

Will you help share this with others?

Has this approach to recovery been helpful to you? Do you see its potential to benefit others? If so, please consider joining us by:

- 1) **Sharing the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*** with another individual, team, or congregation so the power of communities grounded in earth, faith and hope can grow.
- 2) **Offering specific examples** of how you and your faith community are engaging in each of the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, so we can post them on the website to share with others.
- 3) **Writing your story** describing the difference the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* have made in your life and the life of your faith community, so your testimonial can be shared through the website and publications like this one.
- 4) **Making a monthly contribution or any financial gift** that will enable us to expand this effort to benefit more people and faith communities who may need them. EcoFaith Recovery depends on the contributions of people like you who share our vision for the recovery of human life and healing of God's creation. Please donate through the website or via the address below.
- 5) **Inviting your congregation** to support and fund this effort.

Thank you so much for your partnership in EcoFaith Recovery!

Please contribute your examples, stories, and financial gifts to:

EcoFaith Recovery
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Portland, OR 97212
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www.EcoFaithRecovery.org

The Little Booklet of EcoFaith Recovery



The Practices for Awakening Leadership

**For the Recovery of Human Life
and the Healing of God's Creation**

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

- Alice Walker

We are EcoFaith Recovery...

We are a broad network of volunteer leaders and faith-based communities in the Pacific Northwest who are:

- *recovering* our true vocation as people of faith and citizens of earth;
- *restoring* our sanity in the midst of an addictive culture and economy;
- *reconciling* a right-relationship with all of creation, including human and non-human communities;
- *rediscovering* courage to rise up with the most vulnerable and oppressed in the face of systems that escalate injustice and climate chaos;
- *reclaiming* our prophetic imagination for the flourishing of an earth-honoring and life-honoring faith, economy, and culture.

We are EcoFaith Recovery.

And we are recovering.

7:10 - 7:20 Where are we in the Movement (successes and setbacks) **and our BFF Strategy?**

7:20- 7:30 Group Reflection and Evaluation of Previous Action (Practices #3 - 6) Reflection and evaluation on an action from the previous month using our Criteria for Effective Action and our notes from who signed up to go.

7:30 - 7:40 Break: Offering and Announcements, Then a Song/Poem to re-gather

7:40 - 8:00 Introducing the upcoming Action/s of the Month and SIGN UPS: Who is going and how many others are you bringing?

8:00- 8:20 Group Reflection, Planning, or Teaching (Practices #3-6)

- **Option #1:** Prepare and plan for an upcoming action. Using the Criteria for Effective Action, strategize about participation, bringing the practices, mobilizing our congregations/communities, etc.
- **Option #2:** Learn more about one of the strategy areas (
- **Option #3:** In-depth teaching on the Practices or Sources of Strength

8:20 - 8:25 Evaluation of the Meeting (Practice #4)

8:25 - 8:30 Closing: Announce G4A/action dates, ask for volunteers to finish cleaning up, invite people to join leadership team meeting, **Spiritual Grounding (Practice #1)**

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8:30 - 8:40 BREAK, CLEAN UP, GOOD-BYES, COUNT OFFERING

+ + + + +

8:40 - 9:15 BFF Leader/Action Team members Meeting

1. Constructive feedback for G4A facilitators (**Practice #5, Mutual Mentoring**)
2. Using new format template, plan next G4A and assign facilitator roles (or assign roles via email: see “Core Administrative Tasks” below)
3. *Feedback from 1-1’s from the previous month*
4. *Identify one person to have a 1-1 with before next G4A*

Sample Monthly Initiative Gathering

EcoFaith Recovery's Beyond Fossil Fuels' "Grounding for Action" (G4A) Meetings

Before the meeting starts:

Write the agenda on the flip chart

Put little white cards with the 6 Practices on them on each table

Put box of Accountability Cards on the table

Arrange several tables in a cluster with chairs all around

6:00 - 6:30 Potluck

6:30 - 6:40 Spiritual Grounding (Practice #1) Song/Prayer/Reading

6:40 - 6:50 Opening Welcome (this includes a welcome, overview of why we are here and what BFF/G4A's are about, our use of EcoFaith's 6 Practices, introductions of names and agenda review)

6:50 - 6:55 Self-Accountability Check-In. Facilitator: This is a time when we take a few moments to hold ourselves lovingly accountable to the work of organizing our communities, congregations, networks. The way we do this in BFF is using these notecards - a place to write down YOUR goals for YOUR OWN organizing and outreach in the next month. Right now you'll get a few minutes to think and write on your own card. And you can keep your card to jot additional thoughts through the meeting. At the *end* of the meeting, we'll collect them -- and return them to you next month to see how you did. No one will read your notes.

