

What Is GaiaYoga™?

A Holistic Cultural Vision For Living Sustainably As Spirit, Self, Community, And Earth

Would you like to live in a way that gives you the material abundance you want without harming the Earth?

Would you like to be surrounded by a cooperative culture that shares your joys and sorrows, supports you in all areas of life, and provides intimacy with continuity?

Would you like your daily life to be 100% integrated with Spirit?

If you are longing for these things, you are not alone. Many, many people are plagued by a gnawing sense that things could be A LOT different. In fact, it's becoming increasingly obvious that they *must* be if we're going to grow beyond our current ecological and social crises, and into a way of living that's life-serving all the way around. But the enormity of what's required to make this shift happen often seems overwhelming. Is there anything one person can do to really make a difference?

We believe there is. In fact, we believe there's a lot we can do. But to do it, we must root our lives in the soil of a whole different understanding and intention. What might that look like?

Imagine... You wake up on Monday morning and receive a phone call from an old friend who says, "I'd love to go fishing with you today, 'cause we haven't spent time together in months." Now, in your old life you'd have to tell him the following bummer story: "Gee, I'd love to, but I can't get off work because I'm the only dentist my patients trust to work on them. Also, my SUV's in the shop, so we couldn't get out to the lake. And my daughter has a ballet class this afternoon that I have to pick her up from. So I'm booked all day — again."

But instead, you've designed an entirely different life for yourself. In your new life, your old friend doesn't live across town — he lives with his wife and two children on the same 80-acre piece of land that you, 30 other adults, and 18 children all co-own. So you say to him:

"Hey, that sounds great! Let me call up the other three people in my cooperative dentistry practice and see if they can cover for me. We have a light day today, so I know one of them will say 'yes.' How about if we meet at the meditation hall at 9 a.m., sit for half an hour, and then head over to the community pond? Hey, that'll really work out great because tonight's my monthly night to make dinner for the community, and I didn't know what I was going to fix. I'll make a big sushi dinner from our catch. How's that sound?"

"Sounds good to me. Do you want to drive so we can bring the fish back easily?"

"Nah, let's just each take a wheelbarrow. I don't even wanna deal with the solar-powered golf cart today. Let's really rough it!"

"Cool. How late can you stay out? Do you have any responsibilities in the garden or with the kids this afternoon?"

"No. Yesterday was my day teaching the pre-teens about the connection between diet and emotional balance, and Wednesday I'm leading a crew in planting the community's new corn patch. I'm psyched on that. I love being able to have a garden, with all that fresh organic food, *and* not need to grow it all by myself. Also, did you know that this year we're going to plant an extra acre to sell at the farmers market to pay for bringing in a Compassionate Communication specialist to help us with our co-parenting skills?"

"Yeah, I know. I really pushed for that. It's been so frustrating for me to have us get into conflicts, only to find out later that we were actually in agreement but had just misunderstood each other. I'm glad you reminded me. I'm going to be there Wednesday to help plant that corn."

"Great. I guess my only resistance to fishing today is that I was going to watch my daughter practice ballet with the other kids this afternoon. They're getting ready for their big performance for the community next month. But I can watch her tomorrow, so I think she'll be OK with that. Yeah, this sounds great—let's go fishing. It'll be a simple and fun way to spend the day together, plus I just love all the quiet out at the pond—I can really feel Spirit out there, especially after I've been to the meditation hall. So let's do it! I'll make those calls and see you there in 45 minutes."

"Yahoo! I love this life. I'm so glad we made the change 10 years ago. Imagine where'd we be if we hadn't?"

"Yup, we're really fortunate, and even more so today from all the work we've put into ourselves, this community, the land, and our spiritual practice."

"You said it. Love you. See you soon."

