



Our Circle Tale this month is actually TWO short tales from Lucia Gardner, who attended our Circle Practicum this past August.

Lucia has worked in the healing professions for 25 years, beginning with midwifery and then adding massage therapy and shamanic healing. Her ability to be with people on the threshold of life and death began with assisting women to give birth and continues as she accompanies people to recover their wholeness and aliveness through healing traumatic experiences while working with them on the bodywork table. Lucia currently paints, lives, teaches and works in Salt Lake City, Utah with her husband Steve and her two cats.

Circle Tale, November 2007 Two Circle Tales

The Dinner Party

Right after attending the Circle Practicum on Whidbey Island this summer, I stayed with a good friend in northern California on my way home to Utah. My friend was very interested in what I told her about PeerSpirit Circling and wanted to try it with two friends who were coming over for dinner. I was a little nervous in that I didn't know if they wanted to do it, what we would talk about, etc. It turns out they were very interested and one woman wanted us to talk about the Iraq War. So after dinner, we cleared the table and I set a flower in the middle and used my friend's meditation bell and a little statue for the talking piece. I decided to keep the format very simple. We left it open as to how many rounds we would have and how long each person would have to speak.

One of the women decided to go first, sharing what she felt about the war and what she does to join with others to oppose it. We continued sharing feelings of despair, helplessness, anger and apathy. At the end of one round, I rang the bell, we breathed together and I asked how they felt about going around again. This time each of us shared thoughts and feelings, some sparked by what someone said in the first round.

When we finished, everyone commented on how great it was to be able to really listen to each other and to have as much time as we wanted to say what we wanted to say – and at a dinner party, no less! I was amazed at how close I felt to these women, two of whom I had just met. The others commented on this as well. The circle we made was deep and quiet and sacred; it felt much more satisfying than trying to keep up with regular conversations you would normally have at a party.

Helping A Friend

Three days after I returned from my trip this summer, my husband asked me if I would participate in some healing work for a friend of ours who was in the hospital on the psychiatric ward, having just made a suicide attempt. I volunteered to host a circle of friends for her, which included her psychiatrist and her therapist. I made it clear to her that she would need to open up to us and tell us what she wanted and needed. She understood that we would pass a talking piece and each of us would speak.

She was able to arrange a room on the psych ward where we moved the chairs into a circle. I placed a beautiful rose and herbs from our garden, which I picked with prayers for her healing. We started with her telling us how she was feeling and what kind of support she could use from us. We each responded with how much we cared about her and what we could each do to support her. It was really great to have her doctors there participating as well with no one taking the lead and everyone offering what they could.



I was wary of too much energy going towards our friend so I kept checking with her to see if she was okay with the process. She told me yes and wanted us to go around twice. After the circle, we walked her back to her room, bringing the flowers and herbs from the center for her to have in her room. Without me talking about it, she said that when she got overwhelmed she just stared at the flowers in the center and felt soothing energy, which helped her. It was really rewarding to be able to help her and to collaborate with her medical practitioners in this way.

If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.

*For more information on many applications of circle, visit our web site at www.peerspirit.com and subscribe to our monthly Circle Tale newsletter using the subscription mechanism at the top right of the page. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*