

2019: A Year of Loving-Kindness

March 2020, Amsterdam, Quarantine

Dear all,

It is quite late for my traditional “year report”, and still, here is it!

I am sending you love and gratitude for being part of my life; sharing my news & links & pictures... and asking about your wellbeing: I do want to stay in touch, so this is an opportunity to hear from each other, and continue or repair our connection.

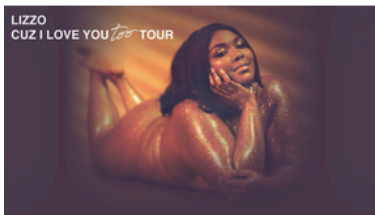
To paraphrase Bilbo Baggins: “I’m not in contact with more than half of you - half as well as I would like; and I am in contact with less than half of you - half as well as you deserve.”

This is also a call for help – and an offer of support: if you feel inspired to do something for me, please offer!

And if I can do anything for you, effortlessly, by being myself: please **ask**, and I will say YES or NO, and we will still stay friends!

Biggest 2019 news:

- we are a couple again – Arnd & Vesna – together since end-2019! (and also since end- 2011 ;-)
- I am taking medication for my C-PTSD! (Sertraline/Zoloft, anti-anxiety & anti-depressant)
- I saw Lizzo live, I went to the concert with Alisa!



Biggest 2020 news:

* we have a new house: on Valutaboulevard 51, 1060RX, Amsterdam (Osdorp) (since 1. March 2020)

<https://becha.home.xs4all.nl/valutaboulevard51-funda-photos-3.pdf>

* Corona-virus pandemic is keeping us all in emergency & lock-up; we are healthy & safe: so far so good!

In **2019**, I was learning to let go, and to feel my feelings: starting with sadness and anger, then moving on to love & joy. I was learning how to re-parent myself: how to be self-nurturing and self-protecting. I was healing, it was hard work - and I did it!!

Body & Mind Healing:

* Early in 2019 I had a “minor burnout” (due to both eye-infarct & the chronic C-PTSD) and decreased my work-hours for a few months, then gradually went back to 60% (3 days/ week)

* I've been seeing many therapists, doctors, masseurs, teachers: they have all helped me a lot! I am forever grateful! Thank you: Monica, Liddy, Debby, Doris; Maike, Dr. Bakker, Dr. Lerhman; Simone, Anita, John, Chico, Erik, Marius... Mirjam, Yoram, Berit, Trond...

* I've been learning - and practicing - many techniques: NVC, mindfulness, breath-work, EMDR, somatic therapy, squat-shitting, meditation with an app, walking, (hot(yin)) yoga, & more walking while listening to audio-books; taking supplements and being on a low-carbs diet (no sugar, no alcohol) plus being a vegetarian for political reasons ; and ROLLER-SKATING while singing-out-loud self-affirming & powerful songs & dancing; cycling; plus dancing to the Wii videos from YT ;-)

* I've lost 12 kg in 12 months, then gained 6kg back in 6 months (75->63->69)

* My cholesterol was back to normal in October 2019; my eye is still at “90%” healed; my “frozen shoulder” is probably better then 90% healed;



* DRUGS: After more than 2 years of such hard work, in December 2019 I finally dared to ask for medication! Psychotherapist told me to ask my GP (huisarts); she was very much willing to do it; I started with 25mg Sertraline, didn't have any bad side-effects, moved to 50mg, and now I'm at 75mg, with maybe 100mg as the max - and after continuing for 6 more months I will slowly go off it, then see if I'm OK: stay tuned for the next year's report!

I am SO HAPPY that these drugs exists and that they work well with me: I can finally SLEEP, after years and years of troubled sleeping, of flashbacks and “inner critic” attacks every night... Next step: learning to LAUGH again :)

*In February 2020 I have injured my knee & middle finger (he he!): I fell while carrying a moving box; it's been healing for 6 weeks, and now it's almost OK! I can cycle, walk, jump on the trampoline... SKATING is next!

BIGGEST LOSSES & Reasons for Mourning

In 2019, I have learned to cry again & I've cried a lot; I have learned more and more about grief: followed the NVC course about mourning, a lecture about "Dealing with Loss", and read / practiced "grieving" from many books and online-courses: by Pete Walker; "The Body Keeps the Score";

* Ivana Sokic died in December 2019: she was only 16! Her funeral was on 4th January 2020, near Nurnberg; Arnd & me went there, from love and respect for Soki and his family's pain. It was a sad, harrowing yet touching experience of grief and resilience and community support and long-lasting friendship connections.



