



RADICAL JOY FOR HARD TIMES 3-YEAR PLAN

(abridged version)

October 2018-December 2022

Radical Joy for Hard Times is a 501(c)3 organization and global community dedicated to finding and making beauty in damaged and endangered places. Now, almost ten years since our founding, we have realized the need for more clarity about our vision, a more specific timeline for our projects, and a more direct way of engaging current and future members in the crucial work of revitalizing the human relationship with loved places.

To accomplish this goal, we have created this 3-Year Plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

In a world increasingly threatened by climate change and countless local environmental challenges, practicing meaningful, creative and collaborative ways of living in the present is essential, even as people strive to build a better future. So often, when the places we love are damaged or threatened, our tendency is to avoid them, fearing that we'll be too depressed if we face our sorrow. Or we become passionate activists and how much we love those places. In order not just to survive, but to thrive, in a world increasingly threatened by local and global environmental challenges.

Connecting with wounded places is a powerful first step in the effort to bend our evolutionary journey into alignment with our home ground, Earth. Just as we would not abandon a good friend if she fell ill and couldn't do the things she used to do, so, too, do we refuse to abandon the places we love when they are no longer how we remember them or what we wish they could be.

WHO WE SERVE

The Radical Joy for Hard Times community is composed of people of diverse ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds who are deeply attached to the places where they live and that they love to visit, willing to face their grief when something happens that destroys those places, and eager to explore ways of developing a new and productive relationship with these places.

We serve:

- Communities and individuals impacted by damaged landscapes
- Educators and institutions leading the way toward a regenerative future
- Artists who help tell the story through creative, ceremonial, collaborative expressions of love for place
- Change agents who are committed to innovative ways of changing our human consciousness in the face of growing environmental threats

In these times when the necessity to reclaim our basic kinship with all our earthly relatives is so urgent, Radical Joy offers each of us the opportunity to experience this interdependence with the natural world; a path of confidence, reliability, compassion, kindness, joyful participation, and so much more regardless of our personal beliefs and life style.

—Anne Stine, Ashland, Oregon

HOW WE SERVE

Our form of outreach is known as the RadJoy Practice, and it is both practical and philosophical. We encourage members of our global community to explore both forms of outreach:

The philosophical form: people shift their perspective of damaged places, so that, instead of seeing them as sites that have lost their value and should therefore be avoided, they see them as treasured relationships that have supported and enriched their own and other life forms and can continue to do so, even in their present condition

The practical form: people acknowledge and re-forge that bond between person and place through simple actions that culminate in making simple “gifts” of beauty for them

The RadJoy Practice has 5 *suggested* steps:

1. Go alone or with friends to a wounded place.
2. Sit awhile and share your stories about the place.
3. Spend some time getting to know the place as it is now.
4. Gather again to share what you discovered.
5. Make an act of beauty for the place using materials the place itself provides.

Radical Joy for Hard Times is a populist, grass-roots organization. The tools we offer:

- Are easily accessible

- Are highly adaptable
- Are flexible and open-ended
- Aim to transform relationships, rather than fix them
- Bring people into relationship with nature
- Normalize grief for place as a natural response to the crisis in the world
- Workable for both groups and individuals

We have never codified a “right” way to do the RadJoy Practice; rather, we make suggestions that individual communities can follow in their own way. We heartily support environmental activism, but our contribution to the broader movement has a unique focus. We aim to transform the relationship people have with the places they love that are currently under threat.

WHERE WE’VE BEEN

What you are doing has taught me that even when things look bad, there is a way of honoring them, being with them and perhaps in some way making change possible.

— Sara Firman, Derhadun, India

Since 2010 Radical Joy for Hard Times has:

- sponsored our annual Global Earth Exchange in 34 countries and all seven continents. On this day people around the world visit and create beauty for wounded places. About a third of our participants have participated every year their first experience with the event. An estimated 2,300 have participated in these events.
- developed three special programs to highlight specific regional problems and encourage acts of beauty and generosity: Gulf Coast Rising (2010), The Ground Beneath Our Hearts (2015), and Raise a Glass to the Catskills (2017)
- since 2010 mailed a printed quarterly newsletter to all donors and participants in our programs
- since 2014 sent a weekly e-news story, Radical Joy Revealed, to subscribers
- been featured in articles in *Parabola Magazine*, *Orion*, *The Ecologist*, *the Huffington Post*, *Ecopsychology*, and *In These Times*
- presented workshops or talks at Bioneers, the Wilderness Symposium, Wilderness Guides Council annual gathering, Rowe Conference Center, the World Healing Institute, the Sierra Club, several Unitarian-Universalist Congregations, the (Episcopal) Church of the Woods, and the Parliament of the World’s Religions, as well as at a clear-cut forest in British Columbia

- presented programs for students at Humboldt State University, Naropa University, California Institute of Integral Studies, Stephens College, and Keystone College

Radical Joy for Hard Times returns sacred to the wholeness of life, acknowledging the full rhythm of growth that insists that we show up for the difficult as well as the celebratory initiations of our life. By respectfully loving our losses, our wounds, inside as well as outside of ourselves, we radically alter our world and create harmony rather than discord, humility and humanity rather than domination.

