

Sacred Story Book: A Journey Through Collective Trauma and Renewal

INTERNATIONAL LABS 2024

Curated by Adrian Wagner and Kosha Joubert





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Introduction to the Sacred Story Book

Transforming Traumatizing into Trauma-Informed and Trauma-Integrating Cultures

T he Sacred Story Book is a testimony to the courage, wisdom, and healing capacity of more than one thousand individuals across the globe who have participated in our International labs—year-long, co-created journeys that delve into the complex and often painful terrain of ancestral and collective trauma.

These labs are not just projects—they are sanctuaries of remembrance and restoration, where people gather online from diverse geographies and histories to explore the echoes of trauma in their lives, cultures, and lineages. Each lab focuses on a specific theme or region, guided by experienced Collective Trauma Integration facilitators, and shaped by the unique composition of the group. Together, we attune to the rhythms of each community, moving at the speed of trust, and responding to what arises in the field with presence and care.

The aim is not simply to talk about trauma—but to experience, feel, and integrate what lives in the body of humanity. Through carefully balanced processes of resourcing and witnessing, we create the conditions for the release of frozen pain, the surfacing of buried stories, and the reconnection to a deeper sense of wholeness.

From January to December 2024, 32 labs have come to life. In each one, participants have shared personal memories and collective insights, often for the first time. They have listened across boundaries—national, racial, generational, spiritual—and, in doing so, begun to stitch new threads into the torn fabric of our shared history. These stories, offered here with great humility, are not just individual recollections. They are part of a larger collective remembering process, and they carry the seeds of transformation.

These labs are one expression of the work of The Pocket Project, an international NGO committed to a single shared client: the world. We support communities in their movement from fragmentation to coherence, from pain to possibility. We believe in the regenerative power of post-traumatic growth and in the sacred responsibility to meet this moment in history with compassion and clarity.

Our mission is to support the evolution of trauma-informed, creative cultures that are capable of addressing the challenges of our time with groundedness, sensitivity, and systemic insight. To do this, we must shift away from traumatizing dynamics—within ourselves, our relationships, and our institutions—and toward communities that know how to hold pain without perpetuating it.

As you enter this book, you are stepping into a tapestry of human experience that transcends borders and invites connection. These stories are sacred not only because of their content, but because of the quality of presence with which they were told and received. They are markers on the path from disconnection to belonging, from silence to voice, from trauma to integration.

We are deeply grateful for your interest in this work. Whether you are a witness, a practitioner, a funder, or a seeker, you are part of this journey. Your listening matters. Your presence makes a difference.

Together, we are weaving a more resilient and compassionate world—one story, one heart, one lab at a time.

With gratitude, Thomas Hübl, Founder Kosha Joubert, CEO



Honoring the Voices: A Sacred Acknowledgment

T his book would not exist without the courage, gentleness, and raw honesty of those who have shared their stories. Each participant and facilitator has offered a profound gift—the gift of their vulnerability, wisdom, and commitment to healing. As we hold these stories in our hearts, we honor the bravery it takes to confront trauma, to move through pain, and to step into the unknown with hope.

Thomas Hübl reminds us that "trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an empathetic witness." Each narrative here is a testament to the power of witnessing—to holding space for one another's pain and transformation. This book is an invitation to continue that sacred work.

We acknowledge that these stories form only a small part of the vast, interconnected web of healing. Many other voices, experiences, and insights from the labs remain beyond the scope of this collection, yet they are no less significant. Their wisdom and impact continue to be held within the Lab Reports¹ and the SenseMaker Public Dashboards², where they offer additional layers of understanding and reflection. These resources remain open to those seeking a deeper engagement with the breadth of narratives shared.

This collection is a beginning—a carefully tended garden of narratives, offering seeds to inspire understanding, compassion, and growth. It is not a complete picture of every voice, nor could it ever be. Like wildflower seeds scattered across an open field, these stories will take root in unique and unexpected ways, growing into a shared understanding beyond the bounds of these pages. Let us offer a prayer of gratitude and intention for all who contributed to this tapestry of healing. May their stories inspire us to honor our own journeys, deepen our connection to one another, and continue the work of mending the fabric of humanity. May these seeds flourish, planting hope and resilience wherever they are carried. Together, may we transform darkness into light and separation into love. Amen.

^{1.} https://pocketproject.org/international-labs-2023-24/

Before: https://platform.sensemaker-suite.com/r/d/a4994706-96d0-431f-a6d2-f22e07564e60
 During: https://platform.sensemaker-suite.com/r/d/9838513b-c09b-4cba-b627-37b714c041fa
 After: https://platform.sensemaker-suite.com/r/d/c514fccd-4a78-49c6-a3bd-e97c22dc6ad1



A Sacred Tapestry of Healing

In the intricate tapestry of humanity, we each carry threads woven from our past—threads of triumph and suffering, connection and isolation. These threads converge in a shared fabric of collective memory, shaping not just who we are but also who we might become. This book, A Journey Through Collective Trauma and Renewal, invites you into a profound journey of witnessing, reflection, and healing. It is a sanctuary for the voices of those who courageously dare to face their pain and transform it into light, who delve into the depths of trauma to uncover seeds of renewal.

"I am really passionate about raising awareness of collective trauma and participating in healing it. Collective trauma can't be healed as separate individuals, and the Western psychological worldview encourages everyone to focus on their own individual process."

Healing depends on something larger—a communal, interwoven effort where our stories, like rivers, flow into one another.

In this collection, you will meet individuals navigating the churning waters of ancestral wounds:

"As an Armenian, I was born in a culture with an unresolved systemic multigenerational trauma because of past and present oppression in Armenia, colonialism, centuries of persecutions, and genocide." These words echo the silent pain carried by so many—proof that even across continents and centuries, our suffering intertwines.

The stories also explore the internal landscapes of polarization and connection. One participant bravely shares, "I want to address the polarization within myself, as well as how it is showing up in our collective fields. This feels more expansive and a powerful means to explore the roots of deeply held trauma where polarization is the symptom". Here, the work of healing is not simply an intellectual exercise but an intimate dance with our most entrenched fears and inner tension lines.

Others embark on journeys of reconciliation with their roots: "I had a sense that I was 'coming home' to the places and ancestors I fled from more than 50 years ago". These stories remind us that home is not merely a location but a profound return to self and lineage—a reweaving of fragmented identities into wholeness.

But healing is not only about understanding pain; it is also about envisioning and creating anew. "Inspired movement, singing, and dancing are the purest ways to form a connection with the Divine life force". Within these pages, you will encounter stories of resilience and creativity, where individuals reimagine their relationships with self, others, and the earth.

Each narrative is a testament to the sacredness of our shared humanity. Whether addressing historical injustices, navigating the delicate terrain of personal identity, or seeking harmony in a fractured world, the participants remind us of the transformative power of bearing witness. As one contributor eloquently puts it, "We are one world; what affects you, affects me".

Through these sacred stories, may you find not only the courage to face your own wounds but also the hope that healing is possible—together. Let this book be a mirror, a map, and a prayer for a more compassionate world.

How to Read and Use This Book

This book is not just a collection of stories; it is a living, breathing guide to the sacred work of healing—both individual and collective. To truly experience its power, approach these narratives as sacred invitations to reflect, connect, and act.

BEGIN WITH INTENTION

Before opening these pages, take a moment to pause. Breathe deeply, center yourself, and set an intention for your journey through this book. Are you seeking insight into your own healing? Looking to deepen your connection to others? Searching for inspiration to contribute to the healing of our collective wounds? Allow your intention to guide how you engage with each section.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH

This book is not meant to be read cover to cover in one sitting. Instead, think of it as a garden, where you can wander freely, pausing to savor the stories that call to you most. Each section, like a sacred path, offers a unique perspective on trauma, resilience, and transformation. Trust your intuition to guide you to what you most need at the moment.

ENGAGE WITH THE STORIES

As you read, let yourself fully absorb the voices of those who have shared their journeys. Highlight passages that move you, write your reflections in the margins, and allow the experiences of others to stir something deep within you. You are not a passive reader; you are a participant in this sacred weaving.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

After reading a story or section, take a moment to sit with what you've read. Ask yourself: How does this resonate with my own experience? What emotions or memories does it bring up? What lessons can I carry forward into my life or community? Journaling or discussing your reflections with others can deepen your understanding.

APPLY THE WISDOM

The insights in this book are not meant to remain on the page. Consider how they can inspire action in your life. Whether it's starting a conversation, seeking support for your own healing, or contributing to your community's well-being, allow these stories to guide you toward meaningful steps.

RETURN AGAIN AND AGAIN

This book is a companion for the journey, not a one-time read. As you grow and change, the stories will meet you in new ways. Revisit them in moments of doubt or difficulty, and let them remind you of the shared humanity and hope that connect us all.

This Sacred Story Book unfolds like a multi-layered journey, guiding readers through the profound exploration of healing, connection, and transformation. Each chapter represents a key theme, weaving together narratives that inspire reflection and action.

The Journey of Integration

The Collective Trauma Integration Process

Healing collective trauma is a layered, emergent process. It does not unfold in a straight line, but through complex rhythms of relational attunement, emotional sensing, and subtle shifts in inner and outer awareness. The Collective Trauma Integration Process (CTIP) moves through six key stages—each building the capacity to hold greater depth, complexity, and presence. These stages are not sequential in a rigid sense, but appear as developmental movements that reflect the intelligence of the group field and its capacity to metabolize trauma.

1. SYNCHRONIZING & RESOURCING

A gentle entry phase focused on grounding through somatic awareness, shared ritual, and connection. This stage helps establish the necessary relational coherence for deeper trauma work. Attunement is not only interpersonal but systemic—setting the tone for the field to become a container for complexity.

"There was a sense of calm when we breathed together. Like tuning into the same frequency, even though we didn't talk much, I felt connected."

"I noticed my body relaxing as I listened. My chest softened. I realized I had been holding tight for so long."

Participants often report a sense of relief, stabilization, and subtle energetic alignment. These moments create the baseline safety required to begin accessing the deeper layers of the collective nervous system.

2. MEETING THE LANDSCAPE

This phase is marked by the surfacing of fragmentation, absence, and emotional suppression. Often these emerge not through words but through silence, disassociation, or emotional overwhelm. These edges can be seen as "narrative attractors"—zones in the collective story where trauma has interrupted coherence.

"As soon as we started talking about it, I wanted to disappear. It was like a fog settled over me."

"I felt myself split—part of me was present, but another part checked out."

This is where signs of repression, dissociation, and emotional overload often begin to register across the group, both somatically and relationally.

3. BECOMING A CONDUIT

As coherence in the group builds, previously inaccessible material—personal, ancestral, or cultural—begins to enter awareness. This stage is less about fully formed stories and more about sensing and expressing what had been unspoken or unacknowledged.

"The carefully crafted prompts and the facilitators' adept skills in guiding us to navigate through our collective trauma with fluidity and openness."

"When folks have the courage to bring up difficult topics."

Gestures, sensations, and fragmented expressions carry just as much meaning as verbal narratives. The focus shifts toward how content is held and reflected, rather than what is said. The field becomes a site of collective meaning–making, not individual catharsis.

4. LISTENING TO THE FIELD

In this phase, the group begins to attune to field-level dynamics rather than isolated experiences. Archetypal patterns such as victim-perpetrator dynamics or exile-belonging tensions become more visible, often mirrored in the group itself.

"When we felt a literally frozen layer. When we touched birth, met trigger, I touched fear, co-regulated, and came back... It is like a stream through my system."

"Meeting traumatised spots in a group container... trying to listen and understand so hard."

Rather than focusing on individual stories, attention shifts to resonance patterns and field phenomena—an emergent awareness of collective entanglements.

5. INTEGRATING & RESTORING

Insights gathered do not lead to quick closure, but to a softening. What was touched begins to metabolize through presence, stillness, artistic expression, and shared witnessing. This stage is less cognitive and more about stabilizing shifts in awareness.

"Triads and small groups during the labs... Being able to witness all those trauma symptoms and witness the melting of the numbness and silence."

"The process of thawing the permafrost took many months... Witnessing the courage and vulnerability of participants created a powerful sense of shared humanity."

This integration does not resolve trauma but transforms the relationship to it. What emerges is often a greater tolerance for complexity and ambiguity.

6. META-LEARNING & REFLECTION

The final stage centers on reflecting not just on what was experienced, but on how it became possible. Participants begin to notice shifts in perception and extract actionable insights that can be carried into other domains—such as relationships, communities, and organizational life.

"Witnessing how the original intention and impulse go out into the world, receive confirmation and become a body of work; a cosmic address; a gathering of souls and crucible of love in action."

"Being able to witness the formation of coherence within the group and observing how group dynamics shifted over time was truly insightful."

These reflections are less about closure and more about recognizing transformation as an ongoing relational process, informed by a deepened sense of interconnection and responsibility.

The Collective Trauma Integration Process reveals that trauma integration is not a destination, but a shared capacity to hold complexity, encounter truth, and remain present to what emerges. These stages offer a framework for navigating that unfolding with dignity, discernment, and care. And through this cyclical, collective, embodied intelligence, we begin to sense a deeper truth:

That what was broken, can be witnessed.

What was frozen, can thaw.

And what was forgotten, can be remembered—together.







I.

Division & Belonging: Finding Our Way Home

What does it mean to belong?

Is home a place, a feeling, or a memory?

Or is it something deeper
—an unfolding relationship with self,
others, and the spaces between?

In this opening chapter, we explore the universal longing for connection and the fractures that keep us apart. From personal wounds to collective trauma, from ideological divides to ancestral legacies, the journey toward belonging is rarely simple, yet it calls to us all.

These labs did not seek to erase differences, nor did they offer easy solutions to polarization. Instead, they invited participants to turn toward discomfort, to listen without the need to convince, to hold complexity without retreating into certainty. What happens when we approach division not as an endpoint but as a threshold? What shifts when we see home not as a fixed destination but as something we carry within us, shaped by the way we show up in the world?

Through these explorations, participants discovered that belonging is not about uniformity, but about expanding our capacity to hold difference with care. They found that connection is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to stay present within it. And they realized that perhaps home is not something to be found, but something to be created—moment by moment, breath by breath, in the spaces where we meet one another with honesty, courage, and an open heart.

Lab 1. Becoming a Bridge in a Polarized World

Learning to Host & Integrate Trauma of Polarization within Ourselves



INTRODUCTION

Polarization has become a defining feature of modern society. Political, ideological, and personal divides deepen, making meaningful dialogue difficult. This lab was not about eliminating disagreement but about learning to remain present within it. Bridging ideological divides requires not just intellectual understanding but a capacity to sit with discomfort, challenge assumptions, and hold space for perspectives that may feel irreconcilable.

What does it mean to stay in connection when opinions differ? How can ideological tension be held in a way that fosters transformation rather than further division? What shifts when the goal is no longer to convince, but to understand?



INTENTION

THE CALL TO ENGAGE

For many participants, joining this lab was both a personal and social commitment. Some came to understand how polarization was affecting their relationships, while others were drawn to the larger question of how societies navigate difference.

"To participate allows me a means to be of service, to partake within and of something that feels deeply meaningful... not only a way in, but a possibility to explore with others who have also committed to a degree that feels much needed... addressing the polarization within myself, as well as how it is showing up in our collective field(s)."

"My heart led me to partake in the International Lab process, a heart that has only ever wanted to be in service to Humanity."

What makes ideological differences so threatening? What would change if polarization was seen as an opportunity for deepening connection rather than reinforcing division?

IMMERSION

SITTING WITH DISCOMFORT

As the lab progressed, participants faced the reality that ideological divides are not just about differing beliefs—they tap into emotional wounds, personal identities, and deep-seated fears. The challenge was not in solving these differences but in learning to stay present within them.

"When something comes up that I know I do not agree with, I am finding myself not as defensive... finding more space where I can listen without feeling that this is a battle to fight that I need to win... finding my body slows down and I can be present—such a gift."

"The insight that is more and more clear to me is how uncomfortable and triggering it is to be a bridge and that the whole process IS about remaining engaged despite the discomfort."

Through structured group practices, including triads and open dialogue, participants found that the more they engaged with differing perspectives, the more flexible and open their responses became. Over time, the emotional charge of disagreement lessened, creating space for curiosity and connection.

What happens when the need to be right is replaced with the desire to understand? How does staying engaged—even when it feels difficult—reshape the experience of disagreement? What becomes possible when ideological difference is no longer a barrier but a doorway?

"My heart led me to partake in the International Lab process, a heart that has only ever wanted to be in service to Humanity."

INTEGRATION

THE SPACE BETWEEN OPPOSITES

By the end of the lab, participants spoke of a deeper ability to remain engaged in difficult conversations—not by forcing agreement, but by allowing space for complexity.

"I experienced the lab as a space where I could release overwhelming emotions and gain more practice in holding contradictory emotions simultaneously. I had learned that distancing, looking away, and judgment were ways of coping with the force of polarization, but In the final call, I experienced an overwhelming opening of the heart, gratitude, openness, humanity. It was deeply moving."

"The experience allowed me to have a safe space to explore polarization within myself. It increased my window of tolerance to remain in difficult conversations, which is crucial for me as a change agent in a hot trauma environment."

What if the goal of dialogue is not agreement but understanding? How does the capacity to hold multiple truths at once create a foundation for healing division? What would change if polarization was no longer seen as a threat, but as an invitation to deeper relational work? "The experience allowed me to have a safe space to explore polarization within myself."

CONCLUSION

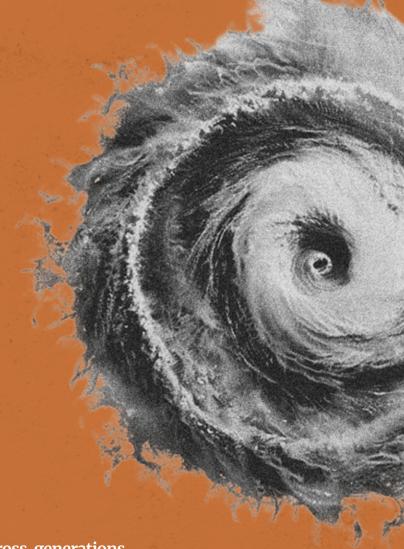
Polarization is not just a social problem—it is a deeply personal experience. It tests the ability to stay present, to listen without needing to convince, to hold differences without severing connection. This lab provided a space where participants could practice these skills, not by seeking to erase division but by expanding their capacity to remain engaged within fields of tension. The challenge of bridging divides is ongoing. It requires patience, self-awareness, and the willingness to hold discomfort, and respond rather than react. Yet, as participants discovered, the reward is significant: an ability to remain connected even in the face of ideological opposition, to find belonging not in uniformity but in the richness of complexity.



Lab 2. Victim—Perpetrator Dynamics Through the Individual, Generational & Collective Lens

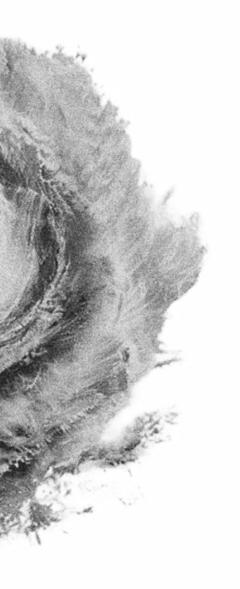
What Holds the Past Alive in Us Today? How Do We Ease and Release the Entanglement?

INTRODUCTION



Harm is not a singular event—it ripples across generations, shaping identities, relationships, and societal structures. The victim-perpetrator dynamic is one of the most complex and painful inheritances of human history. This lab invited participants to explore these entanglements, not through judgment, but through deep inquiry into how these roles live within individuals, families, and communities.

What does it mean to be both impacted by harm and capable of perpetuating it? How do these patterns persist across time? What happens when they are witnessed with awareness rather than denial?



"My strong aversive feelings toward my ancestors have calmed. My own armor is falling away."

INTENTION

FACING THE INHERITANCE

Some participants arrived with a clear sense of the trauma in their lineage, while others were just beginning to see the ways in which these dynamics had been woven into their personal and collective experiences.