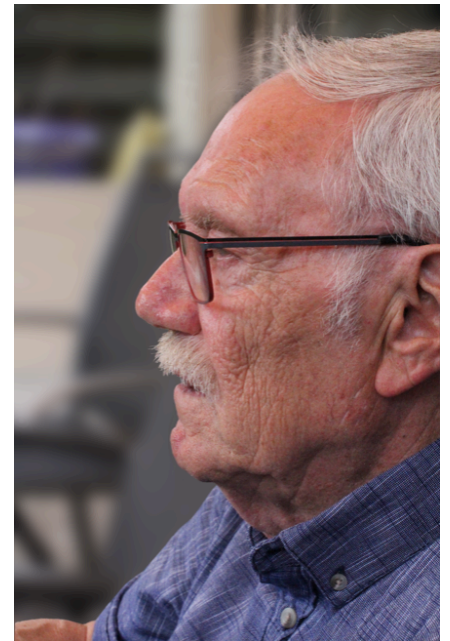
* Vesna's bag was stolen at the Xmas party, Friday the 13th December: with ID, cards, phone (& contacts, photos, notes, apps!), keys... Although on the large scale of things this is NOT a big loss, it was a shock for me & a violation of trust and a visceral missing of something that was MINE – as well as a reminder of how dependent I became on the technology and "plastic cards":

* Axel (Managing Director of RIPE NCC) "resigned" after 20 years (on 16-10-2019), during RIPE79

* Ad Marijnissen (Arnd's father) died, after only few months of being diagnosed with lung cancer (on 19-9-19). He was 74. This tragedy brought Arnd & me back together - it was a "wake-up call" for expressing all the pent up pain, loss, and longing for what is important in life: connection, safety, togetherness...

* Vesna and Arnd broke up (again), in August 2019 ; then agreed to have a 3-months break instead & finally decide in October; then postponed it to November because of Ad's death. Being "alone" was both difficult & liberating: it gave me clarity, time to be alone & figure out what I really want, but at the same time it was a time filled with sadness, regrets, doubts, nostalgia and anger.

* Charlie broke his arm (in July) !!! On the last day of his camping-vacation; just before his sea-vacation! He was very disappointed that his plans for having fun with his friends were spoiled by this: he wanted to dive, jump into the water from cliffs, swim, skateboard... and all of that was almost impossible. Still, his ability to feel joy was stronger, and he still enjoyed the sea-vacation!



* During summer holidays we have commemorated 1 year anniversary of Bogdan's (my father's) death.

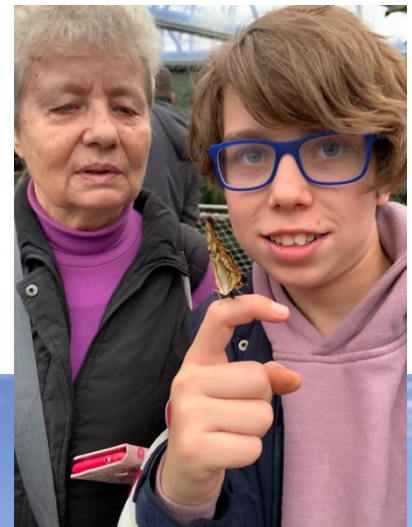
We made drawings on the stones, and at the sunset we've returned them to the sea, with the messages for Bogdan's soul. Here is some poetry I wrote about him:

<https://becha.home.xs4all.nl/bogdan/prvi-haiku-6pp.pdf> &
<https://becha.home.xs4all.nl/bogdan/haiku-english-1.html>

春

Kids Are Doing Great!

