

Will you help share this with others?

Has this approach to recovery been helpful to you? Do you see its potential to benefit others? If so, please consider joining us by:

- 1) **Sharing the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*** with another individual, team, or congregation so the power of communities grounded in earth, faith and hope can grow.
- 2) **Offering specific examples** of how you and your faith community are engaging in each of the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, so we can post them on the website to share with others.
- 3) **Writing your story** describing the difference the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* have made in your life and the life of your faith community, so your testimonial can be shared through the website and publications like this one.
- 4) **Making a monthly contribution or any financial gift** that will enable us to expand this effort to benefit more people and faith communities who may need them. EcoFaith Recovery depends on the contributions of people like you who share our vision for the recovery of human life and healing of God's creation. Please donate through the website or via the address below.
- 5) **Inviting your congregation** to support and fund this effort.

Thank you so much for your partnership in EcoFaith Recovery!

Please contribute your examples, stories, and financial gifts to:

EcoFaith Recovery

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www.EcoFaithRecovery.org

EcoFaith Recovery

**For the Recovery of Human Life
and the Healing of God's Creation**

Practices for Awakening Leadership



*“The most common way people give up their power
is by thinking they don’t have any.”*

- Alice Walker

Stories/Testimonies

This section (and corresponding website pages) will be expanded over time to include pages of testimonies from our leaders as to how they are using the practices and what difference it is making in their lives, the lives of their communities, and their capacity to help bring about faith-based change through public action. Please email your stories to office@ecofaithrecovery.org.

Examples of Practices

This section (and corresponding website pages) will expand over time to include specific examples of how various communities are engaging each Practice and Sub-Practice. Please email your favorite ways of engaging any Practice or Sub-Practice to www.ecofaithrecovery.org so we can share them with others.

Sample 90 Minute Meeting Format

Make sure everybody has a copy of this booklet so leaders can reference which Practice the group is engaging in whenever possible.

Each Corresponding Practice is in parenthesis below.

0:00 **Lead a Spiritual Grounding Exercise (Practice #1).** Ideally, this Practice would connect people to this meeting's purpose.

0:10 **Sharing of a Story (#3)** - One Person shares a brief story about his/her experience related to this meeting's purpose or any one of the Practices (revealing how any *Practice* grounds or facilitates public action for the recovery of human life and healing of God's creation).

0:15 **One-to-One Conversations (#2)** in response to the story that was just shared. [20 minutes is even better!]

0:30 **Full Group Sharing – (#2)** Briefly share any significant insights that arose during the one-to-one's.

0:35 **Rhythms of Engagement (#4)** – Indicate whether this meeting's primary focus is *Preparing for Action*, *Engaging in Reflection*, *Participating in Evaluation*, or *Celebrating Sabbath*. Proceed forward with that agenda. [Plan for more time here and a longer meeting, if desired.]

1:15 **Read aloud one or more of the Practices from Mentoring (#5) or Conscious Leadership Development (#6).** Discuss together how those present would like to engage that Practice in the coming week.

1:25 **Spiritual Grounding Practice (#1) to conclude.**

Who is EcoFaith Recovery?

We are a broad network of volunteer leaders and faith-based communities in the Pacific Northwest who are:

- *recovering* our true vocation as people of faith and citizens of earth;
- *restoring* our sanity in the midst of an addictive culture and economy;
- *reconciling* a right-relationship with all of creation, including human and non-human communities;
- *rediscovering* courage to rise up on behalf of the most vulnerable and oppressed in the face of systems that escalate injustice and climate chaos;
- *reclaiming* our prophetic imagination for the flourishing of an earth-honoring and life-honoring faith, economy, and culture.

We are EcoFaith Recovery. And we are recovering.

What is our purpose?