"I want to explore the deeper collective trauma dynamics in a group that feels safe and curious, guided by experienced facilitators... I feel a strong presence in my ancestral energy too, which is why I want to explore it deeper and start healing and integrating those aspects of me."

"Victim and perpetrator dynamics play out in the world as in my life and family history. They prevent us from finding peace and forgiving others. Sometimes they justify further violence. I wanted to reflect on these patterns through a trauma-sensitive lens and perhaps find elements of healing for ourselves, our families, and the world."

How does inherited trauma shape perceptions of self and others? What would change if these dynamics were acknowledged rather than repeated? What role does personal awareness play in breaking these cycles?

IMMERSION

BRIDGING THE ABYSS

The lab did not offer simple answers—but deeper questions and a space to sit with them. Participants found themselves in unexpected places, feeling both resistance and recognition as they engaged with family histories and societal narratives.

"My relationship with my ancestors has changed dramatically. I had hate, disgust, rage, and felt a deep abyss between them and me... Through our sessions, especially the entanglement exercise, I developed images of understanding... My strong aversive feelings toward my ancestors have calmed. My own armor is falling away."

"I have been exploring generational domestic violence and victim-perpetrator-by-stander dynamics. I now see their cyclical nature more clearly. Understanding them has grown my capacity to hold space for these roles... By acknowledging them, I can find the place inside me where I know: I am just like you (or them)."

Through shared processes, including deep listening and witnessing, participants found that simply recognizing the entanglement between victim and perpetrator roles created an opening. The more these dynamics were acknowledged, the less power they had to define identity.

What happens when the pain of the past is no longer a justification for future harm?

INTEGRATION

TRANSFORMING AWARENESS INTO ACTION

The final phase of the lab was not about resolution but about learning to carry awareness differently—to hold history without being consumed by it. One participant described the deep realization of how these cycles persist while others reflected on the power of their transformation.

"The main thing I began to see more clearly is how the seeds of perpetration live in the bodies of victims. Unprocessed helplessness and pain create self-protective behaviors that can lead to 'power over' tendencies, which risk perpetuating harm."

"My stance toward victim/perpetrator dynamics has changed. I see victims and recognize perpetrator aspects within them; I see perpetrators and recognize victim aspects within them... My strong aversive feelings have calmed. My relationship with my ancestors is shifting. It feels like change, even if I cannot yet say when and how."

This lab was not about erasing history, but about creating a new way of relating to it. By sitting with these entangled roles without fear or judgment, participants found pathways toward integration—ways to acknowledge pain without being trapped by it, ways to witness harm without perpetuating it.

What does it take to break the cycle? How can awareness of these dynamics lead to transformation? What happens when victimhood and responsibility are no longer seen as opposites but as intertwined aspects of human experience?

"Unprocessed helplessness and pain create self-protective behaviors that can lead to 'power over' tendencies, which risk perpetuating harm."

CONCLUSION

The victim-perpetrator dynamic is one of the deepest wounds in human history, yet it is also one of the most necessary to confront. This lab provided a space where these entanglements could be explored with honesty and care. Participants did not leave with easy solutions, but with a greater capacity to see beyond binary identities and into the deeper patterns of harm and healing.



Lab 3. Relational Activism

From Entanglement to Presencing and Beyond. How does real change happen?

INTRODUCTION

This lab was an exploration—an invitation to step into activism not as a battlefield but as a living, breathing space of connection. It challenges the urgency, the fight, the instinct to resist with the same force that created the very struggles we seek to dismantle. Instead, it asks:

What happens when activism is rooted in presence?

What shifts when transformation is nurtured through relationship rather than reaction?



"I'm trying to deepen the synthesis of contemplation and social action so my instincts are honed for the next step. The world is heating up in every sphere... I knew this lab would support me into further action as the world calls me."

INTENTION

SEEKING NEW APPROACHES

For many, joining the lab was a call—an unspoken longing to engage differently for others, a sense of readiness, of knowing the old ways were no longer enough. Entering the lab meant facing the discomfort of activism itself. The exhaustion. The doubt.

"I'm trying to deepen the synthesis of contemplation and social action so my instincts are honed for the next step. The world is heating up in every sphere... I knew this lab would support me into further action as the world calls me."

"Because I want to understand more precisely which activist actions can have an impact in the world. Because I am often dissatisfied with existing approaches, finding them ineffective and very exhausting."

"I have often felt torn between my desire to be engaged and the exhaustion that comes from constant urgency. I find myself questioning whether the ways we fight for change actually reinforce the same patterns of disconnection and aggression that we seek to dismantle."

IMMERSION

LEARNING THROUGH CONNECTION

Inside the lab, something softened. A different kind of activism emerged—not through slogans or strategies, but through deep listening. The understanding of activism was reframed, new insights emerged and how entangled the self and system change is.

"I have learned about my own and others' entanglement in activism and experienced the ability to detach from harmful patterns by relating to others. I have made meaningful, vulnerable, and healing connections."

"I see how much of my activism has been driven by urgency, by a sense that I have to prove something. Sitting in this lab, I find myself wrestling with the impulse to fix things immediately, rather than allowing transformation to emerge in its own time."

"Looking at all change processes through the lens of how we connect and relate provides important insights; also, reflecting on how we are part of the system we aim to change has provided fascinating new perspectives."



INTEGRATION

TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION

By the end, something had changed. Some seeds started to grow. One participant described it as a deep unveiling:

"The deepest insight for me is how deeply my strategies go to avoid relationships... I feel this great gratitude for finally having understood and for sensing how my own unfolding increases my effectiveness as a worker for a just future."

The lab illuminated the hidden forces that shape activism itself—the entanglement of movement and trauma, urgency and wounding.

"I became much more aware of the entanglement between activism and the motivation of activists on one side and collective trauma on the other... I also experienced my need to 'force the process' and exert pressure to shift something in the group. I became aware of my tendency to cover my vulnerability with structure and competence."

If we ask what is the essence, the potential of relational activism? One sentence stands out:

"Embracing 'power with' over 'power over' is such a healing paradigm shift."

"I feel this great gratitude for finally having understood and for sensing how my own unfolding increases my effectiveness as a worker for a just future."

CONCLUSION

The lab did not offer easy answers. It did not hand out solutions. But it did something else—it opened a door, a way forward where activism is not a performance of resistance but a practice of presence. Where change is not a battle but a remembering. And where transformation begins, not in the urgency to fix, but in the courage to stay—to listen, to connect, to trust the unfolding.



Lab 4. Exploring Loneliness

Presencing our Personal, Cultural, Ancestral & Collective Experiences of Loneliness

INTRODUCTION

This lab was not about escaping loneliness. It was about turning toward it, feeling its weight, its shape, its texture. What if loneliness is not a void, but a river? What if, instead of resisting its current, we allow ourselves to float? In this space, participants were invited to explore these questions to understand what it asks of them. Like water finding its way through rock, perhaps loneliness, too, carves a path we do not yet see?



"I now understand that my loneliness seeks to be heard, held, and healed. This lab feels like the container I have been yearning for."

INTENTION

SEEKING CONNECTION

Loneliness is often a quiet undercurrent, present even in crowded rooms. It does not announce itself loudly; it lingers at the edges of experience, waiting for recognition. For many, joining the lab was a turning toward this unspoken presence, an invitation to sit with what had long been avoided. The lab became a space to explore loneliness—not as something to conquer, but as something to witness.

"I wanted to explore the different facets of my loneliness more deeply. It is important for me to learn to distinguish between what is rooted personally, transgenerationally and collectively. I looked forward to the focus at the meetings, the exchange with others, being heard and hearing others."

"For most of my life, I have felt an intense sense of loneliness... My loneliness has felt engulfing, consuming, and all-encompassing. I was searching externally for solutions, always left in pain. I now understand that my loneliness seeks to be heard, held, and healed. This lab feels like the container I have been yearning for."

Loneliness, for many, was not merely the absence of others—it was a longing for deep resonance, for a meeting beyond words. To step into this space was to step into uncertainty, not knowing what would be uncovered, yet trusting that something awaited on the other side.

IMMERSION

THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS

As the lab unfolded, participants found themselves immersed in a paradox: the thing they had most feared speaking of was the very thing that connected them. Loneliness, once thought of as deeply personal, was suddenly revealed as a shared landscape. Each voice was an echo of another, each silence held the weight of something unspoken, yet known.

"The process seemed deceptively simple: a large group, smaller groups, and triads where people express how loneliness is alive in them. Despite our different backgrounds, our experiences were strikingly similar. In my triad, a simple 'thank you' spoken earnestly had a profound physical effect. I understood what it felt like to be truly seen and heard."

"The intimate joy of our peaceful, sacred being. That connection and relationships are central to our well-being, and the suffering lies in separation."

Loneliness, when named, lost some of its grip. It was no longer a silent weight, but something spoken, heard, and met. In this meeting, something shifted—not as an answer, but as an opening. Like mist rising from a valley, loneliness became something softer, something that did not need to be held so tightly.

INTEGRATION

INTEGRATION AND GROWTH

By the end of the lab, loneliness had not disappeared, but it had changed form. It no longer felt like exile; it had become a companion, a quiet teacher offering its lessons in stillness. The willingness to sit with it had softened its edges, making space for something else to emerge.

"My own exploration of 'being loneliness' brought awareness of my separation patterns. I withdraw when I feel unseen, and I find certain social expectations exhausting. However, I've gained curiosity about my reactions rather than just retreating. The lab provided a cocoon—contrasting the coldness of loneliness with warmth, ease, and presence."

"I grew immensely through this lab. The facilitators' commitment created a space where we could truly explore loneliness. I now feel more spaciousness around it in my life."

"In a group on loneliness, simply gathering is almost magical. We meet and, in doing so, acknowledge our own loneliness. That alone is powerful. I now have a new relationship with it."

"I grew immensely through this lab. The facilitators' commitment created a space where we could truly explore loneliness. I now feel more spaciousness around it in my life."

CONCLUSION

The lab did not promise to dissolve loneliness, nor did it claim to have answers. Instead, it invited a different kind of knowing—one that does not grasp, but allows; one that does not resist, but flows. Perhaps loneliness is not something to be solved, but something to be met with quiet curiosity. What if in meeting it, we meet ourselves? What if in meeting ourselves, we find that we were never truly alone?



Lab 5 . Finding Our Way Home

Cultivating our Capacity to Sense a Place

INTRODUCTION

This lab was an exploration of belonging—not as a fixed destination, but as a living, breathing relationship. What does it mean to feel at home? Is it a place, a feeling, a memory? Or is home something we carry, shifting and evolving with us? In this space, participants were invited to sit with these questions, to unravel the many layers of home, and to listen for the quiet truths that emerge when we stop searching and begin noticing.



INTENTION

SEEKING A SENSE OF HOME

For many, the journey toward home began with recognizing its absence. A longing for grounding, a desire to settle not just in a place, but in themselves. Participants reflected on the inherited patterns that shaped their sense of belonging as a central force in life but also as something that remains elusive:

"I recognize my family's culture of 'moving away' has left me feeling unsettled. I feel like I was raised to live as far as possible from my parents and birthplace. My sense of home is impacted by how I was raised. I am aware of the sense of 'home structure' and land both calling me in different ways, and I am curious about growing in my capacity to be with these differences."

"Place and home are a central navigation point from which to feel myself in life. My family background means that I never felt real belonging. This journey is deeply personal and also relevant to so many in society."

The path toward home was not always clear. For some, home was a place they had never truly known. For others, it was something they had lost or outgrown. And yet, there was the possibility of discovering what home could become.

IMMERSION

DISCOVERING THE MEANING OF HOME

As the lab unfolded, so did the understanding that home is not a single location, but a relationship—one that extends beyond walls, beyond geography, beyond time. Participants explored the ways in which land, memory, and presence shape their experience of home.

"Place matters. I am more aware of how the land I am standing on informs me energetically."

"That home is much more than just about place."

"Together, we are on a journey. While we know certain milestones, we do not know exactly what they will look like or how they will feel. Yet, I keep experiencing how enriching this journey is."

As the lab deepened, home became less about arriving somewhere and more about being present—about listening to what was already here. It was not just a place to return to, but a state of belonging that could unfold in the present moment.

"Place matters.

I am more aware of how the land I am standing on informs me energetically."

INTEGRATION

INTEGRATING THE EXPERIENCE OF HOME

The journey did not end with a singular realization, but with an unfolding—a slow settling into something deeper, something known not through logic but through feeling. Participants shared the subtle and gentle shifts they experienced.

"The lab has been a life-changing experience. I have experienced many emotions month by month that have brought me to connect and embody more. After this process, I can say that I feel absolutely at home. I have gained the knowing that I am home in my heart and wherever I am."

"The insights have been subtle—a deeper sense of ancestral lineage, a greater understanding of the relationship to 'home' in its many iterations."

"I have delved deeply into sensing HOME in my body and earth. The journey together grounded me in an embodied sense of rhythm and movement. Attunement to my body has helped me land in belonging. My sense of home has greatly widened through this work."

"I have gained the knowing that I am home in my heart and wherever I am."

CONCLUSION

This lab revealed that home is not just a structure or a memory—it is a dynamic, unfolding relationship with self, land, and others. It is not something to be grasped, but something to be met. Like the breath, like the tide, like the rhythm of the seasons, home is always moving. And when we stop grasping for it, we may find that it has been here all along.



Division & Belonging: Finding Our Way Home

Overall Reflection

Belonging is not a fixed point on a map, nor is division a permanent fracture. They are movements—ebbing and flowing, shaping the landscapes of our relationships, communities, and inner lives. This chapter did not seek to offer easy resolutions to polarization, displacement, or the aching distance between self and other. Instead, it invited a deeper inquiry: What happens when we turn toward what divides us, not to conquer it, but to listen? What if the path home is not about certainty, but about learning to dwell in the spaces between?

Across these labs, we saw that polarization is not simply about opposing ideas but about the breakdown of relationships—the moment when trust is replaced by fear, when complexity is reduced to rigid binaries. Healing does not come from erasing differences but from expanding our capacity to hold them. To sit in discomfort without retreating. To notice where we, too, have hardened.

Victimhood and perpetration, activism and exhaustion, loneliness and connection, home and exile—these are not isolated experiences but interwoven patterns, repeating through generations, shaping our world. As participants stepped into the complexity of these dynamics, something unexpected emerged: not resolution, but recognition. A sense that the fractures we experience—both within ourselves and in the collective—are not endpoints, but thresholds.

This work is slow. It requires patience, attunement, and the willingness to stay present even when the impulse is to turn away. But in that staying, something shifts. A softening. A widening. A recognition that belonging is not the absence of difference, but the ability to hold difference with care.

Perhaps home is not a destination, not a place we arrive at once and for all. Perhaps home is a way of being—with ourselves, with each other, with the uncertainties of a world in motion. And perhaps, in learning to meet the spaces between us with presence, we begin to find our way there.



II. Gender & Power: Reclaiming Balance

Power, like water, flows where there is space.

What happens when it is obstructed?
How does it reshape itself when given freedom to move?

In this chapter, we explore the fluid and evolving nature of gender, leadership, and identity. For too long, power has been structured as dominance—rigid, hierarchical, and exclusionary. But what if leadership was not about control, but about presence? What if influence was not about asserting, but about listening?

These labs provided space to unlearn the inherited weight of patriarchy and step into new models of leadership—ones that honor collaboration, shared responsibility, and deep relational intelligence. Participants examined the power structures shaping their lives, relationships, and roles, not just through analysis but through lived experience. What happens when we release the grip of outdated narratives? What shifts when we no longer view leadership as something to achieve but as something to embody?

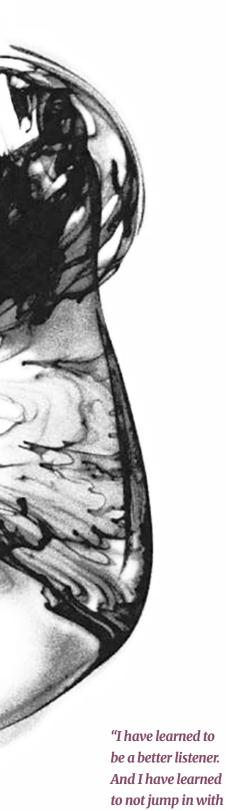
This chapter is not just about dismantling what no longer serves—it is about remembering other ways of leading, of being, of relating. What if reclaiming balance is not about replacing one power with another, but about rediscovering a power that was always there, waiting to be seen?

Lab 1. Unlearning Patriarchy to Embrace Fluid Leadership

Exploring the Patriarchal Impact on our Leadership Experience

INTRODUCTION

The first step toward change is awareness, and this lab invited participants to become aware of the invisible forces shaping their leadership, their self-perception, and their relationships. Patriarchy is not only an external system but an internalized way of thinking, feeling, and acting. For many, the lab became a space to unearth and examine these deeply ingrained patterns.



unwanted advice."

INTENTION

RECOGNIZING THE PATTERNS

Participants entered the lab with curiosity and a recognition that something within their approach to power and leadership was not fully their own. Some came because they saw how patriarchy shaped their workplaces, interactions, and assumptions about leadership. Others came with a personal longing—to understand unconscious scripts that shaped their relationships and ways of being.

"I wish to learn to feel and see the architecture of collective trauma, to understand how its effects shape our daily being and actions... Only in this way do I believe that we can truly change collective trauma, such as millennia of patriarchy."

"I chose 'Unlearning Patriarchy' because I am taking on increasing responsibility in my work at a large environmental NGO. I want to become aware of my unconscious patriarchal patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting in order to foster a healthy and humane way of being together..."

"Much of my work relates to the intersection of the feminine and leadership... This is also very much my own personal journey of self-discovery and how the patriarchal system lives inside of me."

All came with a deep commitment to not look away regarding their privilege.

IMMERSION

SITTING IN THE DISCOMFORT OF CHANGE

As the lab progressed, participants moved from intellectual awareness to embodied realization. The work was not just about understanding patriarchy but about feeling its weight—and its absence. As they experimented with new ways of listening, responding, and leading, they started noticing something new, sometimes unsettling.

"I have learned to be a better listener. And I have learned to not jump in with unwanted advice."

"More awareness about how leadership flows (or doesn't). Patriarchy is a big topic with lots of frozen pain, especially in women."

"We are sitting so deep in the swamp of patriarchy that most of our reactions are part of the trauma response."

Yet, within this awareness, something shifted. By naming these patterns, participants began to loosen their grip. They experimented with allowing more space, with listening rather than asserting, with questioning rather than assuming. And in that space, something new began to emerge.

INTEGRATION

INTEGRATING A NEW WAY OF LEADING

By the final sessions of the lab, participants had not only developed new insights but had begun to embody new ways of relating to power. Leadership no longer meant control—it meant presence, responsiveness, and trust in the unfolding process.

"Leadership doesn't mean taking action yourself or making decisions for others, but rather perceiving who in the room or group is ready to receive the 'spark'. Leadership is a collaborative process."

"Leadership is a collaborative process."

"Observing spaciousness in facilitation, observing how the facilitators gave breathing space to what needed it, opened up space for insight and change."

"I can better recognize the patriarchy within myself. I can feel the split between men and women more deeply... I have a better relationship with my fear of men as a queer man."

CONCLUSION

Reclaiming balance is not about dismantling one power structure just to replace it with another. It is about making space for something deeper—something that has been forgotten but not lost. In these labs, participants found that leadership is not about dominance but about presence, not about control but about trust. As they unlearned the rigid structures of patriarchy, they stepped into something more fluid, more alive. And in doing so, they did not just reclaim their own power—they made space for others to do the same. This was not an ending but a beginning. The real work lays ahead—in the choices participants make in their workplaces, relationships, and moments of doubt.

