

Essay

## ON MULTIDIMENSIONAL VISIONING — for the transformation of suburbia

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My husband and I arrived in Bloomington from Jackson Hole Wyoming in late 2002. He had decided to go to law school at I.U. Then, after only one semester, he had a heart attack, and died on January 4, 2003. Suddenly I was the only occupant of a home that I didn't even like (I've always hated ranch houses in suburbs) in a new town where I knew no one. Would I stay or leave? Thanks to inner guidance, I chose to stay. Green Acres Permaculture Village is now the result, evolving as one possible template for the transformation of suburbia into a permaculture paradise.

I view visioning as an evolutionary tool, an observation of what is, plus what is needed to create dynamic balancing between any perceived opposites.

All of us in America endure continuing oppositions between individual and community, and between humans and their earthy home. Here in Green Acres Neighborhood specifically, as in all college towns, we also endure the opposition between renters and owners, old and young. In Green Acres Village, we strive to integrate all four oppositions, with vision and creativity.

In a larger perspective, my view of the world is multidimensional. That is, I aim to continuously open space both vertically and horizontally.

**From above:** 1) Attuning to and drawing in intuitive information from the expansive cosmos to enlarge the atmosphere in which we live so that the ever-evolving dynamic situation doesn't get stuffy, stuck, with one pole of any opposition repressed rather than consciously recognized and integrated. 2) Individually, each person appreciates their larger connection to whatever they view as "source." 3) For me, as a student of astrology, I also attend to the changing configurations of the solar system and how the energies of the heavens above are reflected in the atmosphere of our human communities below.

**From below:** 1) Shadow work, which involves working within one's own awareness to recognize what is stuck inside the mind, body and associated emotions. Shadow work often involves others, since until we do recognize any denied aspect of ourselves that gets projected, we need other people to reflect back to us what we are projecting. Shadow work is key to resolving conflicts — within the self, between two people, within a group, and between a group and the larger world. 2) working with the body of Earth and her rhythmic daily, monthly, seasonal, and annual changing relationships to Sun and Moon; and especially recognizing, honoring, and celebrating Earth's ever-flowing abundance and deep power of regeneration.

The Above realm is invisible, the quantum field where all possibilities reside and our clear focused determined intent decides which possibilities will come into form. The Below realm is that world of form, and here our intent is to help it continue to replenish itself, to continuously release stuckness while cultivating stability.

There's a big difference between "visioning" and "planning." I tend to work mostly in the realm of visioning, out ahead of where we are now, creating and holding what I call a frequency field, a particular, strongly intended *genius loci* that allows and encourages a certain set of possibilities. What those possibilities are is often undefined, until a feeling of "rightness" or "wrongness," of being "on" or "off" sets in.

Early on, I set an intention to see this neighborhood in its entirety morph gradually into a more interconnected village, or networked group of villages, where neighbors live and work in place, their properties connected by paths and common gardens, play areas for children, care for elders, and a sense of safety and security for all.

For years I and others in our neighborhood association attempted, and largely failed, to work with this entire neighborhood of over 440 homes adjacent to Indiana University. And no wonder. 65% of these homes are registered rentals, mostly to students, many of whom are clueless undergraduates just released from the confines of their families, and most of whom move at the end of each school year. We are sometimes subjected to loud drunken crowds just outside on the street, as doors slam and cars start to drive off at 2 a.m.

In any case, even the undergraduates who don't indulge in wild parties are seldom aware that they are actually living in a neighborhood! Fifty years ago, this core neighborhood was populated with the children of returning G.I.s getting their college education. Moms were at home, and offered cookies in the afternoon to the kids running through yards in packs, connecting and reconnecting all parts of this neighborhood together. Now, most of the original inhabitants are old, or dead. Rental agents snap up empty houses and care only for getting money from those who live there. The properties deteriorate over time. The sense of community has been long abandoned.

The best decision I ever made was to turn from the impossible task of attempting to work with the entire constantly emptying and refilling neighborhood to focus instead, right here, at home, where I live, inside this body, this house, this land. Seven years later, I added the house next to mine and its grounds. And with that addition, came the need for more people to join me, and to help manifest a vision of a continuously regenerating place-based community.

In late 2016 I added a third house adjacent to the first two.

Here we aim to demonstrate a different way of life. Our motto: Growing Community from the Ground Up.

**Three tips for those wanting to start an intentional community:**

First, **close observation** of what is really needed where you live to rebalance perceived opposites, utilizing the three permaculture principles as guidelines: Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Share.

Second, **organic emergence**: start with tiny steps, allowing plenty of time for them to alter the situation before adding another step based on what you have already set in motion.

Three: **continuous visioning**: what is your ultimate intent for your intentional community? Keep that intent in mind at all times, see it, feel it, nurture it. For it will guide you to recognize what tiny step needs to come next.

Remember: big multidimensional projects that aim to make a profound difference take a very long time to enact. There are no quick fixes in nature. If we can transform our Fear into Love, then will all else be possible.