

# Super Diversity Conference

Deep Democracy Presentation

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# Welcome reading

- Welcome friends, families, those who have come alone and those who have come from specific groups or organisations... Take a breath
- Welcome those from the South, North, East and West and everywhere in between.
- Welcome those for whom Belgium is birthplace and for whom this land feels like home. And welcome to who are from beyond these borders, real and imagined, for whom this may be a comfortable or uncomfortable home.
- Welcome, all of our diversity, visible and invisible...the diversity that make us similar to each other and the diversity that make us unique and different.
- Welcome all our colours and shapes and sizes and all the ways that we identify ourselves and feel about ourselves.
- Welcome all the languages and all the many ways we express ourselves, aware that though we speak in English now, for so many this is not your mother tongue...welcome all expressions here in your mother tongue.
- Welcome those who are extroverted and self-assured in groups. And welcome those who are quieter and shy and for whom being in groups like this is not comfortable.
- Welcome women and men, mothers and fathers, those who are not and may never have children...welcome the many roles we hold in the world.
- Welcome all religions, all spirituality and welcome those who are not drawn to any.
- Welcome those who are gay and heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, those not limited by labels and those still awakening to sexual identity.
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# Welcome reading

- Welcome those who call ourselves Young, and those who say I am Middle Aged and welcome our Elders...thank you for the beautiful places we all hold in human journey.
- Welcome those who are healthy and able and those suffer both visibly and invisibly with challenges of the body, the mind and the spirit...thank you for the extra and unseen effort it takes for those who suffer in this way to be here.
- Welcome those who have a roof over our heads, homes to call our own, good work in the world and money in a bank...And welcome those who feel alien in this mainstream world, because we are homeless, foodless and moneyless.
- Welcome those who remember war and displacement and welcome those who have lived with the beauty and privilege of peace.
- Welcome those who feel connected in the world and those who feel utterly alone.
- Welcome all strengths and resilience. And welcome all the places we feel scared and wounded and vulnerable. Welcome all thought, feelings and ways of being.
- You are here, because some part of you has vision, passion and knowing for what is possible between us...And it is work of courage... Thank you for being here people of courage, risk, and people of great heart...
- Thank you those have gone before us and who are now part of us, those who come behind us, those who stand next to us and in front...
- Thank you to the land we are in an on. Thank you to the mysterious, organizing force of life that holds us all now...

# Introducing ourselves

- Personal Diversity Context
  - Each share something short of own awareness of diversity
- Work Diversity Context
  - Grounding ourselves as team
  - Key diversity issues post apartheid
  - What's hot for us in SA: education sector (what they can relate to on global level – has been supported internationally)
- Sharing what our multi-sector diversity work entails
  - Community mediation
  - Race community conversations: practical conversations, what we struggle with, who comes, what that allows for
  - How this links to work in corporate space and work we do there
  - What does it mean to work with healthy relationships (what is a greater challenge after political work is done)
- Why working with Deep Democracy is needed in our context
- What are the key diversity issues here, that might be different to the ones we share?

# Why Deep Democracy Matters Now

The world today is confronted with challenges of dealing with inequality, intolerance, xenophobia and racial tensions. While some of these problems stem from structural and political biases imposed by those in power on their communities, most of the reasons are exaggerated by inability to deal with our differences or diversity. Inability to constructively engage with diversity of cultures, sexual orientation and gender, religion, race, class, education etc. is at the heart of conflicts which often escalates to inhumane violence and hatred. Arnold Mindell is the founder of Process Work called Deep Democracy, which he developed while working in many countries and communities steeped in intense conflict including South Africa. Deep democracy seeks to use the wisdom of the group (system) in conflict in attempting to resolve conflicts caused by differences and finding the best way forward for all. This methodology places inner work of all those who engage with groups or communities at the centre of their practice. While as a facilitator you may be entrusted with creating a safe space for the group's deep conversation, a facilitator is not solely responsible for what happens in the group's engagement. Everyone in the system is responsible. Every single individual within that system or group is the voice of that particular system, and as a result carries part of the wisdom needed by the system. In order to honour all voices of the system (unlike in our popular democratic ideology) – the 'NO voice' is given equal space and listening, to hear what wisdom it has to offer the system. The question arises then, what would be possible in our countries, communities and organisations if we were to engage in the manner that held these principles as a form of dealing with our differences our fears and/or longings to understand each other and continue to transform our relationships from what we see in the world around us today? The Deep Democracy process is a real exploration of this possibility through deep conversation with those who are looking for another way ...