- * Both Alisa & Charlie took part in School Strikes for Climate & Fridays for Change
- * Alisa taught me about Lizzo - and we went to a concert together - and she's my new favourite singer!!
- * Charlie was examined for possible ADHD, but didn't get a full research nor diagnosis
- * Both Alisa & Charlie had multiple concerts with their bands: bass-guitar vs trumpet/singer
- * Charlie got pet-rats, in June
- * Both Alisa & Charlie had multiple sleep-over parties at our places
- * Alisa gave several theater performances; the funniest was feminist Monty Python remake!
- * Both Alisa & Charlie finished their school-year successfully in 2019; Alisa is now 5th year, Charlie 3rd, in VWO (gymnasium)
- * We had two of Charlie's friends with us on summer holidays in Barbariga: Rover and Eliasz





Vesna's Biggest Reasons to Celebrate in 2019

- * I finished "NVC Mediator" course: 6 weekends, from January to July. The most amazing empathic connections and soul-searching-lessons happened there; so much support, being seen, accepting others as they are, so much celebration & mournings, and "doggy piles" :)
- * I followed a 2-day First Aid course, at work. It was re-triggering to do the CPR & think of Bogdan! I did admit that & cried & asked for the help ... and received sympathy & understanding of my colleagues.
- * I attended a 8-week MBSR (mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction) course, at work: a life-changing event, since that made me develop a daily habit of meditation!
- * My T-shirts flag was included in art [exhibition](#) in Novi Sad!!
- * I finished a 4-day Holacracy Practitioner course! Was elected a "facilitator" for Comms circle, for 6 months!
- * I had a vacation in Bakkum, in September, alone
- * I organised three hackathons at work (with much help!): <https://labs.ripe.net/hackathons>
- * I initiated the "Sustainability Focus Group" with other enthusiastic colleagues from work (Dec. 2019)
- * I traveled **by train** to Sarajevo, Rijeka, Pula, Ljubljana!
- * We had ski-holiday in Austria & visited Zdravko in Munich
- * We swapped house for summer vacation, and made friends with Ana Djokić & her family. And with **Nana & Nina: TRI SESTRE!**
- * We got engaged! In sLOVEnia! Vesna asked Arnd to marry her, on 20.4.2019. , where Sava joins Krka, in Čatež

Soul-Food Media:

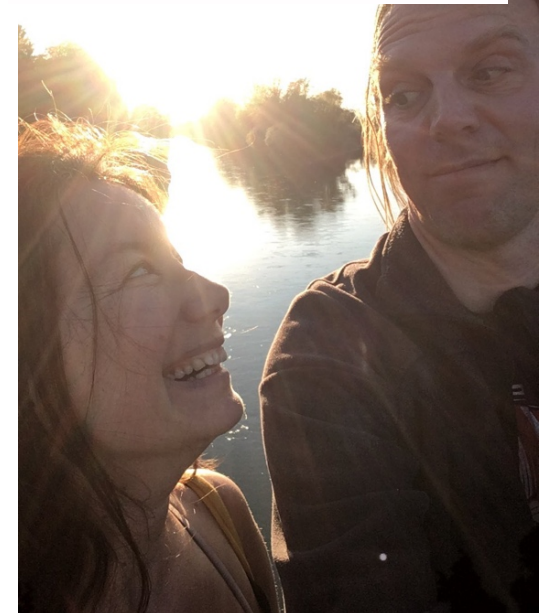
Audio- Books: The Art of Asking; Where Should We Begin; With the End in Mind; Thousands Names for Joy; I Thought It Was Just Me; Unsheltered; Radical Self-Acceptance; The Found and the Lost; (and 30 more!)

Series: One Day at the Time; How to Get Away with Murder; Fleabag; Killing Eve; Atypical; Big Bang Theory; Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt; Scandal; Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency; ...

Apps: PTSD Coach; Audible; Insight Timer; Spotify; Signal; Viber; Mandala. For a while I was addicted to Tweeter & Daylio & fitness trackers... but then I lost several wrist-watches & then the phone got stolen... so I stopped.

Books: I was reading 1.5 book per week, so in the last 15 months that's... about **100** books I've read: I can not list them all here. I bought many, picked up even more from the "free books" cupboards... I was also trying to get rid of the books – but that's harder than one would think! I was active on BookCrossing again:

