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To Friends of DCH who attend regularly our times of meditation and sharing or support us or are just friends! A discussion to reflect about the next steps.

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Dear Friends,

This is the third year that we have had a consistent program of regular meditation and of sharing about varied themes, from spirituality to ecology or the Enneagram. It is now the beginning of the year and we are thinking about the next steps. We would like to share our thoughts with you and have your advice because we need your intelligence, your creativity and your insights; especially because our project at DCH intends to create deeper links of friendship and solidarity between all of us.

In a few words, we see roughly three possible orientations:

- 1) The first way consists in continuing doing what we have done these past years, i.e. organising times of meditation and workshops on different themes. It means that, Ursula and me, we continue to structure times for meeting and we propose themes of reflexion as well as the material of these reflexions. On one hand we can see how the experience of these three last years has been rich for us because it is fascinating and challenging to choose a theme and to research it, and then to invent lively and playful ways to share these interrogations with you. On the other hand we are not specialised in this kind of practice because it goes much beyond the field of any specialisation. Therefore we do not know how long we will be able to feed a regular and pretty dense program as we do at the present moment. There soon be repetitions also because life means continuity and persistence on constant core issues. Once the program of the year and the different activities have been proposed, it is a bit like for the cinema in Merimbula: the program is attractive or not, people take part or they don't. We notice that very few participants enrol very early, showing how it is a clear choice for them to participate; and the majority of other participants wait until the last moment (in case...). Some of our workshops had a very minimum attendance which made the experience of the workshop more problematic by lack of participants (lack of interaction) although it allows also a more intimate and personal

exchange. This way of functioning is based on a rather too common game in our market system between offer and demand, i.e. consumption: we propose, you dispose. DCH in this scenario can be described as a kind of personal search done by us, Ursula and Yves, and we are in charge. This is evidently a true and realistic and satisfying, yet limited, possibility for our future, as the creation of DCH is our private initiative and should not oblige anybody else.

- 2) The second way differs from this first basic option because it proposes a more collective process. It would integrate the first way but add to it the dimension of a wider leadership by a few people who would share the responsibility of the whole concept; this responsibility would include making alive the spirit we intend to nurture as well as the practical preparation of the program. It would mean forming a team of people who would be ready to commit themselves to support DCH and give some energy in doing partly what we do presently, i.e. imagine different topics of reflexion, proposing activities or times of sharing, inviting external guests or animating different activities, and participating in these events. On one hand our regular meditation times are already in place and tend to run almost by themselves as they need no special preparation except very practical tasks. On the other hand, by contrast, the program of workshops is a bit different because it requires imagination, research, information and certainly courage to dare to propose challenging themes, and of course a lot of work for the preparation of an interactive dialogue that allows everybody to participate in an active way. It would be very helpful for us to have the support and participation of a few friends and the access to their bright insights; this involvement of yours could be simply limited to being a kind of echo chamber that would give us the possibility to discuss our intentions and to take with your help some more critical distance from our own perceptions or it could involve any further form of participation. The design of DCH's path by a larger team could be also an opportunity for the members of this team to reflect on what matters in our world today and to invent forms to promote it and make it accessible for people who are keen to widen their views and their way of life. The diversity of the people belonging to this team would enrich the process and make it more complete, for the benefit of everyone. This second way would then engage a few people who would share a very free and adaptable form of common search and practice, yet each one in their own way, without having to give up any personal preference or to consecrate more time than they wish to.

There is also another aspect to this second way that concerns the rather practical and material aspects of maintaining a place like DCH. Here again this is our personal choice, for Ursula and Yves, to commit to such a project and this does not require from anybody to be involved in it. Yet the work of maintenance of DCH is a big job as such. So far we manage to do the necessary, more or less, with our own strength. There are of course smaller and bigger jobs to be done. For instance, as a bigger job, I just redid the cladding of the west side of the main house; it had not been sealed properly at the time we built because we were very tired. I re-did it then recently with villaboards that have been properly sealed this time (lazy people have it the harder way!). Now it is good again. But, among smaller jobs, there are 3 houses with 15 rooms to be dusted or prepared when people come here, a lot of windows to be regularly oiled or to be cleaned, many spider webs to get rid of, many small repairs, maintenance painting to protect many parts of beautiful natural material that need a renewed coat, a lot of wood to be cut for winter days, composting toilets to be emptied, the grey water system to be drained, batteries to be filled with distilled water, etc... without mentioning the work in the garden or the maintenance of the road, of the paddocks or similar. It would be helpful for us to have a team of people who are regularly available for this kind of maintenance jobs. We have a few times organised working bee. It worked well at the beginning but then fizzled out. This means that we have to rethink this practical aspect of our project.

