



(R)EVOLUTION ROAD

Travelling the terrains of creativity, power and love

A Discussion Paper in association with Compass

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SUMMARY

Life is a collective creative process. Generating changes to how we live together is also a collective creative process. Many of us strive to live together differently, in ways that are more clearly directed towards the well-being of people and planet. What are the paths that travel in that direction – that take us into meaningful regime change?

This discussion paper explores the potential connections between individual internal change and the journey of creating political, economic and social systems that are liberating rather than oppressive. The author sets out a definition of [r]evolution, shares stories from her own journey of personal change and highlights a few of her encounters with intentional collective practices to create differently.

The paper draws particular attention to the importance of stepping into darkness, in order to unleash our collective brilliance. In the spirit of inquiry, the paper does not set out a clear path. Instead, the author reflects upon and poses many questions about creativity, power, love and relationships. If it is true that we create in our own image, this paper nudges us to step into the question: what is it we see when we look in the mirror?

1. INTRODUCTION

In Autumn 2010, I decided to walk out and walk on.¹



Image 1. River trail cycle and walking path, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

During a fifteen-year career in what I now think of as the social policy industry, I held a variety of professional roles. These include being a human rights programme coordinator, a think-tank researcher and a policy advisor in British central government.

In this time, I increasingly noticed that we crafted visions of creating a brighter, better world, while fuelling organisational cultures that tended to leave people feeling drained, dis-spirited and crushed. Many of us – myself included – were caught up in insidious entanglements with status, recognition and power.

Some days I thought: “Screw the system, I want out.”

Other days I thought: “What will it take to succeed?”

In 2010, I was asked by a think tank to research and write a report on creating greater ethnic diversity at the top levels of large corporations. The people in the financial services industry who commissioned the work talked

about ensuring people's talents are being utilised, regardless of their race or ethnicity. They wanted us to highlight the importance of recognising that people acquire valuable skills and abilities through a variety of experiences. At face level, these are good intentions.

However, these same people seemed to believe that the way to drive culture change is from the top-down and by disseminating cookie-cutter recommendations, tick-boxes and simplified success stories. I was interested in taking people into the messy spaces of ethical deliberation, empathy, fear-driven behaviours and unconscious beliefs. I believed it would be more valuable to ask questions rather than put out recommendations.

When the six-month project ended, I felt like a fraud. I decided that the work I had been doing in the social policy industry was, at best, creating tiny shifts and movements in the way a few individuals approached their work. At worst, I was playing a role - however minor - and being complicit in fuelling oppressive systems, structures and institutions that are suffocating our spirits and disconnecting us from our humanity.

I decided to walk out.

Around the same time, I decided I wanted radical (of the roots) change in my own life. I wanted to end debilitating cycles of anxiety and depression. I wanted more love and joy in my relationship with myself and my relationships with others.

I turned myself into a major change project.

I began a journey that has thus far taken me geographically from London to New Mexico, via Chicago, Mexico, Guatemala and California. Places I've stopped along the way include a language school run by the Zapatistas, a rural perma-culture farm, an urban collective striving to live the principles of Gandhi, an organisation promoting social justice through puppetry, circus and theatre arts and a school for movement medicine.

Physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually, I've travelled through terrains of hate, fear, rage, grief, shame, resistance, acceptance and vulnerability.

These travels have brought me to [r]evolution road. What follows are reflections on my journey thus far. I am trying to deepen my understanding of what it means to be the change I want to see in the world and how I create change in my self. I am exploring the relationship between individual internal change and collectively creating liberating replacements for our oppressive economic, political and social systems.

I'm sharing these reflections as food for thought for fellow travellers.

2. TALKING ABOUT A (R)EVOLUTION

The point of the bracketed [r] is to highlight evolution as being the heart of revolution.

What is evolution? Evolution is defined as a “gradual process in which something changes into a different and usually more complex or better form.”² One definition of revolution is “a sudden, momentous change in a situation.” At face value, revolution and evolution are opposites: a slow gradual process vs. a sudden shift or change.

If we dig deeper, as many have, I think we’ll find that revolution and evolution go hand in hand. The process of evolution periodically involves sudden and dramatic shifts and changes. A series of revolutions repeatedly emerge along a continuous path of evolution. Each influences the other.

