



Convergence Newsletter

Nr 56 — July 2020

Welcome to this edition of the Convergence Newsletter, in these unusual and changing times. We hope you and your families are all well and our thoughts are with you who've lost loved ones from any cause during this time.

In this newsletter, several people muse about Convergence and how it affects our lives. There's also an update about tree planting out at Journey's End, and memories of Chrissy and Jim, who passed away recently and were loved by many of us.

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Convergence notices and newsletter

There now is an email list for Convergence notices, which are sent out more often than the newsletter, and are better for news that can't wait. You can get more information and opt-in here: <http://convergence.org.nz/notices>

Send notices you would like to have included to mynotice@convergence.org.nz

To receive the newsletters ask info@convergence.net.nz for it (note the .org/.net difference!).

The newsletter is produced approximately 4–5 times a year (before Mini Gatherings). Contributions for the next newsletter can be sent to mynotice@convergence.org.nz, deadline is approximately 3 weeks before the Mini Gathering starts.

July Mini Gathering and Winter Break

Wed 15 – Sun 19 July

Leigh Lodge is open again for sleeping in! Hang out in the lovely and warm lounge. It's school holidays too so bring the kids out! Come for as long or short a time as you wish.

No cost, bring bedding, your own breakfasts, and food to share for lunch and dinner, and games for the evenings.

This is mainly a chance to relax in nature, but we will try to make ourselves useful with a little bit of site maintenance. Let's see what the weather does. Sun-bathing and skinny-dipping optional (it was possible the last two years).

Saturday night feast, and there is a rumour of mulled fruit juice to celebrate the season.

Rewards at Mini Gathering

While coming together for lunch, one of the natives was already lunching on the ripe berries in summer, only 2 metres away. It was at times funny to watch, with the bird moving down the thinning branch, almost falling off a few times but managing to cling to it upside down.



Planting native trees at Journey's End

At the beginning of June, about 35 people spent a couple of great weekends attacking broom and blackberry along the fence-line out at Journey's End and then planting 200 baby trees.



Social distancing: stay a brush-cutter length apart!



An energetic group in the sunshine.

The weather was glorious—some enthusiasts even went swimming—and we had great food and a lot of laughs and evening sharing. The fantails were out in force getting underfoot and the sandflies weren't—perfection!

We got all 200 planted, watered and mulched, and now they just have to sit there and grow.

Heaps of thanks to everyone who joined in!



A happy tree—and a friendly helper.

Free to Be

The theme “Free to Be” got me thinking and here’s some of my thoughts on the subject.

Perhaps in the womb I was free to be, but, from the moment of my birth, I started being moulded to fit into the family, and society, into which I was born. As long as I didn’t stray far from the guidelines set for me by others, then all would be well.

In my mid forties circumstances propelled me into a new way of looking at my life. Basically it could be said that my life became focussed on the question “Who am I?” and it could be said that I started a journey of learning how it was possible to be “free to be Me”.

Some 20+ years ago friends started saying to me “River, you’ve got to go to Convergence. It’s you!” And they were right! So 10 or so years ago I went to Convergence for the first time and I walked in and immediately felt that here was a place where I had complete freedom to be Me. It was a complete revelation to me that there existed a place, full of people, where it was entirely my choice as to what I was doing at any moment in time. I had complete freedom to be Me. I guess the timing was perfect as I was able to fully indulge in the experience. (An interesting side issue is that some people at Convergence have reacted against my experience and have tried to bully/coerce me into their experience, but that’s another story! And maybe I’ve also done that to others!).

During these last 10 years I have become aware of another “shift” happening in me, with Convergence as the annual “full immersion” to help me understand what is going on. Over the years I have been involved in many different workshops and “practices” about life, enlightenment, etc. One of the commonest instructions is the need to “Be” rather than “Do”. The inference being that Being is positive and Doing negative. Thus one can sit on one’s bum in a cave for many years and let go of the mind and the need to “Do” and just “Be”. That is “the way to Enlightenment”, or so they say. Like every other “instruction” I have ever had from another person, I have discovered that they are talking about their way, not necessarily mine. I have discovered that I revel in my mind and my “Doing” and, if I fully immerse myself in that, then I am “Being” in that moment. The one “fact” which I am certain about in life is that all humans are different. We may have similarities but what works for me may not work for you, and vice versa. By my acceptance of my Self, which allows me to be free to be Me, I am “Free to Be”.

