

Go Green Illinois meeting notes

September 8, 2020

Conflict Resolution: How to have productive conversations about difficult topics

48 people representing 18 communities/groups

Beth Drucker welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Kim Stone introduced our guest speaker:

Michael Montgomery is an international depth psychotherapist, social worker, published researcher and most importantly a committed father to two boys, supporting his partner to pursue her career. Originally from Belfast, his work and message is very much informed by the experiences, past and present, of growing up during a violent armed conflict. Before he trained in psychotherapy, he left his career as managing director of an advertising agency to spend many years in a Buddhist retreat centre and spiritual community. He specializes in trauma and conflict resolution. Given the polarization in our country, we thought this topic would be helpful for the group.

Michael recommended the film *Behind the Curve*, a documentary about flat earthers.

He talked about polarization, tribalism, distrust of science and disbelief fostered by politicians, media and others. We should have compassion for ourselves and others. Those of us who do work to make the world better often forget to take care of themselves.

Dehumanization is easy to do, especially to people with whom we fundamentally disagree. The secret to communicating with those with whom you disagree is finding a connection. We need empathy to heal the nation. We can connect through empathy by focusing on needs.

Climate change deniers – what need do they have? They are in denial because of fear, anger, concern about change or losing their way of life. Denial is not rational, so a reasoned argument will not work. Their self view may be projected in their world view. Climate change deniers may be fearful people.

Establish relationships based on honesty and empathy. This will fill people's needs and help improve communication.

Ask/try to determine what are people afraid of. Connect with them on those issues. Be human. They may be fearful of giving up comfort, of death, of change, for example.

“Real listening is the willingness to let the other person change you.” Alan Alda

Are you open to listening? You need to let go of being right and desire for change. Instead, focus on the connection, needs and feelings of the other person.

Montgomery recommends the film “Accidental Courtesy,” the story of African American musician Darryl Davis who has spent much of his life seeking out and engaging with members of

the Ku Klux Klan. <https://accidentalcourtesy.com> Davis starts many of those conversations with the question, "Why do you hate me?"

In summary:

- Invite a conversation.
- Conversations come after we connect. What is the need and how do you connect on that? Connect on a different level before you get into change.
- Connect before we correct.
- To get people to change, don't judge or criticize. Need to connect.

You can reach Michael directly at: michael@logic23.com

Our next meeting is November 10 at 1 pm. This is one week after the election.

If anyone is interested in arranging a virtual screening of the film Public Trust and a discussion, please contact Kim to discuss.

A suggestion was made to hold informal GGIL meetings on off months, possibly with small groups in breakout rooms, similar to our pre meeting lunches at CBG. Please email Beth and Kim at info@gogreenillinois.org with your thoughts on this idea.

This is an edited version of the chat from our meeting:

We asked people to rename themselves in the zoom to include the name of their community or group along with their name. Those who responded to our question about live or remote meetings all preferred to continue meeting remotely.

From Kim Stone: Take a look at our website for lots of upcoming events:

<https://www.gogreenillinois.org/calendar/>

From David Husemoller, CLC : Topic suggestion: Use of Roundup on recreational trails.

From Gia Schultz: Vision, Morton Grove : Would love to hear about other municipality sustainability plans and how public can influence and guide the process.

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston : What does the intersection of equity and sustainability look like in your community?

From Andy Amend, Go Green Highland Park: Add to David's suggestion on Round Up to include other lawn products, especially colored (dyed) mulches

From Seema Keshav, Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire : Plastics has become an even bigger problem with COV-ID. What can we do? How to get reusables back in?

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: Would love to hear from Illinois Environmental Council and the progress of CEJA

From Thomas Poupard: Confirmation bias: <https://youtu.be/0xKklLpIng>

From Andy Amend, Go Green Highland Park: What do you think of just asking "What in your experience brought you to this view?" A liberal Franciscan nun suggested that.

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: It is like positive discipline- Connect before you correct.

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston: Here's another great climate psychologist:
<https://reneelertzman.com/>

From Kristy Miller: William Ury has a great book, Getting to Yes, to look at conflict from a theoretical perspective. Another, more practical book that discusses tangible strategies for having difficult discussions is Crucial Conversations by Joseph Grenney et. al.

From Dorr St.Clair, Friends of the Green Bay Trail: Go Green Illinois is great. The fact that there are so many communities coming together offers an opportunity for us to learn what works by hearing from the voice of experience. I think it's a good model. Also, because we are a large group, we benefit from the speakers who we wouldn't see as individuals. Thank you.

From Donnie Dann, Highland Park, Bird Conservation Network: Idea for part of a future meeting: Last Wednesday I gave a short presentation on bird friendly construction before the Planning committee of the Lake County. As the major news outlets have reported, we have lost 29% of our birds, about one billion in the past 50 years. How about a future meeting devoted to the implications, causes and the remedies?

From Marion Cartwright, Green Minds Lake Forest Lake Bluff : I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. Maya Angelou quote that helps me every day in moving thru the alternate reality I feel around some people

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston : That's my favorite quote

From Amy Bartucci - Seven Generations Ahead : On Kristy's point about garden education, please take a look at #NowMoreThanEver <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/now-more-than-ever/>

From Amy Bartucci - Seven Generations Ahead :

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisFarmtoSchool/>

From Barbara Lonergan: Kristy Miller, can you post a link to the EPA info you referenced?

