

Emma and Miki Purpose Partnership Statement

August 2021 Version

Overview

Since October 2019 we have been vagabonding together in search of people, places, tools, learning, resources, and capacity that will eventually lead to the establishment of a live-in NGL community. At present, we are in a one year commitment in that direction with two other people. As our journey of learning has deepened, we came to see our relationship as an experiment in a new form of relating, directly emerging from the commitment to transform the patriarchal conditioning we are all immersed in. We call this form a purpose partnership.

We have come to see the emergence of this form, and all we are learning through our explorations, including with who now live with us, as an essential ingredient of transcending the patriarchal legacy, and we want to share our learning with others. This document is an attempt to do so. We started it in December 2020 and are updating as new insights emerge. It took a while before we began to put anything in writing, and that, too, we explain later here.

Everything we write below is based on our own experience, as we are currently our only example of a purpose partnership. We look forward to a day when many people embrace this form and to learning what of what we are discovering carries over to other contexts and what is simply our own experience. We hope that none of what we say below looks to anyone like a prescription for how relationships “should” be. We are offering it in as much humility as we know to access, in the hope that it will spark conversations and experimentation, both similar to and different from our own.

In addition, given the high visibility of both of us in our communities, transparency about what we are doing and what we are not doing within our partnership is, in itself, part of breaking the patterns of patriarchal conditioning we each and both seek to unsettle and transform.

Because what we share here can easily be misinterpreted in more than one way, we ask that you suspend forming any assumptions until you have read the whole of what we have written here.

What is a purpose partnership?

A purpose partnership is a vision-based relationship focused on facing life together in full shared risk and in support of a shared purpose. We believe that a purpose partnership may be as small as two people, and as large as five, beyond which it may be more accurate to speak of it as a community.

The vision, and therefore the purpose that infuses a purpose partnership is a pull forward and away from patriarchal norms, patterns, and known forms.

As an example, here are ours:

Vision: A global web of conscious relationships forming a relational foundation for a world where humans meet their material and non-material needs through maternal gifting in community and in reverence for life

Purpose: Discovering and articulating possible blueprints for reintegrating human relationships, communities, and systems into the flow of life.

The risk sharing we are talking about here is integral to this endeavor. It is an attempt to reclaim the collaborative and communal nature of human life prior to patriarchy and even well into it in the form of the commons, fully superseded by patriarchal forms only with the industrial revolution and the destruction of remaining commons communities, first in Europe and then in its colonies. We believe that any purpose partnership that aims to be part of transforming patriarchy will find itself tending towards creating structures that support consciously reintroducing conditions that support and are supported by risk sharing. It is our hope and dream that sharing the work we are doing can serve as inspiration and possibly a template for creating relationships that have the robustness necessary to be able to create shared-risk communities.

Capacity

Everything that happens within a purpose partnership happens because it aligns with its purpose. The purpose is what gives the partnership its strength and capacity.

We started this exploration as only two because this is what we had. This is not what either of us sought. We consider a two-some to be a weak structure. The weakness of a two-some has several forms. The most immediate is the existence of resources: for tasks, for engaging with conflict, for support, and for anything else that life requires. Another one is the lack of redundancy of resources in the event that one of the two loses capacity, either emotionally or physically, either temporarily or permanently. Similarly, we came to see that in relationships that function well, the parties to the relationship build upon the places where they all have strengths; compensate for each other where one has weaknesses and others don't; and seek outside support where their weaknesses overlap too much. This is one way to understand why two-somes are weak: there isn't enough capacity around to compensate for weaknesses.

Finally, a two-some has no continuity. Once one of the two dies, the relationship ends. Because of all these reasons, we have been actively seeking more people to enter with us into the depth of commitment with which we do all of our explorations. While we now have two more people with us in the living with a commitment for a year, and while we are sharing much of the risks with them, the level of commitment that we hold with each other is still just us. This continues to feel like a limitation.

When we realized that patriarchy, in its current form, is organized around relationships that are generally two-somes, most especially the heterosexual couple as the basis of a family, it made it clear to us how this structure makes it harder for most of us to stand up to patriarchy: there isn't enough capacity in a two-some to take on the level of challenge that this would entail. This is also exacerbated for heterosexual couples, because the training that males and females receive keeps both compromised in ways that reinforce each other's

patterns. Without additional capacity, exiting those norms is exceedingly difficult, and likely impossible for most.