<https://www.bookcrossing.com/mybookshelf/BeCHa/>



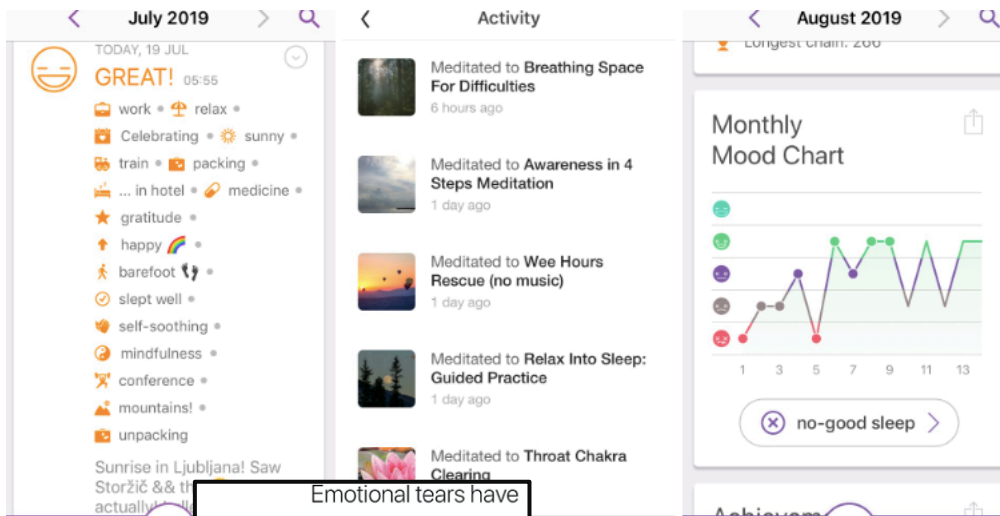
- Left Photo: NVC doggy-pile in the Centrum for Tantra



- Many people stayed as guests in our house on Bonaireplein, among them a family



from Uruguay



Emotional tears have protein-based hormones including the neurotransmitter leucine enkephalin, which a natural painkiller released when we are stressed.



Biggest NOs I'm Most Proud of:

- * Did not fly.
- * Did not go to FOSDEM, RIPE78 (Iceland), CCC Camp, BalCCoN, 36c3...
- * Did not get stressed or involved with Axel's "departure".
- * Did not lend any more money to anyone in 2019 (after lending 3 big sums to 3 people in 2018)



Biggest regrets:

- * Did not get involved in much activism
- * Did not follow up on any techno-shamanist activities
- * Did not post much to www.UnCiv.nl
- * Did not go to Lika, at all
- * Did not go to CCC Camp, for the first time in 20 years

Relationship, HOUSE & Moving:

After the 3-months-break-up, Arnd & Vesna decided to get back together - with the help of both relationship therapy, personal therapy — and mostly: NVC-technique for active listening & empathic connection!!! We agreed to get a temporary house together, as soon as possible: and we did it in 3-4 months! We had a very nice process of making agreements, while involving children, listening to each other respectfully and carefully, and expressing our needs and preferences in genuine ways.