What we're suggesting in this illustration is that we can live from an altogether different understanding—one that honors our diverse needs as individual, social, terrestrial, and spiritual beings. The people in this example had that understanding. They could see that the course they were on was never going to give them what they actually wanted. And they had the courage to seriously re-evaluate their lives and re-design them to provide what they truly desired. They wanted to live sustainable, non-polluting, lifestyles; they also wanted physical and emotional health, happy and well-cared-for children, balanced careers, a full spiritual life, a community that supported and enriched all of that, and a land-base to make it real and grounded. In other words, they saw the need for the integration of *Spirit, self, community, and Earth*. And they were willing to do the necessary work—including personal and relational growth, acquiring the material resources, and developing practical skills—to make it all happen. Cultivating this kind of holistic understanding, developing sensitivity to one's need for integrated and sustainable culture, and taking the practical steps to bring it into life—that's what GaiaYoga is all about. It's a "yoga" (i.e. a practice of unification) for living sustainably on the Earth.

There are many different ways to practice GaiaYoga—this is just one example. You don't have to live in the country, co-parent, meditate, or be a gardener. It also isn't about losing control of your life to a group. What it *is* about is addressing our core needs for Spirit, self, community, and Earth in an integrated and intelligent way. How these needs will be met will vary from person to person and from circumstance to circumstance, but the process that brings us to these different choices will be the same. Through GaiaYoga we can transform fragmented, unsustainable ways of living, step-by-step, into holistic ways of being that are balanced, healthy (for ourselves and the Earth), and deeply fulfilling. It is possible.

If you would like to find out more, we invite you to read our booklet, *An Introduction to GaiaYoga™: A Holistic Cultural Vision for Living Sustainably as Spirit, Self, Community, and Earth*, by Ano Tarletz and Mercedes Kinkel (that's us). Send \$9 (+ \$8 per additional booklet) to Pan Piper Press, 55 Mitchell Blvd. #20, San Rafael, CA, 94903, and we'll ship 'em to you.

We're also creating a full-length GaiaYoga book, educational programs, and a residential GaiaYoga community that we can call "home." Contact us to learn more about GaiaYoga and support it's sprouting in the world—through classes and workshops, personal consultations, volunteering, or patronage. We're happy to speak to individuals and groups about this exciting way of life.

Ano Tarletz and Mercedes Kinkel

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What Is A Seedball?

Can you imagine growing a garden, orchard, or forest without tilling the soil, digging holes, fertilizing, or even weeding? It's entirely possible using *seedballs*—marble-sized mixtures of clay, seeds, compost, and other organic goodies. The way they work is so simple, yet so magical...

Seedballs can be made by hand in the comfort of your own home, as a wonderful activity to share with friends and family. The ingredients are simple: powdered red clay, a large variety of seeds, compost, soil microorganism inoculants, and hot pepper to repel insects and rodents. These all get mixed up with water and worked into a kind of dough. Once the right consistency is reached, the dough is rolled into little balls, and laid out to dry. A day or more later, you're ready to roll! The seedballs can be tossed out anywhere there isn't already mature forest—on lawns, garden beds, empty fields, barren grasslands, even deserts—at the rate of a few balls every square foot or square yard, depending on the situation. It's that easy—just walk around and throw them about!

Because they are encased in clay, the seeds are protected from rodent and insect predation, premature germination, and rotting or baking on the ground. When enough rain comes to dissolve the clay ball, the seeds get wet and buried and can safely germinate. The clay retains moisture and, along with the compost and inoculants, feeds the sprouting seeds to get them off with a strong start. Often 100 different species or more will be sown at once, including native trees, shrubs, and grasses; nitrogen-fixing trees and ground covers; and/or edible vegetables, roots, fruits, and nuts.

What really makes seedballing different (as opposed to transplanting seedlings or tilling in one species of seeds) is that we let the diversity of seeds and the whole of Nature decide which plants are best suited to the exact conditions they're in. Each type of seed prefers different conditions and fills different niches. Because a large quantity and variety of seeds are broadcast, we can be sure that something will grow (unless conditions are completely infertile or toxic). Plants who find a niche will thrive; the ones that don't will perish or not sprout. This process naturally promotes optimal plant and land health.