The project of vagabonding is, in part, designed to support our capacity by putting us, more and more of the time, in contexts where there is more capacity by virtue of having intimate coholding of what unfolds within a larger intimate coholding than just the two of us. Even when others aren't fully part of what we do, by virtue of focus, with those others, on the purpose we take on with them, there is more capacity, for the two of us and for all of us, than when we are just with each other.

How a purpose partnership differs from a couple

Because there are, currently, only two of us, and because of the intensive nature of our engagement with each other and with the various projects we are part of, it is all too easy for others to see us as a couple. It's important for us to be seen accurately, and this statement is, in part, aiming to support that clarity. As we describe below the dimensions of difference that we see, we also acknowledge that there are likely many couples who may recognize themselves more in what we say about a purpose partnership than in how we characterize couples.

How we orient

A couple relationship is usually inward oriented: towards their individual and couple well-being. A purpose partnership is outward oriented: towards purpose, towards service.

For example, we are constantly documenting our learning, and are prepared to share it all with others in service to moving towards realigning with life. In our vagabonding, we invite others to participate in what we do, to co-design with us our time together, and to share impacts with us, so the learning can increase. In general, we aim to involve others in decisions with people who would be impacted by such decisions rather than what often happens in couples, where a subtle sense of primary-decision-making-regardless-of-impact is the norm.

Where is the primary focus?

A couple relationship generally tends to have some degree of seeing itself as primary, as a unit unto itself, a spot from within which to engage with the rest of the world. We see that at this time, romantic/sexual relationships, especially in the form of 1:1 primary partnerships within the nuclear setup, *is* the patriarchal re-constitution of a shared-risk community; that it is with this single other person with whom we hold and navigate our lives and to whom we are accountable. Because it is ingrained that this is "the norm", when we are in community -- however committed we may be -- the community doesn't fully register within us as a secure place of togetherness that we can fully trust. We still carry the automaticity of returning to our couple for security, and therefore there is always the possibility of a member exiting the community based on finding a romantic/sexual partner.

A purpose partnership, on the other hand, thrives within community and lives within it as additional capacity even when others are not as committed to the purpose as the purpose partners themselves are. Even when a purpose partnership *begins* as a two-some, it organically seeks to bring into itself more people to increase capacity to move towards vision.

We want to be part of a community where the community and the purpose for which we are collectively together *is* the primary partner, where there is no exit because everything that happens is integrated into learning for increased functioning and togetherness, and where our needs can be attended to without needing to move away from community and into nuclear set-up .

Exclusivity

While there are more and more couples who experiment with open relationships or polyamory, the *norm* of coupling within patriarchal societies is one of exclusivity.

As a way of distinguishing what we are doing from being a couple, we have coined a new term: proclusion. We gravitated towards this new concept because we can't find ourselves within the existing vocabulary. We couldn't find our orientation to others anywhere on the spectrum of exclusive to inclusive; no point on it seemed right. We are definitely not aiming for inclusion, for anyone and anything goes. At the same time, adopting anything that sounds like exclusivity brings with it, immediately, the entire meaning field that coupling is within. In addition, exclusion has a negative connotation and is more individual and personal, nothing that is true for us. Proclusion, our made up word, is about including *for* something, based on something: we are in principle open to others joining us in the fullness of our partnership, so long as they accept and adopt the extraordinarily stringent criteria, practices, and commitments we are operating with and within. Proclusion, then, is criteria-based inclusion that means there is no specific primacy to a two-some engaging in the process of forming community, and there is no exclusivity around them. In that sense, our purpose partnership in particular is more like a community-in-forming than an ultimate destination. In particular, with the two people with whom we are currently in a one-year commitment, the degrees of commitment, intimacy, and what gets shared where and how are fluid and continually under open, transparent investigation.

Sexuality

Couples, normatively, engage in a sexual relationship with each other. In a purpose partnership, sexuality will either happen or not, overall and in any given instance, based on whether or not it aligns with purpose.

In our own purpose partnership, we have been exploring the question of sexuality even before we knew to name what we were doing a purpose partnership. The question has been on the table since August 2018. We have been in active conversation about it, which has taken us to deep places within each of us, between us, and with others. And, so far, we have chosen, repeatedly, not to cross the line into a sexual exploration. There are two reasons: we are still exploring, including with others, possible impacts on individuals in our lives and on the communities of which we are part; and we are clear that we are still too immersed within patriarchal patterning around sexuality to retain full choice were we to be sexual with each other.