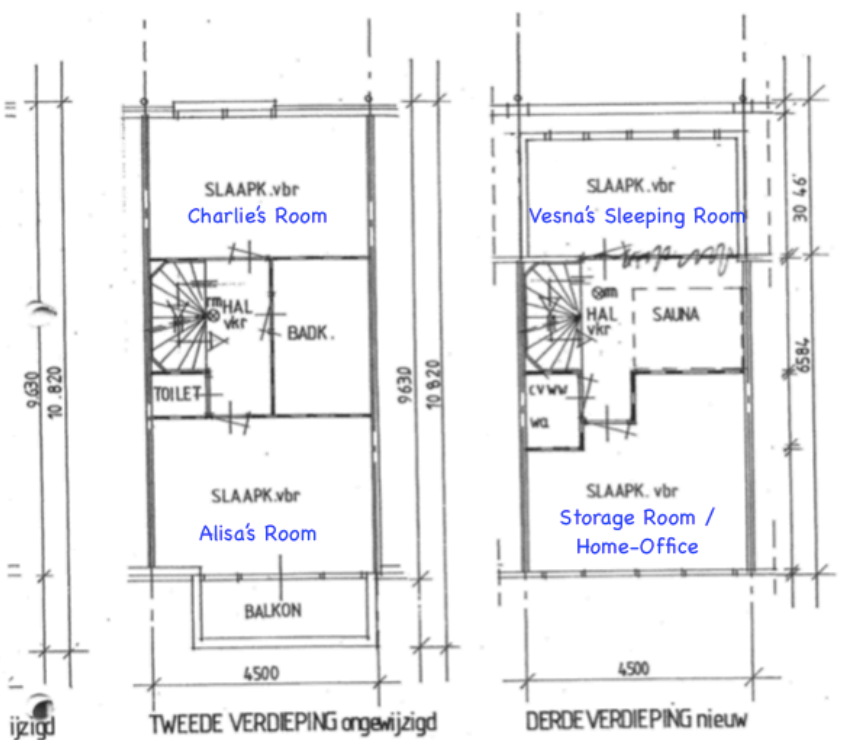
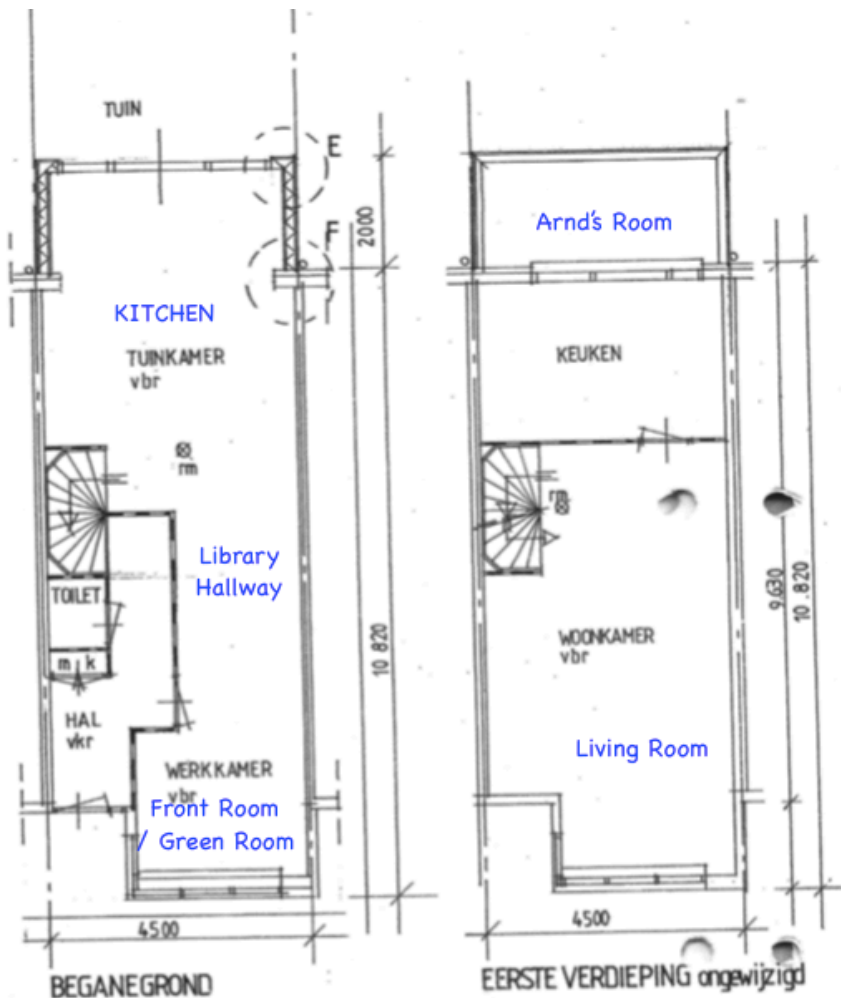
- * We got the keys on 13th February
- * We moved using StudentVerhuizers & a lot of help from our friends, on 14. February (Valentines!)
- * I have new tenants, from 19. February :) For 2 years max!
- * ~~Arnd is having new tenants, from 16th March (maybe?)~~



instagram: @green_fox_blue_fox
twitter: @foxes_in_love
tumblr: <https://foxes-in-love.tumblr.com/>