The Zapatistas in Mexico seems to capture this dialectical journey by having the slow moving, spiraled-shell snail as a symbol for their [r]evolutionary movement.



Image 2. Segment of a mural in a Zapatista caracol, Chiapas, Mexico.

I first stumbled across a bracketed form of the word revolution in an email from Pancho Ramos Stierle of Casa de Paz in Oakland, California. He includes the following in his email signature:

“undocumented and unafraid, planetizing the movement of the ahimsa [r] evolution from some corner of our round borderless country...if you want to be a rebel, be kind...”

I next encountered brackets in the work of the Detroit-based James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership. They have published a pamphlet called *[R]evolution in the 21st century*. Born in 1915, social activist and author of *The Next American Revolution*, Grace Lee Boggs has long been at the forefront of writing, talking about and living revolution rooted in what she calls dialectical humanism.

Boggs writes that revolution has “to be for the purpose of accelerating our evolution to a higher plateau of Humanity.” She describes radical social change “as a two-sided transformational process, of ourselves and of our institutions, a process requiring protracted struggle and not just D-day replacement of one set of rulers with another.”³

Inspired by these and other [r]evolutionaries and informed by my own personal journey, I’ve created this definition of [r]evolution:

The daily practice of consciously rooting our creativity and power in love, as a means of evolving our relationships with our selves, each other and the planet.

When does revolution mean going around in circles?

When I chose to walk out and walk on, I was preoccupied with the desire to be transformed into a more joyful, loving human being more ready and able to be of use in creating healthy, thriving communities. A large part of this agenda was a desire for freedom from debilitating episodes of anxiety and depression.

One definition of revolution is “A turning or rotational motion about an axis.” This means coming full circle, back to the starting point. When I began my journey, I didn’t want that kind of revolution. I didn’t want to topple one regime only to replace it with a new one that gets up to the same antics, though perhaps in different forms.

Yet, three years later, that was exactly what I seemed to have done. I had invested time, money and energy into intensive self-change efforts. I intellectually reflected a lot on compassion, faith and love. Nevertheless, anxiety and depression had me in their shackles once again.

I was in London being tormented. I had continuously sleepless nights drenched in sweat. I wept often. Previously, it had been relatively big decisions that triggered such intense anxiety, such as whether or not to leave a job. But now minor choices seemed to send me spiralling downwards. I was in a period of transition in my life, with the privilege of having many options in front of me. Enveloped in fear, small choices about my next steps put me into paralytic indecisiveness. Some days, I found it challenging to walk out the front door.

In this state, I would dwell on choices from the previous six months and weave stories about how I had made bad decisions and thus messed up my life. I often had moments of becoming aware of what I was doing, only to then beat myself up further for succumbing to the fear and anger.

I'm aware that the circumstances of option-anxiety might seem petty – bourgeoisie angst, I sometimes call it. Nevertheless, the fear, despair, rage and sadness that bubbled away within me were powerful, toxic and oppressive.

I felt powerless and beaten down. I wanted a internal revolution that would truly liberate me, once and for all.

Who is creative?

A common perception is that creativity is something some people have and other people don't. I challenge this notion. A basic definition of create is "to cause to exist, to bring into being." Creativity is "having the ability or power to create."

With my creativity, I give rise to thoughts, words, emotions and beliefs. I generate assumptions, actions, relationships and dynamics. I do this all day, every day. We all do. Life and living together is a collective creative process. I am, therefore I create. We all have creativity. We are all creative.

What are we creating and what can we create?

Our creativity is limitless and can go in many directions. We can create missiles and genocide. We can create organic vegetable gardens and solar panels. When I am being anxious and depressed, I create and sustain feelings, thoughts and stories steeped in fear, anger, judgments, blame and hate. I create loops that run me around in circles of oppression. I create a tyrannical regime within myself.

I believe we tend to create in our own image.

When I walked out of the social policy industry, I seriously questioned what we were doing with our creativity. What is leading us, individually and collectively, to use our creativity and power as we do? From Parliament or Congress to a small charity group, we espouse high ideals in the name of public service. Yet, we seem collectively prone to creating and sustaining toxic, oppressive, embattled communities in our organisations and institutions.