6:50 - 6:55 Telling our Stories (Practices #3) - Why I keep coming back to the G4A's - what they mean to me; or some other story from the heart

6:55 - 7:10 Relational Practices (Practice #2, plus 3 and 4) - One-to-one conversations: You may use one or more of the following prompts to focus your sharing, or some other topic

- I utilized the practices in these ways...and this was the impact...
- I participated in these actions...and this was the impact on me...
- This is how my work in my congregation/community is going...
- This is what I have done well...these were the challenges I faced...this is how I experienced building power...this is what I can do better...this is the help I need...

Our Purpose is to...

- + identify existing and emerging leaders,
- + develop our leadership potential through EcoFaith's *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, and
- + lift one another up to support our faith communities in taking courageous public action for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

Our Name...

EcoFaith Recovery arose at the confluence of three rivers of wisdom:

- 1) **ecology**,
- 2) earth-honoring Christian **faith**, with an openness to learning from other spiritual traditions, as well, and
- 3) various "**recovery**" movements, especially
 - ♦ personal 12 step recovery groups,
 - ♦ community anti-oppression trainings, and
 - ♦ grassroots community organizing for the recovery of our institutions

From the confluence of these rivers we draw the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* and go into "ecofaith recovery" together.

Common Characteristics among those of us engaged in EcoFaith Recovery

Like millions around the world who have sought recovery from the destructive effects of growing up in addictive and dysfunctional systems, we in EcoFaith Recovery discovered that we also had many experiences in common from living in a society addicted to an unsustainable way of life. While understanding that not all of these characteristics describe all of us, many of us experienced the following:

- We found that we were not spiritually grounded, that our current institutional faith practices were not sufficiently rooting us to weather the storms (ecological, economic, social, political and spiritual) of climate change and ecological degradation.
- We often felt overwhelmed by the incessant bad news, finding ourselves either compulsively acting to “fix” the problem or “checking out” emotionally.
- We sought ways to get involved in actions or activities of our congregations and local organizations, but sometimes left these experiences and meetings feeling more isolated than when we came.
- We found ourselves exhausted and “burned out” by actions and activities, even and especially from those that were for a “good cause.”

Sample 90 Minute Meeting Format

Make sure everybody has a copy of this booklet so leaders can reference which

Practice the group is

engaging in whenever possible.

Each Corresponding Practice is in parenthesis below.

0:00 **Lead a Spiritual Grounding Exercise (Practice #1).** Ideally, this Practice would connect people to this meeting’s purpose.

0:10 **Sharing of a Story (#3)** - One Person shares a brief story about his/her experience related to this meeting’s purpose or any one of the Practices (revealing how any *Practice* grounds or facilitates public action for the recovery of human life and healing of God’s creation).

0:15 **One-to-One Conversations (#2)** in response to the story that was just shared. [20 minutes is even better!]

0:30 **Full Group Sharing – (#2)** Briefly share any significant insights that arose during the one-to-one’s.

0:35 **Rhythms of Engagement (#4)** – Indicate whether this meeting’s primary focus is *Preparing for Action, Engaging in Reflection, Participating in Evaluation, or Celebrating Sabbath*. Proceed forward with that agenda. [Plan for more time here and a longer meeting, if desired.]

1:15 **Read aloud one or more of the Practices from Mentoring (#5) or Conscious Leadership Development (#6).** Discuss together how those present would like to engage that Practice in the coming week.

1:25 **Spiritual Grounding Practice (#1) to conclude.**

1:30 **Close the Meeting**

How can our group, team or congregation engage in these Practices for Awakening Leadership?

There is no single or right way to engage the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*. You are most welcome to participate in an EcoFaith Recovery Initiative to gain experience with the *Practices*. Whenever you are ready, you can bring them back home to your faith community. Because experience has shown that we recover more fully when practicing within a community of support, we encourage you to find two or more others, or any existing group in your faith community. These may be people who have a fairly clear sense of the difference they would like to make together or a group that simply knows they want mutual support in speaking up and taking action in response to their faith. Then just set a time to meet and start!

Possible ways to practice together include:

- Working with one of the six categories each month. Try engaging one sub-practice per week for four weeks, and use any fifth week to practice Sabbath together. (A sample meeting format is on the next page, and additional formats can be found on the website.) This would enable you to move through all six categories twice every year;
- Beginning (or ending) a meal or a meeting by engaging in any single practice;
- Engaging a different practice as a family at the beginning or ending of each day;
- Bringing a team of one or two fellow leaders to a gathering of one of EcoFaith's various Initiatives where you can learn how to engage these practices more deeply in your life and with any group.