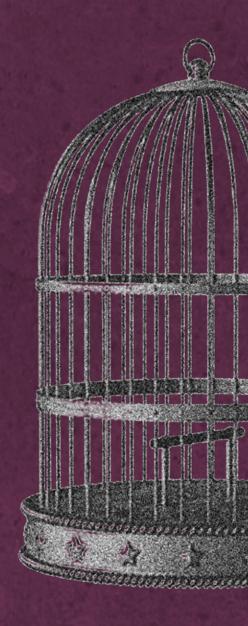


Lab 2. Transcending Societal Expectations for Women

Coming Home to our Bodies as we Include & Transcend Societal Expectations

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a woman beyond societal expectations? What parts of our identity are truly ours, and which have been shaped by the weight of culture, family, and history? This lab brought together women with different lived experiences, yet a shared desire to explore how expectations have shaped their sense of self. It was not about seeking easy answers, but about sitting with the complexity of being—questioning, feeling, and uncovering new possibilities. What happens when we slow down and notice them? This lab was a space to listen—to ourselves, to each other, and to the stories passed down through generations. It was not about rejecting femininity, but about stepping into a fuller sense of what it could be.





INTENTION

QUESTIONING IDENTITY

Many arrived with a sense of something missing. Some felt their identity as women had been reduced to roles—mother, caretaker, supporter—without space for the fullness of who they were. Others struggled to find a connection to womanhood at all. What does it mean to be a woman when the traditional markers—motherhood, appearance, relationships—do not fit in the way they are expected to?

"I feel I am missing a lot of my womanhood... Me being a woman doesn't have coherence beyond the roles of being a mother, a caretaker. I want to process along with other women how come we are imbibing these expectations and allowing them to rule our lives."

"There are many aspects of 'womanhood' I haven't been able to connect with. I spent much of my childhood relating mostly to men, feeling competition and lack of belonging with women. Since I became a mother, and then shortly after I lost my son, I have experienced confusion and pain around my identity as a mother and my ability to relate to other women... I also want to explore my connection to my body, which includes my health, how I look, sexuality, instinct, and intuition." (...)

"Women are so much more limited by societal expectations than men. What is it to be a woman? Do we know who we are, or are we living a version of womanhood shaped by a society ruled by the masculine? Through embodiment, I hope to gain deeper insight into what it means to be a woman from a feminine perspective."

IMMERSION

UNRAVELING AND RECLAIMING

As the lab moved deeper, something began to shift. It was not just about discussing ideas—it was about feeling them, seeing them reflected, noticing where they lived in the body. What does it feel like to sit with other women and name what has been unspoken for so long? To hear your own story in someone else's voice?

"I have experienced how people coming together with a common intent can cause shifts in energy and healing. It creates a sense of wider connection in tumultuous times."

"It's powerful to be with a group of women exploring topics typically avoided or met with frustration. Here, we meet them with sensitivity and healing, and that makes all the difference."

"It's lovely to reflect on how broader societal dynamics influence personal behaviors. Things I once saw as personal failures, I now recognize as shaped by systemic forces. As I bring awareness to them, I begin to have a choice."

"It's powerful to be with a group of women exploring topics typically avoided or met with frustration.

Here, we meet them with sensitivity and healing, and that makes all the difference."

For many, the connection went beyond the present moment:

"I am astonished at how much pain exists in the field and within me. I feel more connected to my ancestors, especially my female lineage, and how their struggles reflect in my own life. Despite our differences in age, bodies, and cultures, we share a painbody, a closeness, and an understanding that I never thought possible among a group of women." (...)

What happens when we stop carrying these burdens alone? When we allow ourselves to be seen, not as fragmented parts, but as whole? In witnessing each other, we began to reclaim the parts of ourselves that had been left behind.

"Despite our differences in age, bodies, and cultures, we share a painbody, a closeness, and an understanding that I never thought possible among a group of women."

INTEGRATION

A NEW AWARENESS OF BELONGING

By the end of the lab, something had softened. The expectations had not disappeared, but they no longer felt as heavy.

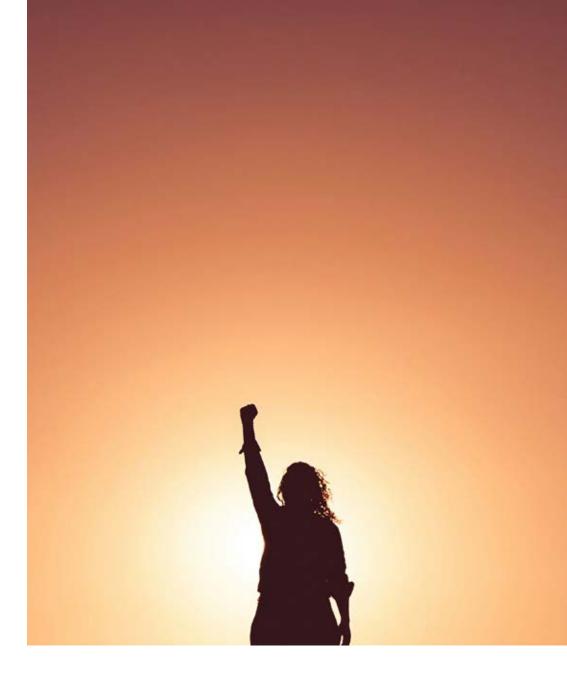
"Developing a sense of not being alone with certain difficulties, loosening up the sense of isolation and oppression around being a woman."

"I have learned how deeply engraved our ancestral and collective trauma as women is in our society and in my own life. I had been so socialized that I didn't recognize many of the symptoms of discrimination I face today are shaped by society and culture. This journey opened my eyes to that."

"What a beautiful and enriching year. I entered as an individual, and after this journey, I realize I am a part of the other participants, and they are a part of me. Through listening and sharing, I became aware of parts of myself that were previously invisible or numbed. This is the case for all of us."

There was something in this space—this space of listening, of being witnessed—that created the possibility of change:

"The deeper the sharing, the deeper the transformation. When we create a space safe enough for people to show their vulnerability, it allows others to feel more at ease with their own. The deeper the process, the more grace happens. It is magical, yet so simple."



CONCLUSION

This lab was not about discarding womanhood but about rediscovering it—on one's own terms. What does it mean to belong to oneself before belonging to an expectation? Who are we when we stop performing and start listening? Through exploration, witnessing, and connection, participants found space beyond societal expectations to redefine their identity. They did not leave with all the answers, but with a new question: "Who am I, when I listen to the voice within rather than the voices around me?" In this question, and in the community they built, they had already begun to find their way home.

Lab 3. Men, Fathers, Gods: Trauma & Alignment in Men's Lineages

The International Men's Lab

INTRODUCTION

We often think of manhood as something to achieve, a standard to meet, a role to embody. What does it mean to be a man shaped by generations before us? What happens when we stop moving forward and instead pause to stand alongside the men who came before us, the ones we knew and the ones whose stories remain unspoken? This lab was not about fixing something broken, but about being with what is—sitting with the weight of lineage, the expectations, the silences, and asking:

What do I carry? What do I want to pass on? What do I need to let go of?



INTENTION

THE WEIGHT OF GENERATIONS

Some participants entered this space knowing that something from the past still lived in them. It was in the body, in patterns of disconnection, in the inherited struggles that had shaped their fathers and now shaped them. For some, the weight was literal, passed down through physical symptoms; for others this weight was felt as an emotional absence:

"I am aware that my trauma load has passed through my son to my granddaughter. This saddens me deeply. I also carry my struggle about being a man in my body, manifesting in physical symptoms. Several generations before me did that. I am committed to moving whatever I can to give the next generation as much freedom as possible."

"I felt distant from my father as a child and young man. I know my father did too with his father. I want to look at the emotional disconnection between fathers and sons in my family. I wish to heal the wound I carry from my father and his fathers. I want to be able to form a healthy connection to my children in the future."

And then, there was the question of faith—of the father beyond fathers: "I want to make peace with the path I took in relation to God and the church. A new version of 'manhood' is wanting to emerge in the world, and I want to contribute to that." (...)

What does it mean to be shaped by what we do not fully understand? What happens when we turn toward the patterns rather than away from them?



UNRAVELING AND RECONNECTING

In the quiet of this space, stories that had been carried alone were spoken. What once felt personal, even isolating, was reflected back as something shared. How many of us had struggled to understand our fathers? How many of us had been handed definitions of masculinity that did not fit, yet had worn them anyway?

"I hadn't realized how closely connected ancestral work and spirituality were. Through connecting with our fathers, we connect with God. This is deeply moving and transformative."

"Having a consistent space to meet—men, fathers, sons—has been invaluable. The weekly triads keep this work close, like a fire that stays warm. Patterns like avoidance, anger, grief, and distance become visible much faster and can be brought into the light."

"A new version of 'manhood' is wanting to emerge in the world, and I want to contribute to that."



"I found that many of the problems I considered personal were not just my own. The challenges we face as men at the end of a patriarchal era, standing at the birth of something not yet fully visible, are shared challenges. Many are rooted in our collective past."

What do we do with this awareness? Do we carry it differently? Do we meet our fathers with softer eyes? What shifts when we stop trying to 'fix' ourselves and instead allow ourselves to be seen, exactly as we are?

INTEGRATION

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF MASCULINITY

By the end of the lab, something had settled. The questions did not disappear, but they no longer carried the same weight. They had been spoken, held, understood. There was an unspoken permission—to be, to feel, to not have all the answers.

"I have become more aware of the complexity and challenge of men's struggles—to embrace emotional experience, to inhabit strength without rigidity, to face and include our fathers, to allow intimacy and be with fear."

"I have become more aware that my struggles are not mine alone. Through sharing and listening, I realized that much of what I sense as pain and tension in my body has a collective dimension. I experienced that it is safe to open up to other men, to express my feelings and thoughts. This has changed my relationships with men—I am now a better friend, capable of deeper and more nourishing connections."

For some, there was a new understanding of their fathers and a new way of being:

"Listening to fathers speak about their struggles with their sons has helped me understand my own father. I now see how my ambivalence toward God mirrors my ambivalence toward my father."

"Men's spaces are much more sensitive than I thought. It is safe to show up in them."

"Listening to fathers speak about their struggles with their sons has helped me understand my own father. I now see how my ambivalence toward God mirrors my ambivalence toward my father."

CONCLUSION

Transformation does not come from rejection, but from integration. It is not about erasing the past but standing with it, listening to it, deciding what to carry forward and what to lay down. In this lab, men sat with their lineages—not as something to fix, but as something to understand. And in the space between past and future, between father and son, between silence and speech, something shifted. They did not leave with all the answers. But they left with each other. And maybe, for the first time, that was enough.



Lab 4. Inhabiting the Female Body

(South American lab)

A collective journey of self-discovery through the female body

INTRODUCTION

The female body carries not only personal history but the weight of collective and ancestral experiences. From societal expectations to trauma passed down through generations, inhabiting the female body is both a deeply personal and shared journey. This lab explored the layers of disconnection, violence, and resilience embedded in women's bodies, while also highlighting the power of collective healing and the wisdom that emerges when women come together.

How does trauma shape the way women experience their bodies? What happens when these narratives are held collectively rather than in isolation? How can connection, presence, and cultural wisdom support a return to embodiment and agency?

The body is not just a vessel but a living record of experience. This lab became a space to reclaim what had been lost or buried—to step into the wisdom of the body, not only as an individual experience but as part of a larger, collective remembering.



INTENTION

THE CALL TO RECONNECT

For some, joining the lab was about reclaiming the female body as a place of presence rather than disconnection. For others, it was about understanding how societal structures shape the ways women relate to their own physicality and experiences.

"I hope that, by the end, we gain a deeper understanding of our role as women and have greater freedom to choose."

"The body is the anchor for the soul's experiences in our earthly world; it has the ability to perceive each of our experiences through our sensory organs, the largest of which is the skin, followed by sight, hearing, smell, and taste."

The lab provided space to acknowledge that embodiment is not just about individual awareness, but about unearthing the wisdom stored in women's histories and shared experiences.

How does societal conditioning shape the way women inhabit their bodies? What happens when a woman's body is no longer a battleground but a place of presence and power? What would change if embodiment became an act of resistance and liberation?

IMMERSION

FEELING AND UNRAVELING THE LAYERS

As the lab deepened, participants moved from intellectualizing their experiences to feeling them—sometimes for the first time. For many, there was an awakening to the reality that what had felt deeply personal was actually part of a larger, collective experience.

"I have learned that what I feel is not just me; there are lots of people with similar stories, feelings, senses."

"The perspective I have gained is that of being part of something. The confirmation that we are all always in resonance, and what that resonance brings to my personal work is more light for my path."

Through practices such as storytelling, embodied movement, and ritual, participants accessed a deeper knowing—one that bypassed language and rational thought. For many, the experience of being in a collective of women offered something profoundly transformative: the realization that healing is not a solitary journey.

What changes when the female body is no longer seen as something to be controlled or silenced? How does connection with others create a path toward deeper embodiment? What wisdom emerges when personal experience is woven into a larger collective understanding?

INTEGRATION

RECLAIMING THE BODY AS HOME

By the end of the lab, participants described a renewed relationship with their bodies—one rooted in presence, pleasure, and belonging. The body was no longer just a site of pain but also of joy, resilience, and deep wisdom.

"Before being in this lab, I could only feel my body in pain; now I can also feel it in pleasure and joy. I feel very alive through my body. I am excited to inhabit my space with emotion."

"This lab was a beautiful experience, a journey month after month through different topics and perspectives of what inhabits us as women. It has been a privilege to do this accompanied and nurtured by women with awakening and profound wisdom; every group or plenary meeting has enriched and expanded my experience..."

The work of this lab did not stay confined to discussions; it was felt in the body, in the nervous system, in the small moments of reclaiming sensation. One participant beautifully captured the long-term impact:

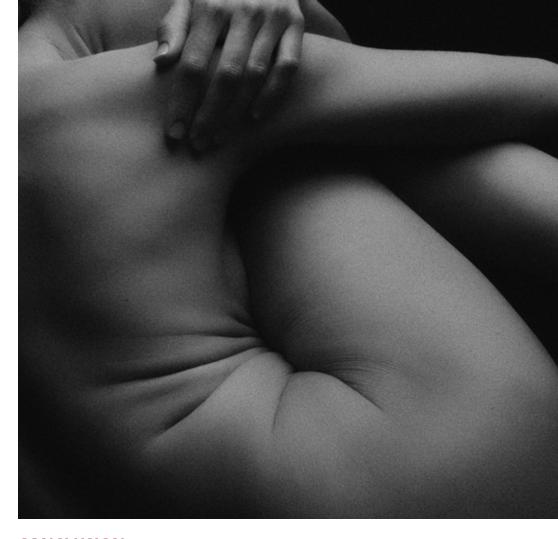
"(...) The seed we've planted over the course of this year, every single month, has now become a flower, then it will become a sturdy tree. Something like an Amazon that we can create among us to give air to this world."

"When I began, I was coming from a deep disconnection with my body. I leave the lab connected with myself, with my body. I leave connected with those things that are now in the light. Thank you for being wise and welcoming mothers. I have felt much healing."

"It was a wonderful experience. When I started, I realized how disconnected I was from my body; I could only feel it when it hurt. My main reflection was wanting to experience it in enjoyment and pleasure. As the year passed, I began to realize how I started to feel it... and now that we've finished, I can say I ACHIEVED! I can feel it in enjoyment and pleasure!"

What happens when women truly inhabit their own bodies? How does collective healing shape individual transformation? What shifts when the body is no longer a place of suffering but of joy and presence?

"I leave the lab connected with myself, with my body. I leave connected with those things that are now in the light."



CONCLUSION

The female body has long been a site of societal control, but it is also a place of profound wisdom and power. This lab was not just about understanding trauma—it was about reclaiming embodiment as a source of strength. Through collective experience, participants found that healing does not happen in isolation; it happens in resonance with others.

Despite the virtual nature of the lab, the depth of connection was undeniable. Women from different backgrounds, geographies, and experiences found common ground, proving that healing is not dependent on physical proximity but on shared presence and intention.

What if inhabiting the female body was seen as a revolutionary act? How would the world change if women moved through it with full presence, unapologetically embodied? What wisdom arises when the female body is no longer silenced but deeply heard?

II.

Reclaiming Balance in Gender & Power

Overall Reflection

P ower, when confined, becomes rigid—turning into dominance, control, or fear. But when given space, when invited into fluidity, it transforms into something alive: presence, connection, relational intelligence. This chapter was an exploration of that transformation—of what happens when we loosen the grip of inherited structures, when we let power move in a different way.

The International Labs on gender and power were not about replacing one dominance with another; they were about stepping into the forgotten possibilities of leadership, identity, and embodiment. Across these spaces, participants encountered the imprints of patriarchy—not just as an external system, but as something internalized, something shaping their very way of being. They found that power is not merely about who holds authority, but about how presence itself shapes the field.

For women, this meant unraveling the weight of societal expectation—learning to hear their own voices beyond the roles they had been given. It meant reclaiming the body as a place of wisdom rather than restriction, learning to stand in their fullness rather than conform to what was expected.

For men, it meant facing the unspoken, the generations of silence that shaped their sense of self. It meant sitting with the inherited struggle between strength and vulnerability, between connection and isolation. It meant exploring the lineages of fatherhood, masculinity, and faith—not to reject them, but to find what had been lost in their rigid definitions.

And for all, it meant looking at leadership differently—not as something to be achieved, but as something to be embodied. The shift was not only in the mind but in the body, in the way people listened, in the way they held space for each other. Leadership became less about control and more about attunement. Influence became less about assertion and more about resonance.

This work is not finished. It is an ongoing movement—one that must be lived in relationships, workplaces, and communities. It is an invitation to continue stepping into new ways of relating, to keep unlearning the old stories and remembering what power can be when it flows freely.

What happens when we stop striving to hold power and instead learn to move with it? What shifts when leadership is not about authority but about deep presence? These are not just questions for the past; they are questions for the future, waiting to be lived into, moment by moment, choice by choice.



III. Systems & Organizations: Melting frozen structures

Systems shape our lives in ways both seen and unseen. They provide structure, yet they can also become rigid, resistant to change, and disconnected from the people they are meant to serve.

How do we bring warmth to the frozen layers within these structures?

How do we soften what has long been hardened by habit, hierarchy, and history?

This chapter explores trauma within healthcare, organizations, media, and education—four arenas where human lives are deeply impacted by systemic forces. Each of these fields holds immense potential for healing, yet they also carry wounds that remain unseen, unspoken, or unresolved. Participants in these labs did not set out to dismantle entire systems, nor did they search for quick fixes. Instead, they stepped into the work of witnessing—turning toward what is stuck, listening to what has been silenced, and allowing space for transformation to emerge.

Can institutions that have long prioritized efficiency over humanity learn to value presence and connection? Can leadership become an act of attunement rather than control? Can journalism inform without retraumatizing? Can education move beyond authority to truly foster growth? These labs did not offer definitive answers, but they illuminated the pathways where change becomes possible. In places where systems numbed, frozen, and disconnected, this work invites us to bring warmth, breath, and movement—to melt what is rigid and awaken what is alive.

Lab 1. Trauma in the Healthcare System

Exploring Fragmentation and Dysfunction & Inviting Health and Healing

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare system is meant to heal, yet it holds deep wounds of its own. It is a place of care, but also of exhaustion, disconnection, and structural harm. This lab was an invitation to sit with that reality—not to fix it overnight, but to witness it, to feel where the trauma lives, and to explore what it means to bring collective intelligence into a system that often isolates those within it. As participants tuned into the field of healthcare, they also tuned into themselves, feeling the resonance of trauma but also the possibility of transformation.

This lab became a space to sense the weight of what has been carried, to feel into the frozen layers, and to open new pathways for connection and coherence.

INTENTION

A CALL FOR CHANGE

Many participants arrived with a sense that something needed to shift—not just in the system, but in the way we relate to it. There was a longing to move beyond critique and into a space of collective intelligence and transformation.

"To be part of a new healthcare system, from collective intelligence."

"Connecting more hearts for world healing."

What does it mean to change a system that is so vast, so deeply ingrained? Can transformation emerge not from forcing change, but from attuning to what is already present?

IMMERSION

FEELING THE FIELD

As the lab unfolded, it became clear that the trauma within the healthcare system is not just conceptual—it is tangible, it is felt. Participants began to sense the weight of exhaustion, the speed that overrides presence, the way disconnection is built into the very fabric of care.

"How much trauma there is in a system, how affected we are by it, and how much healing we can do together around it, which is heartwarming."