In my experience, mantras of value for money and efficiency seem to be skewing our measures of what is valuable. Policymaking processes often are led by the desire for the right media headline or campaign sound-bite. Communication in meetings often is limited to blame, defensiveness or posturing.

I frequently bore witness to an incendiary mixture of people strutting about and puffing themselves up alongside people who felt undervalued, silenced and pushed down. How is it that we expect these ways of relating to one another to steer us successfully into creating public policies, programs and systems that nurture well-being and fuel our collective brilliance?

In my travels, I've been exposed to a lot of people trying to rethink how and what we are creating together. Ha Omek Ka is an intentional permaculture community in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico. Co-founder, Sylvian Bernand, said that part of the rationale behind creating this community was to shift from vocal protests against the status quo to collectively creating alternatives. She described this as a process of creating the change we want to see in the world. At Ha Omek Ka, this involves experimenting with farming methods, sanitation systems, and communal living.

Casa de Paz is the name of a house in a low-income neighbourhood called Fruitvale in Oakland, California. Casa de Paz and the house next door, called Canticle Farm, form another type of intentional community. The people living in these two houses make a conscious commitment to live and promote the principles that led Gandhi: self-determination, truth and non-violence.

Residents of this community create direct resistance. They join their neighbours to rally against GMO foods. They help organise protests against the city closing down a local community garden that they helped develop in a neglected city-owned lot.

Like the residents of Ha Omek Ka, these people are passionate about consciously creating ways of living geared towards restorative relationships with one another and our natural environment.⁴ As they walk down their local streets, they make a point of picking up litter and chatting with their neighbours. They work communally to create fruit and vegetable gardens in backyards along the street. They host group meditation sittings and shared meals.



Image 3. Zapatista caracol, Chiapas, Mexico.

The Zapatista movement in Mexico is part of a five-hundred year continuum of indigenous resistance against colonialism. The movement is about resistance and transformation. Resistance entails saying ‘no’ to

being oppressed by the Mexican government and the neo-liberal values dominating global systems.

Transformation entails creating autonomous local communities that collectively are building their own systems, e.g. healthcare and education. This collective creativity is rooted in dignity, well-being and liberation. It is directed by Indigenous practices and belief systems that offer up narratives and relationships different to those dominant in industrialised, individual-centred cultures.

In learning about the Zapatista movement, I kept bumping into the question: ¿Qué significa ser humano? What does it mean to be human? What if, for example, being human means to be part of nature rather than separate from it?

These different communities, and other ones around the world, are experimenting to find what works best to give rise to well-being and liberation. I'm not bothered by the fact that no one I have met or read about has created an idyllic community through their experiments. To expect that movements directed at re-creating how we live together will not meet with conflict and tension would be misguided. Conflict is inevitable and necessary. As Grace Lee Boggs emphasises, it is through our struggles that we will evolve.

Thinking about creativity directed towards liberation, I wonder: How does highly localised creativity in intentional communities dovetail with efforts to dismantle widespread systemic and institutional oppression? When we cry out for social justice, what are the animating principles for the ways of living we want to create? What types of creativity make us come alive?

What is your orientation to power?

In October 2013, I was talking with Sarah Nolan, Director of a community organising group in Las Cruces, New Mexico called CAFé – Comunidades en Acción y de Fe (Faith Communities in Action). Sarah asked me: “What is your orientation to power?”

My ever-evolving orientation to power is that my task as a human being is to use my own power to support others to draw on their power. When

I do this, I not only reinforce individual power, I play a role in expanding collective power.

One definition of power is “the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively.” When I say, “There is nothing I can do” that is the same as saying “I am powerless.” Powerless is exactly how I felt when I was debilitated by anxiety and depression. I feared I could not do anything to change my situation.

In the thick of this paralytic episode, I did an intensive workshop with the School of Movement Medicine based in England. In that workshop, called Re-Creation, I reached a point where I literally began to move with clarity, precision, flow and confidence. I felt, calm yet forceful. With this experience, I began to have renewed faith that I am capable of knowing what to do and how to do it. I began to feel empowered.

I now believe that I always have access to some form of power within myself. This power cannot be taken away from me. I can only become blind to it or knowingly choose to ignore it. Such a belief in intrinsic power seems to go against a dominant narrative in the US and the UK: power is a zero-sum game. The assumption is that I only gain power by taking it away from someone else.

