

# Creating Home



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**Capstone Year, Output 5**  
**Capstone Thread Report**  
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## **This output in 150 words**

*home is an environment that meets universal needs*

*Home is the natural state of living beings*

*at some point, humans chose to leave home, create an environment that didn't meet their needs*

*I grew up in a culture from that lineage, I am homeless, major needs go consistently unmet*

*my life is about creating home, creating an environment that meets basic needs*

*this is what i'm doing right now towards that goal.*

*learning about food, what to eat and how to get it*

*building family and skills for connection and intimacy*

*doing work for money, energy that I can use to create an environment that meets my basic needs*

*identifying how I need to transform in order to be a person who can be at home and create home for*

*family and community, and engaging in that work*



# Output Specification

## What is this Output?

This is the fourth output of my capstone year with Gaia University. In this output I define my capstone thread of creating home, and report on a variety of learning experiences that I am pursuing in relation to that thread. This output marks the completion of a major shift in my pathway, away from regenerative entrepreneurship and towards regenerative home economics. Since my LIPD, the focus of my learning goals has shifted, but the essence of them remains the same, becoming an adult and creating the environment for myself and my future family to thrive, both within and outside of myself. This output gives a broad overview of the structure of my life, and how I have designed my life as a learning experience with the goal of being a person who can create Home for himself and others.

In reading this output, I would like you to know that I am not trying to convince you or prove to you that anything I have said here is Truth. The thinking that I present here is simply a model, a way of thinking that has helped me to bring meaning to my life and to understand the world. As you read the output, I encourage you to look inside yourself and see if what I have said touches you in any way, or gives you a new perspective with which to think about your own life.

## Output Design Process

This output was mostly designed during implementation, through a combination of inspiration, trial and error, and reflection and revision. My goal for this output was to clarify the parts of my life and unite them around the common thread of Creating Home. After identifying this goal, I briefly sketched a framework for the output as a whole, then started to fill in the pieces. The introduction was the result of a moment of great inspiration that sparked a creative outpouring. Some of the thinkers that influenced that inspiration are mentioned in the introduction. I chose the project sections by laying out in front of me all of the tangible and specific things that I am doing right now (cooking meals, going to men's group, etc...) and grouping them into the four categories I present below. Afterwards, I wrote about what each category meant to me and why it was so important. Additionally, I sought feedback from my friend Lily, and integrated it into the writing I had done<sup>1</sup>.

## How to read this Output

The main body of the output is designed to be read from beginning to end, with non-crucial information in the footnotes. In addition, the appendices contain several interesting tidbits, including excerpts from my learning journal, explanations of the pictures used in the output, a recipe for roadkill squirrel stew, and some other stuff. There are a couple of links in the output, but you will not need the internet to view the actual output material.

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<sup>1</sup> I also have made changes to the output since reading my advisor Jennifer's review and since discussing the OP with her. The biggest change was adding pathway reflections and capstone thread sections.



# **Project Specification and Capstone Thread Description**

## **What is my capstone thread?**

The thread that I have chosen to weave together all the different elements of my capstone year is named “Creating Home”, and manifests as a complex project composed of many layers and sub-projects. Creating Home is a lifelong commitment and experiment. Some other names for this project might include “living my life” or “learning how to live well by living as well as I can”. This project is about a major life transition, about moving out of the cocoon phase of my life, in which I was seeking within and outside of myself for my life purpose and my place in the great scheme of things, and into the apprentice phase, in which I am choosing a way of life and learning how to live it well, learning how to give my gifts, and settling into the life I am living. This transition from seeking my life to living my life has been taking place slowly over the last year, and is still very much in progress. This thread is very different from the way that I originally envisioned my pathway unfolding, and I will explain further about that evolution in the next section entitled “Pathway Reflections”.

Within this nebulous and broad project, there are many more focused subprojects. This output focuses on four areas of my life, food, family and community, livelihood, and inner work, and reports on what I have been pondering, doing, and learning in each of those categories. I chose those four areas by looking at all the things I am doing in my life, all the actions that I put energy towards, and grouping them into those four categories that encapsulate the meaning and the purpose of all of those actions. In other words, I chose to report on those four areas because those are the areas to which I have been devoting the most energy in thought and action.