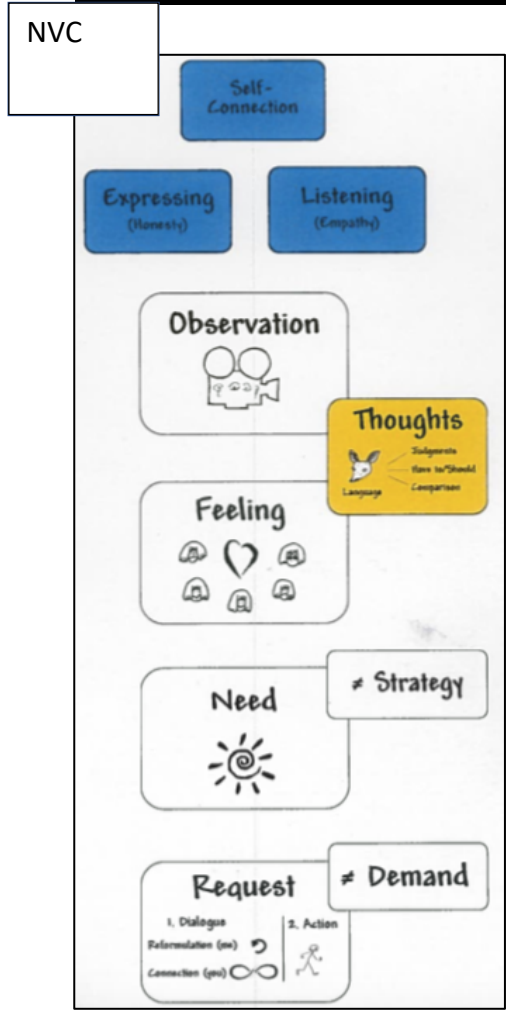
The new house is A-MA-ZING!!! 170m², four floors, 6 rooms, back-yard with a shed, bathroom with a bath, 2 toilets - and a SAUNA on the top floor! 14 DOORS!!! We can all get our privacy now! It is so luxurious and spacious.. almost 4-times as big as my previous house! It's furnished: fully-equipped kitchen, HUGE sofa in the living room, extra beds, lights fixtures, all the washing-machines we can use... and many stairs (39?!) to climb up & down, multiple times a day - good for the exercise! It's in the nice, green neighborhood; quite far from the city-center; and with the great view of the sunrise!





Violent Communication

- Judgement
- Comparisons
- Right and Wrong
- Demands
- Threats
- Predictions
- Evaluations
- Generalizations
- Thoughts-as-feelings ("I feel that...")



Community

It is possible that the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual.

The next Buddha may take the form of a community - a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living.

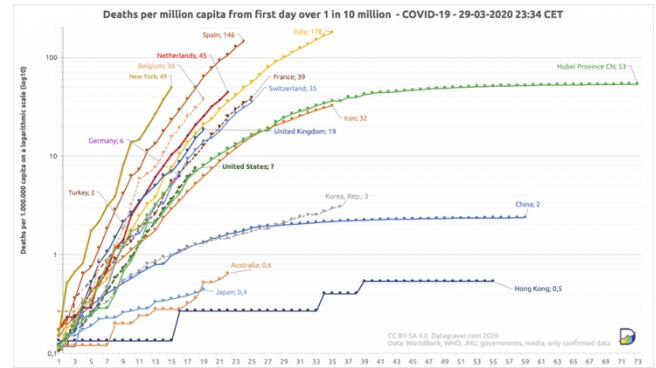
This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the earth.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Corona-crisis update (end-March 2020)

1. We were so lucky to have moved before the crisis started!! Now everyone has to Work-From-Home & School-From-Home, and we have lots of space to do that in, as well as to relax and enjoy. Thanks to Arnd, we also have good Internet connectivity & lots of computers, games and other gadgets: personal cinema!

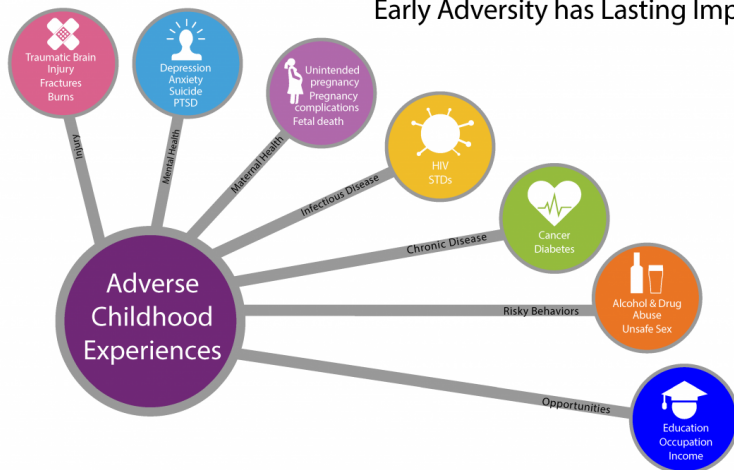
2. If the pandemic causes a huge economic crisis, the domino effect might cause us to not be able to get tenants for our mortgaged houses; and then we might not be able to pay the rent for our rented house, and then we might need to move again... and that's the best-case scenario, where everyone survives.



