



Photo on left by Rodion Kutsaev; Photo on right by Aj Yorio

Exploring Our Stretch Zone

During this call we dive into some of the more juicy elements of tending a local Grove with an exploration in our 'Stretch Zones' as facilitators. This might touch into different areas for many of us and there may also be some common ground such as dealing with conflict in a circle or responding to strong emotions.

Welcome welcome welcome everybody. My name is Jenny. I'm the TreeSisters Groves Mama and this is our May 2018 Grove Tenders Wisdom Circle.

So I want to say a really big welcome to all of you that are here live and also to all of you that are listening in to the recording. And a special hello and welcome to any of you that are here for the first time. Maybe you're new to TreeSisters or new to Grove Tending and it's really lovely that you found us.

So as I just mentioned, this call will be recorded. And it will also be transcribed for some of our Grove Tender sisters who have less access to internet across the globe so they can also share in our gathering. And while I say a little bit more about the call, it would be really lovely to hear from anyone who's here. If you've come through on your device, you'll be able to scroll down to the left and you'll see a little Q&A box and if you can just type in your name and where you're from and how you are right now. It really feels nice to get a sense of the energies that are present in the circle, so we can feel each other a little bit more and come into a bit more closeness.

So for those of you that are here for the first time, these calls tend to follow a format, which is that we start with something which we call the in-breath, which is just something to help us settle and arrive and really receive some nourishment from it. It's our opportunity from TreeSisters to give back to you who are out there tending Groves in the world so you can receive. You don't have to hold space in the same way that you are in your circles. And today what I'm going to do is, it's like a story, but it's also really just an offering around some of the ancient teachings of Groves, of sacred Groves.

And then we move from the in-breath out to the out-breath. And that's where we focus on the theme that we have either each month or sometimes we have a theme that runs over two or three months, and we go into it in a bit more depth. And today we're going to be exploring what we're calling the Stretch Zone of our facilitation. And it's that zone that we get invited into when we step up to do something, maybe more than we've done before or in a different way to how we've done it before. And we feel a bit stretched out of our comfort zone, which can feel a bit of an edge. So we're going to explore some of what might come up for any of us in those moments.

And what's lovely on these calls is they can be a bit interactive. I know it's still a bit virtual and it's still online and we're all in our separate homes, but we'll call ourselves into circle a little bit more in a moment. And you know, if you can share your experiences, it's very very rich and nourishing for the other women on the call or listening to it later. So often what one of you shares is speaking for so many other Tenders, so it can be incredibly supportive. And like I said, really nourishing. So I really encourage you to share as much as you feel to on these calls. And please never feel that you're asking anything that's going to be annoying or a stupid question or anything like that. All your questions are really, really welcome. There's no such thing as a stupid question. So please know that any of your sharings are really really welcome.



Oh, so lovely. So we've got Petra: "Hi, Jenny. It's Petra here from the Netherlands. I am feeling fine." Welcome Petra. Lovely to have you here.

And we've got Pauletta. "Hello everyone. Nice to be here." Pauletta is from Ohio in the States.

We've got Ellen "Hi, I'm here." Lovely. There's a couple of emojis Ellen that haven't translated, but lovely that you're here and you're from California.

And we've got Fee. "Hi. Fee here from Cornwall. I'm in a good space after a day of working outside. Feels great to relax with you all as I'm achy and tired." Absolutely lovely to have you here Fee.

Like I said, I'm Jenny. I'm from West Wales, and it's a light spring evening here. And I was just saying to Terra, it feels ages since the last call and it's probably because we've done Earth Day. We've been quite busy in between, so it feels really nice to be coming back into circle for a Grove Tenders Wisdom Call.

And we've got Terra hosting us, which I really want to appreciate, because it feels so supportive to have someone holding the tech behind the scenes. So thank you, Terra. And I can never remember exactly where you're from, so if you want to type in I can say.

Okay. Someone's got their hand raised. Yes. So Terra if you could unmute them that would be great. And we can just hear you and where you're from.

Jenny: Hello hello.

Tina: Hi. This is Tina.

Jenny: Tina. Oh how wonderful that you've made it.

Tina: ...

Jenny: Ah say that again. I think there's a bit of echo on the line so it's a bit hard to hear you.

Tina: I'm just unintelligible, that's why. Is it awful?

Jenny: That's loads better now.

Tina: I've got closer to the microphone.

Jenny: Oh and how are you doing?



Tina: It's some interesting times, isn't it really?

Jenny: Yeah.