## **A note on design**

None of the projects reported on in this output, with the possible exception of one of the projects in the food category, were designed using any kind of clearly defined process. Each one has evolved through a combination of rational, emotional, and intuitive decisions, opportunities arising and receding in my life, and my own intentions, visions, and creative actions. However, looking at the broad pattern of how the decisions I have made led to the outcomes described below, I have identified the following general flow of my thinking and actions:

- Noticing feelings (pleasant or unpleasant, simply noticing, expressing, and exploring them, for example “I feel sad, frightened, and angry with myself”)
- Connecting them to needs (whether met or unmet, taking stock of my needs and how the structure of my life is meeting or not meeting them, “my need for integrity is not being met” )
- Creating intentions and visions (envisioning how my needs could best be met, creating intentions that move me in that direction, “I would love to have a group of people to hold me accountable and to push me to be my highest self”)
- Noticing opportunities (either to meet my needs or to flex skills that will allow me to meet them in the future, “Oh look, there's a men's group starting at Earthaven next monday”)
- Taking actions (such as joining a men's group, working on a farm, initiating a scary conversation “here I go off to men's group”)
- Reiteration of this cycle (either in relation to the last set of feelings, needs, intentions, and actions, or starting with new and unrelated feelings “Hmm, now I feel fulfilled and joyful. What needs were met for me in that men's group?” and so on)

Although it never quite looks or feels like that when I am actually living it, this process is constantly

taking place in my life, and the more I bring my consciousness and attention to it, the better it works for me.<sup>2</sup>

## Pathway Reflections

Although this Output was written as the fourth output in my capstone year, I have chosen to present it in my portfolio as my Output 5 because it describes and reports on my capstone thread of Creating Home. I am writing this pathway reflections two months after the rest of the output, which allows me to put it in a broader perspective. I have three goals for this Pathway Reflections; first, to show how the goals I created in my LIPD have guided my pathway through the year and how they have evolved and changed, second, to track my accountability to the pathway design that I created in my LIPD, and third to describe my capstone thread and its relevance to my goals and my pathway in general.

### Evolution of Goals and Visions

In my LIPD, I created a set of goals, divided into long term goals for my lifetime and beyond, and short term goals for this year. Then, in my Output 3, I re-examined those goals and created new ones to reflect the shifts in my pathway and in my understanding of myself and what is truly important to me. Below, I have copied the original goals from my LIPD, with the revised goals from my OP 3 in pink, and my latest revisions as of this writing in blue.

What are my Long Term Goals and Visions?

#### Seven Generations

- A world safe for all children. A world in which all children everywhere have the opportunity to grow into healthy, whole, adult human beings who are able to contribute to their ecosystem in beautiful and creative ways.
- A world in which human beings live in accordance with the Laws of Life, recognizing ourselves as a part of the community of life and giving our unique gift to the whole.

#### My Lifetime

- Raise at least one child, providing them with an atmosphere of abundance; abundance of love, food, play, connection, natural beauty, and opportunity for learning and growth. Provide this child with the best possible environment in which to grow into a healthy, whole, adult human being. /Ground myself firmly in a simple, beautiful, connected life, in community, with a family of my own.
- From this grounded place, give my gift of service to the world.<sup>3</sup>

What are my goals for this year?

#### Soul

- Feel confident and secure in my sexual energy and self care, be my own best lover

- <sup>2</sup> In her review of this OP, my advisor Jennifer asked whether I view this pattern as a design process, and if not, when it would become a design process. She suggested that “it's design when you 1. engage aware that you're in a design process throughout the experience, and 2. accountability, that in some way you're tracking the flow so you may adjust, align, adapt, advance, and acknowledge your experience.” I agree, and with that definition I feel that this pattern is most often not a design process, and I don't always need it to be. It is useful to recognize, however, that those two elements of awareness in design and accountability can make this process into a full design process.
- <sup>3</sup> This goal is still very vague. I don't know yet what exactly this “gift of service” looks like. I do know that it has to do with challenging and nurturing others to discover their animal nature and take their place in the community of life.



