

# Storytelling for Care of Creation and Eco-justice across Differences

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EcoFaith Summit  
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<https://meh.religioused.org/web/creationstories/>

(slides available here: <https://www.slideshare.net/maryhess1/>)





A brief outline of the plot (or this garden of ideas)



thinking of pollinators, let us “buzz like bees” and offer a brief introduction into the chat... perhaps start with where you are zooming in from, and then one idea or hope or concern you’d like to pollinate our time with

give me a few moments to describe the plants in  
this plot, or perhaps the flowers in this garden

four kinds of power  
four kinds of stories  
four dynamics to embody

then let's talk!

polarization is about high conflict, and healing is not simply about “engaging difference” but actually finding ways to approach relationship

“Joy is the gift of love. Grief is the price of love. Anger protects that which is loved. And when we think we have reached our limit, wonder is the act that returns us to love.”

Valarie Kaur

finding ways to wonder together...



# four ways to think about change and power

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- structural
- political
- relational/human resource
- cultural/symbolic



	<b>Builder</b>		<b>Shepherd</b>		<b>Prophet</b>	<b>Gardener</b>
	structural		human resources		political	cultural/symbolic
<b>Inspires action by</b>	making decisions		empowering people		training and mobilizing collective action	making meaning
<b>Approach to leadership</b>	complicated organizational theory		pastoral care		coalition-building and nonviolence	homiletic approach, complex adaptive action
<b>Emphasizes</b>	roles and responsibilities		relationships		calling people into relationship with God, evangelism and mission	vocabulary and stories
<b>View of congregation</b>	structure		community		circle of voices in restorative justice	culture
<b>Biblical precedents</b>	Nehemiah, Jethro		Jesus as Good Shepherd		Micah, Jeremiah	Nathan and David
<b>Note: this chart began as an elaboration on the 4-frame theories of Bolman and Deal by Scott Cormode.</b>	It has been expanded upon by Mary Hess, in the winter of 2022.					

[\(link to download\)](#)

“Love without power is anemic and sentimental.  
Power without love is reckless and abusive.”

