



**An invitation to participate in a warm-up activity for the
Gathering/Hui - February**

PERCEPTION - EXPERIENCE - ACTION

Welcome to the **first of three self-directed discovery
activities – something **reflective** to do before you arrive!**

Dear Registrant

We are delighted to let you know that 75 people have already registered for the Gathering/Hui. This letter launches the first of our three warm-up activities that will help us explore the theme more deeply. We hope that you will join us in preparing for our Gathering/Hui by engaging with these three activities over the next three months. From our perspective as a facilitation group the Gathering/Hui commences from this moment going forward until we gather face to face.

We have a larger view of the value of this unique event and therefore we are sending the three self-discovery inquiry activities to everyone in the GANZ community and beyond. We are interested in creating a community, professional and personal development experience for both people attending in person and those unable to be present.

This letter elaborates our perspective on this community experiment and how the three activities will support a deeper exploration at the Gathering/Hui as well as creating wider field conditions of support for our time together.

Context and purpose of activities

The purpose of the three (3) pre-gathering activities is to invite everyone attending (and those not attending) to undertake some personal reflection as preparation for engaging with the interactive nature of the Gathering/Hui. Each activity aims to support us to have an informed voice in certain sessions in the program.

Within the overall process-oriented design, each day builds on experiences of the previous day, rather than offering panels, and the traditional choosing from a menu of workshops or presentations. In effect, the Gathering/Hui is a macrocosm of the gestalt process within a community situation. The intention is to invite participation through engaging together in a variety of configurations in exploring and expanding our understandings and learnings around the core theme of ***Catalysts for transformation***, rather than focus on any single social issue.

From our personal and professional experience as citizens and practitioners we know that in our life experiences and the work we do that we all witness a wide range of personal distress within diverse aspects of society. Our craft provides us with the ability to offer transformational processes and to develop personal capacities and skill sets that illuminate a deeper awareness of what catalyses change. Our invitation to you to engage with each of the three self-directed discovery activities reflects our hope to optimise our individual and collective capacity to explore deeply the theme of the Gathering/Hui.

Understandings of the facilitation group

As a facilitation group we have come to understand that we represent an incomplete microcosm of global diversity, yet our diversity includes a mix of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ancestry, facility in languages other than English with associated cultural sensitivities, and a variety of belief systems from the sacred to profane. For us, as well as for many others these and other attributes may intersect. We also believe that no one person is entirely within their '*culture*' given such diversity, and that we all have some form of cultural incompetence in relating to our clients, colleagues and the wider community whether individuals, social groups or larger systems.

We recognise that many of the diverse groups and experiences of our broader communities may not be represented in person within the collective of participants at the Gathering/Hui, especially given the wide range of attributes listed in human rights legislation that might invite unlawful discrimination. We have grappled with the reality of our Gathering/Hui being unrepresentative and we have come to appreciate that we cannot be more than we are, but

also, we do not want to be less than we are. We will work with what we have understanding that this is not all there is.

In our process we recognised that in our work all of us, including students, may engage with members of diverse communities who will not be represented at the Gathering/Hui and on whose behalf, we may be tempted to speak. While it is possible to be a spokesperson for the under-represented, we encourage speakers during the Gathering/Hui to be clear about the personal context of their contributions and not assume their views are representative. We encourage sensitivity, openness, courage, kindness and compassion in our ways of being together and speaking about others.

We remain committed to the furthering of the founders' vision, and many others since then, in fostering the contribution of gestalt to individual and social change processes that value inclusive collaboration, develop restorative action, and reject oppression. We have come to realise that these transformative processes are not conceptual - they are at the heart of the Gathering/Hui. And as a result, we profoundly realise that our Gathering/Hui will mirror the dynamics that play out in the wider field. The opportunity in our coming together is that as these inflammatory stuck points of misunderstanding and overreach manifest, rather than moving into isolation and alienation we will collectively breathe and create the space to discover the catalysts required in the moment to enable transformation.

Background to the development of the activities

As a facilitation group, in reviewing and reflecting on our own experiences together in working with the Gathering/Hui theme we identified three aspects of our relationship to the world that appeared relevant to designing the three pre-Gathering/Hui activities, **PERCEPTION – EXPERIENCE – ACTION**.

The first area of inquiry related to **perception and our perceptions**. We became interested in the structures of the ground, or more specifically how the field is organised around issues related to the theme and the dynamic reciprocal relationship of the field on us and us on the field. The second area of interest related to **experience**. We realised that we all have personal stores of transformation that we have experienced or witnessed and that these are the portal through which we might discover further catalysts for transformation. The third guiding focus was **action**. We wanted to activate our inspiration, passion and intention to take transformative action in our personal relationship with ourselves, as gestalt practitioners and as citizen activists.

It is with pleasure that we offer you the first of three self-directed discovery activities to engage with. Activity two will be published in the first week of March and activity three in the first week of April. Our hope is that together these three activities will deepen your exploration of the theme, warm you up to this GANZ event and enliven our sessions together.

Self-directed discovery activity 1: Perception

We are inviting you to engage in a personal inquiry into the ground on which we stand; specifically, the ground of our perceptions. In acts of mutual influence, we are continuously shaping and being shaped by our attitudes and beliefs – conscious and unconscious. We tend to act in ways that are aligned with our attitudes and beliefs: these are the drivers of our acts of compassion and bias; acceptance and prejudice; fairness and discrimination. We are interested in uncovering our perceptual ground and its impact.

We have some inquiry questions to guide your reflections and cultivate your awareness:

1. What experiences have you had of being the subject of another person's power, exclusion and/or being objectified - in other words being "*othered*"?
2. On what basis do you believe you were "*othered*", for example your class, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, language, religion, age, nationality, world-regions, specific beliefs or attitudes and more.
3. In what ways have you interacted from a position power, privilege, bias, objectification either consciously, or out of your awareness where you have "*othered*" someone?
4. Take some time over the coming month and ongoingly in the lead up to the Gathering/Hui to identify the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs that reflect your personal experience of *othering and being othered*.
5. Your reflections will support your contribution to session one on Friday evening in a novel introduction process.

We wish you well in your exploration and encourage you to invite a friend, or colleague who might have a different voice to yours to accompany you to the Gathering/Hui.

Gathering/Hui Facilitation Group

Mike Reed, Brenda Levien, Alan Meara and Gabe Phillips and Ashleigh Power