? I honestly can't think of a single thing! It was so well done. Maybe if time permitted, it was possible to schedule a one-on-one with the three co-facilitators at the get-go for every participant--possibly at the down times? Or via zoom PRIOR to the event? I was so pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss with Violet--it changed my agenda ENTIRELY and for what I believe is for the better. I would have liked to have had a brief say 30 min meeting with all three of you.

Anything else: This has been an amazing experience thus far, and one I suspect shall be 'life transforming' when I reflect back on my own life later.

PS/ For some reason, I completed this form from the bottom up, rather than top down. Maybe it's my ADHD not quite sure,