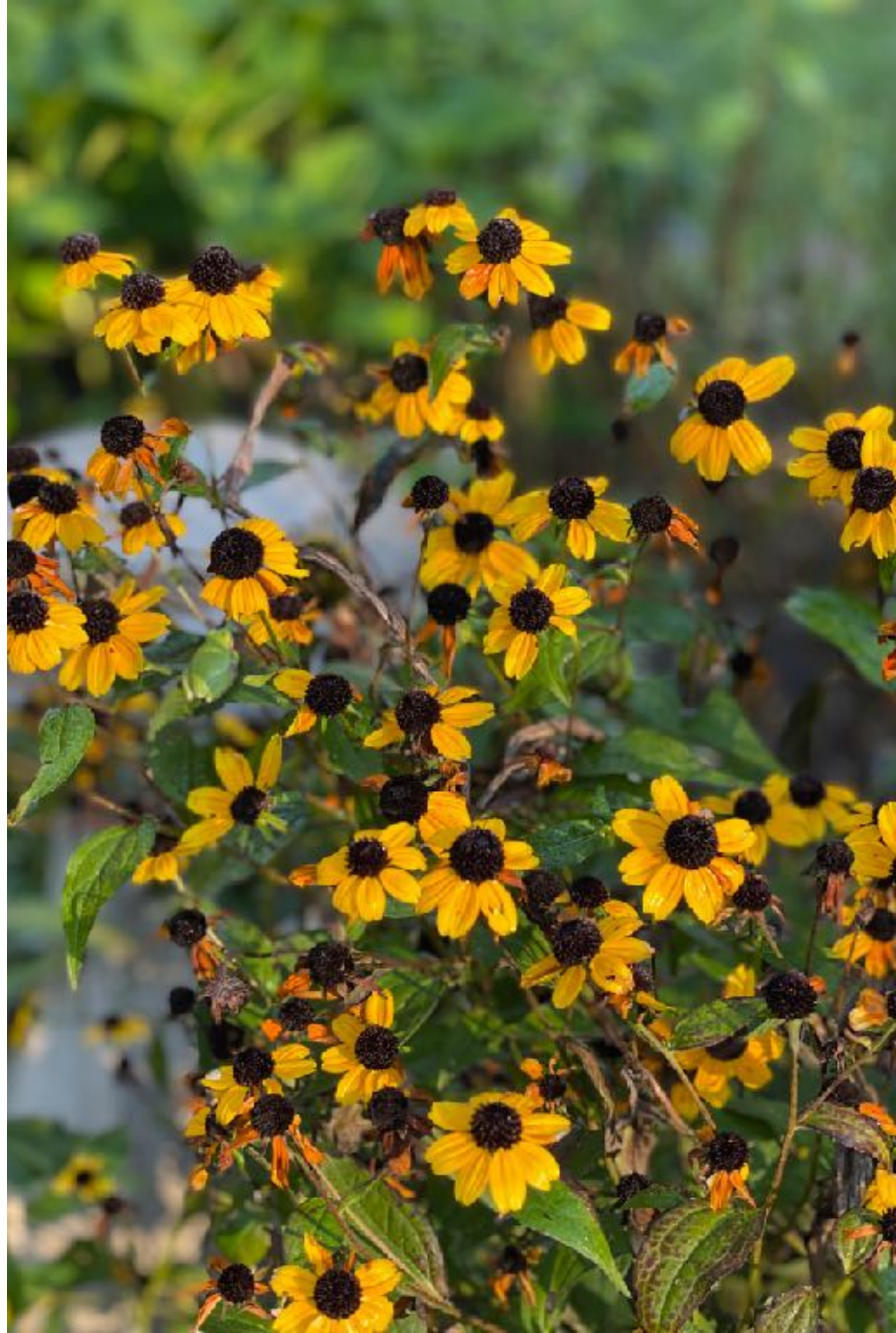
MLK, Jr.



# four kinds of stories

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- dominant or stock
- concealed
- resistance
- counter / transformative





