



This month's Circle Tale was written by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea of PeerSpirit. Here they use the harvest as a metaphor for their legacy work with circle, and invite readers to offer their own contributions.

Circle Tale, September 2011 A Time of Harvest

It was peak summer on Whidbey Island and the vegetables in our gardens were ready to pick. But we were a long way from home, waking to cool late winter rains, daffodils and camellias, and a row of kookaburras on the electric lines overlooking Green Gables Retreat Centre in the foothills of Warburton, Victoria, Australia. We spent the second half of July on a teaching trip offering three seminars on Circle and Story, and a Circle Practicum that included a number of staff and clientele of the visionary Melbourne consultancy, Success Works. It's a 20-hour commute from Seattle to Melbourne: we were here on a mission: *to bring circle, and to leave circle—to instill the capacity for circle participation, leadership, and training in all we met.* This mission is our harvest.

Particularly since the publication of *The Circle Way, A Leader in Every Chair* last year, we find ourselves in a new phase of engagement with the global shift toward participatory leadership. There is a growing understanding that circle is the foundational pattern embedded in methodologies of collaborative conversation. PeerSpirit Circle Process, along with World Café, Open Space, and other forms of dialogue, draws on a lineage of council that trails back into pre-history. If ever there was a time when we need to harvest this lineage, it's now.

At home on Whidbey island for August, our annual Circle Practicum enjoyed the presence of ethnic, racial, and age diversity (six out of fifteen participants under age 35) and the sense that the lineage of circle is also moving forward into future history.

As you read this (September 2011) we will be in Brussels, Belgium working with Art of Hosting practitioners within the European Commission and the pan-European community. We will then be near Frankfurt, Germany, working with twenty German consultants. Our autumn pace of teaching, consulting, and engagement in dynamic communities of co-learning continues in great busyness through mid-December with plans building into 2012.

What sustains us in this work is the people we meet and the sense that we are all being carried along in a harvest of the garden of our life works. The best work that we are capable of is being called out of all of us. Across generations, we are rising to an occasion the scope of which we cannot see anymore than one plant knows the whole garden. But we talk about the urgency to grow, to produce fruit, to sow seed, to offer our ripeness to one another.

We were born for these times: all of us. We who do any variety of this work of calling people into collaboration, participation, partnership, and communion are a global garden. We invite you to join us in celebrating this harvest and contributing what you can.

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. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*