## Sustenance

- Meet my income needs with entrepreneurial projects that serve both me and my community/**Meet my income needs in a way that aligns with my deepest values and commitments**
- Push my edges with money and professionalism, and flex my skills as an entrepreneur/**Begin to build a foundation for future entrepreneurial projects, both by flexing basic entrepreneurial skills and by learning more about my chosen fields./Begin to build a foundation for right livelihood by engaging fully in the work that I am doing and exploring other ways of contributing to my sustenance./ Learn how to give my unique gifts through the work that I am already doing.**

## Society

- Build community with men, and learn more about sacred masculinity
- Engage actively and fully with Gaia U, as an ELF, an organizer, a participant, and any other ways I can find./ **Fulfill my commitments with Gaia University and graduate on time./ finish my portfolio in a way that I feel proud of and that serves me in my life pathway.**

Overall, the evolution of my goals and visions for my life over the course of the year has been away from the concept of entrepreneurialism and business, and into the more intimate realms of family and home. In defining my goals for the year originally in terms of entrepreneurialism, I was pushing my own edges in engaging with a part of the world that I find challenging and frightening, namely the world of business and economics. I experimented with this edge pushing for about three months, and during that time I found that I was consistently and inexorably drawn back into the things that I am truly passionate about: intimacy, community, family, and home. My experiment in entrepreneurialism was valuable and taught me some very useful skills, but it was clearly not at the center of who I am and the work that I want to do in the world. Over the course of this year, I have slowed my life down, letting go of much of my desperate need to change the world, and focusing in on creating the quality of life that I want for myself, my family, and my community.

## Learning Design Accountability

In my LIPD, I created a design for a learning pathway that would move me towards achieving the goals that I originally created. That design consisted of a set of “self-directed action learning courses” including reading lists and suggested activities and experiments for six areas that I intended to learn about. I also created a tracking tool for tracking my learning in the skills that I had identified as being important in achieving my goals. As my goals have changed and evolved, I have not been accountable to the original learning design that I created. Being accountable would have looked like:

- Asking myself whether I was fulfilling the commitments that I had made.
- If not, asking myself why, and whether those commitments were still serving my long term goals.
- Either recommitting to those commitments if I felt that they still served me OR creating a new design with a new set of commitments to serve my new learning goals.

Although I did not consciously go through this process, I did make all of these decisions at some level. Over the course of the year, I decided that home was more important to me than entrepreneurialism, and in writing this output I did create a new learning design and a new tool for tracking my learning in creating home. I do recognize, however, that I could have gotten much more benefit by checking in earlier and more frequently with my learning commitments, and renegotiating them to serve my shifting goals and visions.

# Creating Home

## Learning to live by living

### Introduction: *What does Home mean to me?*

Home is an environment that meets universal human needs. According to the philosophy of Nonviolent Communication, as outlined by Marshall Rosenberg, all humans share the same universal human needs, and all human actions are attempts to meet those needs<sup>4</sup>. Home is an environment where, as a result of the structure and workings of that environment, those needs are met as fully and as consistently as possible, given the chaotic and unpredictable nature of things.

In my working model of the history of life on earth, heavily influenced by the writings and teachings of Martin Prechtel, Daniel Quinn, and Andrew Langford, I imagine that for the first several billion years of life on earth, every living creature was at Home; that is, every species lived in an environment where most of its individuals had their basic needs met most of the time, as a result of the structure and functioning of that environment. Having evolved along with its environment, each species was naturally at home in the place where it lived. This was true right through the first four hundred thousand years of human history, for human beings as much as for any other animal, plant, or protozoa.

For most of our species' history, humans have been animals living in a community of living beings, all of whom had learned, through an unbroken chain of transmission that stretched back to the first living being, how to live at Home, how to meet their needs as a species and as individuals within the community of life. Home is every living being's natural state of being, unless something else gets in the way<sup>5</sup>

So why is it that I feel Homeless? How did it come about that I (and many other humans) do not live in an environment where our basic needs are met? Why is that I need to learn how to live at Home? It seems to me that at some point, a certain subsection of the human species chose to leave Home. For whatever reason, most likely because of massive trauma they had experienced as a result of drastic changes in their environment, they chose to live in such a way that their basic needs went consistently unmet, to restructure their environment in such a way that it would consistently fail to meet their needs, as well as the needs of other species<sup>6</sup>. Over the last twenty thousand years or so, this has led us to the

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4 For a list of Universal Human Needs as outlined by the Center for Nonviolent Communication, see page 5 of the Appendices, and for more information on NVC check out [www.cnvc.com](http://www.cnvc.com)

