

ART FOR OURSELVES GATHERINGS

February 2018: Love Gathering



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Today, we gather in hopes of cultivate community understanding of a love that is outside the margins of a heteronormative, cis, monogamous, romantic context. Today we engage in the personal work of adopting a “love ethic.” bell hooks defines a love ethic as *“utiliz[ing] all dimensions of love-- ‘care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect and knowledge’-- in our everyday lives.”* A love ethic *“presupposes that everyone has the right to be free, to live fully and well.”* I invite us to participate in this gathering to reflect on ways we can know love deeper and practice love as radical action.

As we discuss, I encourage us all to consider ways in which we practice love not just towards others but also in the context of self-love.

Opening:

- Self introduction (name, pronoun, etc.)
- What brought you to today's gathering?
- What are you hoping will come of today's gathering?

Grounding:

- **Begin** with your eyes closed or your gaze lowered.
- Take a deep breath in - filling your lungs with air, feeling your belly rise - then exhale, feeling your belly and ribs sink. Repeat 3 times.
- **Next** rest your hands on your thigh and lightly initiate contact with yourself. You can gently rub, itch, tickle, swipe, or pat your legs. Take that movement up your body - slowly - and back down if you'd like! Making contact with all parts of your skin: your back, under your arms, behind your neck, behind your knees, on your face. Waking up your sensory receptors and initiating sensation and awareness in your body.
- **Last** make your body as small as possible, closing in towards your core, entering your personal space. Then, when you feel ready, extend and open yourself and towards the group. Repeat.

If at any point during this discussion you feel triggered, overwhelmed, or need to step out, please do so. Coming back to your breath and light touch can help ground.

Artifact 1:

- Draw/write/paint/dance/sing/express your current definition of love.

Discussion:

- If comfortable, share your Artifact and definition of love.
- What definitions/examples of love did you grow up around?
- Let's discuss the components of a love ethic. Define (for yourselves) the following components of love and describe what they look like in action:
 - Care
 - Commitment
 - Trust
 - Responsibility
 - Respect
 - Knowledge
- Which components of a love ethic are currently present in your practice of love?
- Which components are absent?
- Are there ways you practice a love ethic towards others but not with yourself?
- Are there ways you practice a love ethic with some folks but not others?

Reflection:

- Has your definition of "love" shifted during this gathering? If so, how?
- In what way will your love be more active?

- What is one concrete action you will take towards adopting a love ethic?

Closing/Artifact 2:

- Take five minutes to journal, draw, write, and reflect.
- Give some love.