

## **PAIN RELEASE CEREMONY**

- 1. SITTING IN A CIRCLE – with a bowl of coals ready to light. This can be in the centre of the group if there is ample ventilation; otherwise have it ready outdoors.**
- 2. PERSONAL REFLECTION 20 mins – what are the painful issues that I can identify. How do they affect my life? Which ideas and experiences bring the most pain and who were part of the experience? Feel again what that pain is like. Feel it and find words to describe it. Feel the reaction within you which that pain causes – think about what I would do by way of reaction if I were free to follow my reactions. Identify what is healthy and not healthy in those reactions.**

**NOW: Write down the negative feelings and reactions which I wish to leave behind me and let go of in this ceremony.**

- 3. SHARING IN CONFIDENCE 20 mins – choose some-one with whom I can share – find a space together in this room and tell them about my reflection and my negative feelings, especially the ones on the paper that I want to leave behind.**

**NOW: Listen as the other person shares their pains and reactions. Listen with respect and empathy – I do not need to propose solutions to their problems, I do not probe deeper – I receive what they are saying, just accept it and see that it is true for them. Show that I care by my attentive listening – because listening is the greatest form of loving.**

- 4. LOOK AGAIN AT THE NEGATIVE FEELINGS ON MY LIST 10 mins– imagine that I am personally surrendering them to a higher power (God, Allah etc). What do I wish to say as I surrender them – what do I ask for to replace them, what do you need as a blessing?**

**NOW: Pray in your heart and ask for that blessing.**

**The group stands in the circle around the bowl and it is lit. The leader introduces the words of the song, then reads point 5 and the singing begins.**

- 5. BURNING OUR BITTERNESS 10 mins – Leader: “One by one, we bring our paper to the fire which is burning. Watch the flames change the substance of the paper to make it disappear and imagine that my higher Power receives my pain, and feels the intensity of my desire to surrender this bitterness. Realise that I am being supported by other brothers and sisters as we all make this act of surrender. Rejoice that giving up our bitterness makes room in our lives for purpose, hope and joy. Feel the truth of this for myself at this moment.”**

**NOW: SING – PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF HUMANITY while each one adds their paper to the fire.**

- 6. RESPONSES 20 mins – voluntary comments from participants.**
- 7.**
- 8. PRAYERS OF THANKS 10 mins – Buddhist/Hindu/Islam/Christian.**

**Total time: 90 mins**

**Created and trialled by Dr John Steward**

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