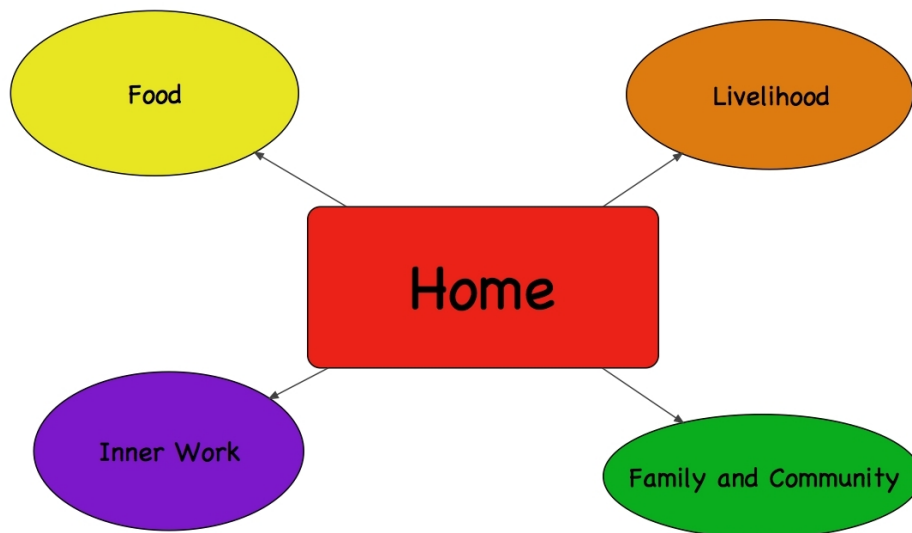
5 Of course, things did get in the way. Because of massive environmental changes such as the introduction of oxygen into the atmosphere, there were times when many species lost their Homes, did not have their needs met for a protracted period of time, even became extinct as a result. This happens all the time, on every scale, from global ice ages to local droughts to volcanic eruptions. The external environment often changes in such a way that the species or individual is no longer at Home. The point is not that every creature or species has always been at Home for its entire history. The point is that in the environment to which it has evolved and adapted, every species, including our own, knows how to live in such a way that its basic needs are met, and has done so throughout history.

6 Daniel Quinn proposes in *Ishmael* that this transition was the beginning of the “agricultural revolution”, that the



condition we find ourselves in today, facing unfathomably large changes to our external environment, and culturally orphaned from a way of living that meets our basic needs.

Having come to this understanding, it is clear to me that my life is about creating Home<sup>7</sup>, for myself, for my family, and for my community. Through all the twists and turns of my pathway, this has been the underlying thread, and now I find myself exquisitely positioned to develop the skills I need to create Home. This output gives a brief window into four areas of my life's path towards creating Home, and into the projects and learning experiences that I am pursuing in each of those areas. Those areas are food, family and community, livelihood, and inner work. In the following pages, I will explain each category and the role it plays in creating Home, and then give some examples of the work I am doing in that category.



## **Family and Community: “Home is Connected”**

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beginning of large scale agriculture was a break from the ancestral knowledge of how to live well as a species in the community of life. From the perspective of Non-violent Communication, this decision to create a way of living based on killing off your competitors and the competitors of your food can be seen as a tragically misguided strategy attempting to meet universal human needs for sustenance, security, comfort, ease, etc... The main question that still arises for me here is “how did the break happen, so that people whose ancestors had a way of living that met their needs and had done so for hundreds of thousands of years chose such an ineffective strategy for meeting their needs?” Andrew Langford's Patrix model proposes that a series of major climate change events caused sustained trauma to huge groups of people, which caused a break in the transmission of the knowledge of how to live well as many people were displaced, killed, and otherwise stressed and traumatized.

<sup>7</sup> I emphasize creating, as opposed to finding. In my experience, the concept of finding Home has been passive and disempowering, with the implication that Home is something outside of me that I can wander about trying to find and one day stumble upon and be there, which of course implies that I might never find it and if I don't then that's too bad for me. It seems to me that as a species we have done such massive damage to the environment and to the ways of living that Home consists of that they are no longer waiting outside of us to be found. If we want Homes, we are going to have to build them.



### **Why Family and Community?**

I have always been a very social being. Family and community are an essential part of home for me. My relationships with other people meet a variety of needs for me, including touch, affection, affirmation, support, communion, belonging, and many others. Family and community are the areas in my life where I feel able to express my deepest gifts, where I feel the most valuable and joyful. For me, creating family and community is about cultivating relationships of honesty, authenticity, and heart centered connection, as well as grounding those relationships in the practical aspects of creating a life together, collectively meeting all of our needs as much as we can.

