

AESOP'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

**ACTIVISTS ENGAGED IN SUSTAINING OUR
PURPOSE & POWER**

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Year 3 Newsletter



Click [here](#) to register for our mailing list.
Learn more on [Prevention Institute's Website](#).

AESOP'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

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AESOP'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

*Activists **Engaged** in **Sustaining Our Purpose & Power***

Year 3 of AESOP's

Click below to access resources, slides, and materials from Year 3 of AESOP's Leadership Network.



Year 3 Overview

- Community building and opportunities for rest
- Dialogues addressing current climate and challenges
- Variety of activities and formats for engagement (retreat, music, movement, drawing, discussion circles)

Year 3 Workshop Materials

Abundance Journaling Workshop – LySaundra Campbell

Cultivating our Care Systems – Erin McClarty, LLC

Holistic Wellness for Leaders – The RECollective

Sustaining Ourselves: Sensing into the Collective – YMM

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Overview of Year 3

Why AESOP's?

Aesop was a North African enslaved in Greece during the 6th century BC. He became renowned for his parables that helped explore complex truths in memorable ways. Aesop's fables became a way for harsh realities to be more easily understood, shared through oral tradition and part of cultural values. AESOP's (Activists Engaged in Sustaining our Purpose and Power) Leadership Network seeks to do the same for those involved in social justice movements and community care. In addition to building a connection of resources for leaders and activists, AESOP's Leadership Network presents recognition of the healing, connecting and hopefulness found in owning our narratives and imagining common solutions.

Meet Our Invited Facilitators



LySaundra Campbell
Music and Creative Writing



Rev. Vanessa Monroe
Faith-Based Healing



The RECollective
Research and Advocacy



Erin McClarty, PLLC
Capacity Building

Activists **Engaged** in **Sustaining Our Purpose & Power** **Year 3 Tools and Workshops**

AESOP's Retreat



Click [here](#) to explore materials from the RE Collective and Erin McClarty

Activists across the Greater Houston area joined us for a 3-day retreat. Over the weekend, leaders enjoyed quiet time, activities like Tai Chi and gardening, and facilitated workshops on the beautiful campus of Journey HTX.

Retreat participant: *"The in person weekend retreat was amazing as it allowed me an intentional weekend devoted to unplugging and activities centered around finding myself again."*



AESOP's participants created a collective quilt, where each patch represents an individual

Stay tuned for the 2026 Retreat!

Activists *Engaged* in *Sustaining Our Purpose & Power* Year 3 Tools and Workshops

September Gathering: Holistic Wellness for Leaders

In September, leaders gathered for a facilitated workshop by The RE Collective to discuss emerging stressors and identify strategies that center holistic wellness in their work. You can explore the materials from the workshop [here](#).

What is Holistic Wellness?

Creating formal and informal systems of support that respond to folx' socio-emotional needs. Particular attention is made to engaging in restorative practices and creating spaces for liberation and building a community of care.

Components of Holistic Wellness include:

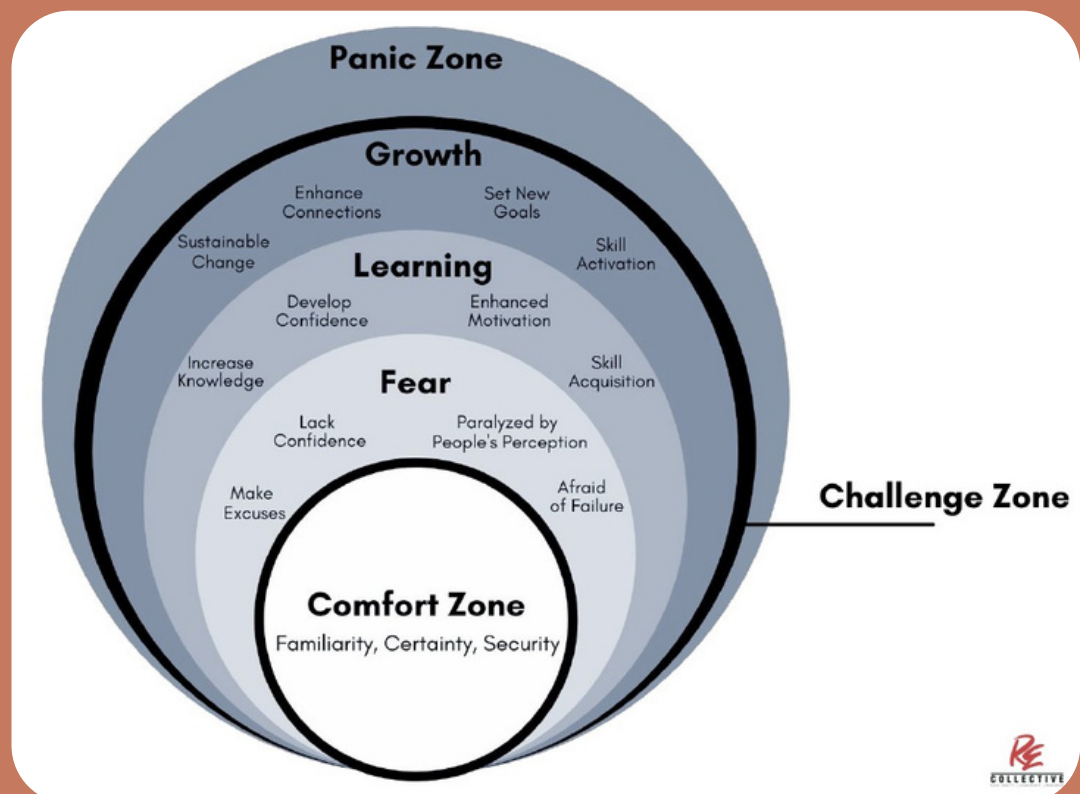
- Setting Boundaries (saying “no”, growth mindset)
- Intentional Rest (body scanning, solitude, naps)
- Harm Reduction (using community agreements, practicing curiosity)
- Restorative Work (seeking ways to arrive at closure)