—Meredith Little, Big Pine, CA

WHERE WE ARE

Accomplishments of the past year (September 2017-September 2018):

1. Produced Raise a Glass to the Catskills, a program to recognize the engineering feat that has brought clean water to New York City for 100 years, and to acknowledge and offer gratitude to the people in the Catskill mountains upstate, who sacrificed land, livelihood, and communities when the reservoirs were constructed
2. Began developing a short program to present at college and university students to introduce them to the importance of tending to damaged places and empower them to begin doing so
3. Sponsored our 9th annual Global Earth Exchange on June 16, with more than 1,000 people participating in 19 countries and 48 U.S. states
4. Launched People Binding the Earth, a year-long program that began with the Global Earth Exchange, in which we are giving anyone who requests it, 3 yards of hand-spun, organically dyed yarn that they can use to make beauty for hurt places whenever they encounter them
5. In conjunction with People Binding the Earth (#4), joined with nine partners, eight in the U.S. and one overseas, to support and promote one another's work
6. Met once a month with the Earth Ambassadors group over Zoom to discuss ways of bringing the RadJoy Practice more fully into local communities
7. Began redesigning the Radical Joy for Hard Times website, to make it more inviting to browsers

Challenges of the past year (September 2017-September 2018):

1. An ongoing lack of funds to accomplish our goals*
2. A board that, although composed of four strong members, was not large enough that the members could devote their attention fully either to working or to governing and hence must do both
3. An executive director, also the founder, who, as the sole employee, must try, with mixed success, to be visionary, manager, and doer for the organization
4. A website that did not always function as we needed it to do, especially in the all-important area of making it easy for participants to register for and submit photos and stories of their Global Earth Exchange events

After almost ten years of working with diverse communities, we have:

1. assessed the results of our past programs and the reports of many individuals
2. recognized the likelihood of increasing threats to wild places and communities in the decades to come
3. become excited about the principles of New Power organizing that transform top-down management practices to community-wide, collaborative practices
4. and resolved to develop platforms for an even stronger and more unified response to help people maintain balance, creativity, and even joy under difficult circumstances

WHERE WE'RE GOING:

RADICAL JOY FOR HARD TIMES 3-YEAR PLAN

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES—Fall 2018-December 31, 2021

OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (for a chronological plan, scroll down)

GOAL 1. TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN THE EXISTING RADICAL JOY FOR HARD TIMES COMMUNITY AND INCREASE THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAMS AND PRACTICE

OBJECTIVES

a. **Global Earth Exchange.** Continue to expand and improve our signature event, the Global Earth Exchange (GEx)

b. **Building Commitment.** Advance membership from each of four levels of current involvement in Radical Joy for Hard Times to the next highest (more involved) level.

* The 2017 annual income for the organization is \$35,000. This has hindered our ability to develop and deliver programs to the fullest capacity. Additionally, compensation for the founder/executive director is not comparable to similar-sized organizations.

- c. **Earth Ambassadors.** Support and expand the scope of the Earth Ambassadors.
- d. **Widening the Network.** Develop practices to involve the wider RadJoy community more regularly and actively in making beauty for hurt places.

GOAL 2: TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT WILL INTRODUCE THE PRACTICE AND PHILOSOPHY OF RADICAL JOY FOR HARD TIMES TO PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD. Some of these projects can be planned in advance; others may be determined by special circumstances (see Urgent Beauty Network).

OBJECTIVES

- a. **Engaging Specific Communities.** Work with three specific groups to interweave the practice and philosophy of Radical Joy for Hard Times with their own work.
 - (1) College and University Students
 - (2) Faith Leaders
 - (3) Artists
- b. **Global Earth Exchange Book.** Create a Global Earth Exchange book
- c. **Ohio River Corridor Project.** Begin designing and producing a special project to connect communities along the challenged Ohio River—to be completed in 2022)

GOAL 3: IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF OUR ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES

- a. **Expanding Sources of Funding.** Expand our sources of funding, so that instead of depending almost solely on individual donors (83%), our income expands to include grants and more organizational donors
- b. **Strengthening Our Support Staff.** Hire a second staff member

GOALS BY YEAR

Fall 2018-December 31, 2019

Global Earth Exchange

August 2018-May 2019: Improve the website, so it is easier for people to register and upload their photos and stories.

June 22, 2018-May 1, 2019: Actively promote People Binding the Earth up until the time of the 2019 Global Earth Exchange

June 22, 2019: Global Earth Exchange

December, 2019: develop a promotional plan for the 2020 Global Earth Exchange, including social media, with the goal of increasing the number of Global Earth Exchanges each year by 20%

Building Commitment

September 10-October 31, 2018: Determine level of membership involvement among the RadJoy network and establish a method of tracking new and current members accordingly

January 5, 2019: Create and send survey to all current members (1,600+) to determine their level of participation and what would encourage them to become more active

January 12-22, 2019: Analyze results

February 1- : Use that system to facilitate email communication with people in different levels of involvement

(1) Inspire **Level 1 Members** (Facebook followers; LinkedIn members; Radical Joy Revealed subscribers; other interested individuals, including members of our Partner groups whose names we do not yet know) to become **Level 2 Members** (People Binding the Earth weavers, workshop or program participants, Global Earth Exchange participants).