Tina: It's been a really interesting week, like I've come out of some kind of cave or hole or something."

Jenny: Right. Well done.

Tina: Actually seems like something's lifted a bit.

Jenny: Great.

Tina: And I'm not quite sure whatever it was. It was quite murky it felt like.

Jenny: Something's got a bit lighter.

Tina: I think so. I think so. And the weather's been so tangible, wasn't it? It makes you feel a little bit not sure of what's going on.

Jenny: Yeah, absolutely.

Tina: ...

Jenny: I couldn't hear - it's kind of echoing again. It's really lovely to have you Tina. Okay, great that you're here.

We've got Marion from Germany: "Also I feel nourished after having worked all day in my garden and looking forward to the immersion into female energy." Lovely.

And then we've got Sarah from Somerset: "Hi, my name is Sarah and I'm here for the first time and very excited to be part of the TreeSisters."



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Oh welcome Sarah, really welcome. Somerset is one of my favourite counties in the UK. It's so beautiful.

Lisa from Devon: "I'm in the midst of kiddy bedtime so may come and go but really happy to be with you all." Lovely to have you here Lisa. Lovely.

Okay, so I'll let other comments come in as they do, but we're going to get going. So what I want to invite you to do is just get yourselves comfy. It'd be really good to have a bit of paper and pen with you, journal, a bit of paper, because in the second half, we're going to do something a little bit reflective, which you might want to write responses to. And have a drink, have a blanket, have cushions. Whatever helps you to just really settle.

Just give your body permission to relax as much as it's able to. I know sometimes different ones of us hold pain in our bodies, and it's not as simple as just saying "let go" but do whatever you can to give your body the most comfort it can have in this moment. And that might include just acknowledging anything that's going on in your body, acknowledging the presence of it and bringing some acceptance to it.

And bringing soft things around you – cushions, blankets - and let your energy just drop like you're really saying yes to the gravity. And then just imagining energetic roots coming down, down from your pelvis, down through your legs, out of your feet and just dropping into the earth. Really gently. No push, just naturally finding their way down through the earth as easily as tree roots do. Just that natural movement down. And just knowing that all around the world other women in our circle are doing the same. And setting an intention for our energy to come together in a really lovely way, in whatever way feels like it serves you. It might be intimate. It might be less intimate, but just knowing that it is possible to have a connection in this way.

And closing our eyes, let's see ourselves in a forest. Maybe calling to mind the forest that we go to on the Moon Calls if you're part of that. And if you're not, you can see yourself coming into a really beautiful forest with a really healthy forest floor - dappled sunlight coming through, strong trees of different species around us. And we can make our way to a glade, a little grove and just sitting there with a fire in the centre. So through the energy of dropping our energetic threads down and visioning, seeing ourselves together, let's really invite a closing of this circle.

And I'm going to read something to you. I've been really struck by the writings of somebody called Glennie Kindred, who's a woman in the UK who is definitely in her 60s maybe in her 70s, and she has really held the position of honouring the old Celtic traditions that once were the absolute main teaching in Europe, particularly in the British Isles. And they really are the ancient wisdom of these lands. They really honoured the seasons. They really honoured the cycles. And in the Northern Hemisphere, we've just gone past Beltane yesterday, the first of May, and Southern Hemisphere you've just come past Samhain.



And it's from that tradition that those particular points in the year are from. And she's produced lots of really beautiful, small booklets, and the one I'm reading at the moment is called The Sacred Tree. And I'm going to read you the section on Sacred Groves. I want to invite you just to rest back into this grove that we're in.

"A small group of trees will create an energy pattern depending on their placement and the trees involved. And if you wish to sense the energy field of a group of trees, try slowly walking between two or more large trees to see if you can sense when you walk into and out of the band of energy that connects the trees. You may notice you're drawn to stand in one particular spot. Sacred Groves were used as places of worship in ancient times, a grouping of trees chosen for their different qualities, including native species, which in the British Isles would have included oak, hazel, rowan, yew, elder, blackthorn and others. They were always situated on a spring and at ley lines. Sometimes they were in the woods but often they were on a hill. The Druidic word for sanctuary is the same as the Latin word 'nemus' meaning grove or woodland glade.

"And these Sacred Groves were used by the tribe or village for meetings, ceremonial and religious purposes and the passing of laws and judgments. The present tradition of free speech in the British Isles stems from the ancient Druidic practise of holding all meetings in the open, in the face of the sun and the eye of the light. Parliament Hill, the harridan in North London, is so-called because it was a meeting hill from ancient Celtic times, and it had a spring that has since been diverted.