*Facilitated by Manny Soares
The RE Collective*

Navigating New Behaviors

The RE Collective created a framework used for leaders to navigate new behaviors, moving from their Comfort Zone (status quo behaviors) through feelings of fear, learning, and growth in the process of establishing healthier behaviors.



Activists **Engaged** in **Sustaining Our Purpose & Power** Year 3 **Tools and Workshops**

Sustaining Ourselves: Sensing into the Collective

Facilitated by Erin, Ibraim, Walter, & Dana



Erin McClarty
Nonprofit Impact
Consultant



Ibraim Nascimiento
Artist & Activist



Walter Hull
ALN Member
Urban Souls Dance
Company



Dana Fields-Johnson
ALN Sponsor
Prevention Institute

At the **Young Minds Matter: Meeting the Moment Together** conference, AESOP's Leadership Network facilitators conducted an interactive 'sensemaking' workshop. Attendees were invited to listen to music and statements related to leadership, and identify feelings that came up.

During the workshop, the participants used markers to draw out how they felt with each statement, creating overlapping swirls, loops, and lines based on the statements shared. Through this process, participants are able to communicate and process emotions without words, creating a collective map to describe how we respond to statements around leadership and healing.

The **complexity of truth** and shared sensing is displayed in the canvas below.

What is sensemaking?

The action or process of making sense of or giving meaning to something, especially new developments and experiences.

Why is collective sensemaking important?

What is true and knowable is multifaceted. The lived experiences, worldviews, cultures, and identities of each of us help us see more, and they enrich our understanding in ways that may not happen if we try to process and learn alone.



AESOP'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

**FEATURED ARTICLES
& RESOURCES**

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Featured Article:

“Restorative Principles For BIPOC Leaders”