If we are doing wilderness restoration, we don't need to be concerned with which particular plants grow, because the ground will become covered and Nature will guide the process towards a climax forest perfectly. If we are determined to grow food, we might choose to make sure we are starting with land whose fertility base can support the non-pioneering plants we are selecting. Regardless, over the years a healthy, abundant ecology "designed" by Nature will emerge. Rather than imposing our plans onto the land (even very well considered ones), we instead harmonize our desires and will with Nature and allow Her to reveal which species is best suited to each particular spot. Once She shows her primary response to our seedballing, we can, as the system

matures, favor some plants over others by cutting and pruning or re-seedballing with an updated seed selection. This way of planting is born of a fundamental trust that Nature, not man, is the wisest and most capable farmer and designer.

Seedballing alleviates a tremendous amount of nursery and transplanting work that is typical in plant propagation, while still being productive and labor efficient. Because there is no tilling of the Earth and a high density and diversity of naturally selected plants, there is very little possibility of disease and no need for pesticides. Nature handles all the details with minimal human management. In fact, the rich tapestry that She grows is far more efficient, productive, and breathtaking than any human could design. All we do is select and gather seeds, make the seedballs, and sow them as we walk (or fly over!) the land. That's it! Nature handles it from there. What less can we do?

I see seedballs as a profound and magical tool for transforming our world. With them we can heal deserts, reforest abused lands, plant food-forests and gardens, and empower citizens to make real their dreams to heal and serve the environment in a direct, easy, and practical way. Even if you have no land or farming skills and live in the suburbs, you can still use seedballs on public or private lands, if you cooperate with the land-stewards and wildlife. Some people believe that money, government, and ownership are the main limiting factors to changing the world, but perhaps through creativity, time management, and cooperation we can circumvent these structures and accomplish "the impossible." *The seedball is in our court!*

Seedballs were pioneered by Masanobu Fukuoka, a revered Japanese elder, farmer, teacher, and visionary, who developed The Natural Way Of Farming, a sustainable, organic-farming approach and spiritual philosophy. He has written several books; his best known are *One Straw Revolution*, *The Road Back To Nature*, and *The Natural Way of Farming*, all translated from Japanese. Unfortunately these books are currently out of print in the U.S., though they are often available via libraries, used bookstores, book locators, and organic farming enthusiasts.

There are several ways to learn more about seedballs and Masanobu Fukuoka. You can read his books. There's a wealth of information, including a short instructional video, available at www.seedballs.com. There are also other websites about Fukuoka. You can contact, Pangaia, a permaculture natural farm and resource center in Hawaii, which uses seedballs as an integral part of creating holistic sustainable culture. Surf to www.pangaia.cc. Or you can contact me, Ano, in the SF Bay area, and I can tell you what I know about the philosophy and practice of natural farming. I want to form a local "seedball troupe" to make seedballs, go on hikes to sow them, and see what grows. Call me if you'd like to give it a whirl. Aloha.

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What Is Instinctive Eating?

Aloha. My name is Zephyr “Ano” Tarletz, and I’ve lived on the Big Island of Hawaii for most of the last 10 years, in an emerging eco-village, where dozens of us are pioneering farms and homesteads using Permaculture principles. For years I have been passionately focused on understanding food and its relationship to health, sustainable lifestyle, and bodily happiness. In 1990, I changed my diet and began to “eat instinctively,” which is a way to eat raw foods using our inborn instincts. This marked a great change in my relationship with food. Later, in 1996, I published a book about Instinctive Eating, and began to formally teach about it. I believe that understanding how instinct relates to food is essential knowledge for anyone who eats, whether or not one is actually drawn to fully choose this particular practice. So I’d like to now share with you the essence of what I’ve discovered over the last decade of happily eating by instinct ...

All diets are based on some understanding (or misunderstanding), whether scientific, nutritional, cultural, spiritual, ethical, or intuitive. And all diets have varying degrees of effectiveness and pleasure, for different people at different times. The reality is there are a lot of diets to choose from—if you are a Homo Sapiens. But if you are any other animal on this diverse Earth there is only one diet to choose: Instinctive Eating! Let me explain.