Biggest Radical Honesty Revelations:

- * Arnd admitted that he was lying for all 8 years: about a personal “hangup”, which has lead to more lies about very important “issues” for our relationship. (in November 2018)
- * Vesna confronted Mileva about Adverse Childhood Experiences ACE (June / September 2019)
- * Alisa came out as gay! A Thespian Lesbian! (in August 2019)
- * Vesna had sex with a woman for the first time! And a first threesome! In the sex-club... (Oct. 2019)
- * Charlie admitted that he is smoking weed! (March 2020)
- * Company where Thijmen works was “featured” on Zondag Met Lubach <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8F9JJ15L-A>

Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



"I'm not a humanitarian. I am not there to 'aid'. I stand in solidarity. We do not need medals. We do not need authorities deciding about who is a 'hero' and who is 'illegal'. In fact they are in no position to make this call, because we are all equal.

"What we need are freedom and rights. It is time we call out hypocrite honoring and fill the void with social justice. It is time we cast all medals into spearheads of revolution!

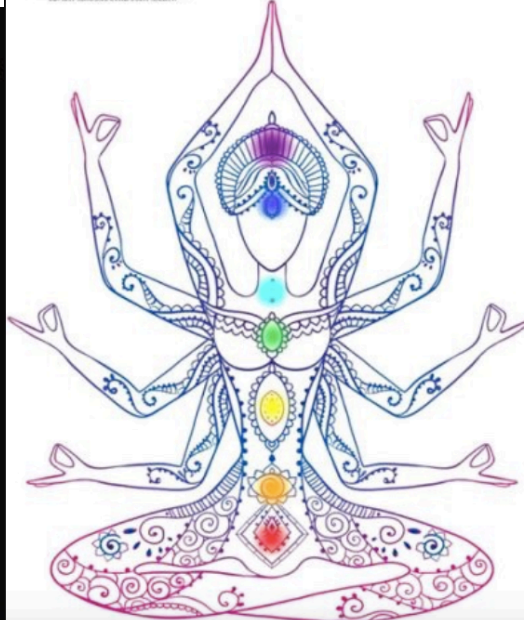
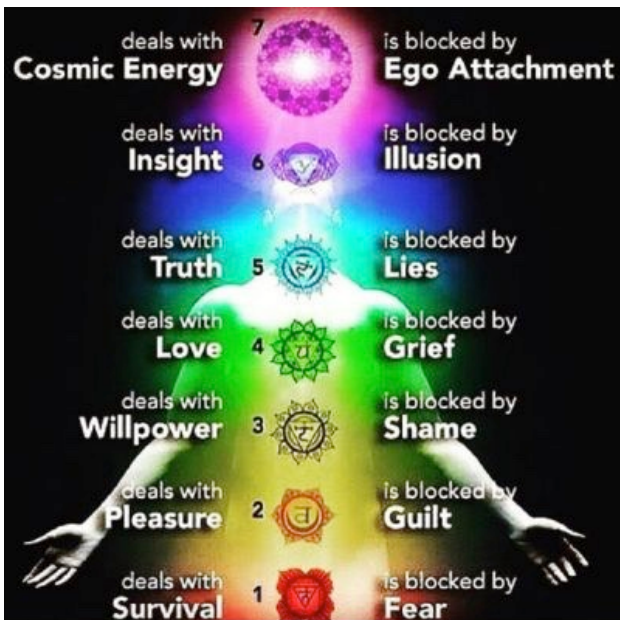
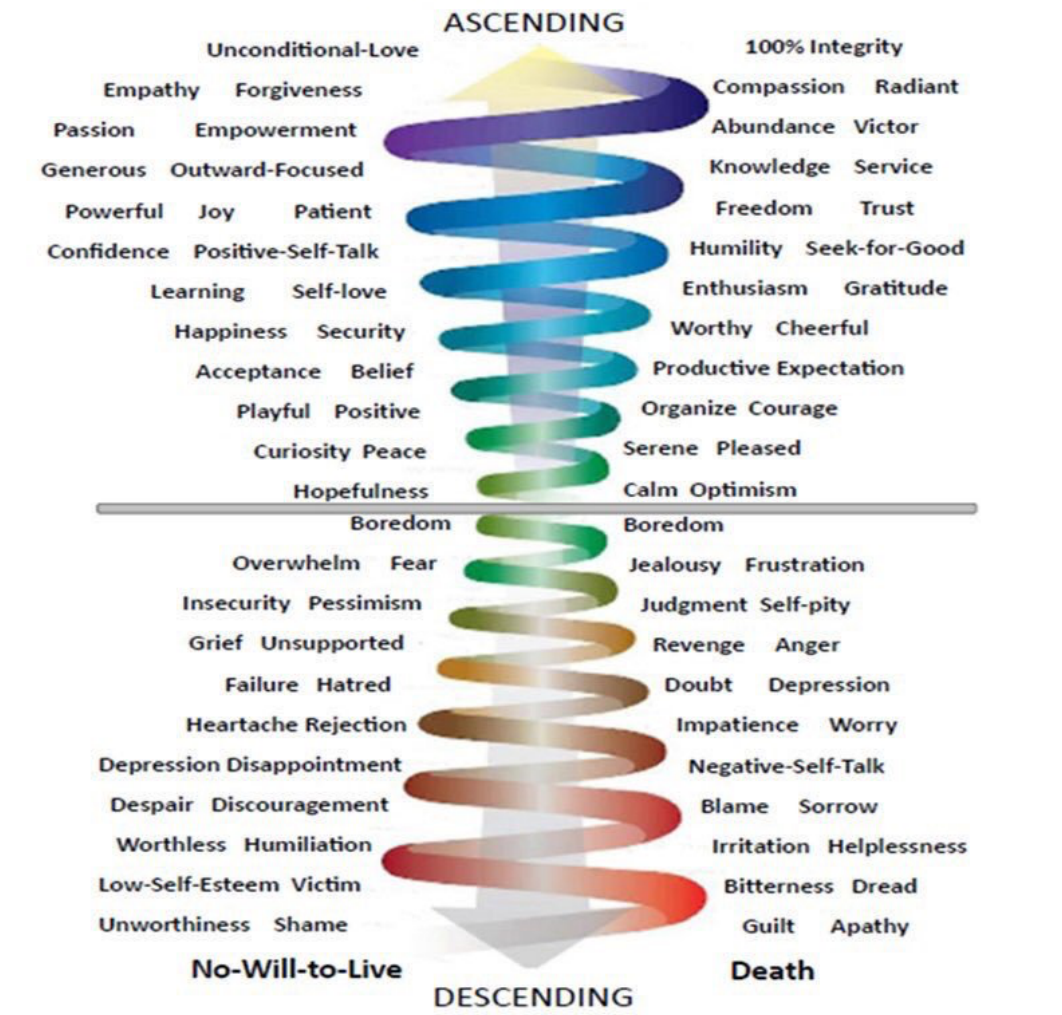
"Documents and housing for all!

"Freedom of movement and residence!"

- Pia Klemp, 20 August 2019



EMOTIONAL SPIRAL



Wishes & plans for 2020: a year of practicing solidarity, JOY, togetherness



- * I wish for myself & my family to enjoy our new house together!
- * We are planning to use the camper to go on vacations together
- * I have a new idea about “collaborative creation” and WikiGit and “spooning” as a software development paradigm but also as common-ing practice ; I am looking for more people to join the creative collective team
- * I wish to join “alchorisma” meetup in August in France
- * I wish to continue with the NVC-group-practices

For the planet & society, I wish that we get permanently changed due to this crisis, and to never go “back”; to develop new practices of solidarity & ecological belonging with the living communities: rivers, squirrels, forests, birds, and even bacteria & viruses.

I am wishing for 2020 to be the year of **mudita & mandala** :

Mandala as a symbol of search for completeness and self-unity.

Mudita is a practice of cultivating “Sympathetic Joy” : happiness rather than resentment at someone else’s well-being & success.

May my good fortune continue and increase.

May you be tickled with delight.

May their happiness continue.

May our joy persist and grow.

Your happiness makes me happy.

May I be filled with joy and gratitude.

May I learn to appreciate the joy and happiness I experience.

