

# UBUNTU & GROUP

We come together in like-mindedness to honor what is unique and what is common amongst ourselves. Like-mindedness in this context does not refer to *same view point*, but refers to the *shared value system* of seeking to be caring, respectful and supportive of one another as human beings whether or not we are in agreement in perspectives. It is a time to share from the deeper self, from our most known truth. It is not a time for political debate, problem solving of global or local issues, nor any other topics that pull us into intellectual states and away from our core being-ness. It is merely a time to genuinely be together.

*Living Ubuntu has an Ubuntu group that meets once a month on a Friday evening in Orange County and one that meets once a month on a Saturday afternoon in San Diego.*

For more information please contact: [info@livingubuntu.org](mailto:info@livingubuntu.org).



*seeking to support and honor being authentic, being alive, being together and being ourselves*

**Ubuntu** [ubuntu] n. South African: Humanity or fellow feeling; kindness.

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, "Yu u nobuntu"; "Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu." Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours."... We say, "A person is a person through other persons."

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed... To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest. What dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me. [Forgiveness] gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.

– Desmond Tutu

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**The Ubuntu group** was born out of witnessing the imbalance that often exists in nonprofits: with so much emphasis on the organization's mission to help others, volunteers and staff are vulnerable to overwhelm and self-neglect. As a result, they do not manage to stay in touch with the real life concerns of one another either. Burn out, compassion fatigue, and feelings of isolation are a likely result.

With chronic busy-ness currently plaguing many of us, the challenge to stay in touch with ourselves and with others is not limited exclusively to the realm of nonprofits. In today's society it is easy for any of us to lose sight of the reality that in order to be able to be caring toward others we must take good care of ourselves.

Busy lifestyles and everyday stressors often interfere with and limit our capacity for relating. Tense muscles, shallow breathing and unexpressed emotions take a toll on our wellbeing. Unable to perceive the sensations within our own bodies, we compensate by over-using our intellect or run on "auto-pilot". In this disconnected, deadened and ungrounded state we lose our ability to nurture a deep, rich inner world; we diminish our capacity to maintain deep, intimate relationships with others.

Contact and connection with others experienced in a safe environment allows us to lower our defenses, drop down into our body, feel our feelings and re-connect to our self. This comes back around and increases our ability to resonate more with others. By receiving the support, empathy and non-judgment we need on an ongoing basis, our ability to respond compassionately toward others expands.

**The Ubuntu group** is a peer-facilitated support and process type small group that has the added benefit of utilizing body methods as part of its format. In order to aid in the transition from the hectic pace of life into a calmer, more open-hearted and available state for relating to one another, the Ubuntu group begins with a body method. This method is designed to release deep muscle tension that blocks us from being emotionally present and comfortable in our skin. Created to provide an environment for authentic connection by encouraging honest sharing about whatever is going on in life at the time, the Ubuntu group plays an important role in creating a sense of community while assisting in our own self-care.

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