Instinctive eating is not a new way to eat. It isn’t the latest twist on vegetarianism, body-typing, Eastern wisdom, or native diets. Rather, it is the inherent living system for selecting, eating, and digesting foods within our animal biology. The way it works is simple, magical, and mysterious. Imagine it’s 50,000 years ago. You are hungry, walking on the beach, looking for food. Essentially, the only foods available are raw, whole, organic, and wild—what I call an “original” food. Next to a salt-water pool, you find a pile of seaweed, a group of rocks, a clan of clams, a maggot-covered fish, fifteen fallen crabapples, and a broken, evacuated beehive, laden with honey. How do you know what to eat *and* what *not* to eat?

Simply put: the nose knows. Like a dog, you smell the foods, look for the best smelling item, and put that one in your mouth. If it tastes good, you eat it, and then forage for some more of that food. This is most significant. The smell of a food is valuable sensory data to the instincts. The pleasurable of the smell indicates that it might be nourishing food. If, after passing the nose test, it also passes the taste test, then you *know* (bodily) that this is a good food for you at this moment. It’s that simple and direct!

So, why would you stop eating? This is the magical part. An original food’s taste will actually change in your mouth as your body’s nourishment needs are met (the ones that this particular food offers). In other words, the honey or seaweed that first tasted exquisite will become less and less delicious, until it is actually painful to try to eat. Really! The sensory experience changes, even though the food remains the same. In other words, the body is a most sophisticated signal-receiving and data-processing organism. It’s perfectly designed to prevent gluttony via the taste change, for even if you are still hungry, you will not be able to eat more of a particular food, as long as you are sensitive to your body’s messages to stop. Why? It just won’t taste good anymore (unless you use condiments to mask and extend the flavor of this now non-nourishing edible). This basic process is effortless and present in all animals. Essentially, instinctive eating produces a radical reduction, or even removal, of food-related confusion, suffering, and hopelessness. Using it yields tremendous liberation, pleasure, and the security that you’re eating the best foods *for you*, as well as profound long-term health benefits.

So what happens if you eat a non-original food that no longer accurately communicates to your instincts? Let’s take a look: A crabapple’s smell and taste clearly reveals the essence of what that crabapple is, what its “nutrient makeup” is, and what its subjective value *to you* is. But that same apple that smells wonderful to you, might not smell good to your friend because s/he doesn’t need it. However, apple pie is a different story. The smell (especially right out of the oven) no longer honestly and accurately represents the essence of the food. And, because of the cooking process and the combining of many foods, the taste change is now either completely absent, muted, or blurred. But your body is genetically programmed to “believe” that if something smells good you might need it, and if it tastes good you *do* need it. So it is totally natural to want to eat apple pie! Your body is following its innate intelligence. But the food is no longer living up to its end of the relationship by telling you the truth. It’s saying to your

instincts, via its always-attractive smell and taste, that it is an always-needed food. Well, need I say, this isn't *always* the case. And unfortunately the symptoms of this tiny misunderstanding around food and instincts are displayed as immeasurable suffering worldwide.

Nowadays there are extensive arts and sciences developed around non-original food, eaten in a non-instinctive way. But all are tragically unaware of our bio-instinctual system that is underlying every overlaid dietary system. Nevertheless, our bodies are always trying to function at peak performance, despite deceptive signals, difficult-to-digest foods, and minds and cultures that don't recognize or encourage the body's most dependable instincts.

To compensate for this we have developed or adopted various techniques for deciding what to eat, when to stop, and, indeed, what is considered food. These include myriad diets, cultural preferences, yin/yang theory, weight loss programs, eating until full every time, willfully stopping when your mind says you've had enough, austerity, bulimia, guilt, shame — the list goes on and on. These are all sadly ineffective and inferior approaches when compared to our inborn instinctive system, which can be trusted to handle all our food-selecting, eating, and digesting processes with impeccable grace, intimacy, and effectiveness. It's the right tool for the job. What a relief!

