

ELDERING

Summary of Program Hour led by Elaine Yarbrough and Ann Kauffman March 18, 2018

PURPOSE

Eldering is a mechanism for regulating our community, helping it be the best it can. Since we don't have hierarchy and structure, we depend on our informal norms to support a healthy, spirit-led, growth enhancing community.

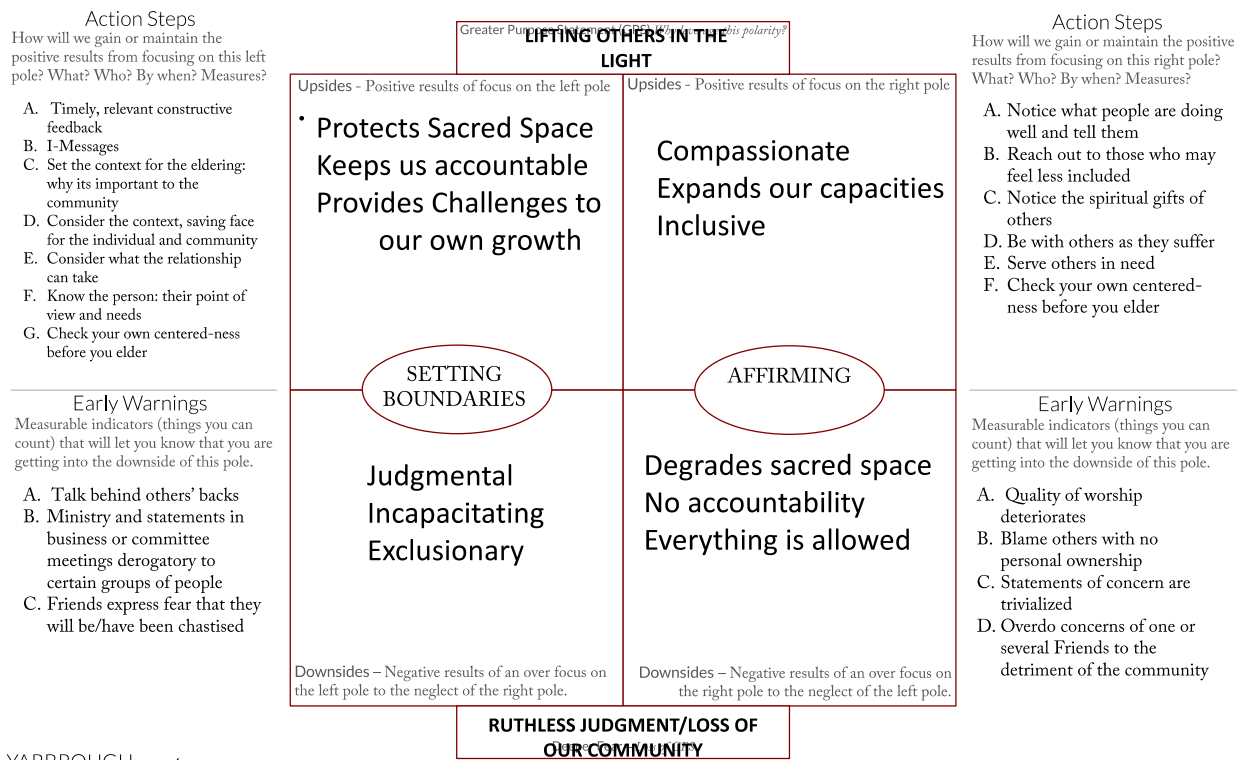
ELDERING

Process in which anyone with discernment and leading engages another for the purpose of helping the other maintain faithfulness to the Light.

MAPPING THE PROCESS

During the program on eldering, first we drew pictures of our images of eldering. There were quite a few depicting heavy-handed Friends admonishing, criticizing, and correcting others. There were some depicting affirmation of others: offering a helping hand, holding others in the Light, encouraging and mentoring, reflecting the talents and gifts they see in others.

Our comments easily fell into a polarity map that organizes the wisdom of our thoughts.



To review the map and polarities:

1. Polarities are interdependent values (*Affirming AND Setting Boundaries*) that need each other to reach a Greater Purpose: *Lifting Others in the Light*.
2. There is an upside and downside to every value.
3. If one value is overdone to the neglect of the other, we get only the downside of that value. For instance, if we overdo Affirmation of others to the neglect of Setting Boundaries, we degrade our sacred space, there is little accountability, and conflict goes underground. On the other hand, if we overdo Setting Boundaries to the neglect of Affirming communication, we get the pictures of 19th century Quakers catching others in all infractions.
4. The goal is to get the best of both values so that we create a virtuous cycle lifting up our greater purpose.
5. We want to avoid our deeper fear: *Ruthless Judgment and Loss of Community*.
6. There are action steps that keep us in the upsides of the values—see the map.
7. There are early warnings that let us know we are slipping into the downside of the value—see the map.
8. We can use the map to check on the state of the Meeting and to refine actions steps and early warnings to support our Greater Purpose.

CRITERIA FOR ELDERING IN BOULDER MEETING.

1. We need to know why we are eldering. In service of what? What is our goal? Does our goal align with the greater purpose of eldering?
2. We need more of it.
3. Anyone and everyone ought to consider themselves “elders.” All ages. Could add words like ‘youthering.’
4. We need to educate Friends on the process.
5. We would like to have positive and not-so-positive examples of eldering for a guide.
6. Eldering requires the ‘elder’ to be centered and spirit-led.
7. We need to build relationships all the time so that we know each other and how to approach each other. One way of eldering will not fit everyone.
8. We need to consider the context of our eldering: public and/or private. Is the message for the community? The Individual? How can we maintain the dignity of people?
9. With new Friends, for example, we need to acknowledge that there is no way the person could have known....
10. We need to be willing to be imperfect.
11. We need to stay in the present moment: if our eldering is not having the intended effect, reiterate your intent and ask the other how you can change your communication.
12. Listen to the other’s point of view and what they intended. In this way, the eldering is equitable.