A further twist happened at Convergence when Rob added some words to enhance it, that something went “click” inside me and life will never be quite the same again!☺ So it became “Free to allow others to be free to be”. From that moment on I felt all my old fears and judgements of others attending the event vanish. As I walked away from where I had heard it, I (coincidentally?) met the one person who I had wanted to change, over the years, and realised that I could now allow them to be free of my judgements and fears, if they were even aware of them! I realised that they had every right to be themselves and I had to change ME if I wanted harmony in the group—which I do.

Upon reflection I suggest that the only place for intervention at Convergence is if someone breaks the laws of the land—everything else is purely subjective, depending on the observer’s own fears, judgements and belief systems. We all converge together at that time and place and hopefully can work together to paradoxically attain a wonderful blend of Beings.

— River

Drinking water at Convergence

The water supplied to the site by the council (less than 1 cubic metre) per day doesn't even last Convergence for half a day. The remaining volume is supplied by a well by the river, and a 4-stage filter that turns it into drinking water. One of the jobs of preparing the site in early December is to clean the silt out of the bottom of the well, because if the inlet sucks in the silt, the filter clogs up every few hours.

The task starts with moving the lid off and having a look at it, before climbing down with a bucket on a rope to scoop the silt out. There are usually roots to be removed too that have grown into the well. Shining a torch around to see how much work it's going to be results in

Oh s__t IT'S MOVING! I'm NOT going down THERE...!!!



An eel had made its way in there somehow. With a limited food supply for the eel, we didn't really want dead rotting eel in our water supply, so the eel got trapped, bucketed, and released well downstream from the swimming holes. We don't really want bitten ankles now either, do we... but that's a different story.

For those who are concerned, we checked out the performance of the filter system while the river was in flood and full of the stock poop washed off the paddocks upstream, and found the filter system produces safe drinking water with an *E.coli* count of zero. At that time of the flood the river water had a count of more than 16 times that at which councils close rivers to swimming.

Remembering Chrissy (Christine) Wills

Who's this coming towards me? A little woman wearing a flowing deep red cloak, a bright purple wig under the hood with unruly blonde hair peeking out from the sides. Mischief-filled blue eyes hidden behind a pair of large pink sunglasses? It could only be Chrissy Wills!

Chrissy's personality was fully reflected in her outfits—larger than life and positively unique. She was one of those people who stood out in any crowd—not only for how she dressed but also because of the strength and force of her personality. Never shy about being forward, if Chrissy had an opinion

you would know about it. Her strength and vitality for life just couldn't be contained.

Forever brewing up new ideas and wicked plans and always fuelled with positive energy, she would share a vision of another inventive inspiration or improvement—some creative masterpiece that she would often eventually create. Her Waikari shed was a continual work in progress, part finished, part not, but every inch a testament to craftsmanship and creativity. It was her sanctuary—a place of art, nourishment, cats and healing.

Open, loving and caring, Chrissy had a positive impact on so many lives and so many places. Many people were touched by her honesty and integrity. Not that she minded a bit of fun or was a stickler for rules, but you had to respect that whatever she did she was quite upfront about it (her parties became legendary). And she cared, so you just appreciated her eccentricities.

Life was never easy or smooth for Chrissy, but even in the last years as she struggled with her health, she was never without a smile or a sparkle in her eyes and a positive thought—and she still had energy to create something for others to enjoy. Chrissy's illuminated fantasy garden was a highlight of the last few Convergences. I am forever grateful that when she needed him most, she found her rock and fellow soul in Jean Francois.

