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Learning with the power of place, nature, self & community  
11-28 May 2009



## The Art of Protection

*Walking the edge of disturbance to harness new possibility 18-21 May*

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***In our lives, organizations and communities, what are the competencies that support us to wisely engage with uncertainty, disturbance and conflict?***

***And how will we cultivate those competencies?***

We invite you into a collective inquiry of The Art of Protection - transforming our hotspots of reactivity so that we are better equipped to uncover and use the new possibilities that are inherent in disturbing circumstances. We are inviting you to join us in working with this reframed definition of "protection" - namely, the skillful walking of a razor's edge in the face of disturbing realities.

Over the course of four months, we will gather by conference call, one-on-one conversation, and other electronic means to co-inquire into and deepen our understanding of protection. In addition to the perspectives and contributions from all who participate in this collective inquiry, we, the hosting team, will be seeding - and hopefully disturbing - the conversation with perspectives from five diverse disciplines (see below).

In May, at the end of the conference-call gatherings, there will be a Retreat at Axladitsa-Avatakia in Greece ([www.axladitsa.org](http://www.axladitsa.org)) where we will deepen our inquiry through practice, embodiment and community.

The five perspectives that help inform and provoke this Inquiry and Retreat are:

<b>Living Systems</b> is a perspective based on nature that teaches us that the point of instability is where potential resides and can be cultivated	<b>Aikido</b> is a martial art that invites us to meet aggression with harmony and teaches us how to blend with and redirect the energy of attack so as to render it harmless	<b>Psychoanalytic psychology</b> recognizes the impact of the past and its repetition in the present - the habitual responses to disturbing circumstances and teaches us to cultivate our capacities to respond in creative ways	<b>The Art of War</b> by Sun Tzu, an ancient Chinese text, explains the pitfalls of ignoring disturbance, the costs of handling it unskillfully, and the mechanics of holistic action	<b>Buddhist practice</b> invites us to experience our fear in a way that opens up a genuine path of courage and action
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***The Art of Protection is intended for*** leaders, consultants, hosts, mediators, managers, mental health practitioners, and pioneers who wish to be insightful and strategic in the face of disturbance, conflict or uncertainty. It is a place for professionals to contemplate some of the best wisdom about conflict and to reframe our understanding of it. It is a collective inquiry for those who wish to meet the inevitable conflicts in one's life with protective, life-serving action, rather than escalation or unnecessary force of any kind. Finally, it is an inquiry and dialogue - a place to share with and learn from dedicated colleagues around the world.

**This collective inquiry is offered in two parts:**

***The Virtual Inquiry*** - three conference calls,( approximately 6 weeks apart) with intervening readings, on-line conversation, and in-person partner dialogues. Each conference call focuses on a particular theme, and the call will be hosted in a way that allows for the best participation from all.

Focus areas for the Virtual Inquiry:

- ***Individual and Collective Hotspots***, what are our places of vulnerability and reactivity? How do we detect hotspots?
- ***Cultivating Protection*** - what are the capacities that enable us to meet disturbance skillfully, both as individuals and as groups? How do we cultivate those capacities?
- ***Victory in Wholeness*** - what are the hallmarks of wise action, as opposed to reaction or acquiescence?

***The Art of Protection Retreat***, 18-21 May 2009. The retreat will carry forward the inquiry and combine it with Aikido practice, living in community, and a broad range of experiential learning. The retreat has proved to be a powerful embodied experience of practice and community, and it gives us the opportunity to better understand protection from a collective point of view. In short, then, the Inquiry and the Retreat emphasize our understanding and our embodiment, respectively.



While we hope that many of the Virtual Inquiry participants will also join us for the Retreat, this is not mandatory. Just as the Virtual Inquiry will lay the ground for the retreat, in the next cycle, we envision that the retreat will lay the ground for the 2009-2010 Virtual Inquiry.



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**The specific aspects of the Virtual Inquiry are as follows:**

- **Pre-readings:** The hosts will draw from a number of traditions and practices, including Living Systems, Psychoanalytic Psychology, Sun Tzu's The Art of War, and Aikido. A short set of readings will help lay the ground for each conversation.
- **Conference call:** Approximately every 6 weeks, we will gather for a 90-minute conference call that will include a check-in, a short perspective that builds upon the pre-readings, and a central question that everyone will have an opportunity to answer. All calls will be recorded, so that if you miss one, you can easily "catch up". All calls are at 6.30p.m. GMT – dates are January 20, March 3, and April 21.
- **Partner work:** Between each conference call, everyone will have at least one "partner call" to investigate the material together in more depth. The hosts will suggest questions and procedure for each of the partner calls, but pairs are welcome to discover their own ways to support each other during that time.
- **Journaling and posting to a 'blog' site:** There will be questions for individual reflection between calls, and participants are asked to share reflections on [http://www.evolutionarynexus.org/forum/art\\_protection\\_0](http://www.evolutionarynexus.org/forum/art_protection_0). Also, the hosts will regularly post articles and questions related to the content, and everyone is invited to do the same.

**Who we are - Your hosting team**



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**For information about the previous Art of Protection, May 2008, see** [http://www.evolutionarynexus.org/forum/art\\_protection\\_0](http://www.evolutionarynexus.org/forum/art_protection_0)

**See Registration [Form](#) for Standard, Non-profit/Independent Fees, including Early Bird rates. To Register: please send completed form to [info@axladitsa.org](mailto:info@axladitsa.org)**

**Remember: The Art of Protection is the second collective inquiry of the *Axladitsa Immersion* – 11-28 May 2009. For further information – see <http://www.axladitsa.org/calendar.htm>**