Our purpose is to

- + identify existing and emerging leaders,
- + develop our leadership potential through EcoFaith's "Practices for Awakening Leadership," and
- + lift one another up to support our faith communities in taking courageous public action for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

Why do we engage with others in the *Practices for Awakening Leadership?*

Like millions around the world who have sought recovery from the destructive effects of growing up in addictive and dysfunctional systems, we in EcoFaith Recovery discovered that we also had many experiences in common from living in a society addicted to an unsustainable way of life. While understanding that not all of these characteristics describe all of us, many of us experienced the following:

- We found that we were not spiritually grounded, that our current institutional faith practices were not sufficiently rooting us to weather the storms (ecological, economic, social, political and spiritual) of climate change and ecological degradation.
- We often felt overwhelmed by the incessant bad news, finding ourselves either compulsively acting to “fix” the problem or “checking out” emotionally.
- We sought ways to get involved in actions or activities of our congregations and local organizations, but sometimes left these experiences and meetings feeling more isolated than when we came.
- We found ourselves exhausted and “burned out” by actions and activities, even and especially from those that were for a “good cause.”

How can our group, team or congregation engage in these Practices for Awakening Leadership?

There is no single or right way to engage the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*. You are most welcome to participate in an EcoFaith Recovery Initiative to gain experience with the *Practices*. Whenever you are ready, you can bring them back home to your faith community. Because experience has shown that we recover more fully when practicing within a community of support, we encourage you to find two or more others, or any existing group in your faith community. These may be people who have a fairly clear sense of the difference they would like to make together or a group that simply knows they want mutual support in speaking up and taking action in response to their faith. Then just set a time to meet and start!

Possible ways to practice together include:

- Working with one of the six categories each month. Try engaging one sub-practice per week for four weeks, and use any fifth week to practice Sabbath together. (A sample meeting format is on the next page, and additional formats can be found on the website.) This would enable you to move through all six categories twice every year;
- Beginning (or ending) a meal or a meeting by engaging in any single practice;
- Engaging a different practice as a family at the beginning or ending of each day;
- Bringing a team of one or two fellow leaders to a gathering of one of EcoFaith’s various Initiatives where you can learn how to engage these practices more deeply in your life and with any group.

6) **Conscious Leadership Development through which we generate a vast regenerative ecosystem of courageous leaders capable of taking public action for the recovery of human life and healing of God's creation.**

Personal: We take interest in our own leadership development by investing our curiosity, energy, time, money and other resources to nurture our capacity to live out our call.

Interpersonal: We model interest in our own leadership development and the development of others by explicitly naming the God-given gifts, call, struggles, and potential we see in ourselves and that which we see in others. We risk inviting and offering feedback for the purpose of growth. We affirm one another's courage in stepping out into uncharted territory, celebrating how mistakes and failures provide rich opportunities for growth throughout creation.

Faith Community: We cultivate cultures of conscious leadership development within our communities of faith by regularly and personally inviting others into developmentally appropriate leadership roles, even when this takes more time and energy than doing it ourselves.

Public Sphere: We engage in public efforts to promote leadership development throughout the workforce through public actions that create pathways out of dead-end jobs into life-giving vocations that improve the health and well-being of communities.



- We kept our feelings of grief, fear and anger inside for lack of a community that could hold and honor the emotional impact that climate change and ecological degradation were having on us.
- We found that we were unconsciously allowing fear of disapproval to keep us from taking risks for the sake of our own development and for the healing of creation.
- We struggled but failed to find words to explain why taking action for the sake of the healing of God's creation was deeply important to us, thus increasing our isolation and feeling of being overwhelmed.
- We believed that we had no unique gifts to offer our congregation or the larger environmental movement, that we were not leaders unless we were prepared to stand up and lead a big group.
- We believed that we had no story, that we had no wisdom, that we had no power, that we were fundamentally victims of a system rather than actors within it.

In response to experiences like these, we are coming together and engaging in the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*.

In the process, we are recovering our true vocation as people of faith and citizens of earth.

We welcome you to join us!