Chrissy—I'll really miss you, my old matey. Keep a good bottle of red aside, lay out a frock and a rainbow punk wig for me, and someday we'll have a yarn, a hug and a good catch up. Until then journey well. I know that you will.

— M/Michelle/Michael

Between the Worlds

As I write this we are in lockdown level 3, and when you read this we are likely to still be in some kind of lockdown. This is a time between the pre-COVID, pre-lockdown world of only a few months ago and the post-lockdown world that is to come. Our movement is restricted, our freedoms curtailed, familiar routines have gone. There have been shortages in the supermarket, businesses are closed and we can't see our neighbours or hug our friends.

For those of you who have been working during the whole COVID emergency as a first responder or an essential service worker I thank and salute you. Never has it been clearer that the people who really matter are the ones who keep us safe, healthy and well fed.

For those of us who've been stuck at home, our days tend to be much the same, the weeks much the same, the places we go much the same.

And somewhere out there, like a half remembered dream, is Convergence. Did we really gather together, so very many of us? Did we actually hug so freely? Did hand sanitiser really only live in the composting toilets? Do you remember how close we got to each other? Wasn't the sun a funny shade of orange—perhaps it was a portent of a plague to come? Or was it all just some lucid fantasy brought on by an overdose of chocolate washed down with wine we've taken to cheer ourselves up?

How quickly we adapt to this "new normal" as the old normal fades into memory, adaptation being one of the better traits of the human animal. Other traits have also been visible—like needing to keep a measure of control in an uncertain situation even if that is control over how much pasta is in the cupboard. We become exposed to ourselves in both our smallness and our greatness, in our dark

and our light, and many of us have little to do but to sit with ourselves and look. And so again we find our way back to Convergence.

Convergence also offers that opportunity to really see ourselves, but in a kinder, gentler way. We aren't forced there. Nobody will arrest us if we leave. But in that time away from our normal we are also given the opportunity to become exposed to ourselves, to look into our own eyes and meet what we see there. Now it feels like life just got sick of our collective lack of progress and bundled us all into a compulsory workshop on relationships, self-reflection, nature connection, the gritudes and surrender to what is.

We still have freedom of choice in our situation. We can spend all day on Netflix or in meditation. We can drown our discomforts in alcohol or we can dive deep to meet them. We can accept that our monkey minds have shut down because of stress and we can be loving to ourselves. We can practice inner kindness as well as kindness towards others. And in our dreaming state in this place between worlds, we can dream.

We can dream of a better way now that much of the old way has stopped. What wasn't working? What's better now? How can we keep it in the new world to come? Is commuting to work much easier? Do we enjoy seeing lots more birds? Are the streets quieter and safer? Do we have more money now that we can't spend it as easily on things we don't really need? How can we support local businesses? What's important to us now? What are the things or the people we are really missing? Convergence is about creating a better way of living—or at least that was the aim of the founders, and this is the time to dream it.

There will be a Convergence and Convergence gatherings in the new world, the world that will come after the Great Pause. They may not be quite the same, but then we won't be quite the same either. Hopefully we will arrive there with the ripened seeds of our dreaming growing in our bellies, ready to give birth to something wonderful and new.

If you are wondering where to start on the journey, I recommend this quote from Carl Jung. There is no better place to start a journey than at the very beginning.

In my case Pilgrim's Progress consisted in my having to climb down a thousand ladders until I could reach out my hand to the little clod of earth that I am. (Carl Jung)

See you in the Brave New World to come. Namaste.

— M/Michelle/Michael

Remembering Jim Horton

My great friend Jim Horton died on his beloved beach in May. Jim had been enduring bad health for some years and wanted to terminate his hero's journey on his terms.

Jim was an inspiration and mentor to me. We shared many times together both profane and sacred. It was early 1990s that I first met Jim at a men's event held in a grove of karaka trees located on the banks of the Wainui estuary in Golden Bay. It was a profound experience for me which has shaped my life. Jim's wisdom and compassion towards me was the start of a deep friendship that grew into a lasting enthusiasm for personal development work.

