

**CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS • IN MEMORIAM: LINDA JOSEPH**

# COMMUNITIES

Life in Cooperative Culture

Fall 2021 • Issue #192

## CONSENT

**Building Consent Culture**

**The Red, Yellow, Green Game**

**Responding to Domestic Violence**

**Learning through Therapeutic Touch**

**Small-Group Consent and Sociocracy**

# CONSENT

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- 4 **Notes from the Editor: Remembering Linda Joseph**  
**Chris Roth**  
We mourn the loss of our Publisher Liaison and friend, and celebrate a life well-lived.
- 6 **Views from Our Partners: The Ties that Bind**  
**Paul Freundlich**  
Community, as both ideal and reality, has the capacity to transcend the usual boundaries.
- 8 **Consent Culture Requires Liberation from Oppression**  
**Kara Huntermoon**  
Institutional structures, norms, and policies, such as these developed by Heart-Culture Farm Community, can address and counteract sexism.
- 11 **Teaching Consent**  
**Crystal Farmer**  
Let children see you set boundaries, deal with rejection, and ask for help. Above all, listen to the child when they tell you what's important to them.
- 13 **Consent in Community**  
**Crystal Farmer**  
Despite the uncertain terrain, there are guideposts for dealing with consent violations. Here are best practices that can aid your group.
- 15 **The Red, Yellow, Green Game: Consent and Accountability at Home and in Community**  
**Julia Taylor**  
Learning to repattern our lives to orient towards consent and responsible repair is to go against all we have ingested about how to orient to the world. For both children and adults, this simple game can help.
- 18 **Building Consent Culture in New Culture East Community**  
**Indigo Dawn**  
The creation of life-affirming, body-honoring, intimacy-building consent culture in community is beautiful, messy, gut-punching, heart-expanding work.
- 24 **On Consent**  
**Jay Glass**  
Just because the problem is hard doesn't mean you get to opt out, but also it doesn't mean you have to be perfect; you probably won't be. But please do try.
- 25 **The Sweet Spot of Consent**  
**Amanda Rain**  
Consent is juiciest when there's open, honest, transparent communication, and responsiveness to the needs, desires, and boundaries of each person.
- 29 **Learning Consent through Therapeutic Touch**  
**Ishka Shir**  
With greater communication skills, both around touch and in general, we have the potential to shift our culture from what is currently often harmful and toxic into a safer, happier, more fulfilled existence.
- 31 **Party of the First Part**  
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Is it actually possible to distinguish / the ones doing the hugging / from the hug itself?

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Johanna Jackson

Laboring for freedom / is tricky work /  
when the soul is under capture.

## 33 Responding to an Incident of Domestic Violence in Community

Anonymous

Part of my reason for living in community is to avoid the kind of isolation that accompanies male-on-female intimate violence. I know I can run to the nearest community member in moments of conflict and ask that we not be left alone with our struggles.

## 34 Gluten-Free Consent

Stephan Nashoba

I think we can all benefit from transitioning away from the Standard American Diet of sexism and consent violations and into a world of trust and ease.

## 35 Getting Clear through Consent

Chant Thomas

While people generally link boundaries and consent to intimate relationships, these functions apply to most every interaction in community.

## 37 Is Consent Decision-Making Hard?

Sharon Villines

Decision-making is hard regardless of method. Decisions are easier when we expect them to be hard and allow the time required for everyone to accept the decision, even if they don't like it.

## 39 How Conflict Can Lead to Consensus

Martie Weatherly

A collaborative community needs people who have different points of view and are willing to learn how to use disagreement to find common ground.

## 40 Consent: One Journey of Understanding

Anonymous

I have learned that consent exists only when the option to refuse to consent is not linked to threat or harm that precludes real choice.

## 43 Consent-Based Decision Making at Songaia Cohousing

Brian Bansenauer and Libby Kelleher Carr

While any decision process has its challenges, ours aligns with our broad community goals of engaging passionately, listening well, and looking for what wants to emerge.

## 47 Scaling Small-Group Consent with Sociocracy

Ted Rau

Being in consent, to me, is not only about the mechanics of decision-making. It's a state of being. It's the trust that things are taken care of, that I will remain informed, and that I can be heard if necessary.

## 50 Two First Things in Building Collective Action

Michael Johnson

To succeed as a group, members must learn to want to hear and understand one another, especially when there is conflict, and also to be willing to disclose feelings, needs, and desires.