As part of this conversation, and the main reason we are choosing to share publicly about this, we have come to understand that bringing into existence new forms of relating, and, specifically, finding exits, however small, from the patriarchal field, cannot be done without opening up and questioning the most intimate and personal layers of our sexual lives. For this reason, we have recently reached a conclusion that sexual exploration is fully within our purpose, though we are still not fully clear whether a sexual component to our partnership will complexify our purpose commitments.

It has been exciting, painful, humbling, and all around liberating to see just how much our very desires are socially constructed and fully influenced by patriarchal conditioning. Through these explorations, we have come to believe that intimacy, in and of itself, is inherently untethering, as it requires stepping into mystery and reverence, both of which are core to challenging patriarchal norms.

We are aware of many groups, communities, and movements that question patriarchal sexual norms. While we are still early in our exploration of what others have done and whether and how it will support the explorations within our own communities, we have some concerns about such practices because we see, within them, too easy a willingness to trust rather than question desire. It seems to us that many believe that simply removing constraints and allowing desire to flow, so long as there are excellent relational agreements, would be sufficient for liberation. Often, it seems, such practices can be simply an excuse to have more sex. We, on the other hand, believe that once a significant group of us start questioning desire, sexuality as accumulation and consumption, and what seems like obsessive preoccupation with sexuality, we may end up having far less sex rather than more.

Our goal, however, is neither more nor less. Our goal is purpose alignment and choice. If and when we see embracing sexuality within our partnership, with or without additional people, as sufficiently contributing to purpose and and choice, we will then move in that direction. Either way, we are finding exquisite understanding and liberation through our current engagement with these questions. Within this exploration, we have been including more and more people through integrating impacts, concerns, and celebrations, and forming a large group of people who are coholding with us the variety of explorations we are doing. That, again, is part of the openness to larger community, the proclusive attempt to create community.

The question of bringing sexuality into our relationship is not a simple one because of the key roles we both play within the NGL community, how Miki is known within the NVC community, and the appearance of our relationship on the outside; though Emma is no longer a student of Miki's, she may very well be perceived as such by others who do not know us more closely, and our age gap is considerable, 33 years (Emma is 33 and Miki is 65). In addition, dynamics of power may easily be perceived within the contrast of Miki's more apparent forcefulness and Emma's gentleness. Engaging with this complexity, in dialogue with many, is part of what took us a while to reach the point of sharing with others about the work we are doing and the discoveries we are making within it about human relationships.

With all this, it may be surprising to some that we are actually celebrating that we have gotten so far within our partnership *without* exploring sexuality. We have literally heard from people that they don't understand how we could be so close to each other and not be sexual. We understand that to mean that deep intimacy that isn't sexual is uncommon. Under patriarchy, sexuality has been separated from the spiritual. We have experienced that deep, non-sexual intimacy is a form of beauty that only grows over time. Within patriarchy, it's so easy to cross the line into sexuality and then, in some way, the sexual takes over and the building of intimacy is no longer in that field of beauty we are so cherishing. Not being sexual, for so long, which wasn't initially chosen by us for this reason, has turned into a remarkable opportunity to play in that field of intimacy.

We are also relishing the opportunity to examine our own conditioning in these areas, to mourn the personal and collective trauma that lives within us, and to seek more and more inner and relational freedom, including physically.

Unpacking our vision

We formulated our vision iteratively, over time, as our purpose partnership evolved and its meaning became clear. Not all its elements were there from the start. Nonetheless, we here unpack all of them in sequence, based on the present. Each of these elements, in its own way, serves as an anchor for the liberation from patriarchal conditioning and the movement towards life.

Note, however, that this section was written in December 2020, and that we have changed our vision, again, in the spring of 2021. We have not yet updated our unpacking of vision, and it still is based on the previous vision.

A global web of conscious relationships

Choosing to verbalize a vision is always about looking at the largest possible vision of the world through the lens of the particular entity doing the visioning and its already existing orientation to life. This is why our vision focuses on a *global web*, and on *conscious relationships*. We spontaneously link what we are doing to the global state of humanity, in large part because of our involvement in the [NGL](#) (Nonviolent Global Liberation) movement. And given how much we operate within the field of liberation, conscious choice is a keystone in that work, and hence its application to relationships, as an antidote and capacity-building element so that, together, we pull one another forward from patriarchal patterns that reassert themselves wherever the vision is not integrated into us.