"The importance of not only having a strong awareness of one's own internal systems, but also one's ability to connect, be present, and share space with a collective of others who are like-minded in some critical way."

"Collective information fields are almost immediately in our awareness and tangible if we are in tune."

"I have gained deep insights into the complexity of the shadows in the healthcare system. These can be seen and felt everywhere every day. Every country and every region has its own dynamics and shadows from its own history. However, coming to terms with this is very exciting and changes my work."

"The importance of seeing and feeling each other, and the lack of this and the disconnection in daily life."

Could the very act of witnessing, of slowing down, begin to shift something in a system that often moves too fast to feel? Could presence itself be a form of resistance to burnout, to the numbness that accumulates when trauma goes unseen?



"I have gained deep insights into the complexity of the shadows in the healthcare system. These can be seen and felt everywhere every day."

INTEGRATION

A NEW WAY OF SEEING

By the end of the lab, something had shifted—not in the healthcare system itself, but in the way participants related to it. There was a deeper awareness, a new way of being with the reality of the system while holding the possibility of something different.

"I have lived with a feeling of deep isolation and aloneness, which I think at its core is the result of not experiencing interpersonal attunement on a particular energetic frequency since birth. One of my lab leaders met me in that young tender open place in my heart before the trauma of disconnection, and I felt seen, felt, and appreciated. That was very healing."

"Transformative, connecting, worth it all the way! Inspires hope and cultivates practices for reviving human nature and spirit through 'collective witnessing."

"The international community lent itself to deeper respect and insight into common problems and solutions in powerful ways. Experience within healthcare is traumatic given the nature of illness itself creates vulnerability. Our common experiences of the dysfunction inherent in our healthcare systems, as well as the shared desire to improve it, was inspiring and encouraging."

By staying present with the trauma in the system, by feeling into the frozen layers and allowing space for them to soften, something else became possible. Hearts widened, wounds were allowed to breathe, and the presence of something larger—perhaps even the presence of the sacred—became tangible.

"One of my lab leaders met me in that young tender open place in my heart before the trauma of disconnection, and I felt seen, felt, and appreciated. That was very healing."

CONCLUSION

Healing does not come from fixing—it comes from listening, from attuning, from making space. This lab did not offer solutions to the fractures within healthcare, but it created a field where those fractures could be witnessed with care. It became a place where the wounds of the system were not ignored, but met. And in that meeting, something shifted—not in policy, not in bureaucracy, but in the way each participant now holds the system itself. With more presence, more spaciousness, and the possibility of something new.



Lab 2. Mitigating Trauma in Organizations

Invitation for Organizational Leaders

INTRODUCTION

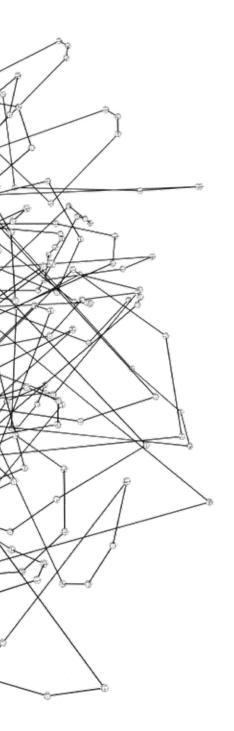
Leadership today extends beyond strategy and decision-making; it demands a deeper awareness of the emotional and psychological undercurrents within organizations. Trauma—whether personal, collective, or systemic—impacts the health of teams, the ability to innovate, and the realization of visionary futures. Recognizing and mitigating trauma is no longer an optional skill but a critical leadership responsibility.

How does unaddressed trauma limit an organization's capacity to evolve?

What happens when leadership shifts from control to attunement?

How can workplaces become spaces for healing rather than sites of reenactment?

This lab became a space to sense the weight of what has been carried, to feel into the frozen layers, and to open new pathways for connection and coherence.



"I've learned to slow down in interaction in order to have a better sense of the situation, the person I am engaging with, and most of all, with myself. It's very powerful to be so present."

INTENTION

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA IN ORGANIZATIONS

Some participants came to the lab with a strong awareness of trauma's impact, seeking to better understand how to address it within their organizations. Others were just beginning to explore how systemic patterns of stress, avoidance, and reactivity shape workplace dynamics.

"I want to bring more awareness of trauma—both big and small T—into the world, including in the corporate context. But first, it's essential to understand just how invisibly it impacts (workplace) relationships and how conflicts become unsolvable when approached with a 'linear disruptions must be fixed first' mindset. We go in circles, exhausting ourselves, especially in healthcare, where I work."

How does trauma shape workplace culture? What would change if leadership prioritized relational intelligence as much as performance metrics? What becomes possible when workplaces shift from reactive crisis management to proactive trauma awareness?

IMMERSION

LEARNING TO NAVIGATE COMPLEXITY

As the lab progressed, participants explored the subtle but powerful ways trauma influences workplace environments. Many described how slowing down and listening to themselves created an immediate shift in their leadership approach.

"The lab has taught me to slow down and breathe—consider my own self-regulation and then calibrate with the community I am in. I have been inspired to invite others to participate. I have become more aware of my body-sense when in a critical moment—and become curious about what I am feeling and the root of why."

"Firstly, I would recommend working in a group about the different responses to trauma. Secondly, the safe container and the wonderful facilitators are relaxing my whole system. Thirdly, I've learned to slow down in interaction in order to have a better sense of the situation, the person I am engaging with, and most of all, with myself. It's very powerful to be so present."

Throughout the lab, a consistent theme emerged: leaders must cultivate inner stability before guiding others. This shift was reflected in the surveys, where participants moved from externally referencing their leadership to trusting their own inner grounding. Additionally, as the group experienced greater coherence, there was a notable shift toward perceiving others as closer rather than distant—a recognition that connection does not require sacrificing authenticity.

What happens when leaders become more attuned to their own nervous systems? How does slowing down allow for better decision-making and conflict resolution? What would change if organizations prioritized relational presence over reactive problem-solving?

INTEGRATION

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP THROUGH AWARENESS

By the end of the lab, participants spoke of a deeper capacity to hold complexity in their workplaces. The focus was no longer on finding a single solution but on developing the ability to stay engaged, attuned, and responsive.

"I am becoming more aware of how trauma is impacting people's behavior and how this contributes to systemic incapacity to create sustainable change. I am very interested in knowing how to mitigate this in my workplace."

"As an organizational leader who works daily with people traumatized by systems and other people, I want to understand if there are 'best practices' for positively interacting with them."

"I feel changed with a deeper, embodied experience and knowledge of holding space in myself and in a group situation to be a bridge in the midst of polarization and help to mitigate trauma."

The lab also revealed a tension between the desire for certainty and the necessity of working with uncertainty. Some participants initially sought clear answers about how to mitigate trauma in organizations, only to realize that the very need for fixed answers was often a symptom of trauma itself. This realization created space for a different kind of leadership—one rooted in presence, relational trust, and the ability to navigate the unknown.

How does trauma-informed leadership reshape the way teams function? What happens when leaders hold space instead of trying to control outcomes?

"I feel changed with a deeper, embodied experience and knowledge of holding space in myself and in a group situation to be a bridge in the midst of polarization and help to mitigate trauma."

CONCLUSION

Over the course of the lab, participants reported a shift in their ability to stay present in challenging situations. They moved from seeing trauma as an abstract concept to recognizing its influence in daily workplace interactions. By the end, the emphasis was no longer just on finding solutions but on embodying a leadership style that fosters resilience, trust, and long-term change.

What if leadership was not about controlling outcomes but about cultivating presence? How would organizations transform if they became places of restoration rather than reenactment? What becomes possible when leaders are willing to meet trauma with awareness, skill, and care?



Lab 3. Collective Trauma in Journalism and Media

(German Lab)

How can we consciously shape, consume and digest news?



INTRODUCTION

Media shapes our perception of the world. It informs, provokes, connects—and often retraumatizes.

In an age of relentless information, how do we engage with journalism and media in a way that acknowledges collective trauma rather than perpetuating it?

How does the constant flow of images, headlines, and narratives affect our bodies and nervous systems? What if we turn the lens inward? What if we ask, What is media doing to me? rather than just What is media doing?

This lab became a space to notice—to feel the patterns, the triggers, the places where media unsettles us or reinforces narratives we may not even be aware of.

INTENTION

SEEKING A DIFFERENT WAY

Some participants entered the lab with a sense of overwhelm, seeking a more intentional way to engage with media. Others came with professional backgrounds in journalism, struggling to balance their work with the emotional toll it carried.

"There is so much collective trauma visible in the world. I am so grateful that spaces like this lab exist, where we can turn toward it together. I am interested in trauma-informed reporting and how I can engage with media in a way that feels more sustainable."

Another spoke of the burden of needing to "fix" journalism:

"I have been struggling with the intersection of media and trauma for a long time. I have always felt like I—alone—had to find the answer for how to do things differently. This lab is a space where I can finally just be with what this topic brings up in me, without needing to immediately find solutions."

What does it mean to engage with media while staying regulated? How do we allow ourselves to feel the weight of the stories we encounter without being consumed by them?



WITNESSING THE EFFECTS

As the lab progressed, it became clear how deeply media is intertwined with our emotional and physiological responses. The group explored the ways in which trauma is not just reported in the news but is embedded in the way news itself is structured—fast-paced, sensational, often polarized.

"It is astonishing how quickly unconscious emotions and physical reactions arise as soon as I focus on a single sentence, a thought, or an experience around a traumatic topic in the media."

"Through working in the group, I have become more aware of how much the media, as opinion-makers, amplify traumatic themes—sometimes reinforcing them through narrow, even arrogant reporting. I now have more insight—and respect—for the work of journalists, but also a deeper skepticism of media narratives."

"My hesitation to voice controversial opinions about traumatic or harmful media coverage is significant—especially because so many in our group are strong-willed media professionals. But as part of this process, my courage to speak my truth has grown."



"There is so much collective trauma visible in the world. I am so grateful that spaces like this lab exist, where we can turn toward it together."

"Not all participants are familiar with trauma-informed work, and it was fascinating to observe how much we still attempt to process these topics intellectually. There is such a strong impulse to find solutions. But I see now that feeling first—before problem-solving—is essential."

Could the media itself slow down? Could journalists and audiences alike take a moment to sense the impact of what is being shared before rushing to react?

INTEGRATION

A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE

By the end of the lab, participants had not found a way to "fix" media, but they had found something perhaps more valuable—a different way of relating to it. They had learned to be more aware of their own responses, to make choices about how and when they engaged with news, and to recognize the emotional and physiological toll it can take.

"I have come to know myself better in terms of how I engage with the media and how I navigate the often highly activated nervous systems around me."

"I realized how important local news is to me and how much more careful I want to be about consuming news from far away—especially when I have little influence on what happens. I now prefer to engage with fewer topics, but in greater depth, rather than consuming everything at once."

A deeper realization emerged about the divide between those who create media and those who are impacted by it:

"This lab brought together both journalists and those affected by media. It became clear how difficult the dialogue between these groups really is, and how much more understanding is needed to bridge that gap. I hadn't realized just how large that divide was before."

"First, I met journalists who are so deeply committed that my trust in media—at least in some areas—was restored. Second, I learned about different approaches within journalism and now focus mainly on constructive journalism, which helps me stay informed without despairing. Third, I saw how news triggers fear and aggression in all of us, and how important it is to navigate these reactions collectively rather than alone." (...)

Could journalism become something that does not just inform, but also holds space? Could there be ways of reporting that acknowledge trauma without reinforcing it? And as individuals, how can we consume news in a way that keeps us engaged but not overwhelmed?

"I have come to know myself better in terms of how I engage with the media and how I navigate the often highly activated nervous systems around me."



CONCLUSION

The media is not just an external force—it is something we are all in relationship with, whether as consumers or creators. This lab was not about finding the "right" way to engage with media, but about learning to feel its impact, to sense where it moves through us, and to recognize the ways it shapes our nervous systems and our collective trauma fields. By slowing down, by staying with what arises, and by honoring the weight of what is being reported, perhaps we can begin to shift our relationship with media—not as something to fear, but as something to engage with more consciously, more gently, and with greater awareness.

Lab 4. Trauma in Education

Exploring & Healing Wounds and Scars from Educational Past and Present

INTRODUCTION

Education holds the promise of growth, discovery, and empowerment. But for many, it is also a space of wounding. The structures that shape learning can be rigid, authoritative, and dismissive of the emotional and psychological needs of students. This lab did not seek to "fix" education but to feel into it—to sit with the ways in which the system has shaped us, both as students and as educators. Through this shared inquiry, participants explored how trauma is embedded in educational systems, how it continues to impact both teachers and learners, and how awareness might open pathways toward a different way of being in education.

What happens when we turn toward the pain that many of us associate with learning? Can we hold the memories of discipline, pressure, and conformity alongside the moments of inspiration and growth? This lab didn't try to "solve" the problems of education. Instead, it made space to witness them.



INTENTION

STEPPING INTO THE INQUIRY

Participants arrived with different relationships to education—some as students, some as teachers, some as parents, and some as all three. But beneath these roles was a shared desire to understand and transform the way education impacts lives.

"I remember many traumatic moments in my life as a student and have seen it over and over again through my children's experiences—I want to transform that. I joined because I am passionate about growth and healing, coming from my own personal journey of trying to understand past trauma and how I can use that understanding to help others. I am also an educator, deeply linked to my community, and I truly believe in the power of collectives."

"I have always felt that I alone had to find the answer for how to improve media and trauma. This lab is the first space where I feel I can sit with these emotions without needing to immediately fix anything."

What happens when we stop trying to force change and instead allow space for what needs to be seen? Can education itself be a process of witnessing, rather than just instruction?

IMMERSION

SITTING WITH THE CONTRADICTIONS

As the lab progressed, it became clear that education is filled with contradictions—it is both necessary and damaging, both structured and chaotic, both oppressive and full of potential. Participants began to notice how deeply these paradoxes lived in them.

"Each session is so engaging. During the last session, we explored rules as a means of control and how the system is like hardware, while the people within it bring heart and flexibility. I also notice softening within me toward the issues I feel strongly about in education."

"The journey is confusing on several levels: my personal insights, my process, and the perspectives of other participants. I don't feel I experienced deep trauma in education, but I was honored to witness the wounds of others. Maybe that means I didn't dig deep enough myself. The sessions are slow, which gives me time to process, but also allows my mind to wander. It is both nourishing and disorienting at the same time."

Instead of seeking clear resolutions, the group stayed with these tensions, noticing how their own nervous systems responded to discussions about learning, authority, and childhood experiences. The exploration was not just about what education is doing, but about what it is doing to us—how it lives in our bodies, in our fears, in our relationship with authority and creativity.

"I have always felt that I alone had to find the answer for how to improve media and trauma. This lab is the first space where I feel I can sit with these emotions without needing to immediately fix anything."

INTEGRATION

A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE

By the end of the lab, participants did not find a solution to trauma in education—but they found something perhaps more meaningful: a new way of relating to it.

"This lab was deeply enriching, especially in the way it revealed education-based trauma as a global phenomenon, likely spread through colonial systems. The trauma in former colonies seems even deeper than in the countries of the colonizers."

"I became softer in my position toward school and teachers. I stopped wanting to fight them or change them. This has given me more space to engage with my daughter instead, and together, we can find lighter ways to respond to the challenges of school. Instead of reactivity and victimhood, we meet these challenges with humor, creativity, and connection to our own power."

For many, the lab expanded their sense of education beyond their own experiences:

"My global perspective on education has expanded through listening to the experiences of people in different parts of the world. The empathy I feel now moves in wider circles. My understanding of how people integrate their experiences has shifted, as has my perception of how much time and commitment is needed for real change."

"I had hoped that over a year, we would travel further in this process. But this reminded me again of the folly of expecting a collective process to go in a straight line. I had to surrender to where the group needed to go, rather than where I expected it to go. A year is such a short time for work like this. There is still so much more to explore." (...)

What does it mean to stay with the process, rather than trying to control it? Can we meet education with the same openness we hope education itself will one day embody?

"My global perspective on education has expanded through listening to the experiences of people in different parts of the world. The empathy I feel now moves in wider circles."

CONCLUSION

Education is not just about what we learn—it is about how we are shaped by the structures that teach us. This lab did not seek to reform education, but to sit with it—to feel how it has lived in us, to recognize the pain and the possibility within it.

The work is ongoing. The questions remain. But what shifted was the way participants now hold those questions—with more spaciousness, more curiosity, and a deeper willingness to listen to what is unfolding.



III.

Systems & Organizations: Melting frozen structures

Overall Reflection

Systems are designed to bring order, yet when they become rigid, they freeze—not only in their structures but in the people who operate within them. Healthcare, organizations, media, and education are all meant to serve human needs, but when trauma is embedded in their foundations, they can instead perpetuate harm, exhaustion, and disconnection. This chapter was an invitation to notice these frozen structures, to feel where they hold weight in our collective and individual experience, and to explore the possibility of transformation—not through force, but through presence. Throughout these labs, participants engaged with the unseen layers of trauma shaping their professional and personal environments. In healthcare, they felt the burden of a system designed to heal but often leaving its caretakers depleted. In organizations, they explored how trauma shapes leadership and decision—making, revealing the need for attuned, relational intelligence. In journalism, they witnessed the ways media can either retraumatize or create space for awareness and integration. And in education, they confronted the ways in which learning environments can both empower and wound, depending on how they are held.

A common thread emerged: trauma does not heal by pushing harder. In every sector, participants found that transformation does not come from top-down reform alone, but from a shift in the way we relate—to each other, to the structures around us, and to the unprocessed wounds these structures carry. Witnessing became a form of resistance to burnout. Slowing down became an act of care. Honoring complexity became a path forward in spaces where oversimplified solutions often fail.

This work is ongoing. Systems do not change overnight, but the way we hold them can shift in an instant. These labs did not solve the crises in healthcare, leadership, media, or education, but they created a space where those crises could be met with awareness, where frozen structures could begin to soften, and where new ways of being could emerge. The real challenge now is in carrying this forward—bringing presence into the daily realities of work, leadership, and decision-making.

What happens when we stop trying to fix broken systems from the outside and instead learn to inhabit them differently? How might organizations change if leadership prioritized attunement over control? What would a healthcare system look like if it cared for both patients and caregivers? How can education and media serve as spaces for integration rather than division? These questions remain open, inviting us not just to think, but to embody new ways of moving through the world.

The work does not end here. It is an invitation to continue—one conversation, one decision, one act of presence at a time.



IV.

Jewish Identity: Memory, Belonging, and Renewal

Jewish identity has long been shaped by movement—across lands, across generations, across histories of exile and return.

It carries the weight of suffering and the resilience of survival, the deep roots of tradition and the evolving nature of transformation.

To be Jewish is to hold complexity—to wrestle with memory, to navigate belonging, and to step into the renewal of the present moment.

The Pocket Project was born out of this very wrestling—with history, trauma, and the potential for healing. Founded by Thomas Hübl, a spiritual teacher and trauma expert, alongside the Israeli artist Yehudit Sasportas, the project emerged from their deep inquiries into art, spirituality, and the collective wounds that shape our world. Their work asks: How do we hold the past without being trapped by it? How do we acknowledge both victimhood and perpetration? What role does witnessing play in healing? The Pocket Project became a space for exploring these questions—not through rigid answers, but through deep presence and relational intelligence.

These questions have never felt more urgent. As Jewish history continues to unfold in real-time, this lab took place amidst the devastating war in Israel and Palestine. It was an act of courage to sit in these explorations while the wounds of today were still raw, while history was not just something to remember but something actively being made. Yet, this is precisely why this work matters. Parallel to this lab, the Palestine and Israel Relief Project, organized by the Pocket Project, has been providing a space for collective witnessing, for holding the enormity of suffering on all sides, for resisting the pull toward polarization.

These labs, like Jewish identity itself, do not offer easy resolution. Instead, they opened space—for listening, for feeling, for being with the tension of the past and the uncertainty of the future. How do we hold onto our history without being defined by it? How do we create belonging in a world that so often fractures it? And how do we renew what it means to be Jewish—not by erasing complexity, but by embracing it fully?