Learning circus arts with the artist-activist organisation Wise Fool New Mexico has nudged me to challenge this zero-sum game perspective. In partner acrobatics, there is a common scenario. One person is the base. The other person is in movement. The base is nothing without the person they are supporting. The person being supported is nothing without the base.

Power also is defined as “strength or force capable of being exerted.”

Wise Fool’s Amy Christian says that a primary task in partner acrobatics is to place our selves in strong positions. We do this as a base, for example, by keeping our arms straight rather than bent. This allows us to use the ground for support. We position ourselves with our partners in ways that reinforce our own strength in order to strengthen the partnership as a whole.

If we fail to assume positions that create solid foundations, we run the risk of someone getting injured. If we position ourselves solidly, we experience little or no strain on our bodies and open up our creative possibilities for imaginative acrobatics. In other words, I gain power by my partner having power. This in turn opens up our collective power.



Image 4 Mural, Peñasco Theater (part of Wise Fool - New Mexico).⁵

Usually, with any movement for change, we ask: “Who here has authority or power to take action?” I am curious about what would happen if we all began to look in the mirror and observe how we relate to power. In what ways are we constraining our own power? In what ways could we expand our power? When was the last time you asked yourself: “What is my orientation to power?”

How do I get to Response-ability?

When I was working for the British government, I was rightly accused of speaking to a colleague in a way she experienced as bordering on bullying. I was frustrated by how she was answering my queries about the tasks she was doing for a meeting we were organising. I took a tone with her that was aggressive. She complained to Human Resources.

Many years later, I sent this woman a blog post in which I reflected on the incident. She wrote back to me: “At the time, situations were quite stressful within the work place and this can cause individuals to react or behave in a way which is sometimes beyond our control.” Our organisation was led by a culture of crisis management and drama. Possibly, I was just one more person being pulled into reactive and oppressive behaviours by my environment.

I believe the way I interacted with my colleague was influenced by a number of factors: my immediate work environment, wider cultural norms and my internal stories. Notwithstanding all these powerful forces at play, I believe my behaviour could have been in my control.

This brings me to the idea of response-ability: finding the means to be consciously responsive rather than reactive, particularly in stressful and oppressive environments.

Reactive is what I am when a button gets pushed, the emotions open up and whatever action follows happens without me thinking. When I am being reactive, I am in knee-jerk mode. I do not own my actions; they own me. This dynamic, in turn, tends to close down creative opportunities with others.

Conscious is defined as “having an awareness of one’s environment and one’s own existence, sensations and thoughts.” Responsive is the experience of having buttons pushed, taking a deep breath, observing feelings and thoughts. I take the time to consciously determine what action will follow. When I’m being response-able, I own my actions. This dynamic, in turn, tends to be more likely to tap fruitfully into the creativity and power of others.

Being response-able doesn’t preclude anger or being forceful. It means expressing anger with awareness and self-determination. When I am response-able, I choose to be led by reflection rather than reflex.

A paradigm shift is defined as a radical change in underlying beliefs or theory. I believe that the current systems and structures dictating how we live together reflect a complex weaving of unconscious stories, beliefs and assumptions dominant in our hearts and minds.

Mirror, mirror on the wall – What are the dominant emotions, beliefs, stories and assumptions that are shaping our world, and in particular the dominant political, economic and social systems in the UK and the USA? What shifts in collective consciousness seem necessary to create healthier and more just ways of living together?

What's Love Got To Do With Dismantling Oppressive Systems, Structures and Institutions?

“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1967 in the speech *Where Do We Go From Here?* Atlanta, Georgia.

Power is the ability to act. Love without action is mere sentiment. But what exactly is love?

When I was in Mexico, a friend introduced me to *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm. Fromm suggests: “Love... requires discipline, concentration, patience, faith, and the overcoming of narcissism. It isn't a feeling, it is a practice... Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an ordination of character which determines the relatedness of the person to the whole world as a whole, not toward one object of love.”

Love is a practice.

A practice of what? With regards to what, as Fromm describes, are we meant to be disciplined, patient, concentrated and faithful?

I set out in 2010 to become more loving. Three years later I was in a tormented state of anxiety and depression. Love was meant to enable me to overcome such oppression. Clearly, I was failing to understand something fundamental about the practice of love.