We are well aware that while each of us individually has been moving inexorably towards liberation on our own, neither of us would be able to get to where we are here, now, without the support of the other and others in addition. We fully recognize our mutual dependence. While to us this mutual dependence is clear and potent, this is one of the spots in which we are aware of potential misinterpretations. Given that Miki is a visible leader, writes a lot, and much of this piece was written initially by her, it may easily appear that Emma is following Miki, when in reality we have been disrupting and transforming each other's lives in ways that mean that we are both leading and following. We each bring different strengths, different areas where we have been able to maintain freedom in relation to patriarchal conditioning. For Miki, this strength lies in the social courage area, taking the form of a willingness to accept loss of belonging and increased conflict as the cost of liberation. For Emma, it's in the area of maintaining the primary reverence and connection with life, taking the form of a willingness to remain unknown to others in order to be able to live her truth. We've been strengthening each other leaning on these qualities in each other. Sharing this document with others, for example, falls easily within the range of vulnerability that was Miki's primary practice for 20 years, and challenges Emma's vulnerability in significant ways. Other things we do, those that require faith in life, lean more on Emma's primary strengths.

In an entirely similar way, a global web of conscious relationships would make each of those relationships, and the communities they are embedded in, stronger than they would be on their own.

... focused on

Our vision is of relationships that, like ours, have a purpose for existing, and that purpose is a focal point for making choices within and beyond the relationship itself.

Service

Service is the essential ingredient of what makes a purpose partnership, what captures its commitment to contribute beyond itself, to the largest whole possible.

Play

Like others before us, we have come to believe that engaging in play is an important component of liberation. Our socialization, especially in modern, capitalist societies, takes us out of play and into regimentation, habits, obligations, ideas of right and wrong and of who deserves what, and following rules and authorities. Play is the spontaneous expression of life energy within us. Our experience is that the more we follow play, the more of it comes, the more laughter we have, and the more energy to face the immense difficulties that our life choices bring with them.

Simplicity

Simplicity arises as we move from the right/wrong, either/or, deserve, should, blame, and shame world of patriarchal conditioning and reclaim our capacity in three key areas:

- Putting our needs on the table in care for each other, those we are with, and the whole without justifying them, without relying on external authority or any should;
- Sharing impacts with each other and those we are with in full self-responsibility and without blaming or shaming anyone;
- Recognizing and naming what resources are available within us in full willingness to contribute, and where we reach limits of capacity or willingness without relying on what's fair or who deserves what, only do what we can and ask for the rest.

All three elements: needs, impacts, and resources, provide all the information needed to navigate life's challenges and joys. We have noticed, over time, that even engaging with conflict becomes simpler more and more of the time as we trace it to patriarchal patterning, gaps in our agreements, or places where we didn't bring forth sufficient information to create the simplicity in which we live more and more of the time.

Humility

One of the core ways that patriarchy shows up within all of us is in the form of hubris: the belief that we can and ought to know, predict, and control what is happening; that we can improve on life; that not knowing is weakness. Instead, we aim to claim knowledge only about what we can know, which is only the past and the present and only our own experience. While we make plans, we surrender to them always changing (especially within vagabonding, and even more so given the pandemic during which we've been doing most of our learning). While we learn and observe things about each other and about others and life, we recognize that we can't know what is true within others. We also accept the reality that our perception is shaped, systemically, by the circumstances of our social location, including in relation to each other and others we are in close connection with.

Reverence in all areas of life

One of the many losses of patriarchy in its modern, secular, scientific-materialistic version is the view of anything beyond human life in instrumental ways, as there for serving humans. The indigenous mindset, and that of all our ancestors, held life in reverence, and us humans as embedded within a mysterious and all-encompassing interconnected web. In our vision for human relationships, and progressively more in our actual experience, reverence is a central and common experience, part of daily living rather than a unique and rare epiphany.

