

# TOGETHERING



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PULSE OF SPIRIT  
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Thank you, Howard Goodman, for introducing me to the idea of “othering.”

Here is the definition: “Othering is the act of treating individuals or groups as intrinsically different, alien, or inferior to a perceived “normal” group. It creates an “us versus them” dynamic that can lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and social marginalization.”

In the fellowship of the innocent and the fellowship of the generative, we focus on our oneness rather than our differences. We are all different, and we are all one. You are other than me, and also part of me.

When we focus on otherness alone, division grows. Weakness and dysfunction follow. But when we focus on our connectedness, something else emerges—strength, creativity, possibility, and power.

This weekend marked the first official drum corps show of the year for Drum Corps International (DCI). I used to be a drummer in a drum corps and participated for ten years. Drum corps

competition—whether on the field or in a parade—is about precision and unity. The more completely everyone moves and performs together, the more powerful the experience becomes for both audience and judges. And the scores are better!

There are unforgettable moments in a show: the expected blast from the horn section as they all turn toward the audience. Everyone knows it’s coming even though you don’t know when. The long and intricate solo presentation from the drum line. I still get goosebumps when I think about it. More than that, I remember the joy of doing something together with such intention, alignment, and shared desire to create excellence. And the thrill when you have succeeded.

There was even a Broadway production created called *Blast!* featuring performers with drum corps backgrounds. Most corps have an age cutoff of 21 and many want to continue. Some of the most thrilling moments are captured in the show—the surprise, the precision, the collective energy. Just when you think the drummers have already had their big moment, drums descend from the ceiling and another dramatic delivery occurs

Part of what makes these performances unforgettable is surprise: “Whoa—no one has ever done that before.”

Generative living can feel like that too.

When people come together with intention and openness, a particular choice, contribution, or moment can transform the whole experience because everyone is participating together.

When everyone is valued and welcomed, we create the opposite of othering.

We become one body.

Some play drums. Some play horns. Some carry flags or rifles. There is a multitude of gifts to be shared.

Each of us brings something unique, and we make it easier for others to bring their gifts when we bring ours.

When I speak of “others,” here I mean the people in our lives, —the people around us whose uniqueness complements and blesses us and blesses the whole. “Othering” is exclusion and rejection. But welcoming difference allows something greater to emerge.

People who come together and embrace one another’s uniqueness become wiser and more creative. We discover solutions and possibilities that are difficult to see alone.

Perhaps we could call this “togethering.”

In South Africa there is a planned march seeking to identify and remove immigrants and determine who belongs and who does not. Many people are vulnerable because documentation can be difficult to obtain. And many couldn’t get documents even if they wanted to.

Social activist Pregs Govender speaks to this distorted pattern:

“We live and speak  
no longer conscious  
of our wholeness  
our connectedness  
we have begun to believe we are fragments  
our stories disconnected  
from each other’s.”

This is othering instead of togethering.

And here is her invitation:

“When life is hard, may we dive beneath the waves to see what moves beneath the surface. May we be insubordinate to the fear seeping into our hearts, minds and bodies, as we help ourselves and each other reconnect to joy, to love, to courage.”

We are individual human beings sharing a human experience, and we belong to something much larger.

We belong to a larger pattern of life’s design and co-creation.

At times of struggle, it may seem we are alone.

We are not.

We remain connected to love’s design and supported by the deeper pattern of life.

A friend once shared wisdom he received from Spirit in the midst of difficult circumstances:

“Even when the rug of your carefully constructed human life is pulled out from under you, I’m still here. You belong to me, to my family, first and foremost. I gift you a human life, but never mistake that life as the primary place you belong. You are mine.”

Each of us can know this individually.

And when we do, we touch the collective that knows it too.

We all belong to life—to that animating force of love.

We get to do this together.

We get to experience the fellowship of the generative, the fellowship of the collective, the fellowship of the innocent.

We participate in collective creation, where the blessings you bring blend with and co-create with the blessings I bring.

Then something extraordinary happens.

Things become possible that once seemed impossible alone.

Creative possibilities multiply. New ideas emerge beyond what any one mind could imagine. Co-creation, complementation, and the wonder of another person's contributions bring possibility, power, and beauty.

Let us be about "togethering."

Let us be innocent and generative together, as we were designed to be.

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