"Many villages had their own sacred trees. These were trees brought into the village and they were more accessible than the groves. Certain types of trees were considered to be more powerful than others, and their dryads or tree spirits more helpful and more communicative. And even today, some of the old villages have a special tree on the village green, often of great girth and age, and these may have been a continuation of this ancient tradition.

"Beltane, which is at the end of April/beginning of May in the Northern Hemisphere, was the Celtic festival traditionally invoking and enlisting the aid of the tree spirits and it occurs throughout Europe around the same time. The Maypole represents the transplanting of the special tree in the village area. But the Maypole was once the living tree brought into the village with its dryad, its spirit. The dryad was called upon to help the village and ensure an abundant harvest and later this became a Maypole and the tree spirit was symbolically represented by a mummer or a player who would dress in green wearing a mask of woven branches or a suit of plaited boughs. This character was called the Green Man or the Jack-in-the-Green, and his foliated face is found hidden in the crevices of some of the old churches showing that the villages have not forgotten him.

"And the family tree is a familial reference to the lineage of a family, but it too has a far earlier history. The ancients believed that a person's knowledge could be passed on at death and that the tree spirits would keep this knowledge.



People were buried between stately trees in groves in the belief that their knowledge and wisdom would be joined with the dryad and therefore still accepted into the tribe. The tradition of planting yew trees in graveyards probably stems from this belief. Yews are the longest living of the native trees in the British Isles spanning many generations of villagers. They're also found in old churchyards because the churches were built on the sacred sites of the old religion.

"And there are also in history many tales of important meetings between kings and tribal leaders taking place beneath sacred trees. This was because the ancients believed that the tree spirit watches and records all that went on around it, relaying information to the cosmic memory banks known now as the Akashic Record. A tree's recording, especially the long-lived trees, were considered to be completely impartial, valid observation, uninfluenced by changing human attitudes."

I just found that to be so beautiful when I read it. And again really reinforcing the importance of spending time as we gather in our Groves in actual groves.

And I know that's not always possible for everybody, not everybody's fortunate enough to live nearby woodland or even nearby trees. So there are other ways, where you can invite the idea of tree into your Grove. If you always meet inside or if you live in very very built-up areas, even in built-up areas it's possible to access that tree energy.



Artist Partner Kathleen Brigidina

And when I've been in cities I've been so struck by the importance of those trees that line the city streets, that are in the parks. You know and they're often quite isolated and they play such an important role on so many levels.

I wanted to get a bit of a background and backdrop to some of the history around groves and why we're calling our local circles Groves. There's such incredible wisdom that's been retained by the trees, and as that writing says that is uninfluenced by the human journey, and right at this time on Earth that feels so essential. We really need it.

So I'm going to move us gently towards the out-breath, and just follow your own rhythm with it.

I don't want anyone to be jarred so I'm going to do it really gently. And as questions or comments come, you're really really welcome to put them through the Q&A. You don't have to wait to get to that point - there will be points where I ask you to share or invite you to share - but if things come up beforehand, do add them to the Q&A.

So, the Stretch Zone - what do we mean by this? I was introduced to this by a facilitator called Jenny McEwen who trained me in The Work That Reconnects, the Joanna Macy work. And it's really useful for us both to know our own stretch zones as a facilitator and also to make aware within our circles, of the three zones that we can move between when we are in sacred space, when we are gathering in circle.

And the first is the Comfort Zone, which is probably very familiar for all of us. And that's where we feel really, really familiar with what we're doing. It really says what it does in the term. It's really comfortable. We don't have to think that much on our feet. Things feel very natural. We might have either done it lots of times before. It might be very similar to something we've done before. So it's a place of ease; it's a place of ease and rest. It's not a huge place of growth. If we want to grow, we kind of need to take ourselves out of the Comfort Zone. Not all of the time, but we need to leave the Comfort Zone and return to it regularly.

The next zone out of the Comfort Zone is the Stretch Zone. And this is really where the most growth happens. It's where we find our edge, our growing edge; edges that we can lean into. And it's where we might be challenged to think a bit more on our feet. We might be invited to bring more of us through as women, as the space holders, as Grove Tenders. We might need to face things that press our buttons, that we feel a little bit triggered by, that we have reactions to. And we might face our limitation here. You know we might face a situation that we don't know how to respond to. And that's really okay. That's really okay. We'll look later on about the gift of transparency in this zone. It's not always comfortable. Those words like edge and stretch suggest that we're not as relaxed in this place as we are in our Comfort Zone, but it calls us more into more vitality, definitely grows us and just calls our gifts through more strongly and our qualities through more strongly.