This part of our vision also relates, again, to sexuality. As written by Audre Lorde in [Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic As Power](#), and as reflected in our own explorations, both individually before we met and through our conversations, a core element of what patriarchy has done to us is making profane the erotic, vital, creative life energy within us, sexualizing it, and separating it from the spiritual, within which the body itself is seen, especially in Christianity, as sinful. We have come, instead, to see liberation, in part, as being about disentangling ourselves from profanity to realign with reverence for life. Stepping boldly into reverence, including resacralizing the sexual, restoring the integration of body, mind, heart, and spirit, and questioning the entire legacy of both distancing from and being obsessed with sexuality and our bodies, appears to us as key to unleashing our creative energy to bring into being a world aligned with life.

It is very clear to us that this exploration is not for or about us. It is about what is possible within community when we dive as deeply as we can into experientially differentiating the sacred from the profane. As we have been living and travelling together for all this time, talking about the possibility of adding sexual exploration to our relationship and exploring and integrating the various potential responses and impacts from people we have been engaging with has been a central element in our endeavour to eventually form a shared-risk community of the sort we describe here.

In particular, in one of our conversations with one of the people whose wisdom and support we have sought, we have discovered significant impact on that person, and we have committed to making the discernment *with* that person. Our conversations with that person are still in an early stage.

Forming a relational foundation

Our patriarchally constructed world is based on exchange, accumulation, and extraction. All of these are instrumental relationships. This focus has been tearing communities apart, separating us from land, from each other, from ourselves, and from life.

It is key and central to our vision that liberation from patriarchy requires monumental shifts. In our purpose partnership, we focus, in particular, on the aspect of these shifts that places our capacities for relationship and community front and center. We draw inspiration from various sources to deepen our understanding and capacity in this area.

- Genevieve Vaughan and the work she and others have done to elucidate the relationships between mothering, gifting, and needs as organizing principles of society (see the work of Heide Gottner-Abendroth in her many books about matriarchal societies, and *The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy*, edited by Genevieve Vaughan, for deep explorations of these ideas);

- Humberto Maturana and Gerda Verden-Zoller's work on the biology of love and the significance of trusting relationships for our thriving (see *The Origins of humanness in the Biology of Love*);
- David Bollier's work on the commons (see *Thinking Like a Commoner*)
- The entire body of work that NGL rests on, and, in particular, the focus on the soft qualities (see "[The Power of the Soft Qualities to Transform Patriarchy](#)")

All the practices we develop and the agreements we base our various experiments on emerge from our experience and this body of work.

Living in choice, togetherness, and flow

At present, we experience our purpose partnership as a covenant with life, a calling we cannot refuse, to leave no stone unturned in our search for liberation from patriarchal conditioning, to dream all the way, to support each other in getting ever more untethered from the normative culture, to move ever closer to full sharing of resources, and to maintain infinite tenderness towards our lack of capacity.

Since patriarchy emerges from scarcity, functions in separation, and results in powerlessness, we see it as our sacred work to envision and move towards a way of living fully aligned with life, restoring, in the reverse order of the loss, choice, togetherness, and flow.

Our main pathway has been focusing on creating communities, temporary for now in our vagabonding, permanent later, that operate in shared risk on the most basic material plane, and engaging in practices that support all of us in continuing to move in that direction rather than being pulled back into patriarchal patterns.

Within the means of the planet

This continual reminder to ourselves, when we review our vision, that we live on a finite planet with limited capacity to carry the proliferating and destructive human activity on it, grounds us in the knowledge that dramatic shifts are indispensable if we are going to sustain life on this planet. We are still early in our explorations of specific physical forms for community, and, even now, we keep ourselves engaged in learning what others have learned in this area. Untethering ourselves from some of the external comforts of patriarchal living, most notably a stable location, allows us to experience and learn how little we actually need to sustain a meaningful and satisfying life. We know what we have done is only a small step in the direction we all need to follow to sustain life into the future. We anticipate big jumps in learning once we commit, with others, to a certain part of the world in order to build community while aiming to be as carbon neutral as possible, even toying with the idea of managing to be carbon negative.

Our values

We have derived our values from our vision, and they embody qualities within it that we aspire to live *within* our relationship and in how we interact with others. They are our primary orientation to how we do things and how we bridge, internally, the gap between current reality and our vision, so we can live as much of it as we know how even while the outside world continues to function within patriarchal norms and systems.

