

Dear friends of the Lineage Group,

Sidney mentioned there might be interest in exploring the subject of succession and knew that I had done some work on this in the past. I'm writing to share a few things I learned in the process.

*Succession seems to be a major topic at the moment.*

I spent a few years working with the Usui Shiki Ryoho (Reiki) community as it prepared for the passing of its grand master, Phyllis Furumoto. It was very interesting to see the group evolve its thinking over time. At first, they were anxious to work on Phyllis's replacement—they wanted to know who the next Grand Master would be. Together we came to see that what they really needed to do was create a potentiated field within which succession could happen and within which the global community (comprising many tens of thousands of students around the world) could transition to a new phase in its evolution without breaking apart due to schism and infighting (which is what happened when the prior Grand Master died).

In this system, the role of Grand Master is handed down at death, much like the selection of a new Pope, but in this case is designated and bequeathed by the old Grand Master as they prepare for death. We operated from the assumption that any one of the members of the group might be called on to step into the role of the Grand Master and so all of them needed to be able to think about the whole of the system and how to enable its ongoing viability, vitality, and evolution. We also assumed that we were building a leadership culture that would encourage all participants (and ultimately all Reiki Masters) to share responsibility for the health of the system as a whole.

Early in the process I introduced these three premises:

- Premise 1: Our system is a source of strength. But it could become a form of dogma if it stops evolving, and if we stop evolving with it.
- Premise 2: Succession in an ecological system refers to a shift to a higher order of expression. The same transformation is possible through our own succession process.
- Premise 3: In a developmental community, leadership is not something that one person provides for everyone else. Rather, it is an inner process occurring within each of us, guided by the potential we are developing toward.

These became the basis for a profound shift in how the group understood the process of succession. This launched a three-year series of monthly developmental sessions that benefitted the community before and after Phyllis's death. Succession was the presenting challenge, but inner development was the way that we chose to respond to it. As a result, I believe that the international Reiki community as a whole is somewhat stronger and more mature than it was before we began, not least because the new Grand Master took part in the entire process.

A few years later we initiated a succession process with a resource development group in Mexico City. There is one exercise we used to initiate the conversation (see at the end).

I know that this is a bit impressionistic, but hopefully you will find these thoughts useful in some way.

With much affection,

Ben

## **Reflections**

- What evolutionary change in state is made possible by this process of succession? (Think about this question at three lines of work.)
- What restraints are we likely to encounter as we work to ensure that this evolutionary change can occur?
- What transformation (in ourselves, our community, and the contributions we are committed to making) must our succession process enable, if we are to remain aligned with the unfolding expression of regenerative work into the world?