# Democracy Definition

## Democracy

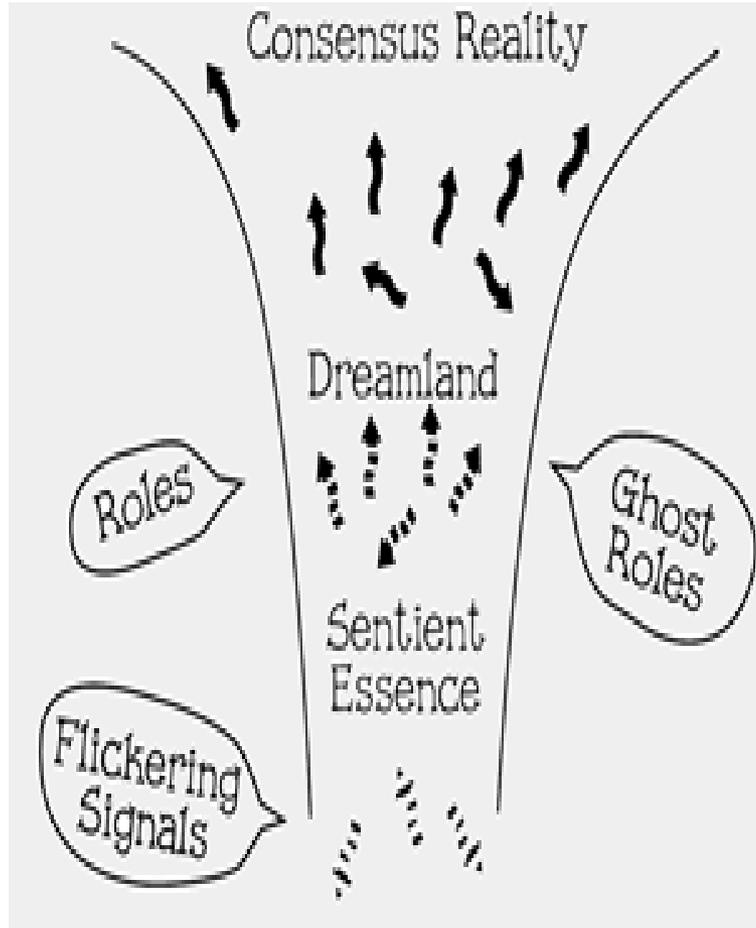
- The power of majority. Talks on political level. Rules that govern relationship.
- Rules do not address some of the underlying factors that are present in relationship.
- Rules work for the majority, but what about and what happens to the minority?
- Is based on human rights and values of liberty and equality.
- One person one vote. Literally translates: people power (in Greek).

# Deep Democracy Definition

- It is both a philosophy and practice:
  - Deep democracy says that **every voice, every person and every state of consciousness is needed** to access the innate wisdom and creativity of the group as a whole unit.
  - **As an outer practice it depends on developing an attitude of deep democracy in our inner worlds as well.** On a personal level it requires educating ourselves to notice our inner experiences while we are dealing with outer situations.
- Deep democracy as an **outer practice depends on developing an attitude of deep democracy in our inner worlds as well.** On a personal level it requires educating ourselves to notice our inner experiences while we are dealing with outer situations.
- Means holding awareness of the **outer social realities** while at exactly the same time **bringing awareness to the deep dreams and visions operating in the background** and the feelings arising from those different realms of reality.
- It's relationship with ourselves, between people and how we relate to each other. **Relationships influence and shaped by what is unseen.**
- **All voices and experiences** in a system are welcome and needed for the system to learn, thrive & grow. Discovering how those puzzle pieces fit together allows a bigger picture to emerge that goes beyond consensus and tolerance.