## 52 Community: Three More "F" Words

Vivian Vaillant

Facilitation, Followership, and Fun can be prerequisites to true Faith when it comes to building strong community.

## 54 Navigating a Sea of Obstacles: The 15-Year Journey to Fair Oaks EcoHousing

Marty Maskall

This has certainly been the longest and most difficult project of my life. Yet I can definitely answer YES! to the question of "Was It Worth It?"

## 58 REACH

## 68 In Memoriam: Our Friend and Ecovillage Colleague

Linda Joseph, 1952-2021

Giovanni Ciarlo, Orlando Balbás,  
Hanne Strong, Ross Jackson, Albert Bates,  
Lois Arkin, Daniel Greenberg,  
and Diana Leafe Christian

Sorely missed, instrumental in so many projects and in so many people's lives, Linda Joseph is remembered with deep appreciation.



### ON THE COVER

Mixed messages coexist with deeper experiences of nature at a decommissioned reservoir in Oberlin, Ohio. Clear, unambiguous communication is an essential ingredient in consent, which is no laughing matter. Photo by Chris Roth.

# Smashing Chains

By Johanna Jackson



First, you said  
*I would never do that.*  
And I trusted it, still not knowing  
the stench of your lying breath.

Then you said  
*But I need you.*  
And the lies choked me,  
a vise grip on my throat.

Gifts flowed from your hand.  
At dinner, on a Saturday night,  
butternut squash lasagna, piping hot.  
Rupturing, scalding,  
bursting in my mouth.

On a Monday afternoon, in the café,  
a blue-green fountain pen in a velvet box.  
I open it. A monster springs out!  
Snarling, unseen,  
it clutches my skin with dirty claws.

Under your hand, I complete tasks.  
Things I would rather forget.  
But it was you who barricaded the building,  
you who lit a match.  
Fire sprawls, and I am inside—tumbling.

I dart inside the arson cage,  
face bloody,  
bumping into trick walls,  
moving like a panicky deer.  
My soul shatters.

Later, laughter disappears.  
With vacant eyes,  
I search inside gutters and scraps  
for what was once mine.

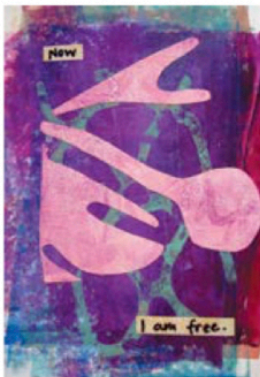
Laboring for freedom  
is tricky work  
when the soul is under capture.

In dreams, I want to scream  
but the scream comes silent.  
Seven years pass, and then three more.  
Time plods on, breaking the rope of  
your lies.

For all the gifts that flowed  
with chains attached,  
now I smash those chains!  
I reclaim these fingernails  
and breath, beautiful breath, as my own.  
I rise up, strong and holy.  
Open hearted. Square shouldered.

After running every night  
from my own dreams  
and my own pain,  
now I have something to say  
with clarity:

I know what you did.  
The lies are clear.  
I know you're in pain.  
But now? Now I'm free.



## Author's Note:

Abusive relationships are things that contain and condense us. They sever us from where we truly belong, which is inside our own skin. They alter our sense of community and connection. When I came out from abuse, I realized that I no longer felt like I was part of the human family.

We are **all** part of the human family; I know this on the surface. But we might live through experiences that make us feel as if our membership has been revoked.

I want us to remember that all abuse happens inside of a community. It might be a neighborhood, a family, a classroom; it might be a dormitory or religious group. But even if the abuse is unseen, it still happens inside of a larger context. When we look at that context, we have an opportunity to heal.

It took me several years to write this poem. Early drafts of it ended in anger. But reclaiming the truth is part of my healing. Even if deep violations in consent leave deep marks, I believe that in time, with love, those marks can be transformed. Thank you for being part of the transformation.

*Johanna Jackson is a writer, artist, Quaker, and resident of Central Pennsylvania. She is cofounder of the Listening Project. Listening to people's stories is part of her healing. Learn more at [forwardinfaithfulness.org](http://forwardinfaithfulness.org).*



In dreams

I wanted to

scream,

but the scream

came out silent

A vise grip



pinched

my throat

Now, though,

I have something

to say

with clarity.



Now



I am free.