So, what's the cost for this relief? Basically, there is one primary discipline: Eat only foods whose smells and tastes accurately represent their essence, and then also communicate an accurate taste change. Practically speaking, this means selecting only from whole, raw, and organic foods. This might sound like a frustrating limit, but there are many of us who have walked through this doorway have been happily surprised to discover an oasis of deep pleasure *combined* with sustainable health and Earth-intimacy. There are also some secondary disciplines. Eat only one food at a time, so that the taste change (or stop) on that particular food can be most easily "heard." And provide yourself with a wide range of original foods to select from. Of course, having a bunch of other hairless apes to eat instinctively with also helps!

A final point. This instinctive system doesn't only work with raw fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts, bee products, and water. It also works with free-ranging, raw, and organic fish, meats, eggs, and insects. This might concern folks with ethical or spiritual considerations around eating animals, or their products. These are valid concerns, and I honor the spirit from which they arise. Nonetheless, the instinctive process exists and functions prior to ethics and religions. This is shamelessly demonstrated in the natural world, where some animals are carnivores, some omnivores, and some herbivores. There are many schools proclaiming which kind of a "vore" humans are. But regardless of the opinions of these different schools, raw meats *do* smell and taste good to many humans, and are found to digest properly and nourish profoundly. Again, from an instinctive point of view, the fact that these foods are sensually attractive is important information that indicates the body truly needs them for health and well-being. So if you don't like the fact that raw animal foods function according to the same principles as other raw foods, you might have some soul-searching to do. (And, yes, it's also true that some instinctive-eating humans find raw meat totally unnecessary for their particular bodies, and this, too, is fine. In fact, it makes life simpler and also elegantly validates the instinctive process: No two humans have the same dietary needs, and indeed, a particular human's dietary needs usually changes as that person's age and circumstance changes.)

Most of us have been trying to navigate the dietary maze in some form or other for quite some time. What I've found is that the body already knows the way, and as we follow its wisdom, the labyrinth becomes a delightful romp in the garden. I invite you to explore your own body and instincts and see if this message is validated in you. It might herald the beginning of a whole new sensibility around food, diet, health, and life altogether. It certainly has for me, and I wish the same possibility for you.

If you're interested, there are a few ways to explore instinctive eating. You can read *Instinctive Eating: The Lost Knowledge of Optimum Nutrition*, by Zephyr (me). It is available for \$15 via Pan Piper Press, RR2 #3334, Pahoa, HI. 96778. If you want to talk to me directly about instinctive eating or other aspects of sustainable lifestyle, email panpiper@pangaia.cc or call 415-289-2110. You can also surf to www.pangaia.cc. And, if you're in the SF Bay area, you can attend one of the introductory instinctive-eating buffet dinners that I offer. Just give me a call.

Enjoy! Zephyr "Ano" Tarletz

What Is Nonviolent Communication (NVC)?

By Ano Tarletz

Ano Tarletz is a sustainable lifestyle pioneer, author, and teacher. He is a resident of Pangaia, a permaculture farm and community experiment on the Big Island of Hawaii.

For years, I've been working on understanding and changing my patterns of communication. I've been searching for a consistently safe, expressive, and honest way to speak, one that promotes real connection between myself and others. Happily, my need for compassionate communication was finally fulfilled when I began practicing Marshall Rosenberg's teaching of *Nonviolent Communication (NVC)*.

I think of NVC as a fine set of tools or a martial art. It's a way to express power and passion with grace and effectiveness. I don't have to use these tools, but when I do, I really produce some pleasing results. The process is quite different from what I'd previously learned to do. In my old communication model, I focused on what was "wrong" with someone's logic, philosophy, or choices, and then I would counter with a response that demonstrated my "superior" intelligence. In the moment, I'd feel alive, powerful, and "right." But when I was done, the room would be cleared and I'd be triumphantly alone. Then I would often continue the combat in my mind, condemning the others and defending myself. Given the logic I used, it all made perfect sense. This was the big hurdle for me to leap—to be willing to explore a new logic and language that could produce more enriching results for myself and those in my life.