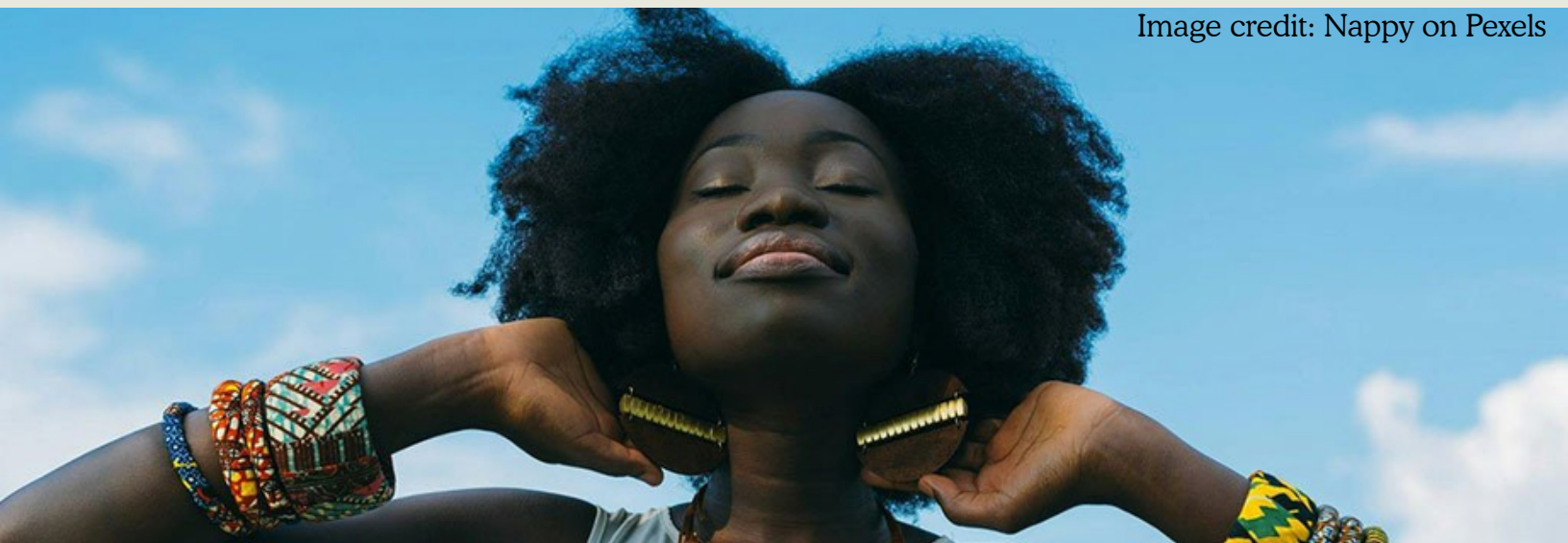
Ain Bailey for Nonprofit Quarterly

Nonprofit Quarterly shares reflections from the work of New Seneca Village, a community offering residencies for leadership and healing that are grounded in principles of agency, liberatory practices, and transformative visioning.

They share three core questions they’re exploring as New Seneca Village grows:

- How do we **challenge, expand, and/or reimagine** existing practices related to leadership, particularly in nonprofit and movement spaces?
- How can we ensure that the **creativity, reflection, and visioning** that emerges from a restorative space like a residency or sabbatical **carries back over** into daily life?
- How do we expand **generative practices** while divesting from those that are deadening to our leadership and our visions?

Image credit: Nappy on Pexels



“Sustaining leadership is about more than professional identity and capacity. It is about ensuring that [leaders] are aligned with their own spirit and values.”

- Founder of New Seneca Village, Ain Bailey

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Featured Articles

Featured Article: “The South’s Got Something to Say”



Quotes from the article:

“The space I define and reclaim is one where my voice is not only heard but actively sought out, where I stand shoulder to shoulder with grassroots leaders, elders, and emerging changemakers, co-creating solutions that honor our shared histories and affirm our collective dignity.”

- Joyvin Benton

“The reason we approach our work with a cultural lens is because we believe that policies and practices that break people come from cultures that are broken. The only pathway we have forward is to heal our culture. It is the only way that we can heal our communities in ways that will last past the next election or the next policy change, or the next grant cycle.”

- Anasa Troutman

“My lived experiences remind me why this work matters so deeply. My identity is a testament to the tenacity and the power of community, and I leverage it as an asset in my work to help secure a better future for us all.”

- Michelle Bidwell

Activists Engaged in Sustaining Our Purpose & Power

Resource Hub: Recommended Readings

Racial Trauma and Healing

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies by Resmaa Menakem
What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma by Stephanie Foo

Self-Care and Wellness

Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto by Tricia Hersey
Racial Wellness: A Guide to Liberatory Healing for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by Jacquelyn Ogorchukwu Iyamah
Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself by Nedra Glover Tawwab

Healing and Community

The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart by Alicia Garza
Building The Beloved Community: A Life Practice by Puanani Burgess
Healing Justice Lineages by Cara Page and Erica Woodland

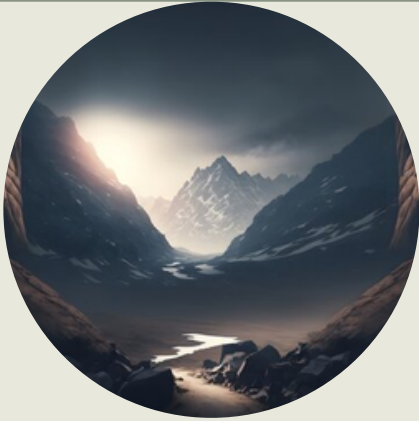
Find other Recommended Books on our [Reading List](#)

Activists **Engaged** in **Sustaining Our Purpose & Power**

Resource Hub: Self-Care Exercises

Guided Meditations

Explore short guided meditations, courtesy of Journey HTX + Rev. Vanessa Monroe, intended to help you center yourself during a busy day.