If we go too far out of the Stretch Zone, and if something comes up that we don't have the answer to, it can be easy to believe that we always have to have all the answers. And that belief in itself can take us into the next zone which is the Panic Zone. And the Panic Zone is where we really start to lose our ground and our fight-flight-freeze aspect of the nervous system gets activated. And we might have that feeling of not being able to communicate anything, feeling we want to defend ourselves or feeling we want to run. Our mind can get really busy. Panic Zone - very very difficult to grow in. And as Grove Tenders, it's really good to recognize the signals of when that's starting to be aroused in us and do whatever we need to do to bring us back into the Comfort Zone. And that can be a really simple practice like conscious breathing, naming it to ourselves, naming it to our sister Grove Tender if we have one, naming it to the group.



There's something about transparency that's incredibly permission-giving to everybody.

It's a journey between Comfort, Stretch and Panic. And I want to focus on the Stretch, because we've all stepped into being Grove Tenders partly because we want to give something and partly because we want to grow in ourselves. And it is an invitation to grow yourself as a Grove Tender. I hope that's given you a little flavour of that model of the three zones. So just pick up your journal and your pen or your paper. And I'm going to get you to reflect in two directions. I'm going to get you to look back and I'm going to get you to look forward.

As you look back through your journey of Grove Tending - and I know that some of you are really new and that's fine - but even coming on this call there's going to have been a journey up to you getting on this call. You're going to have had the moment of noticing the invitation of being a Grove Tender and then finding out a bit more about it through TreeSisters and then signing up for the emails and then getting the invite for this call. So you're going to have taken some steps.

Looking back at your journey of Grove Tending - what are the moments that you've had to stretch yourself to get to where you are now with your Grove? You might not yet have an active Grove, but if you explore your journey to date, there will be moments where you've reconnected. "Yes, I'm going to keep doing this. It's not coming as quickly as I thought it would, but something's making me choose again." And those are moments of Stretch, because it's sometimes more comfortable to just let things go and decide it's not going to work.

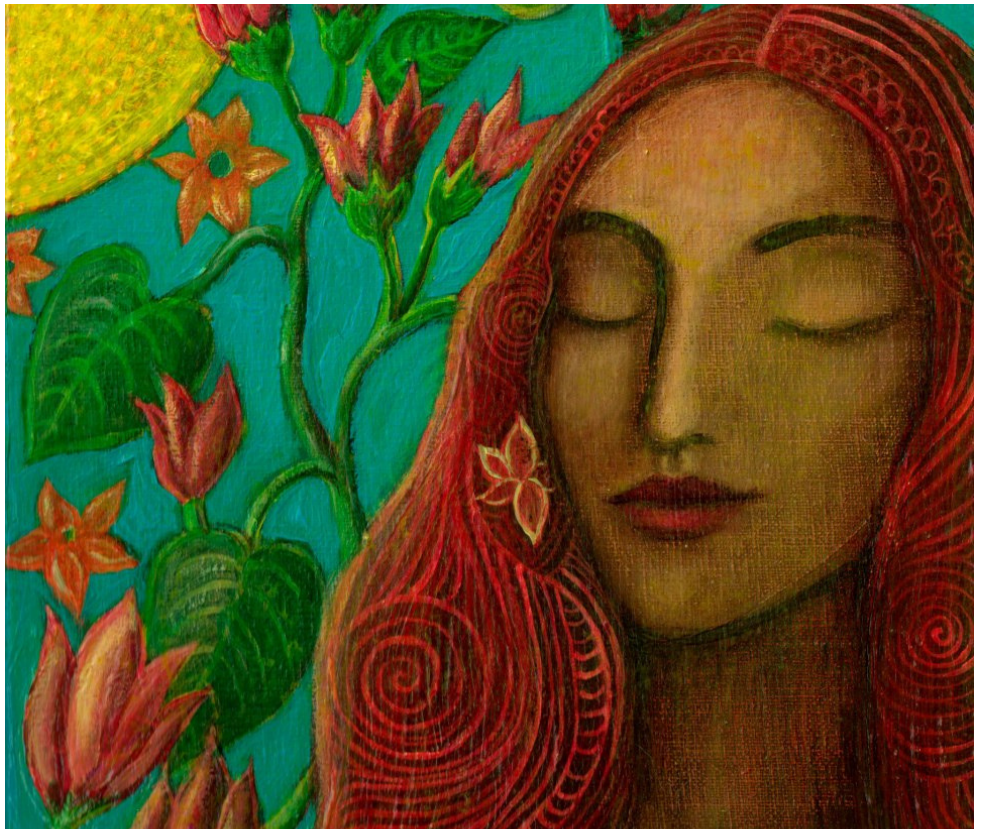
What are the moments that you've had to stretch yourself to get to where you are now with your Grove? And that's actual or still in the dreaming stage. (pause for journaling)