Lab 1. Being Jewish: Persecution and Perpetration

Persecution & Perpetration

INTRODUCTION

Jewish history holds many truths—stories of survival, exile, resilience, and also the complexities of power. What happens when we sit with the fullness of that? Can we hold the weight of Jewish suffering without reducing ourselves to it? Can we acknowledge moments of power without feeling that we are betraying our own people? This lab was not about resolving these tensions, but about stepping into them fully—listening, questioning, feeling what arises.





"It is a complex experience to be a Jew today. I am so grateful to have found a forum to relate with other people and feel more connected—to other Jews and to my own dynamic sense of being Jewish."

INTENTION

ENTERING THE QUESTIONS

For some of us, Jewishness is a given. For others, it is something we wrestle with, question, try to locate within ourselves. Some entered this lab carrying family history that could never quite be put down, others simply longing for a place to connect with other Jews beyond rigid definitions.

"As the child of a Jewish refugee from the Nazis and a non-Jewish German who came of age under Hitler, I have spent most of my adult life considering the implications of my parents' experiences for living my own life. I have felt compelled to dig deeply into such issues as levels of complicity, wielding power through claiming victimhood, and how trauma is passed from one generation to the next."

"It is a complex experience to be a Jew today. I am so grateful to have found a forum to relate with other people and feel more connected—to other Jews and to my own dynamic sense of being Jewish."

Some of us were also carrying fractures within our own families, navigating the divides that exist between generations, between geographies, between political perspectives:

"I'm Jewish, born in Ukraine, with family living in Israel and the USA. My relatives have conflicting political views, my son is married to an Indian woman, and my own stance is different from all of them. I need ways to explore the situation and create more peace and gentle exploration instead of war and confrontation."

Where do we place ourselves when Jewish identity itself is so varied, so full of contradiction? What happens when we hold onto the questions rather than rush toward answers?

IMMERSION

SITTING IN THE TENSION

As the lab unfolded, it became clear that Jewishness is not just something we are, but something we experience—a fluid and ever–shifting relation—ship to history, land, spirituality, and each other. Some of us felt a growing ability to sit with contradictions rather than needing to resolve them. Others felt the weight of trauma in their bodies, realizing just how much had been carried from generation to generation.

"I have learned to hold contradictions, even when this is very difficult. Since this lab, I cherish life even more than before and am acutely aware of how precious it is. It is up to us to make choices that honor this jewel called life."

"Trauma speeds things up. I have experienced a felt sense of the need to go slow, build the vessel, spend time looking at resources... before touching the trauma more directly. Then it becomes possible to create the resonant body that can integrate some aspects of the trauma." As global events unfolded, our lab became a mirror for the complexities of the world. We saw, in real time, how Jewish history was being invoked, debated, weaponized. We watched how the wounds of the past informed the present. And yet, we resisted falling into the binary of victim and perpetrator.

"We've been examining the complexities of Jewish identity, especially around ancestral histories of victimization and perpetration, in a way that honors and makes space for the diversity of feelings and experiences present among group members. It has been very helpful within the context of current social and political discourse around the Israel-Hamas war, Gaza, and the whole Middle East conundrum."

The unfolding of the lab seemed to align with sacred Jewish time. As we sat with themes of memory, forgiveness, and ancestral connection, the calendar carried us through Yom Kippur, through the month of Elul. What does it mean to sit with Jewish identity while Jewish time itself moves around us, guiding us toward reflection and renewal?

INTEGRATION

A SOFTENING AND AN OPENING

By the end of the lab, the questions had not disappeared—but they no longer felt quite as heavy. Something had shifted. Not in a way that brought resolution, but in a way that made more space—for feeling, for witnessing, for simply being with the complexity rather than fighting against it.

"I am deeply thankful that not only Jewish people were present. It was the first time in my life of 62 years that someone non-Jewish said to me, 'Antisemitism has not been owned by anyone, it is free-floating, and Jewish people are therefore still suffering from it.' I felt that something could settle in me, for which I am grateful beyond words."

"I felt the ghost of the past being grounded and more flow opening through the collective field. A couple of highlights: a retelling of the Passover story through the eyes of the women, when we brought in an item that symbolized our ancestors, and how the flow began to open as people shared."

"I have a visceral feeling of connection even with those whose views I deeply disagree with. The trauma imprint that we share from the Holocaust, from centuries of oppression, makes more sense to me now—not as paranoia, but as an intelligent response to genuine events that continue to live as undigested trauma."

And yet, the lab was not only about the past—it was also about how to be Jewish in the present:

"To be in the program during a hot war in the Israel-Palestine region was a profound challenge and an opportunity to witness myself and the collective. This gives me more freedom to respond to it, as a part of it. I really appreciated seeing how a team of expert facilitators led, held, and supported this group, with care, precision, and creativity."

"I felt the ghost of the past being grounded and more flow opening through the collective field."



CONCLUSION

Jewish identity is not something to be resolved. It is something to be lived, wrestled with, shaped over time. This lab did not provide answers—it provided space. Space to ask, to listen, to feel. The questions did not go away, but we learned how to hold them differently. We did not seek to simplify Jewish belonging, but to step more fully into its complexity. And in that complexity, in that willingness to remain with what is unresolved, something sacred emerged.

Lab 2. Healing German and Jewish Wounds

Emotional Exploration of Personal, Ancestral & Collective Wounding

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to stand in the presence of the past? To face the weight of history not as a concept, but as something felt in the body, carried in the nervous system, passed down through generations? This lab was an invitation to meet that history—not to rewrite it, but to listen. To the pain, to the resilience, to the unspoken and the unspeakable. It was a space where Jewish and German participants came together, not to resolve, but to be with the wounds that still shape them, and to ask: What now?

The Holocaust did not end in 1945. It lives on in the bodies of descendants, in the silences of families, in the avoidance of emotions too vast to hold alone. What does it mean to enter a space where these histories meet? What happens when descendants of survivors and descendants of perpetrators sit together—not in accusation, not in defensiveness, but in a shared willingness to listen?



"The trauma of my grandparents and their experiences still lives on in me today—I can feel it very clearly, again and again."

INTENTION

THE WEIGHT WE CARRY

For some, the lab was an opportunity to finally confront what had been felt but never fully acknowledged. The trauma was not just in the past—it lived in the present, shaping relationships, fears, and the ability to feel fully alive.

"I have tremendous ancestral trauma from being the grandchild of Holocaust survivors and the great-grandchild of people who escaped pogroms. As Jews, we collectively carry massive ancestral trauma. It is my deep hope that participating in this lab will help transform ways in which the trauma is stuck in my body and nervous system." For others, the weight was a silence passed down through generations, an unfinished story still seeking resolution:

"The trauma of my grandparents and their experiences still lives on in me today—I can feel it very clearly, again and again. In my family and in German history as a whole, there is still so much that has not been fully processed or truly resolved. Antisemitism remains a pressing issue even today. It is important to me to bring healing into my ancestral lineage and the collective field."

How do we hold the grief of what was lost, the shame of what was done, the fear of facing it all too directly? What does it mean to look at this history together, rather than alone?

IMMERSION

EXPANDING THE CAPACITY TO HOLD

As the lab deepened, it became clear that healing was not about fixing the past—it was about learning to stay with it, to allow it to be seen, to acknowledge the enormity of what was carried. The process was not easy. It was raw, painful, disorienting. And yet, something happened in the willingness to stay.

"I have much greater respect for the complexity of the problems we are dealing with. I had to confront my own avoidance of certain emotions, particularly hatred and deep pain. This has widened my capacity to recognize and respect these emotions in others and meet them with compassion rather than distancing." (...)

"It has been so moving for me to see and hear Germans telling the truth of what happened and how awful it was, in a world where billions deny or minimize the Holocaust—what happened to my grandparents." There was also fear. Fear of getting it wrong. Fear of deepening pain instead of healing it. One participant described feeling both the power of the space and the weight of responsibility:

"I became more aware of my own entanglements. I am really touched by the healing space we create, but I also feel overwhelmed—especially when we move closer to the Holocaust itself. I start to feel stressed, wanting to make sure that it is a healing experience, especially for the Jewish participants." (...)

What does it mean to hold this history together? To sit in the same space and allow it to exist between us—not as something to be solved, but as something to be honored?

INTEGRATION

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF TIME AND HEALING

By the end of the lab, participants had not found closure—because closure was never the goal. What had shifted was the ability to stay, to hold, to listen. The recognition that healing does not happen quickly, nor does it happen alone.

"The strongest change of perspective is how slow as a facilitator I learned we need to go to address the highly dense layers of collective trauma."

"I have learned how important it is for my feeling of safety to hear people's truth, even if that truth is awful. Hearing the truth of how Nazi beliefs were held and spread gave me more understanding. I had so much empathy for the German members of our lab. I also felt very frustrated when Jewish members of our lab could not look at their own internal truths and only make observations about others."

"I was also deeply moved by how much compassion and interest the Jewish participants showed in the history of the Germans. At first, this triggered feelings of shame and resistance in me. In the end, I was able to take it in a little more deeply."

The Holocaust was touched, but only carefully, only at the surface. The deeper layers remained untouched, too intense to fully enter. Yet even this careful approach revealed something profound:

"I had the impression that we only approached the Holocaust cautiously, staying more on the surface layers and not truly touching the deep trauma. And I realized how deeply moved I am by the profound faith in Jewish families, their connection to spirituality—and how unfamiliar this is to me. That was very touching on a deep level. I also felt a kind of 'gentle envy' and wondered whether this might have also frightened my ancestors and perhaps contributed to the violence." (...)

"I was also deeply moved by how much compassion and interest the Jewish participants showed in the history of the Germans.
At first, this triggered feelings of shame and resistance in me.
In the end, I was able to take it in a little more deeply."



CONCLUSION

Healing does not mean erasing. It does not mean forgetting. It does not mean pretending that the past no longer lives in the present. What this lab offered was a space to begin—to hold history between us, not in blame, not in defense, but in presence. The work is slow. The layers are thick. But something happens in the willingness to sit with it. In that sitting, a new kind of belonging becomes possible—not despite the past, but through it.

Lab 3. Wrestling with Jewish Belonging

Relating to Our Jewish Heritage & Spiritual Roots in Challenging Times

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to belong as a Jewish person today? What does it mean to hold onto tradition while stepping into transformation? This lab was not about finding definitive answers but about creating space for the questions—about identity, faith, ancestry, trauma, and healing. For many, it was an opportunity to sit with the tensions of Jewish belonging, to listen to the echoes of the past, and to find themselves within them.

Jewish identity is complex—woven with history, faith, displacement, and survival. Some entered the lab feeling deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, others came questioning where they fit within it. Some sought healing from ancestral trauma, while others simply longed for a space to wrestle with the weight of identity in community. The lab became a sacred space, not to resolve, but to explore.



INTENTION

ENTERING THE TENSION

For many, the lab was a rare opportunity to sit with Jewish identity in a safe space, away from external expectations and pressures. It was a place to hold personal questions while being witnessed by others who, though different, carried similar longings.

"It is an opportunity to explore Jewish identity in a safe place, to explore ancestral and collective trauma connected with the Jewish people."

"This is already giving me a steadiness that I had not previously experienced and is a way to address both my personal and collective concerns, worries, fears."

What does it mean to belong to a people with such a layered history? How do we carry the weight of our ancestors while making space for our own unfolding?

"I can feel my ancestors from before the Holocaust for the first time. I never thought this would be possible."



EXPANDING THE CAPACITY TO HOLD

As the lab progressed, participants found that Jewish belonging was not only about history—it was also about presence, about sitting with both pain and connection. Many spoke of how deeply Jewish trauma had been internalized, yet how powerful it was to be in a space of shared recognition.

"My capacity has expanded for holding painful truths and offering this spaciousness to others when appropriate. I also continue to learn to live more consciously in this difficult time in history."

"I can feel my ancestors from before the Holocaust for the first time. I never thought this would be possible."

Being witnessed by others as these realizations unfolded made the experience even more profound:

"There is much richness when people from around the world, in different cultures and different situations, take such a deep look at the universal and ancestral issues of wrestling with Jewish belonging. There is much comfort in creating a community who wrestle together."

For some, this process of witnessing was deeply healing:

"It is a privilege to sit with such gentleness in my community that carries so much trauma. It is very special to feel part of the collective that is tending to this trauma. Very precious."

What does it mean to meet Jewishness with both reverence and questioning? To hold both the wounds and the joys, the longing and the belonging?



INTEGRATION

FINDING SOFTNESS IN THE WRESTLING

By the end of the lab, something had shifted. The tension had not disappeared, but it no longer held the same tight grip. A softness had entered—the understanding that Jewish belonging does not require rigid certainty but rather the willingness to stay with the questions.

"The lab was an opportunity to make space for myself and others. To learn, heal, and connect. To regulate and co-regulate my nervous system. To learn that integration comes from our connection with each other."

"Something inside me has become softer about the subject of wrestling with Jewish identity. Something has relaxed. At the beginning of the process, there were many fears, especially after October 7. It feels more relaxed now, less anticipating terrible outcomes. There is something more generally that has relaxed in my nervous system."

"The lab was very useful. I intuited that the timing was correct to engage in it, and I was correct. Although I cannot say 'trauma was healed,' I can say I deepened into feeling it and, I believe, became more myself as a result. I am grateful."

And, perhaps most unexpectedly, the depth of connection across distance left a lasting impression:

"I was amazed at the depth of connection with a group virtually, and how profound the healing was from the relatively brief interactions we had. I feel more whole in myself and in my Jewishness as a result." "I was amazed at (...)
how profound the
healing was from
the relatively brief
interactions we had.
I feel more whole in
myself and in my
Jewishness as a result."

CONCLUSION

Jewish belonging is not a fixed state, but an ongoing process—a wrestling, a remembering, a returning. This lab did not resolve the tensions of identity, but it created space to be with them, to explore, to soften, and to witness. The sacredness of this space was not in the answers but in the shared willingness to ask, to feel, to listen. And in that listening, something happened—a deepened sense of connection, not just to Jewishness, but to each other, to ancestors, and to the larger unfolding story of belonging.



IV.

Jewish Identity: Memory, Belonging, and Renewal

Overall Reflection Jewish identity is not a single thread but a vast, interwoven tapestry—of memory and longing, rupture and resilience, exile and return. It does not sit still; it shifts and reconfigures, shaped by the weight of history and the call of the present. Across these labs, participants stepped into the complexity of Jewish belonging—not to resolve it, but to encounter it more fully.

What emerged was not clarity in the traditional sense, but a deepened capacity to hold paradox—to sit with both the wounds and the joys of Jewish existence, to recognize both the burdens of the past and the possibilities of renewal. Like a river carving through generations, Jewish identity has been shaped by movement, by adaptation, by the ways we learn to carry what cannot be put down.

The work of these labs was not about untangling history into something neat and knowable. It was about noticing where the past still pulses in the present, where inherited trauma continues to shape perception, where belonging can feel both like a birthright and a question that must be asked again and again. It was about allowing what has been buried—grief, uncertainty, even contradiction—to surface, not as obstacles to Jewish life, but as part of its living reality.

This is not work that concludes; it evolves. Jewishness is not a fixed inheritance, but an ongoing negotiation—between tradition and transformation, between safety and expansion, between remembering and becoming. And in the willingness to engage with its complexity, something unexpected emerges—not a single answer, but a greater openness to the unfolding of the story itself.



V

Geography of the Past: How Our World Holds Memory

The past is not behind us. It lives in landscapes, in structures, in the very air we breathe. It moves through our bodies, our nervous systems, shaping the ways we relate to the world. Some histories lie just beneath the surface, their presence unmistakable; others are buried deep, waiting for the right moment to rise.

How do we meet the histories we carry, the ones inscribed in land and lineage, in silence and song?

This chapter explores how the past remains active within us—not as something fixed, but as a living field that influences our choices, our fears, our identities. Whether in the deep wounds of the American South, the ongoing legacies of colonialism, the layers of war and displacement in Lebanon and the Balkans, or the ancestral echoes of the Irish famine, history is not only something we remember—it is something we inhabit.

The work of these labs was not to rewrite the past, but to meet it. To listen. To sense how trauma moves through time and space, shaping individual and collective experience. Some histories remain frozen, waiting to be acknowledged. Others are restless, demanding reckoning. The invitation here was not to resolve history but to step into relationship with it—to ask what it needs, what it asks of us, and what might shift when we finally stop looking away.

Lab 1. An Inner Exploration of 'The South'

History, Identity, Trauma & Resource in the Southern United States



INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to belong to the South in the US? To be shaped by its stories, its wounds, its contradictions? This lab was not about fixing or explaining the US South, but about being with it—listening to what it asks of us, feeling how it lives in our bodies, our lineages, and our shared history. Some of us arrived carrying deep roots in Southern soil; others came from afar, drawn to understanding a place that is both deeply personal and undeniably collective. Together, we traced the echoes of history, not in search of easy answers, but in the quiet hope that by turning toward what had long been avoided, something new might emerge.

The US South is not one thing. It is both place and idea, past and present, weight and possibility. How do we hold the complexity of a place that carries so much pain and beauty? What happens when we listen to the South—not as something distant, but as something alive within us? This lab became a space to meet the US South in its contradictions, to stand with its history, and to ask: Where does this land live in me?



INTENTION

THE CALL TO LOOK CLOSER

For some of us, the South has always been home. For others, it is a place we left, a history we have struggled to relate to, or a space we have never fully understood. The lab offered a rare opportunity to return—to the land, to memory, to what we had been carrying but had never quite named.

"I've been wondering for a decade or more how we ever talk about these things in ways that can shift the collective. So I'm joining because it seems like the answer I was looking for."

"My motivation comes from a deep love of the South of the US and also a difficulty to fully land in the richness of it. Often, the South is only framed in one way, but much is left out. I am interested in widening the lens, seeing more here."

"My Southern roots have been a major source of my need and interest in studying and deeply feeling into the work of Thomas Hübl on personal, ancestral, and collective trauma and resilience."

How do we meet a place that is both home and history? How do we sit with the contradictions it carries without needing to resolve them?

IMMERSION

SLOWING DOWN, FEELING MORE

As the lab deepened, we began to notice the ways in which the South is not just a history to be studied, but a presence that moves through us. Some of us felt it in our bodies—ancestral memories rising to the surface. Others encountered it through the land itself, through stories, through the slow unraveling of long-held assumptions.

"I have deeply appreciated the lab and the tender yet strong container that the co-facilitators host and are moving us through. While going at the slow pace of sensing, resourcing, and presencing is sometimes challenging, I can feel the rich soil we are co-creating and the emerging edges of the trauma symptoms we are beginning to host and digest."

"I have realized that I was separating myself from my Southern identity—seeing it as something belonging to others and not myself. Because of this lab, I have just realized I am a Southerner. I am now opening up to the possibility of having a healthy relationship with ancestors, whereas I had been cut off from that as too scary before."

The South, we found, has a rhythm of its own—slow, ungraspable, resistant to being neatly explained. The trauma here is layered, woven into the soil, into structures, into memory. Some of us had unconsciously moved away from it, only to find that it was still present, waiting to be met.

"I have realized that I was separating myself from my Southern identity—seeing it as something belonging to others and not myself."

As part of the lab's unfolding journey, some participants connected with The Legacy Museum in Alabama, bringing its history into conversation with our own. Others carried this work into their daily lives, finding that what once felt distant had become deeply personal.

What happens when we stop trying to define the South and instead allow ourselves to be with it? To notice where it shows up in us, in our assumptions, in our silences?

INTEGRATION

A SHIFT IN THE FIELD

By the end of the lab, something had changed—not in a way that resolved the South's contradictions, but in a way that made them more livable, more possible to sit with. Many of us found a new relationship with our personal histories, with our ancestors, with the weight we had carried without realizing it.

"The lab has provided a rare opportunity to face whatever has arisen in the company of others with similar intentions. I sense that I—and we—are only getting started, and that our continued exploration and healing, aligned with the Divine, will have mystical and practical benefits far beyond ourselves, extending into the land from which we come."