Over the years, I had come to understand that love involves kindness, compassion and forgiveness. Guided by cultural norms, I often used to reduce these practices to sweet words and warm gestures. I am finding that these practices and the art of love asks much more of us.

Last spring, as was my habit, I was inclined to react to anxiety and depression with blind fear and aggression. I was angry to be experiencing what I was experiencing. I was afraid that I wouldn't find a way out. I had an oppressive regime within me of which I desperately wanted to be free. I put much of my creativity and power into pushing against it, which meant pushing against myself.

I was further tightening the chains around me. This is not a practice of love.

Acceptance is a word that seems antithetical to the pursuit of social justice. I stand up for justice because I'm not willing to accept the ways in which I am or you are being treated. Yet, the practice of love beckoned me to embrace acceptance. By this I mean bearing witness as an impartial observer to the beast, the shadow – whatever you want to call it – within myself.

I delved into the fear, anger and sadness. Beneath these interwoven emotions, I discovered hate, pain, grief and shame. Love called on me to see all of this (the oppressed and the oppressor within my self) without mindlessly reacting to what I was seeing or trying to gloss it over with sweet affirmations.

From a place of acceptance, I stepped into inquiry.

Love called on me to shed light on uncomfortable truths and delve into their significance. At a five-day Zapatista language school, our teachers nudged us to question rather than opine. Questions open up spaces for unlearning, learning and insight.

Through a process of inquiry, I have been giving voice to and hearing the stories, beliefs and assumptions that envelope hate, anger, pain and fear. I have exposed within myself, for example, a deeply held belief that vulnerability is shameful. I have seen that I was containing my self in stories of abandonment and isolation that steered me into continuous flight-or-flight mode.

As I've been doing this dance with acceptance and inquiry, the shackles of different emotions, stories, beliefs and assumptions have started loosening.

I have begun experiencing a shift in consciousness. A responsive practice of love is starting to take deep root, replacing the reactive madness of fear, anger and hate that stands against love and is a precursor to oppression. This shift is leading me to use my power and creativity in more restorative ways.

This is my recent of experience of revolution – a type of internal regime change.

From such a place of strength and response-ability, people around the world are experimenting with [r]evolution. Practicing the art of love, they are speaking discomforting truths and giving healthy expression and release to pain and rage. They are consciously using their power and creativity to give rise to ways of living rooted in interconnectedness, well-being and liberation rather than hate, fear, separation and oppression.

About love, justice and radical (of the roots) change, I wonder: How would you define love? What does it mean in practice to root our collective creativity and power in love? How do we create systems, structures and institutions rooted in love and liberation?

3. WHAT DO (R)EVOLUTIONARY RELATIONSHIPS FEEL LIKE?

Relationship is defined as “the state of being connected.” In the best of situations, our relationships leave us feeling uplifted, energised and restored. Chris Jonas is a co-founder of a New Mexico based artist-led social business cooperative, Little Globe. Chris recently described to me his experience of being part of a sixty-person team, led by New York based musician Anthony Braxton. They created an opera.

According to Chris, everybody in the team stepped into their higher selves, supporting one another to shine. Eventually, the dynamics of individual relationships gave rise to a transcendent force that swept everyone into its power. Supported by this animating force, the team created a performance that went to a place of brilliance well beyond what they could have imagined. That’s an ideal situation.

Even the ideal situation is imperfect. *The road to brilliance is paved with darkness.* To access their brilliance, each member of the opera team experienced conflict and tensions. How did they manage this? From what I gather, they connected with each other through the dynamics of radical and restorative acceptance, inquiry and response. Too many of our relationships are in contrast with this experience. They leave us feeling drained, depleted and, at worst, traumatised. Such relationships keep us in the dark.

In 2010, I set out to be more loving in my relationships. At the time, I was only thinking of relationships with people. Deepening my practice of love has required that I create shifts in a range of relationships. My relationship with power was rooted in ignorance. I thought creativity was a gift that belonged to others. I was ashamed of vulnerability. While I enjoyed spending time in nature, I lacked a concrete understanding of my relationship with the elements and our planet.

I believe the nature of our relationships tends to determine how we go about collectively creating together. As I ponder relationships and [r]evolution, I wonder: What types of relationships tend to dominate in the public commons? What are their roots? In what ways are these relationships giving rise to and sustaining darkness rather than opening us up to our brilliance?



