



Spring 2019

TRAINERS MENTORING CIRCLE

The mission of the TMC is to set standards and steward the path to becoming a certified council trainer and facilitator in the "Ojai Foundation, Way of Council" lineage.

Report in Response

We feel it is timely to clarify again, the history and role of the TMC. We offer this response for our trainer community to the email sent by Adam Rumack.

The TMC is an independent body with a focused task of providing guidance for those on the path to becoming a certified trainer and/or facilitator. As stewards to those choosing to enter the council trainer and facilitator paths, we do this in service to the spirit of council and to the trainer body of which we are a part. We are self-determining, answerable not to The Ojai Foundation but to the trainers that practice in that council lineage. We are not a governing body but are volunteers in service to our fellow trainers to whom we are accountable. The TMC is envisioned to be a fluid body with the image of the spiral being present, such that trainers come from the outer circle to take a seat on the TMC for a term, and then spiral out making way for others to serve.

Historically, TMC members are chosen and empowered by the greater North American trainer body. The current TMC is the second round of trainers to serve since its most recent iteration, which began with "The Nine.*" The immediate former TMC included Julia Wasson, John McCluskey, Bonnie Mennell, Marlow Hotchkiss, and Leon Berg. Essentially, we collect the beautiful letters of intention and completion, as well as the letters of support from mentors and other trainers who have witnessed and worked with those on the trainer path. We welcome trainers in training (*mentees*) with their mentors in zoom calls, as they enter, and as they complete. These calls provide rich insights for all and are the highlight of our practice. We track these mentees as they find their own rhythm and offer ourselves to sit in the role of the third for mentor-mentee pairs. We encourage continuing conversations with mentor-mentee pairs, connecting with the TMC at any time. The current TMC continues to welcome specific input on ideas for increasing our functioning to better serve the community of trainers. We have begun to invite younger trainers to consider stepping onto the TMC. In the next two years, the TMC will evolve and change to welcome newer trainers, meaning those who have yet to mentor.

The current TMC has been seated for almost three years. Our first year was a whirlwind of activity as we updated and reconfirmed the steps to becoming a trainer, along with certification for offering Council 2 and eventually Council 3 and, finally, formalizing a path for those wishing to be certified as a facilitator in The Ojai Foundation tradition. Our second year saw a steady flow of mentor/mentee pairs moving onto or graduating from the path... ***And then the Fire.***

The Ojai Foundation and the world in general have been disrupted. Like many disruptions, these times burn through to the essence, calling for transparency and accountability. When this new TMC took their seats, the need for clarified path documents was clear. In order to uphold transparency and build community, we launched this occasional Newsletter and offered Zoom council conferences. We are now in the process of expanding the makeup of the TMC to allow for trainers to serve without the usual requirement of having been mentors for a certain number of years.

We applaud those TMC members who served before, who set the standards, and were stewards for so many excellent trainers -- over seventy -- who continue to train lovers of circle in the practice of council. Spiraling is the beauty of the TMC. Our last Zoom call asked, "What does the trainer body need from the TMC now?"

Who will step in next?

*"The Nine" were nine trainers nominated in 2009 to facilitate the vision, tasks and initiatives of the Elder Council. The four endeavor groups were: Curriculum Gathering, Association and Administration, Outreach and Inreach, and Training Oversight. It is this 4th group from which the TMC was further developed.

Zoom Reflections
January 29, 2019
What are the needs
from a TMC now?

The prompt for this council was: With TOF in a long term re-visioning, C4C and Circle Ways moving ahead more or less independently and regional council groups arising, what do you feel the community of trainers and practitioners needs in 2019, particularly regarding the role of the TMC? Seventeen facilitators and trainers participated on this third TMC convened Zoom council.

The overall spirit was one of gratitude for the existence of the TMC and an affirmation of the need for a TMC. It was variously described as a hub, a place that holds the whole enterprise in our awareness, a group that stands ready, wisdom holders with a heart center, a source of mentoring, as holding space, as a community and co-leadership, as a loop to come home to as other loops spin, and as being a thru-line, and holding the core practice and lineage.

