

THE COURAGE & RENEWAL APPROACH & OUR CORE VALUES

The Courage & Renewal approach is distinguished by principles and practices intended to create supportive communities of reflection and belonging that help people move towards personal and societal wholeness, explore questions of meaning and purpose, and keep showing up for themselves, for others, and for the causes they care about with integrity and courage.

The ways in which wholeness and division show up within us personally and between us societally are inextricably linked. One of the tensions we hold in our work is the reality that, even as we choose to create spaces that invite the soul and nurture wholeness and relational trust, the forces that push us toward the divided life are always present.

Across the world, billions of people live in communities with deeply entrenched legacies of violence, colonialism, and supremacist ideologies. Indeed, as Parker J. Palmer writes, “...violence is woven into the very fabric of our collective existence.” One result of these harmful and ongoing legacies is that we, as active members of these communities, have been conditioned to value certain aspects of human experience and expression over others, creating false hierarchies of humanity and sowing seeds of personal and societal division. Such divisive forces cultivate myriad forms of othering, marginalization, and oppression, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, classism, religious prejudice, ageism, and nationalism. Whether intentionally or unintentionally - conscious or unconscious - the dynamics of power, privilege, bias, internalized oppression and superiority that are fostered in our societies show up inside of us and around us at every level of our lives.

The Courage & Renewal approach helps us actively and intentionally choose to nurture ways of being with ourselves and one another that move against the violent, oppressive forces that create personal and societal division. Instead, we choose to embody core values and practices that move us towards personal and societal wholeness, embracing the genuine within us, and honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every being. These are not choices we make just once, but ones that must be made time and again - for ourselves and our community.

We Choose Integrity: Living and working with integrity requires us to develop greater congruence between our inner and outer selves, to live less divided lives. To move towards such wholeness we must become more self-aware and accepting of our gifts and strengths as well as our shadows and limits.

We Choose Authenticity: When we “show up” as whole people and act authentically, those with whom we live and work are more willing to trust us in relationship and leadership. This can lead to transformed workplaces and organizations.

We Choose Diversity: Diversity is a deeply valued source of strength, richness, and wisdom for us and for the communities in which we live and work. The capacity to welcome and make space for diverse voices and multiple perspectives is critical to the creation of circles of trust, and to the healing and wholeness needed in our world.

We Choose Community: As we do “inner work,” we are not simply focusing inwardly on ourselves. Rather, we become more aware of the fabric of our connectedness with others in our families, workplaces, and communities. This results in an ongoing sense of responsibility and stewardship of the people and concerns that most matter to us.

We Choose Courage: For people whose vocation is serving others, courage is needed to persevere and be “whole-hearted” in the often overwhelming circumstances in which we are trying to make a difference—whether that be in the life of a child, patient, congregation, or community.

We Choose Love: Our work is grounded in love, by which we mean the capacity to extend ourselves for the sake of another person’s growth. Our work in community stretches us to understand, respect, and support each other, teaching us why learning to love is one of the most demanding disciplines we can choose.

We Choose Hope: Hope is believing and acting on our finest and most dearly held dreams, persisting even when the odds are against them. In the midst of the despair and broken-heartedness experienced by so many in our world today, our work engenders hope for people to live purposeful lives, do meaningful work, and make contributions to succeeding generations.

We Choose Renewal: Just as we experience nature’s cycle of renewal through the seasons, so we experience natural cycles of engagement and withdrawal, love and loss, creativity and despair in our personal lives and work. When we take time to slow down, quiet ourselves and reflect, to renew ourselves, and recall our commitments, important changes can happen within us and around us. As we are renewed, we in turn can contribute to the renewal of our professions, workplaces, communities, and ecosystems.