Introduction to the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*

EcoFaith Recovery is a spiritual recovery movement for people of faith and others who care to join us. We see our addiction to an unsustainable way of life manifesting itself broadly from the personal to the systemic. It wreaks havoc and devastation upon us, our families, our communities and our institutions while disproportionately harming to the most vulnerable and oppressed. We see this addiction manifesting in a false understanding of and relationship to power.

Power is frequently defined as “the capacity to produce intended effects.” While we all experience and participate in destructive uses of power expressed through injustice and the degradation of life, we also experience and participate in God’s right use of power expressed as love, compassion, forgiveness, and justice for the sake of the well-being of the world. When this Divine power is expressed in our lives and our community leadership, we experience a healthy understanding of ourselves as leaders in recovery who daily seek right relationship with God and God’s creation. We begin to recover the spiritual and relational power available to us and use it in more healthy ways. To engage in this work of recovery, we drink deeply from the springs of earth-honoring Christian faith and draw inspiration from the streams of 12 step-recovery and grassroots relational organizing.

To support ourselves, each other and our faith communities in recovering a right relationship with God’s power and a healthy vision of ourselves as spiritually grounded leaders, we engage in six primary *Practices for Awakening Leadership* with implications in four primary dimensions of our lives: Personal, Interpersonal, Faith Community, and the Public Sphere. As we engage in these practices together, God renews our sense of hope, nurtures a healthy sense of leadership in us, and restores our capacity to make a difference in the world. These are the practices through which we are entering into “ecofaith recovery” together.

5) **Mentoring and Mutual-Mentoring** whereby sustained attention fosters the nurturing and development of our deepest gifts.

Personal: **At every stage of life, we reflect upon the way our own sense of call could be nurtured by a mentor and the gifts we have to offer by serving as mentor to another.**

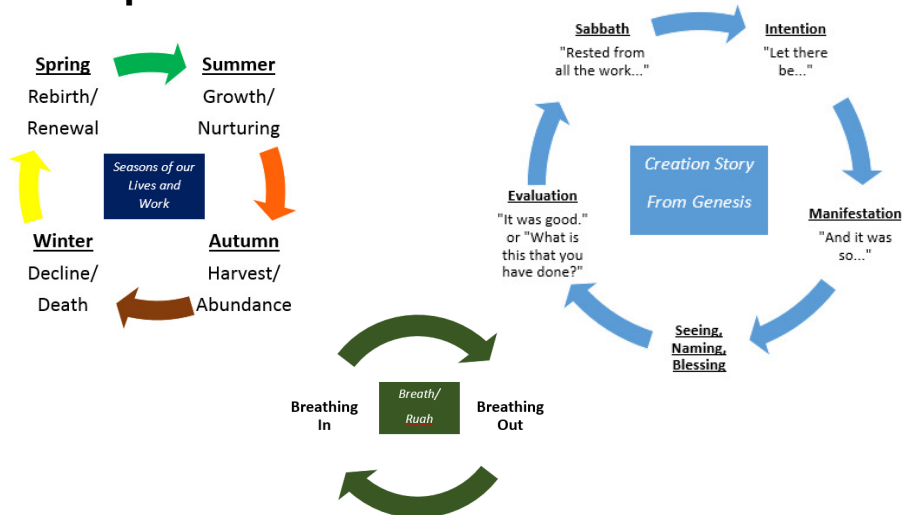
Interpersonal: **We invite somebody to mentor us and offer ourselves as a mentor to another, trusting that both mentoring and being mentored develop greater clarity about our call and a greater capacity to live it out.**

Faith Community: **We seek to develop cultures of mentoring within our faith communities and the other communities of which we are a part.**

Public Sphere: **We engage in public efforts to create and incentivize mentoring.** We support a transition from compartmentalized notions of “jobs we do” to a more holistic sense of “vocations we pursue” to promote social justice while nurturing the community of life.