- We kept our feelings of grief, fear and anger inside for lack of a community that could hold and honor the emotional impact that climate change and ecological degradation were having on us.
- We found that we were unconsciously allowing fear of disapproval to keep us from taking risks for the sake of our own development and for the healing of creation.
- We struggled but failed to find words to explain why taking action for the healing of God's creation and justice for those disproportionately harmed by ecological degradation was deeply important to us, thus increasing our isolation and feeling of being overwhelmed.
- We believed that we had no unique gifts to offer to the movements for the healing of creation and justice for human communities, that we were not leaders unless we were prepared to stand up and lead a big group.
- We believed that we had no story, that we had no wisdom, that we had no power, that we were fundamentally victims of a system rather than actors within it.

In response to experiences like these, we are coming together and engaging in the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*.

In the process, we are recovering our true vocation as people of faith and citizens of earth.

We welcome you to join us!

Purpose & Nature of this Recovery Work

EcoFaith Recovery is a spiritual recovery movement for people of faith and others who care to join us. Together we acknowledge our participation in and powerlessness over our dominant culture's addiction to unjust and unsustainable ways of life. We seek recovery to a higher power, a God who equips us to take appropriate action for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

Seeking Right-relationship to God and God's Power

We believe that a God of Love is always at work in the world pursuing a wholistic flourishing of life characterized by justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This is the Biblical vision of Shalom. God calls us to participate in the life giving power of love in order to embody Shalom in every dimension of our lives: personal, interpersonal, community and the public arena. The more fully we participate in this great work of love with God, the more our cultural, economic, religious, and political institutions embody God's desire for creation.

A Choice Between Powers

Of course there is more than one kind of power at work in the world. Power is frequently defined as "the ability to act or produce an effect." We exercise power in complex and often unexamined ways through the choices we make and the ways those choices directly or indirectly impact others. We experience and participate in both life-giving and destructive forms of power every day across every dimension of our lives.

6) **Conscious Leadership Development** through which we generate a vast regenerative ecosystem of courageous leaders capable of taking public action for the recovery of human life and healing of God's creation.

Personal: We take interest in our own leadership development by investing our curiosity, energy, time, money and other resources to nurture our capacity to live out our call.

Interpersonal: We model interest in our own leadership development and the development of others by explicitly naming the God-given gifts, call, struggles, and potential we see in ourselves and that which we see in others. We risk inviting and offering feedback for the purpose of growth. We affirm one another's courage in stepping out into uncharted territory, celebrating how mistakes and failures provide rich opportunities for growth throughout creation.

Faith Community: We cultivate cultures of conscious leadership development within our communities of faith by regularly and personally inviting others into developmentally appropriate leadership roles, even when this takes more time and energy than doing it ourselves.

Public Sphere: We engage in public efforts to promote leadership development throughout the workforce through public actions that create pathways out of dead-end jobs into life-giving vocations that improve the health and well-being of communities.



5) Mentoring and Mutual-Mentoring whereby sustained attention fosters the nurturing and development of our deepest gifts.

Personal: At every stage of life, we reflect upon the way our own sense of call could be nurtured by a mentor and the gifts we have to offer by serving as mentor to another.

Interpersonal: We invite somebody to mentor us and offer ourselves as a mentor to another, trusting that both mentoring and being mentored develop greater clarity about our call and a greater capacity to live it out.

Faith Community: We seek to develop cultures of mentoring within our faith communities and the other communities of which we are a part.

Public Sphere: We engage in public efforts to create and incentivize mentoring. We support a transition from compartmentalized notions of “jobs we do” to a more holistic sense of “vocations we pursue” to promote social justice while nurturing the community of life.



Destructive Power

Destructive power may manifest as injustice, violence and the degradation of life. Our dominant culture’s compulsion towards unsustainable and unjust ways of life wreaks havoc upon us as individuals, families, and communities. It is equally destructive in the public sphere where it pervades our cultural, economic, religious, and political institutions, such as our schools, corporations, faith communities, and governmental organizations.

We participate in destructive power in ways that are not fully conscious to us or through processes that seem to be far beyond our control. For example, we exercise destructive power as we...

- continue to extract and burn fossil fuels within a climate that is already in peril,
- unknowingly use resources that destroy habitats or foster unjust work environments, and
- permit our economic and political institutions to produce toxic waste and then dump it on the land of indigenous, ethnic minority and low income human communities that lack sufficient power to oppose such choices.