Image 4. Sunset, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

4. (R)EVOLUTION ROAD - WHERE DOES IT GO?

[R]evolution: The daily practice of consciously rooting our creativity and power in love, as a means of evolving our relationships with our selves, each other and the planet.

Three and a half years ago, I walked out of the social policy industry and consciously sought out ways to become a more loving human being. I have recently experienced an internal revolution that seems evolutionary.

I'm conscious that this revolution has roots in the fact that I stopped seeking quick fixes and silver bullets to create a sudden, big-bang, at-last-the-problem-is-solved instance of radical change in myself. Instead, I began a daily practice of love, which takes me through cycles of expanded awareness and re-creation.

[R]evolutionary road does not go in circles. Nor does it go in a straight line from A to B. [R]evolutionary road goes in a spiral. As I keep travelling down the road, I will return to the same terrains over and over. If I choose, I can continually be expanding my awareness, gaining insight, unlearning, learning and creating anew. Periodically, I will experience a radical shift in how I use my creativity and power. Like this, experiencing such revolutions, I will continue evolving.

I no longer ask myself how to be the change I want to see in the world. Rather, I ask "What kind of human am I being?" Day-by-day, I consciously experiment with deepening my practice of love. I have a lot of 'I don't know' in this journey.

I do know that, in my experience, travelling down [r]evolutionary road is more than an intellectual exercise. To paraphrase Einstein, the mind that creates oppression is not going to be the mind that will lead me to liberation. In cycles, I am expanding my consciousness, which in turn generates internal shifts in my mind and heart. I will fuel such movement by

continuing to work deeply and in a variety of ways with heart, body, spirit, mind and the natural elements.

I know that time in natural landscapes is healing for me.



Image 4. Mural in Zapatista caracol in Chiapas, Mexico.

So, too, is laughing, singing and dancing.

So, too, is restorative witnessing of shame, pain, rage, sadness and fear.

I suspect we may all go through similar key stages in our individual and collective evolutionary journeys. Experience is telling me that what matters is the daily practice: the discipline, the patience, the concentration, the faith, the overcoming of narcissism.

How does my or anyone's self-evolution link to liberating our selves from oppressive systems, structures and institutions? I speculate that it is a relationship similar to that of evolution and revolution: the two are entwined and fuel each other. As we shift internally, we will experience shifts externally. As shifts take place externally, they move us internally.

We are on a journey of collectively creating our lives and how we live together. As I continue down [r]evolution road, I aspire for us to root our creativity and power in love while we reach up and pull ourselves into the expanse of infinite creative possibility. We don't know what our collective brilliance can bring forth. That's the magic of [r]evolution.



Image 6. Sunrise, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ I acquired this turn of phrase from the book: *Walk Out Walk On: A learning journey into communities daring to live the future now* by Margaret J. Wheatley and Deborah Frieze. Berret-Koehler Publishers (2012).
- ² Throughout this paper, when I refer to a definition I have sourced it from www.thefreedictionary.com.
- ³ From *The Next American Revolution* (sustainable activism for the twenty-first century) by Grace Lee Boggs. University of California Press (2012).
- ⁴ Restorative is defined as “having an ability to restore health, strength or a feeling of well-being”.
- ⁵ Mural painted by Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski and Rebekah Tarín.

WEBLINKS

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[Anthony Braxton](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Veena Vasista is a recovering social policy professional. She is currently based in Santa Fe, New Mexico and works internationally. Born in the suburbs of Chicago, she grew up in the USA and then moved to England in her early twenties. At forty-four years of age, she has more or less lived half her life in the UK and the other half in the USA.

Veena presently aspires to be in service to [r]evolution in different ways, including through her writing and by facilitating dialogue and the practice of Insight Listening. She chooses to work with individuals, groups and organisations seeking to be more conscious about the roots of their creativity and power. She enjoys using her experience as a mediator to support people in navigating situations of conflict and tension. She has begun writing a book with the working title: *A Balancing Act –performing arts and [r]evolution with Wise Fool*.

When she's not writing or facilitating, Veena can usually be found hiking in mountains, having picnics by rivers, practicing the art of clowning, cooking vegetarian south Indian food and dancing.

Veena blogs at: www.seeandconnect.com

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