# Deep Democracy Model

## Levels of Reality



### CONSENSUS REALITY

- Concrete experience, the things we all can more or less agree to.
- Concrete functions: the laws, the policies, the rules
- Goals, facts, history

### DREAMING

- Feelings, hopes, dreams, polarities, body symptoms, relationship signals, conflicts relationship troubles are all aspects of our deeper dreaming
- Here things are more fluid

### SENTIENT ESSENCE

- The place where we are all one, eldership, essence, we are all human beings, compassion, one-ness
- Non-verbal, non-dual
- Deep awareness that our common human experience prevails

# Deep Democracy Model

## Rank, Power, Privilege

**Our relationships are profoundly shaped and influenced by RANK, POWER AND PRIVILEGE influences how we negotiate relationships across difference**

- **Social Rank by virtue of:** who has money, power, privileged geography, nationality, health, ability, race, education and what is in the mainstream.
- Each group has a kind of **mainstream position and subtle agreements** of what is ok and what not. Other values, differences, and diversities in the group are marginalized and therefore never explored.
- Example: the mainstream norms (sexual orientation and religion means that those on the outside relation to these norms get marginalized. What is **normative is usually decided on by those in 'majority' or those in 'power.'** So an external oppression happens.
- Often those **differences are marginalized not only in the group as a whole but also in each individual** because to express them creates discomfort or other reactions. And so an internalized oppression also happens
- Conflict is escalated when **marginalized voices need their experiences to be heard by the mainstream and aren't:** this creates **insider/outsider dynamics**, which is likely to escalate conflicts. Or when these voices have been repressed both internally and externally for too long and then they either go underground or are expressed violently.
- Those in the **mainstream need to listen deeply to voices on the outside and become aware** of the ways in which mainstream values, norms and rules keep them there – and be willing to change.
- Those on the **outside may need to learn how to communicate with those on the inside.** However, those in the mainstream need to be aware that their expectation that people who are marginalized over and over to speak politely or not get angry, can become another form of oppression: **setting the rules of engagement in the style of those who are mainstream without taking into account the anguish of perpetual marginalization, can be infuriating**
- We may have not social power and have much more **spiritual power and psychological powers and the spiritual powers help us with overcoming** some of our lack of social powers: our eldership, our resilience, our compassion.
- Deep Democracy is based on **finding all sources of peoples power and making it conscious** and bringing it to the fore for the use of the whole.

# Deep Democracy Model

## Roles and Ghost Roles

**The understanding that we are not only our personalities, cultures, or identities, but that we take on ROLES in a field, that the system needs at a moment in time (me, not me, bigger than me, fluidity) explanation.**

- All the **different positions and voices are roles in the field**. They include (but are not restricted to) external tasks or jobs, opinions and moods, our hopes, dreams and deepest visions. Examples are: the protector, the survivor, the one who needs safety, the victim, the helper, the mother, the one who suffers, the peacemaker, the elder. Archetypal roles in a group.
- **Roles have an energy that needs expression in the field to bring awareness and change. Roles pull people to them and, at exactly the same time, constellate other roles that are different.** People with a different view will be pulled to express various facets of the opposing role. In that way we can see that the **role is bigger than any one person and needs the perspectives of many people to give it full expression.**
- For example with gender: in South Africa, it is difficult to talk generally about women's experiences. In the context of so much diversity in experiences, with respect to race, economic class, geography etc., we need to hear women from many different kinds of women's experiences.
- In other words **each role is greater than any one individual or group**. Also **roles persist longer than the individuals** who fill them only temporarily. They persist because the system, group or society needs them in some way. And **each person is also much more complex than any one role.**
- **Noticing and allowing yourself and others to change roles** is an awareness practice; sensing when you are in one role and when you start to move to another is to notice how we all share roles.