From Kristy Miller:

https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/reference/research_and_reports/portfolio_manager_data_trends/renewable_report

From Andy Amend, Go Green Highland Park: Coalition work exemplifies a lot of these ideas

From Mary Munday, Glenview : Heard a wonderful presentation on how important it is to electrify our infrastructure by architect Doug Farr. Don't know if he might address Go Green Illinois. Great program today. Deep. We need to be kind.

From Green MindsLFLB : Thank you. Great speaker!

From Cathi White, Go Green Skokie : Michael, can you put your email in the chat?

From Andy Amend, Go Green Highland Park: I am reading Merge Left, Fusing Race and Class, Winning Election and Saving America. Very few people want to be thought of as a "racist."

From Amy Bartucci - Seven Generations Ahead : THIS WAS HELPFUL, thank you! I believe!

From Nancy Pavkovic: This was an amazing gathering! Yes, Thank You Michael Montgomery, Gave me a lot to think about this afternoon.

From Andy Amend, Go Green Highland Park: This was fantastic and practical!

From Jen Nelson, Seven Generations Ahead: Thank you!

From Susan Casey, Seven Generations Ahead: That was so much to think about-- thank you, Michael & GGIL!

From Jeanie Frye Winnetka: 🙌🙌🙌 Liz!!!!

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston : Here's a great company for planning virtual events. I know Jennifer Friedrich from Leadership Evanston!

<https://bonchicago.com/index.html>

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston : Polly, are you connected with Etown Sunrise?

From Polly Frazer, Sunrise North Shore: Sunrise North Shore email:

sunrisenorthshore@gmail.com

From Polly Frazer, Sunrise North Shore: Instagram: @sunrisenorthshore

From Amy Bartucci, Seven Generations Ahead: Hi All, and Polly: Please help us promote this event that will be student led and facilitated with One Earth Film Festival. We are in the process of planning our panel for post film discussion of Sustainable

<https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org/live-virtual-screenings>

From Kat Gerdts, Go Green Barrington: We have A Dark Skies presentation in conjunction with the Barrington Library on Oct 8...see gogreenbarrington.org for details.

From Amy Bartucci, Seven Generations Ahead: "We" is Seven Generations Ahead's high school climate leadership and advocacy program called It's Our Future - on Insta @iofyouth

<https://sevengenerationsahead.org/its-our-future/>

From Kristy Miller: Andy, could you share that flyer, please. (on reducing waste from take out)

From Seema Keshav, Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire : Yes Andy, please share the flyer

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: Andy- can you send me the restaurant flyer?

Sarah@gogreennorthbrook.org

From Kim Stone, Highland Park: I will post the restaurant flyer to the resources section of the GGIL website. If anyone wants a word version to adapt for your community, let me know.

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: Also interested in the environmental justice flyer from Evanston

From Amy Bartucci, Seven Generations Ahead: Seema is a speaker for this upcoming town hall in collaboration with Seven Generations Ahead too <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-get-your-community-composting-in-illinois-tickets-117294498001>

From Susan Casey, Seven Generations Ahead: I just found out about this webinar on 9/29 about the Break Free from Plastics bill in US Congress. I'm looking forward to hearing an update:

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/92920/>

From Kristy Miller: Laurie....Medline is building a facility in Grayslake that will adversely effect air quality. This might be of interest to your group.

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston : Cook County Equity/Sustainability Town Hall

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cook-county-equity-town-hall-environmental-sustainability-edition-tickets-119461656029?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: Dates on Katharine Hayhoe event, and title, please?

From Seema Keshav, Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire: We posted the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act on our FB page and asked people to urge congress members to co-sponsor the bill. Several people informed us that they sent letters to their congress members. The link below has a canned letter. <https://beyondplastics.org/article/the-break-free-from-plastic-pollution-act/>

From Liz Kunkle, Go Green Winnetka : Hi everyone, for information about Go Green Illinois Schools and its next meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 15, please email GoGreenIllinoisSchools@gmail.com.

From Amy Bartucci, Seven Generations Ahead: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-get-your-community-composting-in-illinois-tickets-117294498001>

From Liz Kunkle, Go Green Winnetka : For information about the Go Green Reads book discussion group and its next discussion on Monday, Sept. 21, please email GoGreenReads@gmail.com.

From Amy Bartucci - Seven Generations Ahead:
<https://www.greentownconference.com/greentown-climate-crisis>

From Beth Drucker, Go Green Wilmette: Ride Illinois hosts a Bike Summit on 9/15.

From Rachel Rosner, Citizens Greener Evanston: Greentown Conference looks fantastic! Thanks Amy!

From Sarah Sanford, Go Green Northbrook: Votefwd.org

From Kim Stone, Highland Park : <https://www.sierraclubindependentaction.org/writing-climate-voters-letters>

From Kristy Miller: Thank you!!!

From Jen Nelson, Seven Generations Ahead: Thank you. Great meeting!!!

From Amy Bartucci - Seven Generations Ahead: THANK YOU, I will try to get Go Green Park Ridge to attend again in the future! Great program

From Jen Nelson, Seven Generations Ahead: Will Overload be screened virtually? Or waiting to do in person?

From Susan Casey, Seven Generations Ahead: Thanks, GGIL! Highly recommend this film focused on youth action on plastic pollution: Microplastic Madness - <http://www.cafeteriaculture.org/microplastic-madness.html>