(2) Inspire **Level 2 Members** (People Binding the Earth weavers, workshop or program participants, Global Earth Exchange participants) to become **Level 3 Members** (donors, Global Earth Exchange leaders, participants in 2 or more programs):

(3) Inspire **Level 3 Members** (donors, Global Earth Exchange leaders, participants in 2 or more programs) to become **Level 4 Members** (major and/or frequent donors, people who've led a GEx 4 or more times, people who practice RadJoy regularly, those who are in frequent communication with RadJoy members):

(4) Encourage and recognize **Level 4 Members** (major and/or frequent donors, people who've led a GEx 4 or more times, people who practice RadJoy regularly, those who are in frequent communication with RadJoy) for their contributions

Earth Ambassadors.

2018- : Continue monthly discussions with Earth Ambassadors, including topics of interest that arise on Zoom meetings, as well as consideration of what participants and their communities need and how the Earth Ambassadors specifically and RadJoy in general can respond.

2018-2019: Explore with current members ways to expand the group from the current 9 members, only 5 of whom are active, with an aim of 15 *active* members by June 2020.

Widening the Network

2018- : Continue to partner annually with 4-8 annually organizations to tie-in with seasonal or special events calling attention to damaged places or endangered species

(e.g. Giving Tuesday, Remembrance Day for Lost Species, World Water Day, Arbor Day). The partner organizations may or may not shift from year to year.

2018-2020: Continue research into a RadJoy Café, a platform on our website that people can sign onto with a password and where they can share stories, information, and ideas, photos and stories. In 2020, run a special fund-raiser or apply for a grant to create this network. Have it in place and functioning by June 2020.

Engaging Specific Communities: College and University Students

October 14-December 31, 2018: Interview faculty and staff at “green” / progressive colleges and universities to explore how a RadJoy workshop, talk, or other program for students would support existing programs.

January-June 2019: Based on these interviews, develop materials for use in the workshops and online. Assemble a team of 4-6 consultants. Develop a program, with support materials, that introduces students to our approach.

September-December 2019: Schedule workshops/training with participating colleges

Create a Global Earth Exchange book

February-July 2019: Design a book of photos and stories from 10 years of Global Earth Exchanges. The book will be published on Amazon’s Create Space and will be available as a print-on-demand book.

Expanding Sources of Funding

January-April 2019: Develop a 3-year financial plan to increase sources of funding and budget for planned events

May-August 2019: Determine what kind of additional staff member would best serve the organization. Raise funds to hire that person and raise the salary of the executive director

Identify one project and an appropriate grant that could supply funding for it

January 1, 2020-December 31, 2020

Earth Ambassadors.

Expand the group to 15. Begin developing a plan to launch a global bioregional network of 25-30 members who will take an active role in offering attention and beauty to the hurt places in their regions.

Widening the Network

Begin developing the Urgent Beauty Network, a team of 10-12 people from around the world who will collectively suggest via simple actions of solidarity, compassion, and beauty that RadJoy members and others can offer to those in places undergoing crisis.

Engaging Specific Communities: Faith Leaders

January-December 2020: Develop materials to be available on the RadJoy website and distributed to progressive religious denominations and indigenous traditions (Unitarian Universalist, Unity, progressive Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches, Reform Jewish synagogues, Navajo, Lakota, Blackfeet, Oneida, Yoruba) to show how finding and making beauty in damaged places is a spiritual act and is in alignment with their litany.

Create a special page of the website where members of the faith community can post sermons, liturgy, and practices they are already doing and plan to do. This page or software would have many of the same features as the RadJoy Café (see 1.d.(2)).

Support members of this faith leaders group in developing special services devoted to caring for broken places.

Expanding Our Sources of Funding and Hiring Support Staff

April: Hire additional support staff to work with the board and executive director

August-October 2019: Begin developing a fund-raising campaign in alignment of RadJoy's vision and philosophy

Continue to research grants that can offer funding for specific projects

January 1, 2021-December 31, 2021

Engaging Specific Communities: Artists

January: Bring together for a Zoom conversation the artists who are already members of RadJoy and discuss a collective project that they can engage in with community members in a wounded place near them. This will be a project with a shared theme that would be enacted in a slightly different, distinctive way in each community that participates (as in Ground Beneath Our Hearts).

March: Based on the input of these artists, apply for a grant (amount to be determined) to enable 4-6 artists to create a project in or for a wounded place in their community, *in collaboration with members of that community*. Each artist will receive \$20,000 to complete this project. The project will include not only a piece of art, but other forms of participation with an even wider segment of the community, such as ceremony, music, poetry readings, dance.