Destructive power often benefits those who have access to greater power and resources while inflicting disproportionate harm on the most vulnerable and oppressed human and nonhuman members of God’s creation. When we uncritically participate in these destructive systems of power and unconsciously replicate them in our families, faith communities, and other institutions, the devastation to our lives, the lives of future generations, and everything God loves escalates. But when we claim the power God gives us to stand in service of Shalom, then destructive power is restrained and what has been devastated begins to heal.

Recovering the Life-giving Power of Leadership

We take the first step toward recovering the right use of power when we acknowledge our powerlessness over our culture's addiction to an unsustainable way of life. But also realizing our complicity in this addictive process, we humbly ask God to realign our lives with God's right use of power so we can awaken to a healthy understanding of ourselves as *leaders* in recovery.

We recognize that the majority of us are already leaders, even when we are engaged in simply leading by example. To become more conscious of the kind of leadership we are already offering and enhance our capacity to make a difference, we engage in six **Practices for Awakening Leadership**.

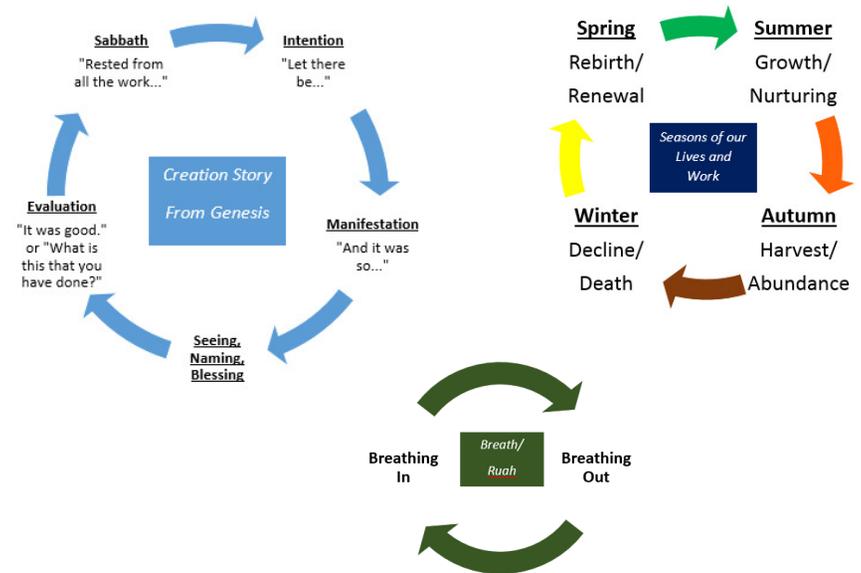
These **Practices** include

- 1) spiritual grounding,
- 2) relational conversations,
- 3) telling our stories,
- 4) rhythms of engagement,
- 5) mentoring, and
- 6) conscious leadership development.

As we engage in these *Practices* within the personal, interpersonal, community, and public arenas of our lives, we begin to recover and reclaim a responsible use of power. God realigns our lives with the divine power of love at work in creation and works through us to inspire action in service of Shalom. We offer more spiritually grounded, relational leadership to our faith communities, other communities and public institutions, inspiring them to take courageous public action together for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation. As we engage these Practices, we find that God expands our capacity to make costly sacrifices to bring about a greater flourishing of the good life God intends for all. We participate in this sacrificial love in service of Shalom when, for example, we...

- choose sustainably-made goods produced with just labor practices,

4) Rhythms of Engagement through which we realign the rhythms of our lives with the regenerative cycles of God's creation. A few examples include:



Personal: We allow the breadth of God's cycles to shape the rhythm of our personal and family life. We seek to allow God's priorities to shape the pace and rhythms by which the good gifts of creation flow through our lives.

Interpersonal: We ask for support and extend support to others in finding the right balance of God's rhythms, so that those rhythms might take deeper root in our lives.

Community: We organize gatherings of our faith communities to explicitly include the rhythms of Preparation, Action, Reflection, Evaluation and Sabbath.

Public Sphere: We help organize our faith communities to prepare for and engage in public action. We reflect upon and evaluate our leadership efforts and public actions, celebrating our successes and identifying specific areas for growth. We pause to delight in our relationships with human communities and all of God's creation before moving onto the next daily, weekly or monthly cycle of action.

3) **Telling Our Stories** to claim the power of God at work in our lived experiences and share our stories to advance the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

Personal: We become curious about our own stories and sense of call. We claim responsibility to educate ourselves about the ways our personal journeys have been shaped by the stories of our families, ancestors, communities, cultures, economic systems, political systems, societal institutions, faith traditions, land, and the 13.8 billion-year unfolding of God's universe. We become literate about the ways these various stories do or do not contribute to a sustainable planet for all.