And the second question on this part - what do you celebrate the most about those times that have called for more to come through you? As you look back in hindsight, and you recall moments where something stretched you, either in a Grove gathering, in the process of calling your Grove together, at the point where you put out about your first meeting, where you invited women, where you followed through despite not getting the amount of receptivity or feedback that you were hoping for. What do you celebrate the most about yourself in those times that have called for more to come through you? (pause for journaling)

This act of celebrating ourselves is so important, and for some people, it's easier than others. And if you're someone who it doesn't come to naturally, I really want to encourage you to stay with this practice of celebrating yourself regularly on this journey, because it's a limitless journey. There's always going to be more that you could do with your Grove. You know, it's the nature of life. It keeps evolving. And it's so important to pause regularly and really, really celebrate despite any internal voices that are telling you otherwise.



Okay, so now I want to invite us all to look ahead, look ahead at the Grove journey. Yes, that's in front of us, so obviously we can't know how it's going to pan out. But we have an inside view of what it might look like. That's natural and even within our fantasy and our imagined view of how the Grove is going to be - what do we see? What do you see as your potential future stretches? What are going to be the conditions, the scenarios, the moments that are going to call you out of the Comfort Zone and call for you to be more in your Tending?



Artist Partner [Alice Mason](#)

And it might be something that hasn't yet happened and might never happen, but it's like what might be something that would really call you to grow? And what might be the thing that you don't want to happen, that might call you to grow? (pause for journaling)

And as you're noting those down, notice how you feel about them. Do you feel excited at the idea of those stretches coming your way? Do you feel fearful? Are there some that you would really welcome and that you're kind of inviting because you want to grow yourself as a facilitator in that way? Are there others that you're really hoping never materialize? What are your feelings about the potential future stretches? (pause for journaling)

And then finally, what do you need in place to support you to stay in the Stretch Zone rather than end up in the Panic Zone? And this isn't to say it's wrong to end up in a Panic Zone. It's kind of par for the course. I've definitely been in the Panic Zone as a facilitator and what's more important is to recognize the signs of being in the Panic Zone. It's natural, it's natural to go there. What I'm trying to get us to think about is what will help us to minimize those times where we end up in a Panic Zone. And it might be as simple as having a really core practice that you do, like mindfulness or having a fellow Grove Tender, another sister alongside you who you just know when you're looking at each other in that certain way that you know what's going on. Or that you create such a level of transparency in your Groves that you just say it, you just say it and that defuses it. What's going to support you to stay in the Stretch Zone and go back into the Comfort Zone rather than end up in the Panic Zone? (pause for journaling)



And when you're ready, it would be really lovely if you would share any of your reflections through the Q&A chat. It would be... it's so helpful to other people to normalize this, what all of us can be with and sometimes it can feel like it's only us with those reactions. So please, please share what you're willing to share.

Just thinking about times where I've been in the Stretch Zone and it's been on the edge of going into the Panic and you know what the first thought that's coming really is I think all of us are dancing between these zones all the time every day in life at the moment, and there's a place, there's a real place for choosing to stay in the Comfort Zone sometimes. If you're someone who's stretching yourself and sometimes finding yourself in the Panic Zone, it's not a cop-out to stay in the Comfort Zone at times. It's really, really not. And I'm thinking back in my journey and working for TreeSisters this is my most recent stretch and it's been a really big stretch at times, really big stretch. And I now know when I need to stay in the Comfort Zone. And I, certainly at times every month, I choose to reduce things that are going to take me into Stretch and just let my system reset in the Comfort Zone. And doing calls like this is a stretch for me for sure. It's getting more comfortable, but I wouldn't say it's my Comfort Zone and having Terra or Rachel here with me makes a huge difference to me staying out of the Panic Zone. If I was having to do the technical stuff here, I would definitely be touching the Panic Zone. And the Panic Zone can be so, it can be so uncomfortable if it really, really grips.