3) The third way includes all of the second but adds to it the dimension of community. It could consist vaguely in what we intended to do in our community days, the third Saturday of the month, that have had little success and need to be therefore reviewed. It is about creating friendship, as our friend David R. says. What is friendship? It could be probably described as a link of solidarity that goes beyond business and beyond simple nice leisure time. We add to this letter a text Yves wrote as a reflexion about the meaning of friendship and community. The experience of what is described in this text could be the content for this third way, to be of course readapted to the wishes of participants and to the further experiences and discoveries to be made on this path. This reflexion has arisen from the observation that we are deprived of deeper relationships of friendship because our economic system provides us with all the comfort we need and little room is left to issues connected with the search for the meaning of life. These central issues seem to be shared only in the frame of a family, or a couple. Monasteries, parishes, places of spiritual practice have disappeared or have been replaced by many forms of talk or silent practice. But in what concerns everyday life, where is our sharing? How could we have some time together where we share living situations of essential importance for us? I observe that people around us are in general pretty lonely and seem to find solace in taking care of their own children and grandchildren but do not experience any special deeper exchanges with friends in what concerns their daily life. And if this exchange happens, it does as a talk around a table in leisure time, outside practical (hands on) issues. We miss therefore opportunities to practice this sharing in concrete situations of everyday life, beyond any form of talk about it. I believe that DCH could be a place where we rediscover what friendship can be and where we invent new ways of practising it in a way that goes much beyond leisure time, into true solidarity and co-responsibility, being involved in one another's life (without intruding!). We need to learn how to lead one another, or accept to be lead, each time one of us has better skills or awareness than the others and is therefore able to guide us to further maturity. This is the proposal how to go on this third way. Of course there is no ready-made solution. The truth is the way itself. We have to engage onto it in order to be able to discover it and imagine new ways of practising it.

Yes, it was a long explanation, full of words that one does not use every day and that can be tested only in practice. But it allows us to share with you a vision about DCH and to see how far it talks to you. This vision remains ours. You have no obligation to share it; we are aware it is important that you remain faithful to yours. But we would nevertheless be interested to have your insight into this matter.

What would you say of a day of reflexion on these three scenarios? Would you be ready to be part of a day of heart-mind reflexion and discussion about the future of DCH? It would be a great help for us to know how you perceive this matter, how far you feel concerned, how much you wish to be involved or not.

To avoid any misunderstanding in asking these questions, it must be very clear that DCH will be just what people make of it. It would be wrong to define a project in a narrow frame. Yet we need also to know where we intend to go and adapt constantly our path to new intuitions that require awareness (which does not imply necessarily narrow planning). What we propose here is an open and lively search that will take shape by stages, being constantly readapted. It means that DCH is not our private project that you feel obliged to support because we are friends. No, DCH is just an empty space that is offered by Life and will become what it has to become. How does it talk (or does not talk) to you? How far do you feel it can answer (or not) your needs and your expectations?

It is not our private space; it is open to all and can be made alive in so many different ways. Here above are three possible of these many ways. Let's talk about it and adapt them.

To discuss all these questions and the topics you will bring yourselves to the discussion, we propose to meet on the

Saturday 17th of March, from 9am to 4pm , at DCH

We hope this date will suit you. We need your insights. It will be also the opportunity to review what should be the role of the Association (until now only administrative). Please tell us if you can make it. We hope to see you soon for this important exchange.

Many blessings to all of you and a lot of gratitude for your support and help.



Attached: (sorry! more to read! Market, technology, friendship and community