



**Abstract Nr:** 245  
**Internet ID:** 570

**Type of Presentation:** Workshop

**Practicing Conversations Across our Differences**

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**Learning Goal:**

Participants will be able to describe a change in their awareness of “other” that they will use to build belonging as they engage in their communities and systems.

**Abstract Text:**

This experiential workshop intends to facilitate mutual listening and learning as a step towards building more equal, sustainable societies and preserving the planet. We will create a space that is “safe-enough” to explore the impact of social inequality on ourselves, our communities and the planet. We will welcome and honor the experiences and voices of all present and recognize our ancestors as well. The facilitator will speak from her lived experience of having been designated “other” by those in authority, diagnosed with psychosis, and having learned and accepted a less-than human identity. Changing her relationship with dominance led to her current perspective that race, class, gender, immigration, and mental health diagnostic categories are social constructions which cause harm. Promoting access to systems that harm cannot support healing and wholeness. Those who have been “marginalized” can facilitate learning and respectful collaboration, demystify power relationships, and contribute to transforming the “mainstream” for mutual liberation. Workshop participants with diverse experiences, identities, cultural backgrounds, and social roles will be invited to listen to one another, to resonate, reflect, and step into our shared power. Within the small container of this workshop we will begin where we are, face and voice our fears, desires, and ambivalence with mutual respect and begin learning differently. It will be a small opportunity to grow awareness and inspire coalition building and solidarity for beginning to co-create societies where individual and social well-being align synergistically and form sustainable bridges across our differences.

**ON THE HEALING POWER  
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**