"One thing that has been quite striking is my relation to faith. I feel more grounded in moving with the light, following my calling, allowing things to unfold, and including and appreciating the unknown, the mystery. I also feel more spaciousness for the dark and slower movements, for the edges of things to take their path and clarify as they are ready."

For some, the lab revealed how deeply our origins shape our perspectives:

"I went into this experience thinking that I knew where I was from and who I am in relation to that. I have discovered through this process that everything I thought I knew about my childhood was seen through the filter of where I grew up. That filter has a built-in bias and blindness that colored everything I thought I knew about my-self, my world, and my place in it. This is just the beginning."

What if healing the South is not about fixing the past, but about being with it? What if understanding the South means learning to hold what cannot be grasped, to listen to what cannot be spoken? The slowness, the weight, the complexity—these are not barriers to healing. They are the path itself.

"I feel more grounded in moving with the light, following my calling, allowing things to unfold, and including and appreciating the unknown, the mystery."



CONCLUSION

The US South does not yield easily to explanation. It is not a problem to be solved or a history to be filed away. It asks something different of us—patience, presence, the ability to sit with what is unresolved. This lab was not about answers, but about listening—to ourselves, to each other, to the land. And in that listening, something unexpected happened: a sense of belonging, not to a single story, but to the complexity itself. The US South, it turns out, does not need to be defined. It needs to be met. And in meeting it, we meet ourselves.

Lab 2. Meeting Lebanon's History in Ourselves

Exploring Effects of Trans-generational & Collective Trauma in Lebanon



What does it mean to live in a land shaped by war, displacement, and survival? To inherit a history that moves through our bodies and our families, even when we try to look away? This lab was not about answering these questions but about making space for them—to stand with Lebanon's complex story and listen for what had not yet been spoken. Some of us came longing to reconnect with our roots; others were drawn to the responsibility of bearing witness. Together, we navigated the weight of memory, the grief of what has not yet healed, and the quiet resilience that continues to shape Lebanese identity.

How do we hold a country that is both home and exile, a place of survival and of grief? In this lab, we did not try to define Lebanon, but instead allowed it to speak through us, through the silences passed down across generations.





"What drew me was a deep curiosity to explore parts of the history of my country that I have never stopped nor dared to fully look at or feel."

INTENTION

FEELING THE PULL OF THE PAST

Some of us arrived with a clear longing—to reconnect, to understand, to feel what had been too overwhelming to touch before. For others, there was a sense of responsibility, a need to acknowledge the weight of history not just as individuals but as part of something larger.

"What drew me was a deep curiosity to explore parts of the history of my country that I have never stopped nor dared to fully look at or feel. I am taking part to honor this longing I am currently feeling—to reconnect to the land of my ancestors and to listen to a grief and anger we have never made space for."

"I feel a responsibility as a global citizen to participate in what is happening in the world through my personal awareness and collective presencing. Often we feel disconnected, unable to make a difference. The lab gives me a sense of taking action by doing compassionate service. It also allows me to feel into other global perspectives, history, and hardships, and honor our differences."

What happens when we stop looking at Lebanon from a distance and instead turn toward it fully? When we allow the weight of its history to settle in our bodies and listen to what it has to tell us?

IMMERSION

MEETING THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

As the lab deepened, the stories that had been held at a distance moved closer. Some of us realized that the weight we carried—restlessness, grief, anger—was not just personal, but woven into the history of our people. Others found moments of stillness in what had long felt like chaos. The shift was subtle, yet profound: from searching for solutions outside to finding space within ourselves for what had always been there.

"When the heart is open, when there is a willingness to pause, listen, and empathize, then all judgment disappears. Then we are all connected, compassionate, and curious. It's just about that single moment in which we feel the same. Then we perceive others. Time stands still. A space opens up... Indescribable, indescribable..."

"I felt unsteady and without a foothold, somehow on the run and lost. I also felt restless. I did all kinds of activities to avoid feeling these feelings and was exhausted all the time. The next day I realized that these feelings were part of my being Lebanese. This was also my body's response to the current behavior of Western states toward the situation in the Middle East and to the colonial centuries. And as I write this, I notice a sadness in the form of a cry that I cannot cry. Then I notice myself. There is a peaceful silence within me."

As participants moved inward, something shifted. The need to fix, to find external answers, gave way to a new way of holding experience. In one session, as someone moved from seeking solutions to allowing space for their sadness and anger, the entire group field shifted. The person changed instantly and substantially. We learned that healing was not always about resolving, but about being with what arises.

What does it mean to sit with Lebanon's grief rather than trying to fix it? What does it mean to allow our ancestors into the conversation, to listen not only to our own voices but to the echoes of those who came before us?

INTEGRATION

FINDING SPACE IN THE WEIGHT

By the end of the lab, the wounds of Lebanon had not disappeared—but something in how we carried them had changed. There was more space. More breath. A deeper recognition that this work is not just about looking at history but about feeling how it lives in us and allowing it to move.

"The beauty of being there for each other in painful times of war."

"In the past two years, I have gained a profound understanding of viewing trauma through a collective lens. Over the past year, specifically through co-facilitating, I've learned how to effectively lead groups alongside other facilitators. Working with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures has been a significant learning experience, especially in observing how individuals share their feelings and emotions."

For some, the lab was an unexpected journey into leadership:

"I also learned to manage my own anxiety as a co-facilitator, which was a valuable personal growth opportunity. As a facilitator, I've developed the ability to understand and manage my anxiety by moving with the flow of the group and its sharing, like riding a wave. I've learned to slow down when the sharing becomes particularly intense, as was often the case in our lab, given the 'hot trauma' due to the situation in Lebanon."

What does it mean to meet Lebanon's history with humility rather than certainty? To listen not only to what is being said, but to what is being felt? Throughout the lab, we were reminded that some things remain ungraspable—not because they are unknowable, but because they ask to be met with something deeper than words.

"The beauty of being there for each other in painful times of war."



CONCLUSION

Lebanon's story is still unfolding. It is written in the land, in the movement of its people, in the silences carried through generations. This lab did not try to rewrite that story, but rather to meet it—to stand with it, to feel its weight, to witness what has been left unspoken. And in that witnessing, something shifted. The past did not disappear, but it no longer held us in the same way. We carried it differently. And perhaps, in that shift, the future became just a little more possible.

Lab 3. Collective & Transgenerational Trauma in the Balkans Lab II

Exploring the Unintegrated Past & Inviting Healing in the Present

INTRODUCTION



The Balkans holds a history woven with war, resilience, division, and longing. It is a land shaped by shifting borders, inherited grief, and deep cultural pride. Facing this history is not just about looking at external events but recognizing how they live in families, identities, and nervous systems. This lab did not seek resolution but created space to feel, listen, and encounter what has been carried across generations. The process stood at the edges of memory, asking what it means to belong to a place marked by both survival and separation.

What happens when stories of the past surface—not just as history but as something alive in the present?

How does inherited trauma shape relationships, identity, and the way the world is perceived?

INTENTION

MEETING THE WOUNDS OF THE PAST

The call to this lab came from different places—some were drawn toward understanding and reconciliation, while others wanted to acknowledge what had not yet been fully seen. Some arrived carrying personal and familial histories of war and genocide, while others sought to move beyond individualistic trauma frameworks and into something collective.

"We are one world; what affects you, affects me."

"The last three generations in my family have been through a genocide and two wars. I felt called to join this community of humans doing similar work to heal their own traumas." (...)

"I'm at a point in my life journey where Western, modern, individualistic trauma frameworks feel not only limited but also deeply problematic. I feel a strong yearning to explore collective trauma alongside others. This is the only place I know of in the Balkans that holds space for that exploration — so here I am."

How can inherited histories be held without being reduced to a single narrative? What does it take to acknowledge the pain of the past while making space for something new? How does the weight of history influence the way the present is navigated?



SITTING IN THE UNRESOLVED

The trauma in the Balkans is layered—woven into personal and political realities, embedded in the land itself. At times, the weight of what was carried felt overwhelming, yet within that weight, something else emerged: recognition, connection, and an ability to hold what once felt unbearable.

"So much undigested trauma in this region. So much healing work needed. So much capacity in ourselves—once we allow it to be felt and seen."

"I am learning so much about possibilities and limitations around what can and cannot be processed in the collective field at any given moment. It is becoming clear to me why the work on collective trauma is an intergenerational endeavor."

The wars of the 1990s had left marks on all sides, regardless of ethnicity. One participant shared how hearing from someone with a different historical position shifted something internally:

"I was surprised to realize how deeply the war in the '90s affected all of us—across every ethnic group involved. For me, hearing human beings from the so-called 'perpetrator' side share their deep trauma, while I come from a group that was victimized in the war, touched something profound within me. It felt like a part of me began to heal." (...)



"We are one world; what affects you, affects me."

The lab offered moments of deep confrontation with the ways history moves through people. When participants who had been looking for solutions outside began to allow space for sadness or anger, the field shifted, and something changed in them. Instead of intellectualizing history, emotions were given room to be felt.

What happens when grief is no longer resisted? How does history shift when presence replaces avoidance? What might change if more space is given to what has long been left unspoken?

INTEGRATION

HOLDING THE COMPLEXITY WITH CARE

Healing in the Balkans is not a single event but an ongoing process—one that requires patience, courage, and a willingness to hold what has been inherited without being consumed by it. The lab did not seek to fix the past but allowed it to breathe, making space for something beyond survival.

"I gained proof, during the three days of our in-person retreat, that we had the capacity to look into the 'volcano' of traumas we were sitting on—without burning ourselves and without provoking new conflicts."

"We met a wanting to bypass 'othering' in this process—a fleeing to the past (nostalgia) or the future ('we are all one'), which got in the way of being with the pain in the present. We were able to move through this layer of resistance by exploring our relationships to trauma, belonging, and oneness in small groups. This opened up the field for further exploration of trauma layers." (...)

Instead of leaving with answers, participants left with something equally valuable—an awareness that hope and possibility can emerge when the past is met with openness rather than fear.

"A sense of hope and possibilities."

The Balkans is a region that has learned to survive, but survival alone is not enough. The lab was a step toward something beyond survival—toward integration, toward acknowledging wounds without being consumed by them, toward the possibility of something different. The pain of the past was not erased, but the way it was held changed. And in that shift, something new became possible.

"We had the capacity to look into the 'volcano' of traumas we were sitting on—without burning ourselves and without provoking new conflicts."



Lab 4. The Global Legacy of the Great Famine in Ireland

Healing the Wounds of An Gorta Mór & Exploring What it Means to be Irish

INTRODUCTION

The Irish famine lives on, not just in history books but in bodies, families, and unspoken habits passed down through generations. The echoes of starvation, displacement, and survival ripple through Irish identity, shaping the way belonging is felt and how stories are told. This lab was not about retelling the facts of An Gorta Mór but about listening for what remains unspoken—how trauma carries forward and how it is still shaping lives today.

What does it mean to inherit the famine—not as an event of the past, but as something alive in behaviors, relationships, and cultural memory?

How does the silence surrounding this history influence the way survival and scarcity are navigated today?



"I'm realizing how
The Famine may
have had much more
influence on my
personal autobiography
than I ever imagined.
I understand how when
my ancestors left Ireland
after the famine, they
closed that emotional
door and never
looked back.

INTENTION

UNCOVERING WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND

Some entered this lab with an intellectual curiosity about how the famine shaped their family histories. Others carried a deeper, more visceral awareness—of patterns that had persisted without explanation, of inherited emotions that had no clear origin. The lab became an opening, a way to finally bring these questions into the light.

"I have always been on the lookout for how trauma—the trauma of being Irish in general, and the trauma of the famine in particular—has affected me and my extended family. I have seen patterns like alcoholism, being quiet, depression, anxiety about certain things, and a closing of the door that happens. Also vagueness and avoidance. So imagine—here is this chance to connect with so many people who are also Irish and wondering the same thing." (...)

"I wanted to better understand my Irishness and the impact of growing up in an Irish Catholic household in regional NSW, Australia. I wanted to investigate inherited trauma and the impact of colonization both in a collective and personal way."

How much of Irishness is shaped by survival? What happens when the unspoken grief of the famine is finally given space? How does the weight of forced displacement and loss shape relationships to land, family, and belonging?

IMMERSION

SITTING WITH THE SILENCE

As the lab deepened, the famine's impact became more than just history—it became personal. The participants began to notice how it showed up in their bodies, in their family systems, in the ways emotions had been handled—or avoided—for generations.

"I'm realizing how The Famine may have had much more influence on my personal autobiography than I ever imagined. I understand how when my ancestors left Ireland after the famine, they closed that emotional door and never looked back. They were committed to surviving and making it in the new world. I'm about to go to an Irish family reunion and aware this phenomenon is present in the whole family system. Anger is acceptable and can even be played with. Love is present too. But sadness, grief, loneliness... they are unavailable, not to be expressed."

For others, encountering the silence surrounding the famine felt like unraveling something deeply embedded:

"It was difficult to fully connect at first. There was a dissonance, like an omertà. Almost like a collusion of silence or amnesia in the system. It deepens and lifts slowly as we progress, but sometimes, if you look at it directly, it wanes—so it becomes a process of unraveling and unveiling and uncovering. But we must look, in small, titrated steps. As we do, we connect more and more. Otherwise, it might be too much."

The process of exploring this trauma was deepened by the structure of the lab itself. The use of triads allowed participants to share in a way that many had never experienced before. The open sharing spaces that followed became places where what was arising in the group field could be acknowledged. Some described the healing that came simply from being witnessed as they uncovered something not just for themselves, but for the whole group.

What does it mean to face something that has been buried for generations? How does grief move when it has been frozen for so long? What might change if these long-held silences are finally spoken into the open?

INTEGRATION

FINDING A NEW RELATIONSHIP TO THE PAST

By the end of the lab, participants did not walk away with easy answers. The famine had not been "processed" or "solved"—but something had shifted. The weight of it had been acknowledged, given room to breathe. A deeper understanding had taken root, not just intellectually, but somatically, emotionally.

"It was a transformative experience. I'd known little about the details and historical context of the Great Irish Hunger (An Gorta Mór) of the mid-19th century, even though my great-grandmother had left Ireland as a teenager to escape. Through the lab experience, including twice-monthly small group meetings and the many resources—readings, podcasts, films—offered to us, I gained a deep understanding of how this catastrophe arose, how it devastated the Irish, and how the trauma was passed down through my own family to me. It was revelatory, helping me understand behaviors in my family of origin that had seemed cruel and incomprehensible." (...)

Another spoke to the power of allowing uncertainty:

"The permission to have my not-knowing be as important as my knowing allowed me to explore something I have always been curious about but also always overwhelmed by. That introduction to my own ancestors awakened a somatic knowing of the net of life I am bound in and supported by that remains to today."

"That introduction to my own ancestors awakened a somatic knowing of the net of life I am bound in and supported by that remains to today." For many, the lab provided a rare sense of connection—to history, to others, to something beyond the intellectual understanding of Irish identity. The inclusion of Irish language in sessions touched something deeply ancestral, particularly for those in the diaspora who had no exposure to the language before. Even without understanding the words, some described feeling something unlock within them when hearing Irish spoken aloud.

What shifts when the famine is no longer just a historical fact but a living presence in the body? What becomes possible when Irish identity is explored beyond survival and into something more expansive?

CONCLUSION

The famine is often spoken about in numbers, statistics, political contexts—but rarely is it spoken about as something alive in people today. This lab offered a space to meet that inheritance, not just as tragedy but as an ongoing story woven through identity, family, and belonging. It did not resolve the famine's legacy, but it made space for it, allowing it to be felt, acknowledged, and carried differently. What might change in Irish identity when the famine is not just remembered, but deeply met? How can this history be integrated in a way that honors the past while making space for renewal?

Lab 5. Reckoning with the Pandemic Era

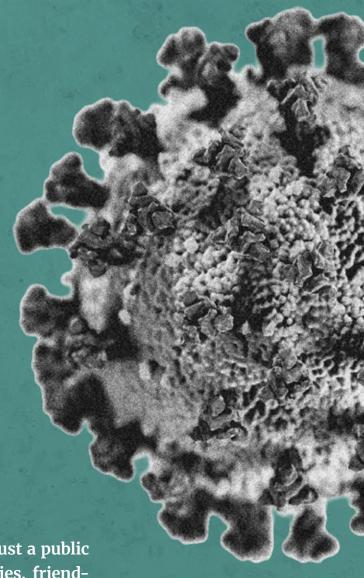
(German Lab)

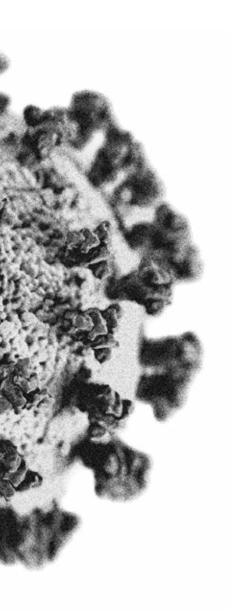
What was unspoken, unheard, unfelt, and misunderstood is now allowed to surface

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic left behind more than just a public health crisis—it created deep fractures in families, friend-ships, and societies. The divisions that surfaced during this time did not disappear when restrictions were lifted; instead, they settled in the background, unresolved and unspoken. This lab was an invitation to step into those silences, to reflect on what happened, and to find ways to move forward.

What happens when deeply held beliefs collide with the need for connection? How does polarization shape relationships, and what does it take to restore trust when perspectives remain different?





"I heard myself saying that hardly anyone wants to process the COVID era, and then I realized that I could contribute to creating spaces for that process to happen."

INTENTION

INVESTIGATING THE RUPTURE

For many participants, the pandemic was not just a time of global crisis but a personal reckoning. Some realized how rigidly they had clung to their own sense of rightness, while others wrestled with the isolation caused by feeling unheard or dismissed.

"I have noticed that my need to be right feels existentially important. This was surely one of the reasons for the deep divisions during the pandemic. I want to explore and understand this further—ideally to heal and integrate it."

"I heard myself saying that hardly anyone wants to process the COVID era, and then I realized that I could contribute to creating spaces for that process to happen."

"The COVID era shook my connections to people and friends. Now, with some distance, I want to understand more deeply what happened within me and in society."

For many, the time of social distancing created wounds that still felt unresolved. How do people begin to rebuild connections after such deep divides? What does it take to sit with the discomfort of opposing viewpoints without retreating into defensiveness?

IMMERSION

SITTING WITH DISCOMFORT

As the lab unfolded, participants began to see how their own emotions—anger, fear, resentment—had fueled the divisions they had struggled with. Through deep listening and shared reflection, something shifted. It became possible to hold the pain of the past without immediately assigning blame, to see how everyone had been navigating uncertainty in the best way they knew how.

"I have become far more aware of how much I contributed to the division. I have begun to see where the people I judged were emotionally affected."

The depth of polarization became clearer, along with the recognition that healing required spaces where people could meet beyond the right-wrong binary: "It is urgently necessary to meet each other because the divisions are still very real and the polarization often runs very deep. This kind of encounter—where there is no right or wrong—can be incredibly healing."

The facilitators noticed how the group process deepened over time, influenced by the way the space was held. The ability to listen with real acceptance had an immediate effect on even the most difficult conversations.

Instead of trying to change each other's views, participants found that simply being heard created openings for understanding.

What happens when judgment is replaced by curiosity? How does anger shift when it is met with presence rather than opposition?

INTEGRATION

MOVING BEYOND THE DIVIDE

By the end of the lab, something had changed. The divisions had not disappeared, but they no longer felt insurmountable. Participants spoke of feeling lighter, more open to dialogue, more willing to acknowledge their own role in the fractures they had experienced.

"What I have realized for myself is how significant my own role was in this whole COVID-trigger-response dynamic. And still is."

"This lab has been a real game-changer for me in processing this time. The opportunity to gain insight into the lives and decision-making processes of others has helped me step out of judgment."

For some, the pandemic had created ruptures in family relationships that felt impossible to mend. Through this lab, a new perspective emerged:

"I have understood that the relationships and love in my family, despite different views and actions (e.g. vaccination), were strong enough to not be torn apart!"

