

FOSTERING A VITAL LIFE ENERGY FIELD THROUGH CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES: A GARDEN OF THE HEART FOR INTERBEING, HEALING, AND PEACE

*Jing Lin, Denise McHugh, Annie Rapoport, Amanda J. Fiore,
Tom Culham, and Rebecca L. Oxford*

This article starts with questions about the type of environment necessary for a sense of shared humanity in a university community and other communities. It then argues that all living beings share a vital life energy, and humans can foster that energy and a sense of *interbeing* (oneness with each other and with nature) through contemplative practices such as meditation, reflective journaling, and labyrinth walking. A university Garden of Reflection and Remembrance is described as a place for these practices, which bring solidarity, healing, and peace in times of travail. Journals written in the garden capture students' challenges, emotions, and transformations, as well as the beneficial effects of nature and of connecting with the positive spirit of a murdered student. The conclusion summarizes the gifts of the garden as a vital life energy field.

INTRODUCTION

Tensions among nations and cultures are escalating worldwide. Hate crimes and social divisions are rampant at many levels. Climate change is causing devastating impact around the world. We are suffering the dire consequences of our alienation from nature, turning Mother Nature into

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