You may be wondering how NVC sounds or what is so different about it. Let me give you a brief example. Let's say I passed a clear-cut forest. I might say, "God, I hate those people. They don't care a thing about the Earth! I wish they'd just disappear because they're the real problem." (And that's an edited version!)

Now, instead of communicating my evaluations and condemning thoughts, I translate my communication into the four parts of NVC—observations, feelings, needs, and requests. In this case, the sentence might sound like:

OBSERVATIONS: When I saw the clear-cut forest today . . .

FEELINGS: . . . I felt disturbed . . .

NEEDS: . . . because I want people to respect our ecosystems and preserve natural resources.

REQUEST: Would you be willing to help me write a letter to the editor about clear-cutting?

With NVC, there is no repression of feelings, false niceness, or denial of needs. At the same time, there's also no blame, shame, or judging. Using NVC, I can take the energy that I previously used in evaluating others and instead express my own feelings and the needs they stem from. Then I ask for that which would enrich my life. For me, this is a profound breakthrough. Following this form, I'm able to communicate any feeling, about any need, in a way that maximizes my chances of actually getting my needs met. Whereas before, I spoke in a way that practically guaranteed my real needs would not get met.

But this is only half of the equation. Perhaps even more unique to NVC is the practice of empathic listening, or *empathy*. When listening empathically, I again translate whatever is spoken into observations, feelings, needs, and requests. Let's say my partner comes up to me and says, "You're a lazy, messy bum, and I'm sick of putting up with your junk all over my house!!!" Using empathic listening, I can do something besides collapse, defend myself, or attack back. In this case, I might pause, reflect, and ask:

OBSERVATIONS: When you came home and saw my slippers and towel on the chair . . .

FEELINGS: . . . were you angry . . .

NEEDS: . . . because you'd like to have the house kept neatly?

Notice, I don't take on their condemnation, nor do I condemn back. Instead, I listen for feelings and needs, and then make my best guess at what they are. *Empathy*.

Hearing this, she might say, "Yeah, but what I'm really angry about [**feelings**] is all the traffic and the fact that I had to work all day while you stayed home [**observation**]." Then I might say, "So did you really want to spend the day with me [**needs**] and you're angry [**feelings**] that your work kept you away all day [**observations**]?" "Yeah, what I'd really like is to take the weekend off [**request**] so we can spend some intimate time together [**needs**]." (Thinking how I could help with this request), "Would you like me to help you figure out how to make that possible [**request**]?" "Yeah." "I'm happy to hear that [**feelings**], because I really want to be with you as much as I can [**needs**]. I was actually bored [**feelings**] sitting around today [**observation**] because I wanted your company [**needs**]." "Yeah, I can relate. Also, would you be willing to put your stuff away after you're done in a room [**request**]?" "Yes." "Thanks."

This dialogue is an example of how NVC can take a potential fight and turn it into an intimate connection. And it only takes one person speaking this language to make it happen. I've found NVC to be very powerful in creating sustainable relationships, families, and communities. For me, it's a way to address the complexities of being human in a manner that's truly nurturing and mutually beneficial. And like any skill, it takes patience and practice to learn it and to incorporate it consistently in day-to-day life.

Beyond it's obvious value in personal relationships, NVC has also been used successfully in organizations all over the world—in schools, businesses, prisons, and in volatile political situations. It's helped bring peace to war-torn areas and turned around apparently hopeless circumstances. It seems to work for people of all races, classes, backgrounds, and situations. This excites me, because I want to be able to communicate with everyone in a way that is respectful and effective, while still being sincere and passionate. Prior to NVC, I didn't see how that was possible.