What does it mean to rebuild trust in the wake of division? How can the lessons of the COVID era shape future responses to crisis and polarization?

"I have understood that the relationships and love in my family, despite different views and actions, were strong enough to not be torn apart!"

CONCLUSION

This lab did not erase all fractures, but it allowed space for them to be seen, understood, and perhaps held with more compassion. The pandemic will not be the last crisis to divide societies. But what happens when the next crisis arrives? How can lessons from this time inform a different way of meeting conflict and uncertainty? What becomes possible when the past is not just remembered, but actively integrated?



Geography of the Past: How Our World Holds Memory

Overall Reflection

History does not sit quietly in the past—it moves, breathes, and folds itself into the present, shaping the rhythms of our fears, our longings, our sense of who we are. It is not a straight road we walk away from but a landscape we inhabit, its contours shifting as we notice, as we listen, as we begin to see what was once unseen.

What emerged in these labs was not resolution, but resonance. The past does not need fixing; it needs meeting. In the American South, in Lebanon, in the Balkans, in Ireland, and in the lingering tensions of the pandemic, we traced patterns that did not begin with us, yet live through us. Silence and rupture, exile and belonging, survival and forgetting—these are not just historical facts, but living dynamics, moving through bodies, families, and societies like rivers carving the land. Some channels deepen, some change course, some await the flood that will reshape them entirely.

Healing is not a destination but an emergence—arising in the spaces where complexity is honored rather than reduced, where contradiction is held rather than resolved. This work did not offer a map; it offered a way of sensing, of being with what is tangled and unfinished. In slowing down, in listening, in allowing the unknown its place, something shifted. Not a grand conclusion, not a simple answer, but a widening—a recognition that history, like a living system, does not move in straight lines but in loops, echoes, and unfolding possibilities.

Perhaps our task is not to solve the past, but to hold it differently—to attune to its murmurs, to let it teach us how to move with it, rather than against it. And in that shift, however small, something new may yet take root.



VI.

Listening to the Earth: Healing Our Connection to Nature and Each Other

The Earth operates as a living network, with each element adapting in response to the others. When we disconnect from this web, we disrupt the balance, affecting both the planet and ourselves.

T hese labs explore how restoring our relationship with the Earth can lead to mutual healing and regeneration.

The crisis of the Earth is, in many ways, a crisis of disconnection. The environmental destruction unfolding today is not just a result of human action but of a long-standing separation from nature itself. This lab explored how trauma—both personal and collective—contributes to that disconnect and how healing the human relationship with the Earth is a key step toward regeneration.

How does the numbing of personal trauma mirror the numbing of ecological destruction? What shifts when the Earth is no longer seen as something separate but as an extension of the human experience? How can reconnection lead to more meaningful action?

Lab 1. 'Climate Crisis Lab'

Embedding ourselves in Embodiment, Earth, and Emerging Future

INTRODUCTION



This lab examines how our disconnection from nature contributes to environmental crises, exploring the role of trauma in this separation and paths toward renewal.

Environmental devastation is often spoken about in numbers, statistics, and distant narratives of loss. This lab moved beyond intellectual discussion, inviting participants to experience the grief and beauty of the natural world in a way that was deeply embodied. The journey was not just about understanding climate change, but about feeling the disconnection that fuels it.

"Collective trauma integration enables collective evolution and co-creation, which we need to advance on to meet our meta-crisis."

INTENTION

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROOT OF THE CRISIS

For some, this lab was an opportunity to explore how personal awareness could translate into collective action. Others arrived with a sense that something was missing from mainstream climate discussions—an emotional and relational depth that is often overlooked.

"Collective trauma integration enables collective evolution and co-creation, which we need to advance on to meet our meta-crisis."

"I believe that one of the main causes is that we are numb in many ways to the ways our actions impact the planet and life on the planet due to trauma. I hope that I can take more meaningful action and design better interventions when I understand more of that on a deeper level (embodied and experienced)."

How does trauma shape the way humans relate to the planet? What happens when ecological destruction is not seen as an external crisis, but as a reflection of collective wounding?

IMMERSION

FEELING THE EARTH'S PRESENCE

As the lab deepened, participants moved beyond intellectual understanding and into felt experience. For many, the connection with nature was not something new, but something remembered—something that had been there all along but had been ignored or buried.

"I experience the whole range of possibilities, from seemingly being stuck in absence to beautiful nourishing connection. There are different perspectives occurring and each has something to teach. One lesson I keep learning and practicing is not to turn away."

"Now I understand that addressing the climate crisis involves daily personal work, alone and with others, slowly allowing my body to truly sense the level of grief, pain, and sometimes despair that I feel, around what is happening with the Earth and with us. As I am able to do this, I am more able to listen to the Earth herself for connection, guidance, and mutual support."

The structure of the lab supported this deepening connection. Through triads and open sharing spaces, participants were able to explore their experiences in ways that were often new and transformative. Some had never spoken about their grief for the planet before. Others found themselves uncovering connections to the land and their own ancestry that had been long forgotten.

What shifts when the Earth is experienced not as something separate, but as something that is listening? How does deepening the connection to the natural world change the way action is taken?

INTEGRATION

REWEAVING THE WEB OF LIFE

By the end of the lab, many participants described feeling a greater sense of belonging—not just to the Earth, but to the intricate web of life itself. The lab was not just about gaining knowledge, but about remembering something essential: that healing the Earth is inseparable from healing oneself.

"Taking into consideration all beings in the web of life is necessary for reflection and shifting fear into proactive climate action." (...)

For some, ancient wisdom teachings resurfaced, bringing a deeper understanding of humanity's place in nature:

"The Tao Te Ching emphasizes that man is to follow Nature's Way first and is the connector between Mother Earth and Heaven. The lab helped me remember that wisdom teaching and how important our body wisdom is—how 'being' matters more than the constant 'doing' our fast-paced culture prioritizes."

"Earth is forgiving. Our personal healing is part of the process. The path emerges. Slow down and align with the natural order."

Through the process, participants also described a deeper experience of their nervous systems—moving beyond personal and ancestral awareness into something more expansive:

"I have gained a felt experience of an ecosystemic aspect of my nervous system, a strand that goes beyond my personal, ancestral, and collective nervous system, and through which a relatedness is formed and information flows to me from non-human communities. My body has melted more fully into the planet and I feel closer to the web of life."

"My life has completely changed over the course of the lab. It revealed to me ancestral fears related to belonging that have been causing me disconnection and suffering. Through my practices of connecting to Earth, I have been able to listen into this fear in a new way, and it has softened."

One participant spoke to the deepening of something they had always known:

"My understanding that nature is not 'out there' but that we, as part of the ecosystem we live in, are nature ourselves, although not new to me, was deepened and expanded through my experiences in the Climate Crisis Lab." (...)

What becomes possible when humans experience themselves as part of nature rather than separate from it? How does deepening this awareness shift the way environmental crises are met?

"Taking into consideration all beings in the web of life is necessary for reflection and shifting fear into proactive climate action."



CONCLUSION

The climate crisis is not just about carbon emissions, rising temperatures, or deforestation. It is about how humans have learned to separate themselves from the Earth, from each other, from their own bodies. This lab did not provide solutions to the planetary crisis, but it offered something just as necessary: a space to remember what has been lost.

What if healing the Earth is not just about action, but about relationship? What if the first step toward regeneration is not just reducing harm, but learning to listen? What would change if, instead of treating the planet as something to be saved, it was met as something alive, intelligent, and deeply connected to human existence?

Lab 2. Healing the Masculine & Feminine with the Earth

Restoring our Connection to the Earth to Heal Ourselves & the Web of Life

INTRODUCTION

The masculine and feminine exist beyond gender identity—they are forces present in all aspects of life. By integrating nature-based practices with personal and collective inquiry, participants sought to reconnect with these energies in a way that fosters healing and balance.

This lab invited participants to explore how these energies show up in their own bodies and relationships, how they have been shaped by trauma, and how they can be rebalanced through connection with the Earth.

How has the disconnect from nature contributed to the wounds of the masculine and feminine? What happens when these energies are approached not as opposites but as complementary forces? How can this reintegration lead to a deeper relationship with the Earth and with ourselves?





"Life on Earth, being as Earth... for me, it is first about letting everything be and feeling how it shows up, how it feels."

INTENTION

THE CALL TO REBALANCE

For some, joining the lab was about reconnecting with the feminine through nature. For others, it was about understanding how patriarchal structures have distorted both masculine and feminine expressions. The lab provided a space for this inquiry to unfold with depth and intention.

"I believe the original disconnect is that from the Mother (divine feminine), and seeing the Earth as a great manifestation of Her energy, I am drawn to healing using our relationship to the Earth as a quide."

"Melting the frozen collective trauma allows for the possibility of healing the trauma that has never been available this way before. It is revolutionary work with profound implications to help a collective shift in this trauma field."

How does the disconnection from nature mirror the wounds between the masculine and feminine? What role does the Earth play in restoring balance between these energies? What becomes possible when this work is approached collectively rather than in isolation?

IMMERSION

HOLDING THE MASCULINE AND FEMININE IN THE BODY

The lab invited participants to engage in embodied practices that deepened their awareness of how these energies live within them. The process was not just about discussion but about feeling into the ways these dynamics have been shaped by personal, ancestral, and cultural histories.

"The masculine and the feminine within me, being a man or a woman, the wounds inflicted by men on women, the wounds inflicted by women on men, life on Earth, being as Earth... for me, it is first about letting everything be and feeling how it shows up, how it feels."

"Shortly after beginning this lab, a new project appeared for me. I am working on a project to give ecological elements on a specific piece of land in the US legal standing to own and control itself. This is an offshoot of the Rights of Nature legal movement. I don't think this project arose coincidentally. There are many synchronicities occurring between this lab and my work to heal the separation between humans and the more-than-human world."

As participants engaged with these themes, a sense of interconnectedness emerged—not just between masculine and feminine, but between human beings and the natural world. The realization that healing is not only internal but also ecological became a central insight of the lab.

How does healing the relationship between masculine and feminine extend to healing the Earth? What happens when the body is experienced as part of nature rather than separate from it? How does this shift affect the way trauma is processed and integrated?

INTEGRATION

REUNITING WHAT WAS DIVIDED

By the end of the lab, participants spoke of a deep sense of integration—not just of masculine and feminine energies, but of themselves in relationship to the Earth. The lab fostered a space where differences could be held with care and where personal healing contributed to a larger, collective movement.

"I felt that my experience had much in common with every single member of the lab. It reached across gender, sex, and cultural differences. The lab connected us in our feelings of fragmentation."

"Trusting men's experiences is not always at the top of my list. In this lab, I was touched by the plight of men and the crisis of masculinity in today's world. It opened my heart to individual men in a space of respect and compassion—and, crucially, safety. For this, I am grateful."

"I found myself more and more feeling the sense of my body actually being part of the Earth, the living Earth. And when I felt that, the collective trauma of the masculine and feminine in my body felt so much more manageable, workable, and my body had much greater capacity to metabolize that trauma and its lessons."

Finally, for some, the lab existed beyond words—an experience that was deeply felt but difficult to articulate:

"The lab feels like a dream, a companion. It felt like it existed on this other plane within. It's more about the feeling I come away with. There is a lot I can't remember cognitively; it's been so lovely and touching to see glimpses of [other] lives and the search of how to live well, a courageous journey."

What if healing the masculine and feminine was not about fixing but about remembering? How does this work change when it is approached as a relationship rather than a problem to be solved? What becomes possible when the Earth is not just a backdrop but an active participant in the healing process?

"Trusting men's experiences is not always at the top of my list. In this lab, I was touched by the plight of men and the crisis of masculinity in today's world. It opened my heart to individual men in a space of respect and compassion—and, crucially, safety."



CONCLUSION

The separation of masculine and feminine is not just a social construct—it is an embodied experience that has shaped history, relationships, and the natural world. This lab offered participants a space to explore how these forces live within them and how their reconciliation is not only necessary for personal healing but for the healing of the planet.

Throughout the process, participants moved from conceptual understanding to a felt experience of connection. The lab reinforced that healing the masculine and feminine is not about opposing forces finding balance, but about restoring a sense of wholeness—within individuals, between people, and in relationship with the Earth.

What if healing was not about choosing between masculine and feminine, but about embodying both? How does personal transformation contribute to planetary regeneration? What would change if humanity re-learned to listen to the wisdom of the Earth in this process?

Lab 3. The Inner & Outer Work of Regeneration

Presencing the Hidden Trauma of Progress upon our Systems and Soil

INTRODUCTION

Progress has often been framed as a necessity—an unchallenged force that propels society forward. But at what cost? This lab was an exploration of how personal and collective trauma are woven into the very fabric of modernity, shaping relationships with time, nature, and self. Through deep reflection and shared inquiry, participants encountered the grief and exhaustion that come with a culture that rarely pauses to integrate what has been lost along the way.

How does the trauma of progress show up in everyday life? What happens when movement is no longer possible—when slowing down becomes the only way forward? How can the inner work of regeneration support the outer work of ecological and social renewal?



INTENTION

TURNING TOWARD REGENERATION

For some, joining the lab was about learning to work more skillfully with collective trauma. For others, it was an attempt to understand the ways in which the pressures of the modern world had shaped their own sense of self and belonging.

"There is a kind of choicelessness when it comes to collective trauma. We are all born into fields and layers of harm-caused and under-metabolized suffering, both as hapless victims and perpetrators. While there is an innocence in the choiceless nature of collective trauma, we are neither exempt from its complex effects nor the necessity to creatively respond."

"Regeneration of self, community, our relationship to the Earth is the nature of our times. Naturally, it is essential at the crossroads of past and future that we socially regenerate in the present."

How does personal healing contribute to wider social change? What does it mean to regenerate in a world that seems to be constantly depleting itself? How can stillness and listening be forms of activism?

IMMERSION

SLOWING DOWN ENOUGH TO FEEL

The lab provided an opportunity to step outside of the urgency of daily life and enter a slower, more reflective space. Many participants spoke about the relief of not being alone in their concerns for the world—of realizing that others, across the globe, were also grappling with the overwhelming scope of the crisis.

"It feels so good to connect beyond our local areas and realize there are folks across the globe curious and caring about the world we live in. To be able to grasp at the bigger global picture of happenings. To not feel so alone in this caring and curiosity." (...)

"I have thought more about the myth of Progress as it relates to collective, ancestral, and personal trauma."

Throughout the lab, the process of slowing down and listening—to oneself, to others, to the Earth—became central. The recognition that regeneration cannot be rushed, that healing must be organic and intentional, became clearer over time. Participants reflected that the frequency of meetings (every two weeks) helped create a sense of coherence, mirroring one of the insights from the lab itself: that the remedy for crisis is not urgency, but deep relational presence.

What happens when urgency is replaced by attunement? How does slowing down make space for transformation?

"I have thought more about the myth of Progress as it relates to collective, ancestral, and personal trauma."

INTEGRATION

LIVING WITH THE UNRESOLVED

By the end of the lab, participants described feeling more able to hold both grief and hope, more willing to sit with the complexity of change without seeking immediate resolution. The lab was not about escaping the realities of collapse but about building the capacity to meet them with greater awareness.

"Although I found the Inner/Outer Regeneration Lab experience challenging throughout, there has been a lot of growth and expansion of perspectives. There is so much more acceptance, allowance of all perspectives, internally and externally, even when difficult emotions may arise as well."

"At the end, most of the air time was given to hear each of the participants—and I found this to have an emergent capacity. I felt the wisdom of the whole blossom as each participant was able to share their perspective." (...)

The lab revealed that progress, as it is often understood, does not allow time for integration. Many participants spoke about how the constant push forward had left them feeling disembodied, disconnected from themselves and the world around them:

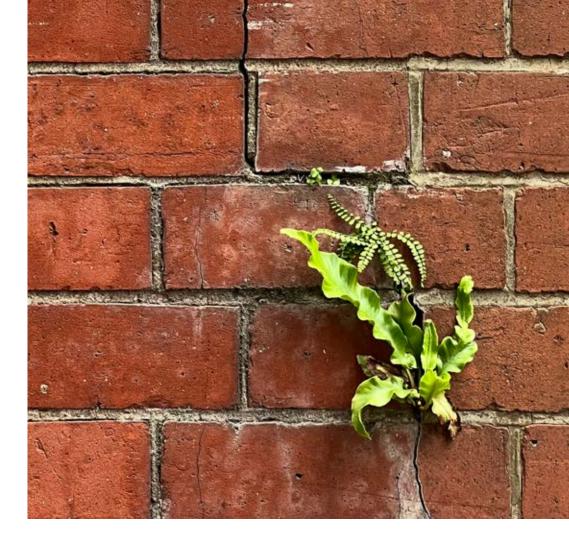
"I've touched the trauma of progress, how the ever-marching forward disallows time for reflection/regeneration. I've seen how this has impacted my own life—how relentless movement forward has kept me disembodied and disconnected from self, the divine, and many in my life." (...)

One insight that emerged was the realization that even within collective trauma work, certain voices were missing. A participant reflected on the absence of perspectives from those most impacted by progress:

"I need to hear voices from cultures that have been colonized in the name of progress. While diversity of cultures and ethnicities is highly enriching, one might wonder if those hurt by progress need to literally be in the same room for their suffering to be heard and felt. What about rainforest frogs? Whales caught in fishing nets? Migrants fleeing climate change? What about plants and insects? Obviously, they do not sit with us, nor can they. Does that mean their suffering is missing?"

How can healing be extended beyond human narratives? What does it mean to listen to those who cannot speak in words? How does regeneration include the more-than-human world?

"I've touched the trauma of progress, how the ever-marching forward disallows time for reflection/regeneration."



CONCLUSION

The trauma of progress is not only historical—it is ongoing. It is embedded in social structures, in economic systems, in the way modernity demands constant movement. But this lab revealed another truth: that healing is possible, and that regeneration is not a concept, but a lived practice.

Participants described moving from numbness to deeper engagement, from urgency to trust in a slower process. Over time, reflections became more fluid, more centered in both personal and collective awareness. By the end, many spoke not only of understanding regeneration but of embodying it—of feeling closer to community, to self, and to the Earth.

What if regeneration is not a future goal, but something happening in every moment? What would change if the focus shifted from doing to being? How can slowing down become the most radical act of all?

Our Thirteenth Moon

Together we lit candles and sat in fires of awakening
From the rubble, light codes rose from our hearts into new forms and structures
We were diving deep into the dark lake and retrieved the hidden light
We kissed every fear, and it became a star
Bowing reverently to both light and shadow
Loving ourselves without end
We joined our hearts in the mystery of life
Regeneration forever, progress became a drop embraced and healed

We crunched our way on a snowy path in the forest, and marveled at the sunrays coming through the treetops Future generations will heal the earth, and the earth will heal the universe

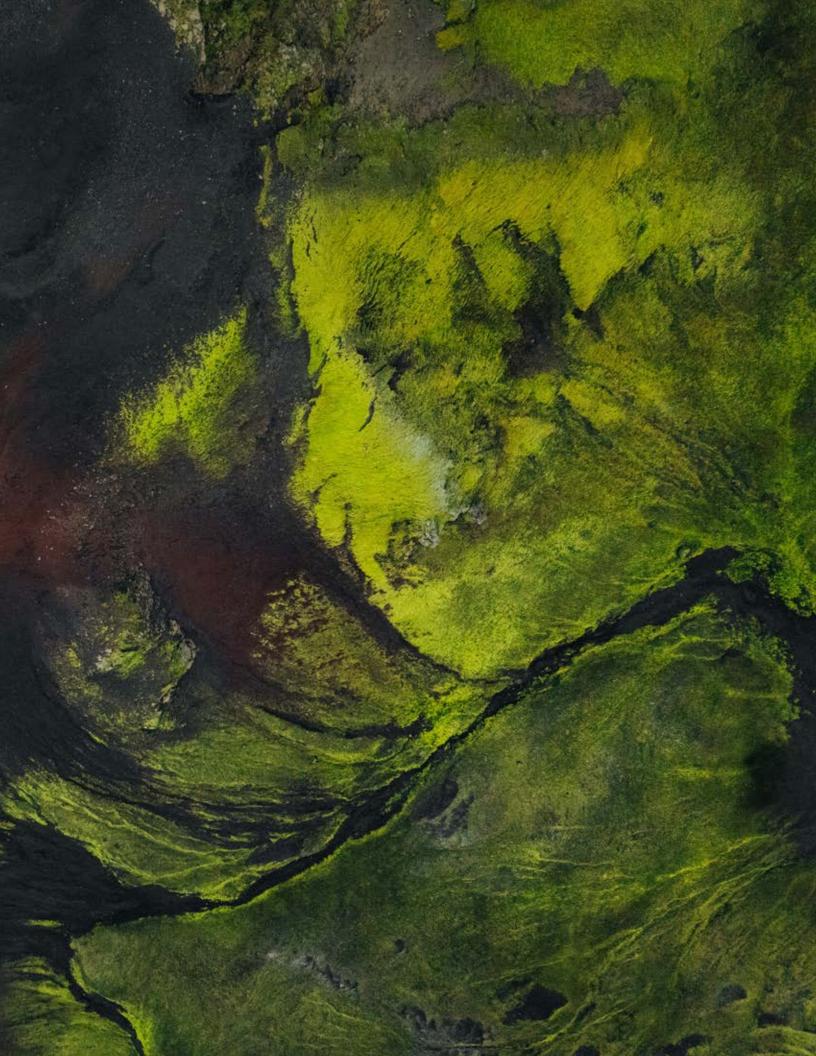
Our fluttering hearts came together as a murmuration, responding with gentleness, respect, and love
Trauma and grief seen and held, melting into compassion and oneness
We remember, in relief, that the sky is borderless

There is a knocking to be shared:

We, an antidote to Too Much Too Fast Too Early Too Little

We, being micro-slow motions—not too much or too fast,
in the right time, and generous.

