

Syllabus for
The Leadership Formation for Elders and Ministers Program

Introducing a Methodology to Reconcile Relationships and Build Trust
to Foster Spiritual Life in our Monthly and Yearly Meetings

Isaac Pennington spoke to our concern so beautifully in 1667*:*

> *Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.*

DESCRIPTION

The Leadership Formation for Elders and Ministers Program (LFEM) is an inclusive leadership formation program with practicum and coaching. A pastoral approach is used to build spiritual and emotional skills and perspectives so that participants can create safe environments where trust and reconciliation are possible. As a project of Quaker Reconciliation Leadership (QRL), this program builds on the knowledge of creating safe environments and intervention processes to apply to all levels of society – from personal, interpersonal, and family, to small and large systems.

QRL is a distinct vocation beginning with reflection time for learning new knowledge of one's own values, gifts, and talents. QRLs reconnect with themselves, others, Spirit, and community to transform unhealthy conflict and revitalize meetings and organizations. The program is a dialogue and conflict transformation process that helps participants realize that every person and perspective in their community is important and needed. When we are reconciled with one another, we can collaborate both to keep conflict at a healthy level and transform conflict at unhealthy levels.

LFEM is designed to develop elders and ministers who are led to heal longstanding and current challenges in their meetings and organizations, offering wisdom, emotional balance, and inner peace in troubled times. Graduates learn how to build trust which strengthens a community's ability to discern, work, and act together. In addition, they develop skills to address other challenges needing personal, interpersonal, systemic, and global competencies. This is a spiral process as shown in the logo, where the personal work is interdependent with the collective work.

A group of committed participants convene in two-hour Zoom sessions for learning and reflection based on readings and personal reflection assignments. The workshops rely on spiritual guidance and systems thinking to be effective.

LEARNING METHODOLOGY & OBJECTIVES

The learning methodology of this program provides personal, interpersonal, systemic, and global competency development. The program is unique because it helps potential elders and ministers to tap their internal strengths to better promote peaceful resolutions to conflict. The methods learned are also useful to rising Clerks and other Quaker leaders. Participants are provided with a toolbox to facilitate reconciliation intervention in community, organizational, national, and global settings. Initially developed for a United Nations setting, the approach has been broadly applied by participants to family feuds, community conflicts, national disputes, and global challenges.

Learning methodologies include interactive presentations, dialogue, small group work, and experiential, spiritual, and vocational development integrated with mission-focused training. Participant leaders learn new skills and develop their own mission statements with sensitive and skilled guidance.

HISTORY OF THE WORKSHOPS

The program is based on 30 years of practice and training in the United Nations Community and New England Yearly Meeting and beyond and is based on the Quaker Peace Testimony, the teachings of mentor elder Elise Boulding, the Hopi Prophecy, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation Dismantling Militarism and Racism report.

In the 1990s, Friends Meeting at Cambridge (MA) supported a campaign to bring Reconciliation Leadership and a peacebuilding process of reconciliation to United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The peacebuilding process is now a Global Mediation and Reconciliation Service introduced at the Hague Appeal for Peace in 1999.

The Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund, the Lyman Fund and the Legacy Witness Program, administered by the Legacy Gift Committee, funded the New England Yearly Meeting pilot program September 2023-March 2024. The Legacy Award states “To allow Virginia Swain to transform the program she developed to train RLs during a 30-year leadership at the United Nations and offer it to NEYM Quakers as the Reconciliation Leadership Program for NEYM. This program is designed to stabilize and empower Meetings to develop leaders who are led to heal historic and current challenges. Reconciliation Leaders are potential Elders in Monthly and Yearly Meetings, willing to offer wisdom, emotional balance, and inner peace in troubled times.

In 2022 I was led to offer the program to Friends for my legacy journey. New England Yearly Meeting Program Director Nia Thomas supervised the transition in a pilot program and provided evaluation. A post-pilot content review was completed in June 2024. Strengthened by pilot

participant feedback and revisions, the updated 6-module workshop curriculum is now on google classroom with lesson plans available on request.

Quaker Reconciliation Leaders facilitate the peacebuilding process of reconciliation to offer a culture of elders and ministers who facilitate peaceful co-existence as a first step towards reconciliation, so that family, community, national, and global challenges can be freed to release untapped potential for resolution of their challenges.

COURSE OUTLINE

The program modules 1-5 introduce the personal, interpersonal, systemic and global competencies.
Module 6 helps the Reconciliation Leader in training develop a practice and become a Reconciliation Leader. The overview of each module is embedded in the module title.
Modules 5 and 6 are still in development. Each module title has an overview url.

The program has common assumptions and core principles.. They are as follows:

1. Co-create, with Loving Presence, a safe, trusting, healing, nurturing environment in which we are able to take risks and grow
2. The inherent goodness in all people and the shadow as guide and teacher; self-esteem, confidence, and clarity of mission as a way to face our limitations
3. Affirm and deepen our sense of goodness even as we confront and overcome obstacles
4. Spiritual direction to develop a regular spiritual practice; learn to access our deepest hopes and visions to develop a co-creative relationship with Loving Presence so that every moment is informed by being a co-creator with Divine.
5. Learn Imaging (Boulding) as central to RL
6. Restore faith in ourselves in order to help others restore faith in themselves and in humanity, understanding that personal transformation is global transformation
7. Understand that systems exist at all levels of being: individual, interpersonal, group, global
8. Recognize that identifying and understanding these systems is crucial to dismantling racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression
9. RLs do not see a dichotomy between working locally and globally, between loving one's country and loving the world, between national citizenship and global citizenship. Nor do they separate their inner journey from their work in the world. They are in unison. Their spiritual paths bridges these dichotomies and are grounded in a consciousness of the oneness of life
10. Understand the systemic intervention process: entry, assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation.