Mourning as tapping into the source of energy in life

Celebration as a way of cultivating goodwill and generosity bringing choice to where we put our attention

Rigour as a fundamental commitment to acting as if the vision is already manifested, the willingness to make up for the gap

Curiosity and Discovery as the commitment to learn and harvest from all our energy poured into our purpose partnership

Surrender as the release of resistance to the gap and the willingness to adapt and creatively manifest the vision in small ways in every moment

Transparency as the basis of all intimacy within and around us

Unpacking our Purpose

We started framing our purpose as soon as we came out of our formative experience in community in the desert, with Erin Selover, towards the end of 2019. (You can read about our learning from the desert in Miki's blog post "[Liberation Lessons from the Desert: Choice, Togetherness, and Flow](#).") It appears now more stable than our vision for the time being, though this may change. As with any vision mobilization structure, the process of liberation moves us closer to vision, and we begin to see different possibilities, experience things differently, and be in different places in relation to vision, all of which continue to create change. We welcome this change.

Our purpose is our attempt to move towards vision beyond our own relationship; to contribute to closing the unimaginably large gap that exists between our vision and the current reality in the world. We see each element within our purpose as carrying within it a core aspect of that work.

Discovering

We aim to approach everything we do with an openness to discovery and with as few preconceived notions as we can be aware we have. The more open we are to discovery, the more likely we are to align ourselves with the flow of life and to move towards our vision. We have been surprised, more often than we would expect, by what we have uncovered, most especially within ourselves, and also around us. We read, we talk, we cry, we laugh, on our own and with others, and we subject everything to rigorous examination. We follow our intuition in terms of where we go, how we choose who to be with, how to show up, how we approach things, and how we orient to our days, even as both of our schedules are full and demanding.

Discovery is so key to our purpose partnership, that it shows up both in our values *and* in our purpose. It is a playful way of exiting patriarchy's notions of what counts as knowledge and how it's acquired.

Articulating

It is clear to both of us that putting what we discover into words, documenting it, and sharing it, is an indispensable part of what we are called to do. We record most key conversations we have with our many co-experimenters, coholders, supporters, and friends to extract learning to be able to share it with others.

We worked for over a year before we got to the point where our understanding of what we are doing, what we are discovering, and the framing we are finding for it were clear and solid enough to be able to share publicly. It is continuing to evolve since.

It is our intention to continue to share what we discover, both in terms of our own purpose partnership and beyond.

Possible blueprints

Starting with our desert experiment, and continuing with our close collaboration with our colleague Verene Nicolas, we have developed a general orientation to vision mobilization that is now a key component of the NGL framework. This framework is based on initial framing by Miki, our experiment with Erin Selover in the desert, extensive explorations with Verene within what we have come to call our Purpose Pod, and through Emma's work with both individuals and organizations in applying the framework (see Emma's piece [From The Desert, Together, With Love](#)). That framework is now taught within the NGL Provider Apprenticeship Program and is available as a [learning packet](#) on The Fearless Heart website. An entire community of facilitators is rapidly forming around this framework and more and more individuals, families, teams, and some organizations are using it to define their lives and work.

Our entire purpose partnership is based on this framework, and we have created a structure that supports and enhances our capacity to do our work. In addition to the very broad parts of it that we share about and explain here, we have a whole set of very specific agreements that, together, anchor our commitment to transform our patriarchal conditioning.

Some examples of agreements we have or have had in the past, that support us in these ways include:

- We make decisions together where they impact us both by engaging together in understanding the overall needs, impacts, and resources within an evolving understanding of how the patterns we are working with influence clarity of discernment about all three.
- We walk every night in the park. We use this time to engage in conversations from our list and to review where we are in terms of capacity for intimacy, so that we notice and honor intimacy that arises from simplicity while maintaining rigor about not moving forward towards intimacy.
- We practice: "ask for everything you want and always tell the truth".
- We share everything that is relationally and practically relevant unless there is a compelling reason not to (in which case we share the reason and do a "say that") or unless there is a liberation reason to grow capacity for choosing not to have to share to maintain flow.

Note: share, in the above agreement, means being transparent about internal states. "Say that" is an affectionate term within parts of our communities that refers to the practice of saying the thing that is the reason for not saying more. It comes from many times when Miki coaches someone who says something about why they can't say something in a particular context, and Miki then tells them "say that!" as a way to work out the moment.

