

Participant Handout for the *Choosing Earth* Book Study Group

Revised Edition 2024

Welcome to the *Choosing Earth* Course

The course is very much a participatory process that includes inquiry, small and large group dialogues, and experiential work. Your participation in all sessions helps the group develop as a community. Please contact the facilitators for possible absences or to discuss any matters of concern.

Facilitator name and email address: [_____]

Guidelines for Participating in the Group:

Please review the following guidelines for dialogue in a group setting. We will be putting them into practice during our course for a respectful exploration of these profound and sometimes disturbing issues. These were adapted from the *Community Groups Handbook* produced by the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

- Speak truthfully, from your heart.
- Listen respectfully and deeply without judgment.
- Be attentive to the underlying assumptions and the truths being expressed.
- Engage in friendly disagreement when appropriate and strive to understand the positions of those who disagree with you.
- Welcome silences as they often “speak with unceasing eloquence.”
- Love the questions and let the answers emerge naturally.
- Pay attention to the frequency and duration of your speaking. Be a role model for clarity and brevity. Refrain from interrupting, cross talking, and commenting on each other’s check-ins.
- Encourage quieter people to engage.

Participant reading and post session assignments

Watch the film: We encourage you to watch the film before the first study group session (but be sure to watch before the third session). The film, *Choosing Earth: Choosing Life is 63 minutes* and its available here: <https://choosingearth.org/choosing-earth-documentary/>

Prepare for Session 1: Introduction to *Choosing Earth*

Recognizing our whole systems crisis in a time of initiation

- Download the ebook or purchase the hardcopy of *Choosing Earth* (be sure to purchase the second edition)
- Read the Preface and Part I (Pages 7–40).
- Find one phrase or one sentence in the book that captures one reason you have for being in the course (you will share this in the introductions).
- Which of the 13 growing resilience actions (in chapter 1) you are already doing in some way, and which is something you want to realize more fully?
- Select a short excerpt from the reading to possibly share with the group (something that was inspiring, challenging, or meaningful).

Prepare for Session 2: Three Pathways Ahead

Collapse, Authoritarianism, and Great Transition

Assignment:

- Homework: Look for where the Wide, Deep, and Long or systems approach is being used for problems and solutions in the larger world. Note a good example of using this approach and a second example where a challenge or opportunity would benefit from being addressed in a wide, deep, and long approach. Bring your insights to share at the next session's check-in.
- Read Part II: pages 41-57, which explore three possible pathways ahead. Observe your body as you read. Make note of sensations and emotions.
- Select a short excerpt for possible sharing with the group
- Bring journaling materials
- Please arrive 5-10 minutes early next week so we can start on time

Prepare for Session 3: Stages of Great Transition I

The Decades of the 20s, 30s, and 40s and the challenges ahead

Assignment:

- Reflection: When you reflect on the Three Pathways, where do you see them being expressed in your community, workplace, family, and/or the media that you take in? When you hear or see this, where does it land with you? Take note of any feelings or sensations that arise.
- Reading: pp. 59 - 101. Select excerpt to share.
- Be sure to watch the film *Choosing Earth: Choosing Life* if you haven't yet.
<https://choosingearth.org/choosing-earth-documentary/>
- Reminder to please arrive 5-10 minutes early so we can start on time

Prepare for Session 4: Stages of Great Transition II

The Decades of 50's 60's and 70's and the timeline for a Great Transition

Assignment:

- Reflection: As you read about the six decades ahead, reflect and journal on how you are affected having looked at the future decade by decade. Then reflect on meaningful ways you honor and care for all of life (including your life, your community and loved ones, the natural world.) Go out to places that you love. Then journal - Where do you find meaning? Where do you serve life? Be prepared to briefly share your insights.
- Take a walk to consider a significant initiation or profound crisis in your life (e.g., moving from adolescence to adulthood, experiencing a major health crisis, or the loss of a loved one). How did you move through this time and what supported you to move beyond it? When you get back, take a minute to consider where your experience is reflected in the 13 actions (or what you would add to 13 actions).
- Read pages 101 to 116.
- No excerpts needed for Session 4 (participants will read a summary)
- Next week we'll be doing a Timeline Exercise. Please be sure to bring 1-2 sheets of white paper, pens or pencils, journaling materials for Timeline activity.

Prepare for Session 5: Foundations for the Great Transition — Part I

Aliveness, Consciousness, and Communication

Assignment:

- Reflect on How am I changed—inwardly or outwardly—by contemplating the future in this way? Record insights, feelings, reflections.
- Go back to the list of Growing Resilience actions in chapter 1 to explore which you can use to help you this week.
- Reading: pages 117 – 148.
- Select a short excerpt for possible sharing with the group

Prepare for Session 6: Foundations for the Great Transition — Part II

Maturity, Reconciliation, Community and Simplicity

Assignment:

- Pause several times each day to notice the aliveness around you. Jot down how that shifts your experience. This is a practice you can do beyond this week to increase your connection with all of life. You may find it helpful to create a way to remind yourself— using a calendar reminder, a note on your desk, or a special object you see regularly throughout the day that will remind you to pause and notice aliveness. You can also partner with someone in the course and text each other gentle reminders or words of inspiration. See handout on ways to open to aliveness.
- Select an Uplift to focus on, journal on, and synopsize to share at the next session. Prepare a paragraph synopsis to share with the group that reflects some of your interests, curiosities, and/or knowledge or embodiment of that Uplift. Alternatively create artwork that reflects your learning and be prepared to share at the next session.
- Read pages 148 to 173.
- Select a short excerpt for possible sharing with the group
- Bring journaling materials

Prepare for Session 7 —Integration

What's been learned? What's shifted? What's next for you?

Assignment:

- Contemplation: What can you do or shift to deepen your relationship to the foundation you chose, be it Reconciliation, Maturity, Community, or Simplicity? Sit with this question each day for a few minutes, perhaps after meditation or a walk in nature when your mind is settled. Notice what challenges or resistances you become aware of. Consider finding an image or creating a collage, painting, drawing, photograph, poem, etc., that evokes or expresses the feeling you are moving toward. Bring it to the next session to share.
- Read pages 174 - 175. Note what moves or draws you.
- Also, review the website for resources to support you:
<https://choosingearth.org/resources/>