Moving Through a Dark Valley

For centering courage and protection while moving through dark times



Sustaining Life in the Meantime

For receiving clarity on purpose during in-between times



The New World in the Now

For stepping out of present-day chaos and into radical imagination

Check out **AESOP's Resource Hub** for other recommended readings, articles, and podcasts

Activists **Engaged** in **Sustaining Our Purpose & Power** **Resource Hub: Recommended Viewing**

Recommended Viewing

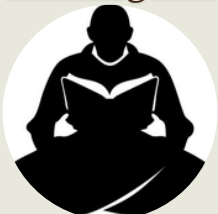
Three Lessons in Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage by Valarie Kaur



What's the antidote to rising nationalism, polarization and hate? In this inspiring, poetic talk, Valarie Kaur asks us to reclaim love as a revolutionary act. As she journeys from the birthing room to tragic sites of bloodshed, Kaur shows us how the choice to love can be a force for justice.

Check out **AESOP's Resource Hub** for other recommended readings, articles, and podcasts

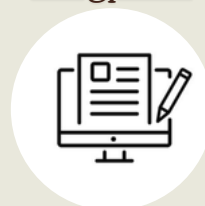
ALN Listening & Reading List



Mental Health Resources



Articles and Blogposts



Music and Meditations



**Do you have books, articles, or podcasts that help you manage burnout or stress?
Share them with Kalia at kalia@preventioninstitute.org**

A Call to Action

Over the past year, leaders have grappled with economic uncertainty, hostile political threats, and exhaustion from the demands of systems change and healing work. While thankless leadership is often rewarded, we deserve time for rest and healing.

If you're looking for a place of respite, where you can come as you are and fill your cup with deep conversations, genuine connections, and solid strategies to fight back against burnout, we welcome you to AESOP's Leadership Network!

In 2026, we will be...

Expanding Our Reach

We want to reach leaders who need rest the most but don't think they have time for it. Join one of our virtual meetings, or stay for a bit during in-person engagements. You'll see how refreshing it is to prioritize yourself!

Inviting New Facilitators

We believe that all leaders, regardless of credentials, title, or role, have a gift that enriches community. Have a workshop, self-care strategy, or story to share? We want to invite you to share it with us!

Sharing our Stories

Instead of perpetuating individualistic practices that lead to burnout, we want to change the narrative and share stories from leaders that promote collective healing, cultural preservation, and justice.

Find out how to get involved on the next few pages!

AESOP'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

*Activists **E**ngaged in **S**ustaining **O**ur **P**urpose & **P**ower*

Join the Network and Share with a Friend!

Experience networking, healing, and connection through:

- Discussion circles and peer support
- Hands-on self care for leaders, advocates, and activists
- Rest and recovery in a safe space
- Quarterly meetings and in-person events

Hybrid and In-Person Events (Texas-Based)

Click [here](#) or scan to
join our mailing list!



AESOP's Leadership Network

EXPERIENCE NETWORKING, HEALING, AND CONNECTION THROUGH:

- AESOP QUARTERLY MEETINGS: HALF-DAY EVENTS FOR LEADERS
- IN-PERSON EVENTS: NETWORK-LED ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS
- VIRTUAL MEETINGS: ZOOM GATHERINGS BETWEEN EVENTS

January <u>VIRTUAL MEETING</u> <u>JAN 15TH, 11-12:30PM</u>	February AESOP QUARTERLY MEETING FEB 20TH, 10-2PM	March QUARTERLY WRAP-UP NEWSLETTER
April <u>VIRTUAL MEETING</u> <u>APR 16TH, 11-12:30PM</u>	May AESOP QUARTERLY MEETING MAY 15TH, 10-2PM	June QUARTERLY WRAP-UP NEWSLETTER
July <u>VIRTUAL MEETING</u> <u>JUL 16TH, 11-12:30PM</u>	August AESOP QUARTERLY MEETING AUG 21ST, 10-2PM	September QUARTERLY WRAP-UP NEWSLETTER
October <u>VIRTUAL MEETING</u> <u>OCT 14TH, 11-12:30PM</u>	November AESOP QUARTERLY MEETING NOV 20TH, 10-2PM	December QUARTERLY WRAP-UP NEWSLETTER

EMAIL KALIA PANNELL AT [KALIA@PREVENTIONINSTITUTE.ORG](mailto:kalia@preventioninstitute.org) FOR MORE DETAILS!