

Compassionate Movement Workshop at the Fluid Mutualism Symposium: *A Reflection*

By Nivedita Rajendra



How might magic, social practice, and technology come together in generative ways (if they weren't already one and the same)?

This question serves as a distinct mold for [the Compassionate Movement Workshop](#), offered at the close of the Fluid Mutualism Symposium on CCA's San Francisco Campus. I have offered this workshop in its entirety thrice before—each time it sits/hits differently. Most obvious effectors are the social conditions of the time, the energetic presence of participants, the physical space of the workshop, and the accompanying sound/music. More subtle, but I believe quite crucial, is my own energetic state and intentions when facilitating.

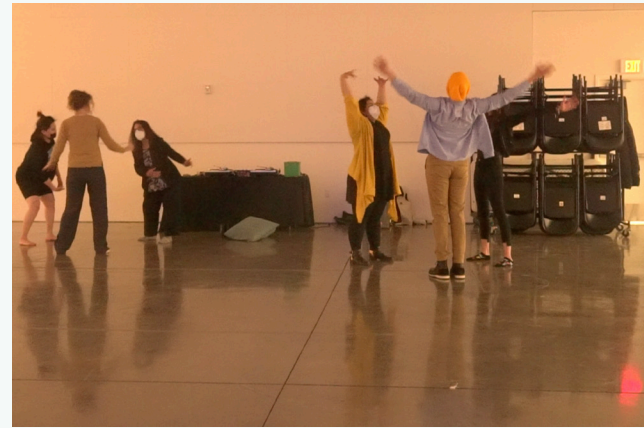
This time round, I commit to creating a container in which magic, social practice, and Indigenous wisdom dialogue, and in doing so, lift us into higher states of vitality and compassion. These states allow us to navigate the current socio-political conditions of tension and dis-ease, with endurance and clarity.

*Magick is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will.*¹

If I were to follow Aleister Crowley's notion of magic and have the workshop be a vehicle for transformation or an act of conjuring, I would first need to have us (the participants and I) set collective yet individualized intentions. Because my workshop is the last of the series in the symposium, I can take cues from the sessions I attended prior in the week.

Mastro Axaxe Gomez's lecture on [Water as a Central Cultural Element of the Nations with Toltek Heritage](#) brings me to these two pieces of advice:

1. Be like the water; clear, tranquil, soft yet strong at the same time.



Participants in Rajendra's workshop on March 4th, 2022.



An image from Rajendra's Compassionate Movement workshop on March 4th, 2022

¹ Aleister Crowley. *Magick: In Theory and Practice*. New York, Dover. 1976. XII.

Imagine the water body's qualities; her temperament and nurturance. The sensations you felt in her presence, or when submerged. Where is she?

2. *Your head hurts me, because I am you and you are me. Let me get to know you and in this way I too will know myself.*

When we envision the selves we want to embody in this world, do we think about the quality of our inner waters? I feel called to draw connections between the waters that have held us, the power those memories hold and our own agency in manifesting clear waters. This feels particularly compelling considering the politics of stewardship and Indigenous resistance that have been brought forth so lovingly through the Symposium.

As I lead participants through the initial stages of Deep Yogic Pranayama, I ask them to meditate on a water body they wish to embody. I ask participants to commit to finding a more present union with this water body by the end of the hour. This visualization is guided by prompts like: *Imagine the water body's qualities; her temperament and nurturance. The sensations you felt in her presence, or when submerged. Where is she?*

When we open our eyes to share memories and intentions with one another, we realize that magic is already in play. Within the first ten minutes of the workshop, we have tapped into a reservoir of deep gratitude and joy that leaves us pulsating with awe and emotion. Voices quiver and hearts soften.

Magic is the art of evoking power from within. Today I will name it this: the art of liberation, the act that releases the mysteries, that ruptures the fabric of our beliefs and lets us look into the heart of deep space where dwell the immeasurable, life generating powers.²

Starhawk's words float through my mind. In sharing tools from the ancient Indigenous technology of Ayurveda, Ashtanga Yoga and Pranayama, I hope to evoke a power from participants that can directly address the current contaminated conditions of Huichin and Yelamu. Lands whose waters have been neglected and exploited.

² Starhawk. *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery*. New York, New York, Harper and Row. 1990.



**Rajendra's Seed, Play, Unite workshop
in 2021**

I lead participants through somatic movement exercises that remind us of our visceral ties to all forms on Earth. According to Ayurveda, every being on this planet is made of five distinct elements: ether, air, fire, water, and earth. Within this simple framework lies the reminder of our inherent kinship with one another. The framework extends to explain how each element has its own characteristics, roles, and intelligence. Water is thus an entity within and around us with her own unique language and wisdom, always teaching if we listen.

In bringing attention to and awakening all the cells of our bodies—water and all—we transform further, clearing our selves of stagnation and preparing for the transmission of deep compassion via touch.

At this point I should mention that we are not only working with tools from Indigenous technology but also very contemporary technology. The sounds that carry us through the workshop come from a self curated [Spotify playlist](#). I offer this playlist to anyone needing support in tapping into their own inner calm and waters.

The second half of the workshop brings participants closer to one another. I won't go into the specifics of the activities and prompts (you need to attend one to know!!), but I will say this: I am always so moved by the capacity of humans to enter into a state of generosity and tenderness with beings they don't know. The second half of the workshop affirms the immeasurable compassion that we hold and also our willingness to receive or give compassion to another. Sometimes all we need is a little push; an incantation of sorts.

*The magical act [is] a liminal space produced by the performance. This is a zone of transformation; a place where the rules of everyday life are suspended and alternative realities can trickle in. It is here that the real magic takes place.*³

³ Gregory Sholette in conversation with Aaron Gach/Center for Tactical Magic. Artpapers.org. 2006. Pg. 19.



Participants in Rajendra's Compassionate Movement workshop on March 4th, 2022

By the end of the workshop, there is tangible collective transformation. Eyes are bright and muscles are loose. Within the political and spatial context of the social, magic has happened. The spirits of ancient and contemporary technology have blessed us with their potency.

I know this because participants express their appreciation and observations to me. As we close the workshop and nibble on dried ginger candy that I brought to share, folks tell me of specific areas of blockage that are now cleared. Many acknowledge the sensation of receptiveness and clarity that has opened up within them. Some note their own surprise at what was activated, a feeling they wish to return to often.

Be like water.

In a time of daily crisis, it is necessary for us to find power in our innate mechanisms of equanimity, self-determination, and love. Only from here will we find solutions that are regenerative and for everybody.

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