Module 1 - Foundations of Goodness: Naming and Claiming Your Gifts and Leadings, (Click on url above to see more)

Competencies:

- Create a safe, trusting, and nurturing environment where you can take risks and grow
- Recognize your core gifts and talents using established tools
- Receive information about your core gifts from trusted others
- Explore your special calling and integrity
- Learn to access your deepest hopes and visions
- Become familiar with systems thinking
- Build a confidence in your goodness to face your limitations with resilience with a mission statement
- Become familiar with the imaging process to become practical idealists started by Friend Elise Boulding

Module 2 - Reconciliation Competency Awareness: Introduction to the Foundations of Reconciliation Leadership Click on url above to see more)

Competencies:

- Develop regular spiritual practice to enable co-creation with Loving Presence
- Be able to name and describe an array of spiritual and psychological attributes essential for reconciliation leaders to embody
- Become acquainted with key conflict transformation skills and identify our own preferences and what we would like to develop
- Continue to digest and build on core goodness and gifts

Module 3 - New Perspectives of a Reconciliation Leader: Awakening the Unconscious to Build Self Trust and Rebuild Relationships Click on url above to see more)

Competencies:

- Learn to recognize healthy and unhealthy behaviors and how to employ healthy interpersonal skills
- Increase awareness of the many assumptions, lenses, and perspectives that must be identified and accepted to become an effective reconciliation leader
- Use dreams, music, and expressive art to uncover the unconscious
- Understand the injured/injurer cycle and commit to healing it
- Understand the levels of conflict and the actions required at each level
- Be so aware of your deepest wound that you are able to set it aside, so you do not hurt anyone with it

Module 4 - Engaging Meetings/Organizations in Sustainable Change to become a Learning Community Click on url above to see more)

Competencies:

- Understand the Meeting/Organization as a system (and the meaning of "Sense of the Meeting")
- Become familiar with assessment tools to "take the temperature" of a meeting
- Become familiar with tools to build trust and a culture of learning and growth in our Meetings
- Become familiar with techniques to elicit healthy and sustained change from Meeting membership
- Learn from a case study

Module 5: Global Mediation and Reconciliation Service facilitated by Reconciliation Leaders to foster elders tor an interdependent world Click on url above to see more)

Partial Competencies

- Embody all the goals in earlier modules
- Develop a set of principles and practices to guide the reconciliation process
- Approach problem-solving with the recognition that problems cannot be solved at the level they were created

Module 6 - Practicum and Coaching to Begin a Practice of Reconciliation Leadership using the Peacebuilding Process of Reconciliation to develop political will

Partial Competencies:

- Plan a practicum with supervision
- Commit to coaching to create a practice of RL and apply intervention approaches

FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS

- A digital library for assignments: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EB2O1JztPiEVvU2FfdGJqFjacOVlwG2nwe4T_mUhjo0/edit?gid=0#gid=0
- A two-hour introductory workshop for Monthly Meetings and Quaker Groups:

  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WJwDAOT7MtBPdtKy05zt4UQCjk0Mn_II/edit
- Updated summary

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N7NLNCGh5e6xJhIGICkPBle4CppKPgZtNEAhmyj4MzY/edit?tab=t.0

- Pilot program evaluation: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UbC8-dXvM2DyGziQfGfyG5zgNBzf4N-3/view
- Biographical note: https://fmcquaker.org/welcome-virginia-swain-2/
- Virginia's latest book: *My Soul's Journey to Redefine Leadership: A New Phoenix Rises from the Ashes of 9/11* (Xlibris 2016 and Audible 2022).
    - virginiaswain.com/new-book
    - Pdf to accompany Audible version: https://virginiaswain.com/phoenix
    - Foreword by Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury: https://virginiaswain.com/new-book/foreword/
    - Review of my book (used in RL program) in Journal of Social Encounters, March 2024: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1267&context=social_encounters
- History of Reconciliation Leadership Development at the UN from 1992-present: https://global-leader.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/History-1986-2023-4-13-23.pdf
- The program is dedicated to the late Ian Harrington, f/Friend, elder and supporter of Reconciliation Leadership for 30 years
- Testimonials from trained Reconciliation Leaders and reviews on Amazon: https://global-leader.org/books/afterwords/
- A Path to Peace: Virginia Swain has made global conflict resolution her life's mission by Nancy Sheehan, *Worcester Living*, Summer 2022, starting on page W28 (Download text-only PDF here), July 1, 2022. See other recent media: https://global-leader.org/media/
- The following links demonstrate 30-years of experience:
    - www.global-leader.org
    - www.virginiaswain.com
    - www.centerglobalcommunitylaw.org

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