### **Sacred Questions**

- What kind of family structure will best meet my needs? How can I create that for myself?
- How can I create an environment of connection, acceptance, authenticity, and mutual service around myself?
- What is a healthy balance between independence and self-care and interdependence and care for others?
- When do I want to meet my needs through connection with others and when do I want to be able to meet them within myself?



### **What am I doing?**

In many ways, my whole life revolves around my relationships with my loved ones. However, there are two main areas of my life right now that are particularly growth full in terms of family and community. The first is my relationship with my lover eli, her primary partner Jonathan, and their one year old baby Oakley<sup>8</sup>. Through my connection with eli, I have been brought into their family in many ways, and that experience has been incredibly enlightening. I have been given a window into the joys and challenges of having a baby, as well as living in community and working on a communal farm. I have also done very deep processing work with both eli and Jonathan about how our relationship is unfolding, and have had an opportunity to practice my skills in communication and intimacy at a whole new level. This relationship feels like a new stage in my development. In many ways it feels like my first truly adult relationship.

The second major area of growth in relationship to family and community has been my involvement with a class called the Art of Intimacy that is taking place here at Earthaven. Taught by Steve Torma, a renowned intimacy teacher who is also a founding member of Earthaven, this eight week class focuses on four major components of intimacy; Self awareness, Emotional Intimacy, Communication, and Sacred Sexuality. The participants in the class all live at Earthaven, so there has been a lot of lively and engaging work being done in that space. eli and Jonathan are both taking the class, so we have made use of a lot of the material in our own relationships.

### **What am I learning?**

- The philosophy and practice of Nonviolent Communication, how to communicate my feelings and needs and connect with the feelings and needs of others
- How to ground relationships in practical activities such as preparing food, caring for the baby, washing dishes, etc..., and the importance of those parts of a relationship
- How to commit myself fully to an intimate relationship, how to say “I’m here” and really mean it, even when I have doubts, anxieties, and insecurities
- The scope of the difficulty and complexity of having a family, particularly one involving open relationships and conducted with an extremely high level of integrity

## **Food: “Home is Nourishing”**

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<sup>8</sup> I could write a whole output on this relationship, and perhaps I will. For now, if you would like to know more about polyamory and how I can have a lover who has a primary partner and we can all get along together, read “The Ethical Slut”. If this is new to you, this book will blow your mind. If you have been exploring polyamory and you haven't read this book, read it ASAP.



### **Why Food?**

Food is central to Home. The way that I choose to meet my needs for sustenance and nourishment defines my relationship with the world around me, and has a huge impact on the structure of my daily life. In many ways, the food that I eat defines who I am (not to mention literally becoming the cells in my body). In the modern world, people have become so disconnected from the process of creating food, and we have lost many of the rich cultural traditions that have always surrounded food. Reclaiming my connection to the food that I eat is a crucial part of my journey towards creating Home.

### **Sacred Questions**

- What kind of diet is deeply nourishing to my body AND aligns with my core values?
- How can I structure my life around the food that I eat? How will doing that change me?
- How can I create an environment around myself that meets my needs for sustenance while also meeting my needs for belonging, contribution, and the well being of others (including other species and whole ecosystems)?

### **What am I doing?**

Food has played a big role in my relationship with eli. Food is a huge part of her life and the life of her family, and in order to bring me closer to them, as well as helping me to eat well, we are working on integrating me into their food system. By helping out with their food acquisition and preparation, I am learning techniques for food preservation, meal planning, cooking, and growing fruits and vegetables. I am also working on the farm that they live on and co-own, which raises animals for meat, eggs, and milk. This combination of apprenticeship and direct contribution to the lives of my loved

ones has deeply motivated me and prompted me to learn a wide variety of useful skills. To give you an idea of the work that I've been doing and how we designed the apprenticeship, here are the notes from our initial brainstorm:

What are the energy inputs into eli and Jonathan's food system?

- farm work
- cash
- food acquisition
  - researching appropriate sources
  - pickup
  - ordering
- worktrade
- gardening
- lower field farm project (a vegetable growing project of Jonathan's)
- trout pond
- putting up
- cooking
- differently local sourcing (acquiring goods from other places when traveling)
- knowledge and experience gathered over time
- infrastructure
  - time
  - money
  - other
- cleanup

Which of these does it make the most sense for me to be involved in? What does that look like?