Okay, so Sarah from Somerset. Thank you Sarah, "I'm struggling with fear around setting up a Grove: fear of rejection, fear of being judged and a huge underlying fear that's totally out of proportion. I'm someone who takes risks and does new things, however, this feels really different - it feels like I'm putting my head above the parapet.... and yet I absolutely know that this is what I need to do and that just as I yearn for the connection with other women so do other women, and I can bring people together ... if I dare! How to take that first step? How to invite? To not go too fast..."

Lovely share Sarah. I really, really get what you're saying and I know that other women on this call are going to resonate because I know some of the other women on this call and I know that they're going to really get where you're at. And I'd love to hear and if anybody wants to respond to Sarah. I think it'd be really lovely. My response to you is, I want to acknowledge that the fear that feels out of proportion, it matches how much you know you want to do this and how much you know it's needed. You know you're stepping into something that you have absolute conviction that you want to do and that you know other women really, really want to receive, and it matters. And the more something matters - it's like the more we love something, the more we're going to miss it when it goes. The more lost we're going to feel when it goes. So the more a thing matters, the more we want to bring it through, the more anxiety we're going to feel about bringing that thing through, because it really really matters.

So I want to just say a big "Hello" to the fear, really really "Hello" to it.



And I don't know if this will land with you, and it's a lot easier for me to say it because I'm not feeling it in my system right now, but it's our friend in disguise, you know. It's our friend trying to protect us, trying to keep us in the Comfort Zone, trying to stop us from getting hurt by taking risks. And you know, the fear that's rising if we can just see it as like a worried love, a form of worried love, kind of softens it. So what you're asking and what you're pointing to in terms of how to take the first step, how to invite, to not go too far – that's so important because rushing and trying to push through fear, possibly could take you or any of us into the Panic Zone. So it's really beautiful that you're breaking down into steps.

And what I want to encourage you to do is - I don't know if you do Facebook and I really understand if you don't, but if you do, I'd love you to come into the Grove Tenders Facebook page* and ask some of these questions because there's really a lot of wisdom and women that have moved through this themselves, and they'd really be able to respond to you in terms of taking it slowly. And how they invited the women and how to take that first step. And I really want you to celebrate every time you take a step, because it's so easy to always be on to the next thing. It's so lovely when Grove Tenders bring back their news of recent gatherings and changes in their Grove and taking their first out-breath and you know, all of those really, really significant steps that are monumental at the time, and then in hindsight, they're like "Wow, I felt that felt so huge" and it was at the time. It really was.

Come back in Sarah if that response evokes any further questions, and if anybody else wants to respond to anything that Sarah's raised you're really welcome.

Okay. Marion: "My one proven help is (a) not listening to my panic thoughts, (b) creating a space of presence around the panic, (c) breathing deeply, (d) remembering that I'm the canal to something wiser than my brain, (e) trusting everything is right just as it is, and (f) telling truthfully how I feel." That's really beautiful, really really beautiful. And I can feel the kind of step-by-step process of those stages that you go through. I'm going to say them again - "not listening to my panic thoughts, creating a space of presence around the panic, breathing deeply, remembering that I am the canal for something wiser than my brain, trusting that everything is right just as it is, and telling truthfully how I feel." Yeah, thank you Marion. Really simple and really wise.

Fee's come in saying: "I resonate with all you've shared Sarah." Yeah, thank you.

And Ellen: "I'm feeling insecurity. My Grove's first meetings were lovely but I was away and missed a month and now I'm nervous the lovely women won't want me to come again. This is similar to Sarah's comment, and exactly what Jenny said about the fear rising because this really does matter to me." I really appreciate you bringing that vulnerability here Ellen. I can feel the tenderness of that. And you know, you're speaking about something, I think, from the collective of women, that all of us have such a longing to belong in circles. And all of us to some degree have either an experience in this life or somewhere in our lineage have an experience of being outside of the circle.



And, you know when we have those gatherings, when we call those gatherings and they feel so precious, and then we're not in them, and the gathering feels like it moves on ahead, and we come back in, it can be really shaky.

I would - I think you'll probably do this anyway - I would really encourage you to share that because that as the Grove Tender coming back in that will really model vulnerability and really model how much the Grove matters to you, and it will give so much permission to the other women. And it brings to mind another conversation I had with a Grove Tender who also - she didn't miss but she stepped aside - and one of the other women brought something into the Grove. And that touched lots.

Wow just all these seemingly small steps that we take in our circles, that if we listen deeply can really bring a lot up, and it can bring up discomfort, but if we can give the discomfort, time and our attention and as much as possible let go of judgment - I know that's not always easy - there can be such richness underneath. So real blessings on you Ellen and really would love, really would love to hear how that goes when you go back.