# four triads to embody

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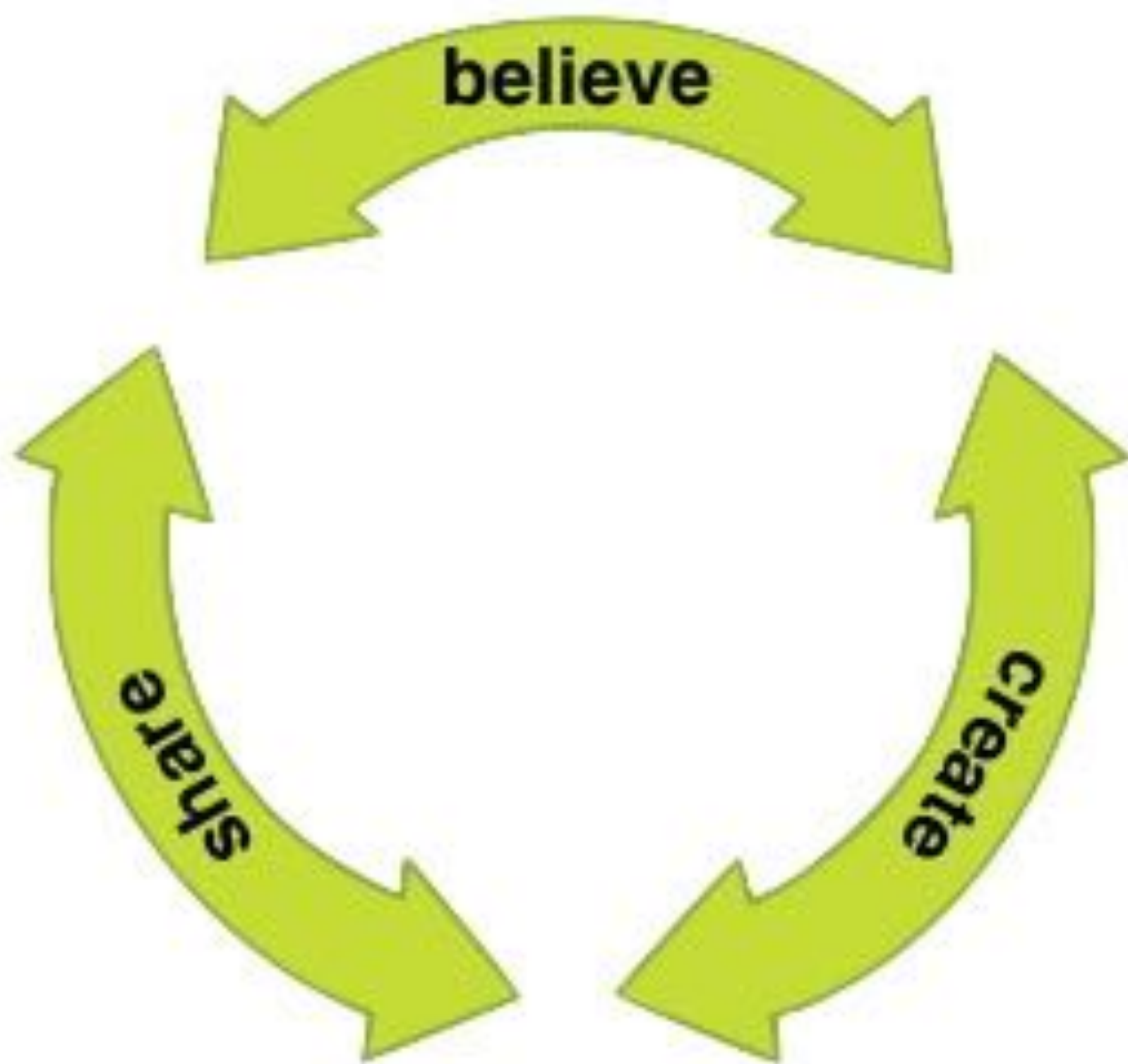
- ideas, feelings actions
- authority, authenticity, agency
- ignite, curate, practice
- confirmation, contradiction



people don't care what you know until they know  
that you care







let's talk using a restorative justice circle format



# a few values to keep in mind

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- Honor the talking piece when it is being used.
- Speak and listen with respect.
- Speak and listen from the heart.
- Personal information shared in circle stays in circle.
- Take the time you need while being mindful of the need for others to have time.
- Take care of yourself.
- Remember you can pass!

an alphabetical list...

for the future...



# two exercises you might want to try

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- a story circle
- a debate/dialogue exercise

a story circle

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- divide into groups of four people
- tell a story about... (several prompts are available at my website)
- have each of the other people listen, and then reflect back what they have heard (emotions, actions, commitments)
- rotate the roles and tell another story

keep in mind:

- no story is 'finished'
- this is about listening, not 'fixing'
- set a time limit (maybe three minutes) and pass a watch around as a talking piece (or a phone with a digital timer)



a debate/dialogue  
exercise to try in pairs

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part one:

- think about something you know to be true
- one partner states their truth
- the other partner **asks questions** as a way of proving that the statement of truth is NOT true
- then exchange places, with the other partner stating a truth and the first partner **asking questions** to prove the statement is NOT true
- what do you observe about this interaction?

part two:

- think of something you know to be true
- first partner **asks questions** of the other partner to understand the statement of truth
- exchange places and repeat
- what insights arise for you about this interaction?

notice the difference between seeking to counter/  
critique, and seeking to understand

mission as dialogue — “first step is deep listening (xiv), “dialogue is the sine qua non of mission. It is about presence. It is about relationship. It is about hospitality. It is about openness. It is humble, vulnerable, joyful”

(Bevans/Ross)



there is lots more information at my website:

<https://meh.religioused.org/web/creationstories/>