- Cash (up to 50\$/month)
- farm hours (4/week)
- gardening (schedule projects as needed)
- putting up (seasonal, as needed, stock canning)
- cooking (thursday nights with eli, occasional brunch, as needed)
- cleanup (lots of dishwashing, etc...)
- lower field project (as needed)

### **What am I learning?**

- Understanding the complexity and difficulty of producing and preparing high quality food
- Basic food preparation and storage skills (canning, breadbaking, cooking, etc...)
- Farm management, how to care for animals
- Skinning and processing wild game<sup>9</sup>
- Dietary philosophies, particularly Primal Diet and Nourishing Traditions
- My love for the simple, beautiful tasks of food preparation
- The joy of contributing to a family
- Excellence in dishwashing

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<sup>9</sup> I recently skinned and cooked a squirrel that eli found on the side of the road. For more about that, see the learning journal entry for 03/03 in the appendices, as well as the recipe for Roadkill Squirrel Stew.



**Livelihood:**  
**“Home is Expensive”**



### **Why Livelihood?**

The way of life that I want for myself is going to require financial input. I want to eat high quality nourishing food, to live in a beautiful, functional space, and to raise a child with a partner. Developing right livelihood, a way of creating income that is nourishing to me and aligns with my values, allows me to meet my needs for sustenance, security, and comfort, now and in the future. Earning money gives me the opportunity to invest in the creation of Home for myself and my family.

### **Sacred Questions**

- How does the work that I do for money feed me in other ways? How can it feed me even more?
- How does the work that I do for money feed others? How can it feed them more?
- What level of income do I need in order to create an environment that will meet my basic needs? How can I create that income?

### **What am I doing?**

At this point, my main source of income is Useful Plants Nursery (UPN). UPN is based at Earthaven where I live, and focuses on edible and medicinal landscaping plants. I work with a small group of other young people, mostly taking care of the plants, potting them, watering them, weeding, and propagating, as well as working on the infrastructure of the nursery. The work is very nourishing to me. I love getting my hands in the dirt, and working with living beings. I love working outside, and working with close friends in a very autonomous, self directed environment. At UPN, I feel respected and cared for as a person, not just a faceless employee. I also can feel the contribution that I am making

by caring for these plants that will one day provide nourishing food to many people.

This is the first time in my life that I have worked so regularly for so many hours (outside of my summers at Camp Winnarainbow). This has been a major edge pushing experience for me. I have encountered a lot of resistance to going to work on time, and to fulfilling my commitments in terms of hours and the quality of my work. I have not focused a lot of design energy on this area of my life, but in looking back I see that I have been running an experiment over and over without knowing it. Each day, I make a choice (or many choices) either to work hard and fulfill my commitments, or to work lazily or for less time than I am committed to. The experiment is “what happens if I work hard and do my best today?” or “what happens if I slack off today?” The results have been quite consistent over the last three months. On days when I work hard and do my best, I usually feel proud, energized, and ready to take on the world. On days when I slack off and complain, I usually feel shame, guilt, and exhaustion, and want to go hide in a hole. To remind myself of this pattern, and to strengthen my ability to choose to do my best each day, I have created the following affirmation “As a man among men<sup>10</sup>, I do what needs to be done proudly and without complaint.”

### **What am I learning?**

- Plant propagation and care
- Basic infrastructure construction (digging trenches for water lines, building a hoophouse, etc..)
- Teamwork and collaboration with other nursery workers
- Focus, attention to detail, consciousness
- How to overcome resistance to working, manual labor. Showing up and getting it done
- Using manual labor as a mindfulness practice
- Basic botany, plant classification, uses and characteristics of plants

## **Inner Work:**

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<sup>10</sup> “as a man among men” is a format used in the mankind project to strengthen the energy behind affirmations that engage sacred masculine energy. A woman might say something like “as a woman who holds the sacred masculine within me” for an affirmation that engages the sacred masculine in a similar way.



## “Home is a Way of Being”



### Why Inner Work?

The phrase “Home is a way of being” is one that I have carried with me ever since I left my parent's house. When I was on the road, hitchhiking through Israel, not knowing where I would sleep that night or where my next meal was coming from, the idea that Home was an internal state that I could cultivate regardless of my external circumstance allowed me to be joyful and comfortable even in completely unknown territory. Although I have been spending a lot of energy recently cultivating the external elements of Home such as food, livelihood, and relationships, the knowledge that home is within has held me and comforted me, as well as motivated me to do the inner work necessary to truly be at home within myself.