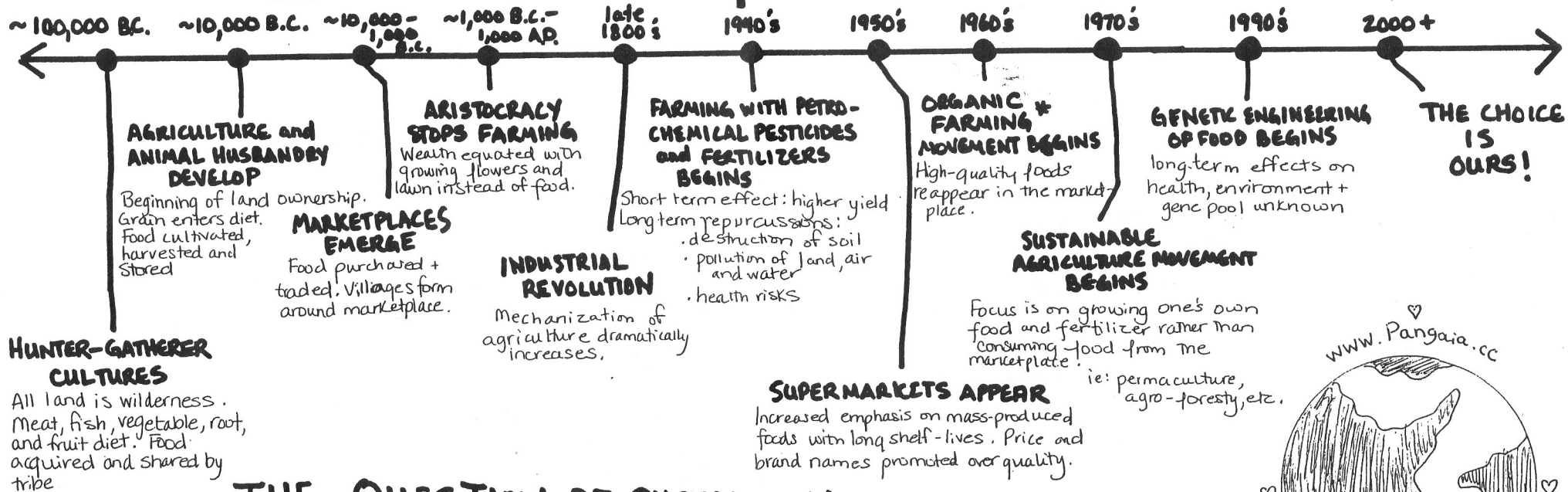
If you're interested in exploring NVC, there are a few websites you can explore: www.cnvc.org, www.nvc.com, or www.azteca.net/~baynvc/. Also, I sell the book, *Nonviolent Communication*, by Marshall Rosenberg, which completely explains this practice, in detail, with many examples. It's \$18 in person or \$22 shipped by U.S. mail (\$25 International). Make checks or money orders payable to Pan Piper Press, RR2 #3334, Pahoehoe, HI 96778.

Thanks for listening! - Ano Tarletz, 415-289-2110 or panpiper@pangaia.cc

FOOD ACQUISITION TIMELINE



← Prior to WWII: ALL FOOD IS GROWN ORGANICALLY! →



THE QUESTION OF SUSTAINABILITY:

Do our systems generate bounty + health for individuals, cultures, and the Earth over time? IF "yes" Keep using them. If "no" Re-design!!!



Farm Like We'll Live Forever

I don't live in the suburbs
I don't live in the wild
I refuse to live in ignorance

I wish to be as true as a child
So I live on a farm instead
Organically fed
To this land I'm wed

I don't drive a tractor
I don't crave a car
I refuse to buy these images

I wish to honor what we are
So I use my arms and legs
This heart and head
Dancing on my homestead

I was root-bound in the suburbs
I root and worship in the wild
I sow the seeds of peace

I don't want to live exiled
So I live on a farm where I'm fed
From this garden bed
Wrought with tools from the shed

I know how to end world hunger
By mini-farms not maxi-marts
My stocks and market are our soils

My health club is this farm
Where I can grow my arms and legs
My beloveds
And even bread

Give you food it only feeds today
Show you how to grow you eat for life
Farm like we'll live forever
Live like we'll die tomorrow

Love like we can't say, "never"
Dream like all will follow
Farm like we'll live forever
Or we might never dream tomorrow

Live like we'll live
On our farm 'til dead
From a life well led
With enough done and said

By Ano Tarletz