# Deep Democracy Model

## Roles and Ghost Roles

**GHOST ROLES** are an important aspect of roles and live in our families, organisation and societies

- When roles are more hidden and less supported we call them ghost roles. They hang around in the atmosphere impacting on everyone but no-one identifies with them. They are talked about and **felt, but no-one occupies them** and they can disrupt our communication and intensify conflict in subtle ways. Usually they **go against the accepted norms of that group** and to **express them is risky** in some way. **They are marginalized within the group repressing diversity.**
- Linked to experiences, shared experiences. EG: gender issues, we talk about patriarchy or sexism but what's in the background and unspoken but felt, is people's experiences with abuse, rape etc. This ghost impacts the atmosphere and we get stuck. What needs to happen
- Examples: absent fathers due to migrant labour, loss of land, "the government," money.
- Some ghost sexist for a whole culture and are called time spirits: whenever we talk about them, they impact the field and relationships in a diverse context. Example: In SA apartheid is a ghost that spooks us all and we are all impacted in our relationships because of it.
- The important thing about ghost roles is that **they are the key to going deeper.** It's really important to **invite ghost roles in and consciously engage** with them. Otherwise they become **increasingly disruptive to individuals, groups, and societies. They also repress diversity.**
- What are the ghosts that exist in this context that may impact relationships and conversations about diversity?

# Deep Democracy Model

Being at home, creating home in ourselves and the world

## In conclusion:

- If we are able to move fluidly between levels of consciousness, between roles, between our rank identities, we find ourselves in our deepest home. **Deepest self is home** – then you can move anywhere.
- So what is important is finding our home in ourselves and in our world
- And what is also important is noticing how certain structures, rules, powers may marginalize some and privilege others, so that not everyone can feel at home in themselves and in the world: e.g. gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender
- Feeling at home in ourselves is a privilege

# Deep Democracy Model

## The place to start is our own inner work

We are living in a unified field. Being homogenous community will no longer be reality – our world is changing significantly and rapidly. Given the context where refugees are entering your world on a daily basis, where there have been attacks on Paris most recently, where there are issues of inclusion and exclusion, where some of us want to think about diversity and others might not, how do we work with the challenge with “the communities outside and inside ourselves?” How do we live, learn, work, collaborate?

- To create a sense of deep democracy we need to work on the group, but also on our own personal issues. **Inner work is actually the core of outer work.**
- We need to **work on our own reactions**. Those who we react to have something important for us - either in their message, or the way they are, or even in developing our own power.
- People who **disturb us can be our greatest teachers**. They awaken us to areas in our personal development where life is inviting us to grow. By working on ourselves we help grow a sense of deep democracy in our world.
- Awareness is important: First step is noticing we are in reaction and acknowledging it. The next step is working with what caught us and getting free.

# Deep Democracy Model

The place to start is our own inner work

## Individual Deep Democracy Exercise Questions:

(please have pen and paper ready for use when we give the instruction)

- What challenges do the changing nature of your communities create for you? Place of work, where you live, broader city, or broader European context – a community you belong to and care about.
- Given these challenges, what are the voices inside of you that are **FOR** and **AGAINST** this diversity? Remembering that these voices inside you are also a **ROLE**, me and not **ME**...no judgment, just allowing myself to hold a deep democracy perspective towards myself. Allow yourself to think of even the voices that would seem uncomfortable or unpopular.
- Divide your page in half. On one side, note the voices and what they say. What are the messages that are “supportive of diversity”. On the other side, note the voices that are “against diversity.” Value all these voices. Just give yourself permission to be deeply transparent with yourself.
- Reflect on how you notice yourself behaving in day-day interactions and relationships and dealing with the challenges.

## Dyad Sharing

- Share with one other person, what arose for you in the exercise
- Also share what it was like for you – any surprises or any challenges?

# Deep Democracy Model

The place to start is our own inner work

Ending the Silence

**Margaret Wheatley**

*A gesture of love is anything we do that helps others discover their humanity. Any act where we turn to one another. Open our hearts. Extend ourselves. Listen. Any time we're patient. Curious. Quiet. Engaged.... Conversation does this---it requires that we extend ourselves, that we open our minds and hearts a bit more, that we turn to someone, curious about how they live their life.*

*Speaking to each other involves risk. It's often difficult to extend ourselves, to let down our guard, especially with those we fear or avoid. When we're willing to overcome our fear and speak to them, that is a gesture of love. Strangely, what we say is not that important. We have ended the silence that keeps us apart.*