Over time, we anticipate sharing more and more of these agreements publicly. In addition, each of us has our own vision mobilization structures which have been public since some time in 2020 at emmaquayle.net and mikikashtan.org/about, respectively.

We also construct such structures, based on the same general framework, updated and upgraded with each new experiment we undertake, in support of our functioning with the people with whom we share these experiments. We have kept track of all these structures, both those that succeeded and those that fell apart in one way or another, since the summer of 2019, even before the desert experiment.

We have it as our goal to share the fruits of our learning with all who seek to build communities and relationships that aim, like ours, to transform patriarchal conditioning and systems within and around themselves.

For reintegrating

Given that patriarchy functions in separation, our work deeply aims to reintegrate elements which have been progressively more separated. We see the work of reintegration, in and of itself, as liberating us from either/or thinking, and, with it, from assigning rightness or wrongness to what we and others do. It takes astonishing amounts of mourning to maintain our hearts and minds clear and committed, as the level of calamity we become aware of as we untether ourselves further and further from the numbing comforts of patriarchy is near impossible to bear without much crying on a regular basis. Each time as we do this, we find new pathways and creative approaches to the next steps in our journey and in our contribution to the world.

Human

Although as human beings we are profoundly concerned about all of life, the focus of our work is only on the human plane, seeing it as the domain of change that is at the root of all that is challenging life beyond the human. In particular, we see the patriarchal turn as the beginning of the separation of humans from the rest of life, and believe that reintroducing reverence into human affairs will ripple to all areas, including processes that have led to global warming, species extinction, and more. We humbly recognize that each individual and purpose partnership by necessity will focus on specific areas of work, and this one is ours.

Relationships, communities, and systems

We have noticed, even before coming to do our work together, that the same processes, principles, and frameworks can be applied at all levels, from the most individual to the global. Miki in particular has already created a model for global governance that aims to engage all humans on the planet in decision making for increasing wisdom and capacity in addressing our overwhelming global challenges. And both of us have worked with individuals and organizations applying and learning as part of our individual purposes.

Together, within our purpose partnership, we focus on bringing together what we learn individually with what we experiment with and learn with each other and with others, to continually enhance our understanding of what can support humans most effectively to end the millennia-old trance of patriarchy that's bringing us to the brink of extinction.

Into the flow of life

Patriarchy started as a break with the flow of life, and developed extraordinary capacity to control, manipulate, extract from, and ultimately destroy life. For us this means that understanding, listening for, inviting, surrendering to, and, as our purpose statement says, reintegrating into the flow of life can challenge patriarchy right at its root.

Doing this requires enormous faith at a time when it's all too easy to despair. Our own practices, for ourselves, bring us time and again into the field of reverence as a fountain that sustains our commitment to honor the flow of life to such a degree that we won't interfere with it along the way, so that we honor the truth that aligning means with ends is essential to nonviolence and to life itself.

Support

We celebrate the support we have received from dozens of people, too numerous to mention individually, within NGL and in our individual networks, to be able to live what we have lived and to be able to share with others what we include in this document. We know that we would not be able to do what we are doing, individually and together, without such support. We have lined up individual support for each of us and for both of us together, from people who hold us both in the challenges of what we are holding and in maintaining integrity. We also receive support from those who have already come to know of this exploration over the last few years since we have always been transparent within relationships where not being transparent would create distance.

Engaging with us

All other things being equal, we would love to be able to engage with all who want to ask questions, offer advice and feedback, learn with us, share information, and celebrate and mourn with us. The questions within what we are holding and the essence of that which we want to continue to bring into being are immense, and we want to continue to be in conversation with people who get it, who are curious, or who are impacted and have willingness to bring forward those impacts to be in dialogue together about how to integrate them into a more robust purpose partnership. We don't have the capacity to do so to the degree that we might wish.

Instead, we are periodically creating opportunities for live calls with us. We also have the support of a few people who have offered to field questions, especially from people who want to challenge what we are choosing to do and how we are choosing to live and serve.

If you want to be informed about future calls, please fill out this [form](#) which will support us in tracking your interest and contacting you when we are ready to do so. The form also includes an opportunity for you to share celebrations and appreciations, and to mention that you want to engage with one of our supporters.

We are grateful for anyone's persistence in getting to the end of this long document. We look forward to engaging with whatever comes next in this mysterious journey we are on. We plan to continue to update this document periodically.