Interpersonal: We practice sharing our stories and motivation for action with others whenever appropriate opportunities arise. We become more confident about the ways God can use our stories alongside the stories of others to inspire recovery for human life and healing for God's creation.

Community: We publicly share our stories and visions within our communities of faith and other communities. Discovering that our personal stories can be both instructive and inspiring, we seek opportunities to tell our stories publicly, practicing them in advance, and requesting feedback afterwards to further develop the power and capacity of our stories to make a difference.

Public Sphere: We organize opportunities for our stories and the stories of the most marginalized among us to have public impact on public officials, public policies and economic practices which impinge upon God's living earth. We learn how to call forth the time, money, turn-out and other resources that enable these stories to make a positive difference.



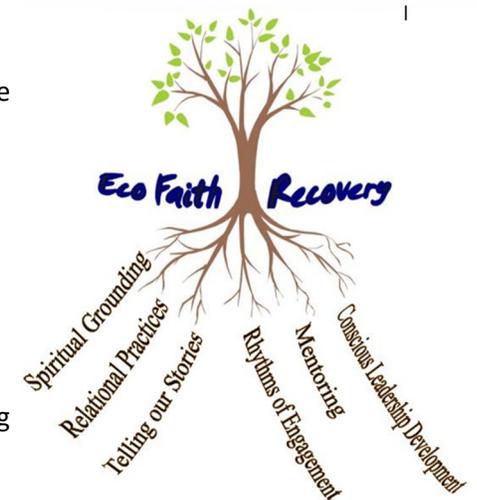
- lobby for legislation which reduces community energy consumption in ways that do not cause additional harm to the economically vulnerable, and
- risk our personal privilege by renouncing violence and standing in solidarity with marginalized communities on the front lines of ecological degradation and related injustices, partnering with them to work for nonviolent social change.

Daily Work Done Together With Others

Through daily engagement with the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, we go into “ecofaith recovery” together. We have found that such counter-cultural recovery work is only possible with the support of and accountability to others who are also engaged in this work. Only in this way can we daily recover to right relationship with God, one another, oppressed communities, the land and its indigenous peoples, our local watersheds, and the whole of God's creation. We seek progress and not perfection, recognizing that this is urgent yet life-long work.

As we recover, we learn to exercise leadership that is more faithful, humble, creative, and courageous. We support our congregations in recovering the power to offer public witness to our faith. We reclaim a vision of congregations and other public institutions as capable of taking action for justice that promotes the diverse flourishing of life throughout creation.

As we do all of this, God renews our sense of hope, nurtures a healthy sense of leadership in us, and restores our capacity to make a difference for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.



The Practices for Awakening Leadership

The following pages describe *the Practices* through which we are entering into “ecofaith recovery” together.

1) Spiritual Grounding through which we see our place within God’s evolving universe and learn to practice an earth-honoring faith.

Personal: **We engage in daily spiritual practices** through which we acknowledge our *powerlessness* over addictive societal systems, come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to wholeness, and reclaim a right relationship with God’s creative power moving through us and the whole creation.

Interpersonal: **We incorporate spiritual grounding and other Practices for Awakening Leadership** when we come together with others who also desire this in order to further open our relationships to God’s creative, life-giving power.

Community: **We reimagine our faith traditions** by reclaiming the Bible as a resource for an earth-honoring faith, repenting of ways we have not used our Scriptures and traditions in support of justice for the oppressed, and reviving our ritual life as a source of compassionate action in service of the diversity, interdependence and well-being of God’s creation.

Public Sphere: **We plan and lead creative public rituals and actions** through which we heed God’s call to worship by “doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God.”



2) Relational Conversations which enable us to cultivate the power present in our relationships and the capacity of our relational networks to take action for the common good.

Personal: **We engage in Intentional Relational Conversations (One-to-One’s)** where we discover more about ourselves while learning about another. Over time we discern whether mutual interests lead us to act together for the common good of our civic communities, watersheds and bioregions.

Interpersonal: **We seek authentic, mutual Relationships with the most vulnerable and oppressed among us and those who dwelled on this land before we did.** We listen for the ways in which injustice to the land is linked to injustice to its peoples and the ways in which environmental injustice enacts oppression. We seek to become visible allies with one another by examining our disproportionate resources and privileges, and using them with thoughtfulness, transparency and respect.

Community: **We organize focused Listening Seasons** in which a group or congregation conducts multiple one-to-one conversations throughout its community over several weeks to discern common concerns, ideas, and themes. We intentionally seek to include the participation of those who are too often invisible or discounted.

Public Sphere: **We develop individual and collective relationships with political and economic leaders** to support the recovery of our institutions as spaces in which relational power can advance the common good of people and their ecological communities.