And we've got Cynthia who's joined us from Oregon in the USA.

Welcome Cynthia: "Echo everything Sarah said. Haven't even determined exactly the purpose of my Grove or even what to call it. Want to move slow as well. Will definitely look at the Facebook page."

These things at the point that we're with them, they are so important. They're so so important. And I guess I just want to name the perfection gene or traits that so many of us, again as women, have. We've been really enculturated into perfection so strongly, and I just want to name it. And it's possible to spiral around in your Grove and come back and review everything that you set out when you first set them up.



YEW SWIRL

Artist Partner Barbara Brown



So it's a case of creating something that feels right for now. You don't have to create something when you're in the beginning of your Groves that will definitely serve you in two years' time, because you can't really determine that. So I don't know if that softens any of the anxiety, but it's something about taking a step for now.

And we have got a couple of processes that could be really helpful to those of you that are at the beginning. And they're like our Seeding Your Grove processes to help you in the dreaming stage. And one of them is journeying with the moon for a month and just really inquiring through the different phases of the moon, all these questions about - What's my growth going to be about? You know, how am I going to call the women in? What might I call the Grove? Or what does the Grove want to be called? It helps like really cultivate a receptive state in you.

You can email me at Groves@TreeSisters.org if you don't want to do the Facebook thing, and I can link you to resources on the website. Or come into the Facebook group*, and we can point you into lots and lots of resources. And it's just so lovely to feel more of you coming in and being at the dreaming stage. It's gorgeous.

Oh, Hulakai, I hope I'm pronouncing your name right. Hulakai from Honolulu in Hawaii. Really lovely to have you on this call. We've been in touch recently. "A fear of being able to identify possible unlikely Grove participants within the realm of known people in my life. And also fear of reaching out and inviting them to gather and understand their expectations." I get that. I really get that. It can feel really huge to reach out to a community where you're not feeling such a resonance, and you don't feel the support of sisters maybe on the same page as you yet. So we were talking about it in the Facebook group this week weren't we, and I want to really encourage you to do something really, really simple as a first step. Even offering a one-off circle, you know something again that will keep you - it will still be a stretch - but it will keep you out of the Panic Zone if it's contained enough. A one-off circle for two hours where you offer something really contained and maybe something very bespoke, like you literally play a TreeSisters meditation and just invite other women to the TreeSisters movement and see what resonates.

I think - and again I'm reminded of the spiral because I'm feeling this in this role. It can be so tempting at the beginning of doing anything to be really ambitious and have really amazing ideas and inspirations about our Groves or our projects or our circle or whatever. And actually, if we go with the seasonal teachings, the wise teachings of nature, we spiral. And we have the Spring, where we get the inspiration and things start to come through. And then we have the Summer where we're really full energy and you know we have lots lots of outward energy. And then we turn inwards again toward the Autumn where we start to shed and then we come back to the Winter where we really drop. And I really think - and same with the moon, the New and the Full Moon - if we can be with our Grove process in that same way, where we can feel that natural ebb and flow of expansion and contraction. That is our nature. It really is our nature. We're so conditioned to be on Summer or Full Moon the whole time, because that's particularly in the Western cultures that is just the conditioning and the pressure.



The reason I'm saying this is... take a step and go into the Summer with it and offer it and then come back into the Autumn and Winter energies of refining it and dropping into the dreaming stage and what else wants to come through. The journeying with the moon. Some women choose to hold their Groves with the Full Moon or with the New Moon and that could be so helpful as a Tender to support you to go with the moon phases around your Stretch. And each time you take a Stretch, really celebrate it with the Full Moon. And then as the moon starts to move back down, let that Stretch go and see what reflections want to come.

And Ellen's come back in, "Thanks for this answer Jenny. I will bring my vulnerability into the group. Great answer. I will let you know how it goes." Yes, please do. Please do and I'm just smiling inside because all your reflections I know are speaking to so many of us because I've had conversations with others of you.

We've just got a few minutes left and if any of you've got any more questions or reflections, anything you want to share about our inquiry, you're really really welcome to. And I might not have all the answers, but it's really great to hear your comments.

And the other thing I'd really like to invite is any suggestions for these Wisdom Circles. I want - I'm kind of spiralling around with these now because we've been doing them since July last year. So we're coming up to a year and I'd love to know what other topics you'd enjoy on these, whether you'd like a series where we go into something a bit more deeply. Are they serving you in the way you want them to serve you? I really, really want them to work for you, and I need to get out of the way in terms of how I feel they should be. If anybody has any feedback on that, that would also be really, really helpful.