The mission of the TMC is to set standards and steward the path to becoming a certified council trainer or facilitator. This newsletter and these Zoom calls are not strictly within the mission and have been initiated at the request of the trainer community, especially in the wake of the Thomas fire. The call for connection was expressed in the following ways: maintain connections with trainers, wanting to see and know what others are doing, how they are using council, ongoing mentoring, and keeping connections alive through providing this call.

We heard some requests that fall outside of the mission of the TMC such as support in providing trainings/gigs, marketing, and hosting internet drop-in council groups, hosted by different trainers; a place where people can find connection. There were also a couple of calls for a summit with various groups, bringing regional organizations together.

The PACT* concept (Professional Alliance of Council Trainers) arose out of the knowledge that, while TMC stewards the path and standards, PACT could be the hub to provide professional support. It would serve trainers' marketing needs with a document library, and provide connections and inspiration for North American council carriers. It might be a dues-funded and may create alliances with sister organizations. As PACT listens for its emergence, the TMC will continue considering its role as connector for the trainer body.

This TMC will soon start spiraling out. We will continue to live into the mission and the expressions of how we can best serve. We thank everyone who was on the call for their input and those who were unable to be on the call but have followed up with interest as to what transpired. We are grateful to all who have confirmed our role as axis mundi for trainers in this dynamic time. If you feel a desire to serve, please be in touch! We four have been used and used well, and are spiraling out in a good way over the next couple of years to take our seat back in the larger circle.

First to spiral out is our beloved Sarah Bryant, who has been our administrative assistant and our rock for the past three years. Her capacity to hold all the details, the data base, be the connector to the council community, and still be the warm and compassionate witness to our work was absolutely essential. We wish Sarah wonderful successes in her life going forward, and look forward to welcoming her onto the Facilitator Path.

A farewell from Sarah

As I move on from this position, I would like to express my gratitude to the TMC and entire trainer body for a wonderful experience serving as the administrative assistant these past two years. It has been a pleasure getting to know and witness so many of you in your growing and evolving relationship with the practice of Council. I am truly going to miss sitting in circle on a monthly basis with Bonz, Kate, Lori, + Jack — it felt like an honor to do so; to bear witness to their depth of wisdom, experience, and passion for the practice as well as their commitment to hold the flame of council with integrity and humility. I was frequently in awe that they always showed up so heart-fully for their voluntary positions of service. I hope to return to this wisdom council soon as a mentee on the certified facilitator's path. Again, thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this community.



UNDER THE TEACHING TREE

In our practice, we are invited to step into the circle in a good way, to remember and to be human with each other, telling the stories that inform our opinions, fears, sorrows and joys.

It is said that our children are our teachers, *yes and*... We also honor and acknowledge those who and what has come before, and on whose shoulders we stand. In these last firestorm years, much has been lost, learned and gained.

As we cross the bridge of forgiveness, into the wisdom of the North, the TMC wishes to acknowledge, with deep respect and gratitude, the seminal vision and dedication of the Elders' Council, who has always responded to our call. We appreciate this latest step in the evolution of the TMC in which seats will be held by both senior and newer trainers. We are grateful to know that when we call, the people who have sat on the Elders' Council for all these years will return again to offer guidance and support.

We also wish to thank the Ojai Foundation; A deep bow to all the staff and directors, for the decades of nurturing our sense of place and growth. We acknowledge all the years of shared lineage and are ever grateful for the creation of space for us to gather... to meet under the Teaching Tree for the many special ceremonies of affirmation and confirmation of new trainers.

May we all hold strong and true with compassion and shared purpose
To meet again under the Teaching Tree,
Wherever that Tree may be.

~The Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Air,...Return... Return... Return...Return~

Your TMC – Jack, Kate, Lori & Bonz