### Sacred Questions

- In what ways must I transform in order to become a person who can truly live at Home?
- What do I need to integrate, change, or grow from within myself in order to be a person who can create home for myself, my family, and my community?
- What can I do or change within myself to meet my needs, and how can I care for myself when my needs are not met?

### What am I doing?

At this time in my life, I am exploring several different varieties of inner work. Much of my

inner work comes up in relationships, especially the intimate and sexual relationships described above in “Family and Community”. The dynamics of my intimate relationships often prompt me to look within and reexamine old patterns, habits, and hurts, and seek to integrate them and grow beyond them. I have also been learning about and participating in Family Constellations<sup>11</sup>, a healing arts methodology that deals with the way that old patterns and dynamics are passed down energetically within families.

My most regular arena for inner work right now is men's work, both with the local men's group here at Earthaven and with the Mankind Project<sup>12</sup> in Asheville. Men's work has been invaluable to me, pushing me to grow into the man that I want to be, and keeping me accountable to my commitments and my integrity. The support of other men has allowed me to do very transformative work on my own limiting beliefs and patterns, and continues to nourish me in many ways.

### **What am I learning?**

- That being grounded in place, with commitment and accountability to the people around me, allows for much deeper inner work to take place
- That the support of other men is invaluable to me
- The principles and practice of men's work as practiced by the Mankind Project
- The principles and practice of Family constellations, as taught by Sheila Saunders
- New frontiers in sexual expression, unlearning patterns of shame and guilt
- Embodying my divine masculine in service to others, guiding and leading and holding my loved ones to presence, holding containers for loved ones to do their work and to be their highest selves

## **Tracking and Accountability**

As I continue on this journey, I want to track my progress, so that I will know what I have learned, and can make changes if this pathway is not moving me towards my goals. In my LIPD and my previous outputs, I had been tracking my learning using the learning shapes tool that I borrowed from Gregory, and in my last output I mentioned briefly that I planned to continue using that tool but to track different things. At this time, I have decided to use a different tracking process that integrates some of the elements of that tool but is easier and simpler to use and feels a little more organic and less rigid.

In order to track my learning around the thread of creating home in the next few months, I will reflect weekly on my learning in the four areas discussed above. In each area, I will record any new skills or knowledge acquired and any resources I have accessed, reflect on my sacred questions and create new ones, and list my growing edges for the next week<sup>13</sup>. I will do this quickly and simply, so

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11 Family Constellations is a healing methodology created by Bert Hellinger. It is based on the traditions of ancestor worship in intact indigenous cultures, combined with the principles of psychodrama and gestalt therapy. The basic premise is that a family is a distinct energetic entity, and that dynamics within the family are passed down through the generations, even when no direct means of transmission is present. The work involves representatives who hold the energy of a particular person within the family and bring to light the underlying energy of that person. For more about family constellations and how it works, see Bert Hellinger's “Love's Hidden Symmetry”. I have been doing my constellation work with Sheila Saunders, who has been an excellent teacher and mentor for me.

12 The Mankind Project is a group of men dedicated to nourishing and developing the divine masculine in men. There is an initiation program, which I have not yet attended, as well as weekly integration groups, which I have been going to fairly regularly. The work focuses on the four archetypes of the Lover, the Warrior, the Magician, and the King, each with its corresponding set of practices. For more about the Mankind Project, visit [www.mankindproject.com](http://www.mankindproject.com)

13 See page 3 of the Appendices for the template I will use for this reflection.

that it does not feel like a burden in my full schedule, and in each of my next two outputs I will compile these weekly reports and share what I have been learning.

## **Output Process Reflections**

This output was hugely challenging for me. I struggled through immense resistance, forcing myself to simply sit down and write, even in moments where I was convinced that it was the dumbest, most useless waste of my time imaginable. Now, however, having finally finished it, I feel very grateful for having done the thinking that led to this output. Clarifying why I have made the choices I have made and how the bits and pieces of my daily life fit into a unified whole has immense value for me. Having written this output, I feel able to clearly and confidently explain to someone in a few words what my life is about and why I do what I do. That clarity is invaluable to me. Since my goal for the output was to gain clarity about my life, I feel that this output has achieved its goals.