Progress & Regeneration Lab, January 2025 (POEM BY THE LAB)



Lab 4. Pathways to a Decolonized Future

Exploring the Ongoing Impact of Colonization & How We Can Begin to Heal It

INTRODUCTION

Decolonization is not just about historical acknowledgment—it is about recognition of the present. The patterns of colonial history continue to shape governance, land ownership, and personal identity. This lab created a space where these realities could be explored—not as a theoretical discussion, but as something living within participants.





INTENTION

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Participants came with a range of motivations. Some sought to acknowledge and work through their own ancestral involvement in colonial structures, while others wanted to better understand how colonial histories continue to impact identity and belonging today.

"I am very aware of the history of colonialism around the world and where I live. I am also very aware of the ongoing environmental and societal reality of colonialism in the here and now. On a personal note, my family were among the countless perpetrators and benefactors of colonial policy (namely the 'Sixties Scoop' in Canada) in my lifetime. I want to acknowledge and work through how colonial policies and attitudes continue to live and affect us all in Canada. I want to do better and work to reduce and repair harm."

"I have been searching for origin for some decades. In Christianity, then Judaism, then earlier. I am now at the transition from Indigenous ways of being to hierarchical/patriarchal. The decolonization needs to start from the source."

What does it mean to take responsibility for the past while also acknowledging its ongoing impact? How does history live in the body, and what happens when it is fully seen?

IMMERSION

UNRAVELING THE LAYERS

As the lab progressed, participants experienced shifts in how they perceived both personal and collective histories. Decolonization was no longer just about systemic change but also about deep inner awareness—about noticing the ways in which colonial structures shaped thoughts, behaviors, and relationships.

"The extent of how much we as white people are first and foremost living in a 'colonized' context."

For many, the process felt like a slow, unfolding dance:

"It has not been as I thought it would be. I am not sure how it is most of the time, actually. I can say it feels like a dance. We began with a very slow dance, getting to know each other, constantly checking ourselves and how we felt, growing a sense of trust in ourselves and in the group. We are in the middle now, and as the dance is getting a bit deeper, more personal, we dare to share more. There is resonance in the group."

"I've been able to notice more and more how colonization is everywhere in my actions, in my reactions, in my thoughts. Just being able to notice it makes it change."

Through this process, a deeper awareness of relationality and interconnectedness emerged. The more participants sat with discomfort, the more they discovered a sense of agency—not to fix the past, but to step more consciously into the present.

How does decolonization move beyond an intellectual conversation? What happens when it is experienced in the body, in relationships, in awareness?

INTEGRATION

TRANSFORMING AWARENESS INTO PRESENCE

By the end of the lab, the concept of decolonization had shifted from an external issue to something deeply personal. The work was no longer about 'fixing' history but about changing the way participants related to it—how they carried its weight, how they engaged with its impact, how they embodied a new way forward.

"My attitude toward this work is shifting away from 'activism' and into awareness of myself within the circles of relational fields. I am becoming more self-compassionate and more compassionate toward people I have tended to label as 'colonizers' (or patriarchal, or racist, or abusive)."

"The authentic sharing from the descendants of the people who colonized and the people who were colonized opened up the gates to this vast information field where I could feel what truly happened in history, not just those 'stories' I cognitively learned when I was at school."

"The grieving ritual set me on a path to a deep place of awakening into presencing in my body. It took me to the brink, letting go of everything, total surrender."

"The embodied movement exercises helped me come closer to both the very difficult and the very positive experiences, with the sense of holding both in my body."

"I learned to allow myself to be vulnerable, intensely uncomfortable (even unbearably sometimes). To include ugliness, pain, loss, brokenness, and fear... I discovered many fragments and layers of conditioned filters coloring my experience."

What happens when decolonization is not only spoken about but physically felt? How does transformation emerge when both pain and possibility are held at the same time?

"The authentic sharing from the descendants of the people who colonized and the people who were colonized opened up the gates to this vast information field where I could feel what truly happened in history..."



CONCLUSION

Decolonization is not just a historical process—it is an ongoing, lived experience. The lab revealed that decolonization is not just about dismantling external systems, but about reshaping internal landscapes as well. Over time, participants moved from seeing decolonization as an intellectual pursuit to something that required deep relational presence, self-awareness, and embodiment.

Participants also reflected on the absence of voices from those most impacted by colonialism. The lab made space for questions around how to engage with histories that are not personally lived but are still deeply felt. Some reflected on the idea that those most harmed by colonialism do not need to be physically present for their suffering to be acknowledged. This realization led to a deeper inquiry: How does colonization live in the land itself? In ecosystems? In species lost to extractive economies?

The lab was not about solving colonization but about learning to sit with its complexities. By the end, participants reflected a greater sense of connection—to themselves, to history, and to the ongoing work of repair.

VI.

Listening to the Earth: Healing Our Connection to Nature and Each Other

Overall Reflection

T he Earth is not an abstract concept, nor is it a passive backdrop to human existence. It is alive, dynamic, and deeply entangled with the human story. The crisis unfolding across the planet—climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity—is not just a crisis of the natural world. It is a crisis of perception, of separation, of forgetting. These labs invited participants to step beyond intellectual understanding and into direct relationships.

What emerged was not a simple call to action, but a deeper reckoning with the ways trauma—personal, ancestral, and collective—has shaped the human relationship with the Earth. The drive to dominate, extract, and control has not only harmed the planet but has also severed people from their own bodies, from each other, from the rhythms of life that sustain all beings. The healing of this relationship, then, is not about imposing solutions but about reweaving connection—through presence, through attunement, through listening to what has been silenced for too long.

Across the labs, participants experienced the Earth not as something separate, but as something that breathes with them, that listens, that responds. Whether through exploring the trauma of progress, the gendered ruptures reflected in human and ecological imbalance, or the colonial legacies still inscribed in land and body, a common thread emerged: the recognition that healing must be embodied, relational, and slow. That true regeneration does not happen through force, but through returning to relationship—with the land, with the past, with the unseen forces that continue to shape the present.

Perhaps the Earth does not need saving in the way human cultures have imagined. Perhaps it is not a problem to be solved, but a vast intelligence waiting to be met. What would change if humans saw themselves not as masters of nature, nor even as its stewards, but as kin—woven into the fabric of life, both wounded by and responsible for the balance of the whole? What if the first step toward healing was not urgency, but stillness? Not answers, but deep listening?

The work of these labs did not conclude with certainty, nor did it offer a single path forward. Instead, it invited a shift in perception—a remembering that healing is not something humans do to the Earth, but something that happens in relationship with it. And in that remembering, something softened. The possibility of moving differently, of holding the future with reverence rather than fear, of knowing that regeneration is not an act of will, but a way of being.



The stories shared in this book reflect a carefully curated selection from the 2024 International Labs—a choice shaped by narrative availability, thematic flow, and the depth of public material accessible at the time of publication. This process required discernment and care. It also meant making difficult decisions about which labs to explore in full detail, knowing that many others offered equally profound contributions to our shared field of healing and integration.

We want to name clearly: the labs not expanded on in earlier chapters are vital parts of the collective body. Their presence is felt throughout this book, and their insights continue to ripple through our community. What follows is a continuation of the sacred weave, a gesture of acknowledgment and gratitude.

These additional labs addressed dimensions of trauma, transformation, and presence that speak to the complexity and richness of our global healing field. In their own ways, they opened doors to sacred knowing, community coherence, and subtle shifts in consciousness. We honor them here with reverence and inclusion.

These labs, like all others, are part of the sacred whole. Their stories are here—not just in words, but in the energetic field this book seeks to carry.

Religious Traumatization and Soul Power

A Healing Journey for Women into Authentic Spirituality

This Lab offered a space of reclamation—where women confronted inherited religious trauma and reclaimed the right to an embodied, self-determined relationship with the sacred. It brought light to the harm caused by spiritual systems steeped in patriarchy and colonization, and it invited participants into a deeper alignment with their soul truth.

"The lotus has its roots in the mud."

"I am a reflection of the broken mirror. I can take care of this clarity. Then the mirror image reassembles itself."

Here, spirituality became a path not of escape, but of return. Not of perfection, but of presence. Together, participants learned to listen through silence, to reweave what had been torn, and to reawaken their authentic spiritual voice.



Spiritual Trauma and Our Personal Path to the Divine

A Journey through the Four Pillars of Trauma Integration

This Lab explored the subtle and sacred intersection of trauma and spirit. Using Thomas Hübl's four pillars of trauma integration, participants examined how trauma shapes—and sometimes distorts—their relationship to the divine. What emerged was a clearer sense of wholeness, humility, and reverence.

"The Lab helped me attune, see, and be with many parts of myself that have felt heavy or terrified. My connection to Spirit became clearer, kinder."

Participants found that healing spiritual trauma is not about abandoning faith—but about remembering it in a way that is rooted in the body, relational safety, and lived experience.

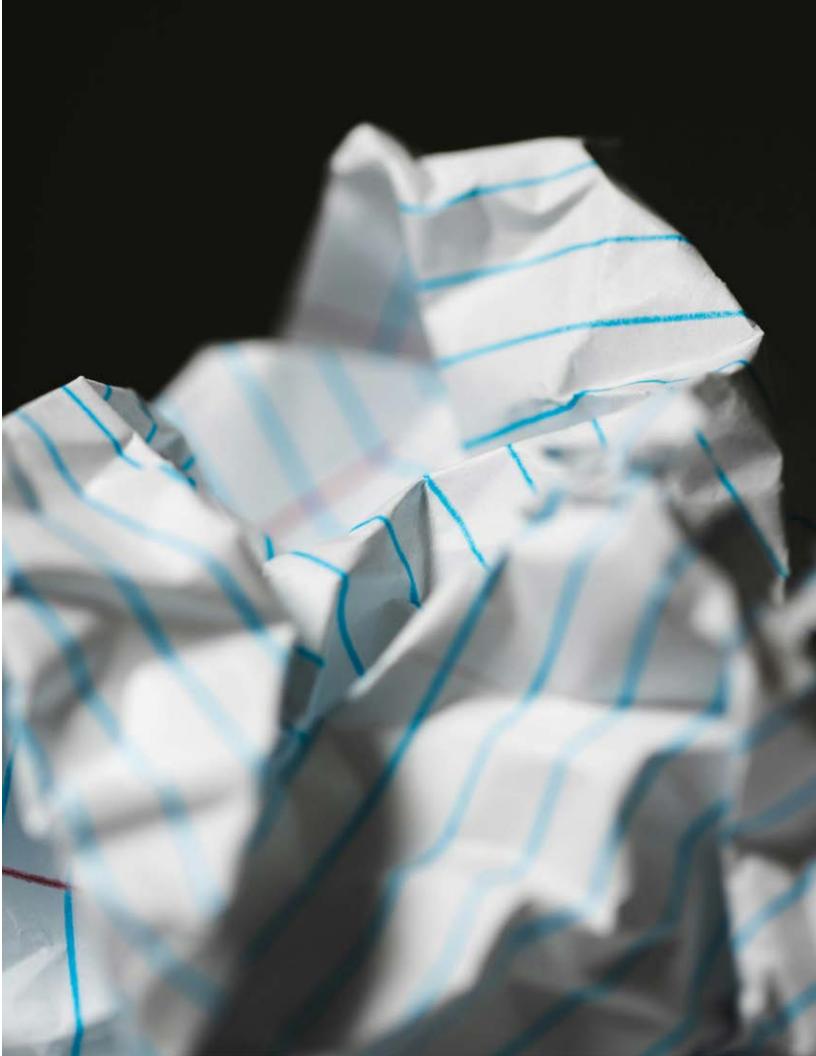


Collective Trauma in Our Personal Career Paths & Work

In this Lab, participants looked at work through a new lens: not as a separate domain, but as a field where trauma plays out and transformation is possible. Together, they explored how systemic pressures, relational wounds, and personal roles intersect in professional life.

"When people work together to be present and remain faithful to this intention, trauma therapy happens."

This Lab affirmed that workplaces can become sites of integration when presence is prioritized and unconscious group dynamics are named with care.



Collective Trauma & Resilience in the Findhorn Community

Healing Our Future – Creating Purpose Through Relating

This Lab held the aching complexity of community breakdown and renewal. Focused on the Findhorn community, it invited participants to sit in the tensions of grief, anger, and love—to listen where trust had been fractured, and to rediscover coherence through honest presence.

"That big hurts and angers can be felt together and begin to be transformed."

"That the coherence, honesty, and capacity of the group leaders is absolutely pivotal."

Participants experienced firsthand that collective resilience is not abstract—it is born in the courage to stay in relationship, even when rupture is real.





A Cut From Art

Collective Trauma and Creative Loss

This Lab explored how trauma freezes the creative impulse—and how art can become a slow, quiet doorway back to aliveness. Many entered carrying numbness, self-doubt, or disconnection from their creativity. Through gentle exploration, they discovered that artistic expression is not just a gift, but a healing force.

"I've learned to be with the numbness while also allowing myself to act on creative impulses."

This Lab invited participants to trust their rhythms, to honor the creative as sacred, and to meet even silence with care.



Collective Trauma & Patriarchy

(German Lab)

Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Now? Where Do We Want to Go?

This Lab turned toward patriarchy not only as a social structure, but as a psychic and ancestral imprint. Participants explored how deeply embedded patterns of dominance, suppression, and fragmentation live within and around them.

"The depth of presence and continuity in the group space is important in order to move such a big topic."

Even with limitations of format, the Lab became a container for sincere reflection, and a reminder that dismantling patriarchy requires sustained presence, long-term commitment, and spaces where vulnerability is met with care.



Collective Trauma & Organizational Stakeholders

Diving Deep into the Unconscious Patterns That Define an Organization This Lab explored organizations as living systems—repositories of unresolved trauma, but also potential vessels of transformation. Participants looked beyond roles and functions, sensing into the unconscious dynamics that shape team cultures, decision—making, and group identity.

"We learned to listen more deeply to ourselves and others, to accept rather than judge."

This Lab asked: What if healing isn't separate from organizational life, but embedded in how we lead, listen, and relate each day?



Final Chapter: Weaving the Threads of Belonging

As we reach the closing pages of this sacred journey, we pause to reflect: What pathways have we walked? Which voices have guided us? What wisdom now rests in our hands? This book has not been a mere collection of stories; it has been a living testament to the power of presence, resilience, and transformation. Each chapter has offered an invitation—an opening to witness, to engage, and to integrate the experiences that shape our collective and individual narratives.

At the heart of this work is the recognition that healing is neither linear nor solitary. Could it be, instead, a weaving of threads—of pain and redemption, of separation and belonging, of past and future—into a fabric strong enough to hold us all? In this weaving, we have encountered our ancestors, the wounds of history, the echoes of trauma, and the possibility of renewal. We have touched the depths of loneliness and the vastness of connection, the weight of oppression and the lightness of liberation.

Through each theme—division and belonging, gender and power, systems & organizations, Jewish identity, the geography of memory, and our connection to the earth—we have uncovered layers of history and self. We have sat with the tension of paradox, the discomfort of unhealed wounds, and the beauty of human courage. We have listened deeply, not just to the words spoken, but to the spaces in between—to the silence where pain lingers, to the breath where transformation begins. Is it not in these spaces, between the notes of our stories, where true healing emerges?

The journey of this book reminds us that home is not simply a place, but a state of being. Can belonging ever be found in uniformity, or is it instead in the ability to hold difference with care? Is power about dominance, or is it about presence? Can healing truly erase the past, or does it live in the way we integrate its lessons—so that we may walk forward with greater wisdom and grace?

As we step beyond these pages, the work continues. Where will we create the spaces where difficult conversations can unfold? How can the inherited pain of generations be seen and held? What new futures can we imagine, woven with compassion and consciousness? Let this book serve not as an ending, but as a guide—a map for those who seek to bridge the divides within and around them.

May we carry forward the knowing that we are not alone in our struggles. That our wounds, though personal, are also collective. That the process of healing is an offering, not just for ourselves, but for the generations before and after us. And may we hold with tenderness the simple, profound truth that in listening to one another's stories, we reclaim the sacredness of our shared humanity.

With gratitude for the voices that have shaped this journey, and with hope for the healing yet to come, we close this book with an open heart, ready to meet what lies ahead.

May we continue to weave together the fabric of belonging, one thread, one story, one act of love at a time.

Call to Action:
Co-Creating
a Global
Healing
Architecture

We offer deep gratitude to every participant, facilitator, and community that co-created these spaces of healing and transformation. May their wisdom continue to ripple, seed, and inspire. The stories shared here are more than testimonies—they are pieces of a larger mosaic, fragments of a living archive that helps us see and understand the patterns of collective trauma and possible next steps forward. Through the International Labs, we have gathered narratives from across the world, tracing the echoes of history, the cycles of harm and healing, and the ways in which trauma lives on in individuals, families, societies, and landscapes. Each story is a doorway into deeper understanding, and together, they form a field of remembrance—a space where what has been silenced can begin to find its voice.

This is not just about looking back; it is about making sense of where we are now. In a world that often feels overwhelmed by crisis and division, these stories remind us that we are not alone, that we are part of a larger movement of healing and transformation. The Pattern Report provides a deeper analysis of the themes emerging across the labs—how collective wounds are held, transmitted, and transformed across time and cultures. Yet, the work is far from complete. Many voices remain unheard, many experiences unspoken. Over time, as this archive grows, we will not only make visible what is already known but also begin to give voice to what is still silent—stories that have not yet found the language to be told, histories that are waiting to be honored.

And in the face of all this, it is easy to feel small, to feel that the task is too vast, too complex. But healing is not about solving everything at once—it is about talking the next right step. This is what the International Labs provide: a space to move forward without needing to see the entire path. A place to turn toward what calls us, to meet what is arising with presence, to listen for what is needed now rather than overthinking the bigger picture.

The Pocket Project and the International Labs are an invitation to step into this unfolding work—not to have all the answers, but to engage in the questions, to become part of a healing architecture built not from certainty, but from trust, from witness, from a willingness to show up.

This call extends beyond what has been included here. Many labs have taken place, each contributing to this growing field of collective healing. Many more stories, too, can be found on our website, honoring the depth and breadth of what has been shared.

We invite you to take part in what comes next. The next cycle of International Labs is forming, and your presence matters. Whether you come to explore your own history, to bear witness, to support the emergence of a global healing movement, or to help shape the narratives that will guide us forward, there is space for you here.