I have been privileged to join Jim in several men's events both at the Tui Tree Field and other

locations as he supported the events organised by MensTrust. My wife and I participated in several Gender Gatherings at the Tree Field. These were often challenging experiences but Jim was there holding the energy and contributing to a safe container with his experience and wisdom. Jim was a poet and loved the ritual which gave him an opportunity to show his king energy often juxtaposed with the jester with memorable effect.

The legacy that he leaves is huge. His leadership inspired many men, women, boys and girls to discover more about themselves, their community and their role in life. Tracks and Tides programs for youth are a lasting reflection of the vision that I saw in Jim at my first men's event all those years ago.

Jim's creative energies were not limited to the programs and events but encompassed extraordinary buildings. The huge Pentacle in the Tree Field reflects his vision and is soon to be replaced by an even grander edifice. Sadly Jim will not see its completion. Other structures reflect his extraordinary imagination. The washanui in the Tree Field and of course his amazing house representing the body of a dragon are examples of Jim's creative imagination.

Jim leaves behind inspired family and friends that will carry on his vision. A great life well lived.

— Bryce

Embodied Being “Who are you?”

Fri 24 Jul 2:00 PM – Sun 26 Jul 2020 2:00 PM, Staveley

A RESIDENTIAL RETREAT EXPLORING MINDFULNESS IN MOTION

I'd like to invite you to join us for a deep dive into self love.

After a beautiful event last year, with open floor movement and heart share and possibility management, I feel strongly about gathering together in community in these times of change and transformation.

The intention of this retreat is for participants to foster and develop genuine self-compassion through Open Floor dance—a delicious combination of conscious movement, heart sharing in the evenings by the fire, mindfulness and exploration! This is an opportunity to take responsibility, and to take a step out and then into life!

Rhythm and dance is in our nature—it is shared by just about every culture. An Embodied Freedom experience is like a modern remix of tribal traditions of community, growth, celebration and gratitude! Physical embodiment creates emotional intelligence, and we develop emotional intelligence by being at home in our bodies.

Discover what stops you from fully accepting yourself, right here, right now.

Loosen your grip. Let go of ideas of how to move, how to be.

Notice yourself. What is it to be a human “being”... really?

Warm up your winter by coming to explore what it truly means to be YOU. Visit yourself and uncover your own unique gifts among the caring support of a connected group. This workshop incorporates Possibility Management tools alongside Open Floor Movement practice and Heart sharing circles.

Cost: \$550, incl accommodation, all meals and tutoring.

Venue: Staveley Camp, Staveley (110km West of Christchurch) [map link](#)

Web: <https://www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz/events/enter-being-2019>

Open Floor Teacher

Edge Worker

Group Facilitator

sybille@embodiedfreedom.co.nz, www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz

Ph: 0210402261

Golden Bay, Aotearoa/NZ

Expand the Box & Open Floor Movement Collaboration

Thu 27 Aug 2020 9:00 am – Sun 30 Aug 2020 4:00 pm, Riverside, Motueka

You probably learned how to survive in conditions that no longer apply, and that might still be limiting you. Do you want to break the shell? Do you want to come alive?

The coming together of these two powerful modalities will allow you immediate access to new paths of change.

The collaboration of Ana Norambuena and Sybille Feint brings pure transformation with the sharpness and possibilities from distinctions, and the wisdom and integration from movement. You will not be the same after!

- Live in the now and find the way to let go of past patterns
- Find out what is blocking you from being authentically yourself and find possibilities for transformation
- Establish authentic contact with fellow human beings
- Communicate with clarity and passion
- Shift drama into creation
- Work in collaboration
- Unfold your potential and give your soul a voice
- Reveal the unconscious part in you: your underworld

Cost: \$690–\$950, incl accommodation for 3 nights (27–29 Aug), all meals and tutoring.

Venue: Riverside Community Hall, 289 Main Road Lower Moutere, Motueka

Web: <https://www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz/events/2019/12/18/expand-the-box-amp-openfloor-movement-collaboration>