Okay, so someone's written in. "What if there is someone with a dominant personality who tends by their behaviour to make some of the others feel less comfortable to share or be heard? How can you be sure all can be honoured and feel like they can share?" I'm not sure who this has come through, because I haven't got a name but thank you for this. This is really, really helpful. So the things that come to me on that are the riverbanks, the boundaries. And so any things like using a talking piece when you're sharing, so that with a guideline that only who's holding either the talking stick or the crystal or the stone, whatever you use, whoever's holding that is speaking. And they don't get interrupted. They don't get feedback unless they specifically asked for feedback. And one way of asking for feedback in a contained way is to say "Ok I'd like feedback and for everyone who has something to feedback just to raise their hand." And then the person sharing can choose how many people they want feedback from.

Another way of containing is to actually time-sharing. So if you're gathering for a couple of hours, two or three hours and you're spending the first 40 minutes of it sharing before you go on to something else, literally divide the time up between those of you in the circle so all of you have a few minutes.



And I would really acknowledge the thing of those being less comfortable to share. Name it in the circle as a real thing. And encourage women who are less familiar with sharing or who just are less comfortable with sharing to name it themselves. Ask them directly is there a way in which this would feel more comfortable for you? Would it be easier to break into pairs, break into threes? Would it be easier to have a direct question rather than just an open sharing? So questions or sort of leading sentences - something like "The experience for me of sharing with women is..." and you have to fill in the blank. Or 'Things I'd really like you to know about me include...' So those open-ended sentences can be really lovely for encouraging women who are a bit more reticent. It gives them a ballpark and they can come back to the sentence.

Definitely breaking up into smaller groups is really useful. And as a facilitator, I sometimes - if there's a conversation and the discussion and it's getting dominated, I sometimes say 'So I'd love to hear from those of you that haven't shared yet.' Just say it really transparently. You know as somebody who's moved from someone who didn't use to share at all in circles who's fairly comfortable but can still be quite quiet sometimes. I can still be quite quiet in circles sometimes. I think it's really good to name, just to name, you know. And to be really careful not to shame the person who's easier and more eager to share and who can sometimes dominate. To sometimes invite people to go out of their default. So let's have a process or some kind of sharing where we choose to share in a different way. For somebody who shares a lot, let's see if we can share really succinctly. If there's someone who tends to share just a few words, let's stretch ourselves into saying a few more.

It's kind of just inviting people to do things differently in a way that doesn't shame them, that acknowledges what they're giving. It's actually it's really great to have someone who's quite chatty at the beginning of Groves, when Groves first start to happen. And you could also be creative with sharing. Sometimes you can get people to share through a movement, through a sound: "We'll just share how you're feeling, just through just making a sound or face and then everybody sort of makes the same sound back." And that gets over the thing about words, because words aren't always the best vehicle. Sometimes in our team check-ins, we also check in through the vehicle of a landscape or an animal: "What animal are you most right now?" So I hope that's helpful. And I'd love to continue this conversation. I'd love to continue the conversation on the Facebook page* to whoever asked the question.

We've just got a minute to go and I want to just bring us back. It's been quite a lot of discussion and I just want to bring us back into the circle, into the forest. And just dropping our energy down again. And just feeling and really acknowledging the support of each other through these energetic connections that we've had. And just bringing our energy back to ourselves. Letting go for now, un-connecting on the energetic threads to each other. Just coming back to ourselves. And really appreciating the forest that we found ourselves in. And just coming back to ourselves in the space that we're in.



I want to say a really huge thank you to all of you for your engagement and for putting time aside for these calls. And yeah, any questions I haven't got to. I'll look back through the chat and any questions I haven't got to I'll bring them to the Facebook page, and we'll go there. And the next one of these is on – I'll give you the date for your diary - it is on Wednesday June 6th and it will be at 10 o'clock UK time, so that's to make it accessible for the southern hemisphere sisters as well.

So much love, much appreciation and look forward to more contact with you soon.

Bye-bye.

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Transcribed by Linéa Stewart of the TreeSisters Scribe Tribe Team
Transcribed in British English

*The Facebook page is no longer in use, however we invite you to join us and share your thoughts in our Grove Tenders Group in our online community here in the Nest: <https://www.treesisters-nest.org/groups/645045/feed>

If you are not already a member of the Nest, you can sign up via the following link to begin your journey: <https://www.treesisters-nest.org/>





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