4) **Rhythms of Engagement** through which we realign the rhythms of our lives with the regenerative cycles of God's creation. A few examples include:



Personal: We allow the breadth of God's cycles to shape the rhythm of our personal and family life. We seek to allow God's priorities to shape the pace and rhythms by which the good gifts of creation flow through our lives.

Interpersonal: We ask for support and extend support to others in finding the right balance of God's rhythms, so that those rhythms might take deeper root in our lives.

Faith Community: We organize gatherings of our faith communities to explicitly include the rhythms of Preparation, Action, Reflection, Evaluation and Sabbath.

Public Sphere: We help organize our faith communities to prepare for and engage in public action. We reflect upon and evaluate our leadership efforts and public actions, celebrating our successes and identifying specific areas for growth. We pause to delight in our relationships with human communities and all of God's creation before moving onto the next daily, weekly or monthly cycle of action.

The Practices for Awakening Leadership

1) **Spiritual Grounding** through which we see our place within God's evolving universe and learn to practice an earth-honoring faith.

Personal: We engage in daily spiritual practices through which we acknowledge our *powerlessness* over addictive societal systems, come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to wholeness, and reclaim a right relationship with God's creative power moving through us and the whole creation.

Interpersonal: We incorporate spiritual grounding and other *Practices for Awakening Leadership* when we come together with others who also desire this in order to further open our relationships to God's creative, life-giving power.

Faith Community: We reimagine our faith traditions by reclaiming the Bible as a resource for an earth-honoring faith, repenting of ways we have not used our Scriptures and traditions in support of justice for the oppressed, and reviving our ritual life as a source of compassionate action in service of the diversity, interdependence and well-being of God's creation.

Public Sphere: We plan and lead creative public rituals and actions through which we heed God's call to worship by "doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God."



2) Relational Practices which enable us to cultivate the power present in our relationships and the capacity of our relational networks to take action for the common good.



Personal: We engage in Intentional Relational Conversations (One-to-One's) where we discover more about ourselves while learning about another. Over time we discern whether mutual interests lead us to act together for the common good of our civic communities, watersheds and bioregions.

Interpersonal: We seek authentic, mutual Relationships with the most vulnerable and oppressed among us and those who dwelled on this land before we did. We listen for the ways in which injustice to the land is linked to injustice to its peoples and the ways in which environmental injustice enacts oppression. We seek to become visible allies with one another by examining our disproportionate resources and privileges, and using them with thoughtfulness, transparency and respect.

Faith Community: We organize focused Listening Seasons in which a group or congregation conducts multiple one-to-one conversations throughout its community over several weeks to discern common concerns, ideas, and themes. We intentionally seek to include the participation of those who are too often invisible or discounted.

Public Sphere: We develop individual and collective relationships with political and economic leaders to support the recovery of our institutions as spaces in which relational power can advance the common good of people and their ecological communities.

3) Telling Our Stories to claim the power of God at work in our lived experiences and share our stories to advance the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

Personal: We become curious about our own stories and sense of call. We claim responsibility to educate ourselves about the ways our personal journeys have been shaped by the stories of our families, ancestors, communities, cultures, economic systems, political systems, societal institutions, faith traditions, land, and the 13.8 billion-year unfolding of God's universe. We become literate about the ways these various stories do or do not contribute to a sustainable planet for all.

Interpersonal: We practice sharing our stories and motivation for action with others whenever appropriate opportunities arise. We become more confident about the ways God can use our stories alongside the stories of others to inspire recovery for human life and healing for God's creation.

Faith Community: We publicly share our stories and visions within our communities of faith and other communities. Discovering that our personal stories can be both instructive and inspiring, we seek opportunities to tell our stories publicly, practicing them in advance, and requesting feedback afterwards to further develop the power and capacity of our stories to make a difference.

Public Sphere: We organize opportunities for our stories and the stories of the most marginalized among us to have public impact on public officials, public policies and economic practices which impinge upon God's living earth. We learn how to call forth the time, money, turn-out and other resources that enable these stories to make a positive difference.

