



Loving Cohousing

February 19

9am-3pm Pac 12-6pm East

Trish Becker Keynote Transcript

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Okay, So i'm gonna start the recording here, Jess Gordon was unable to join us today, but she looks forward to sharing her story and her experiences with us at a future event.

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So the Event Planning Committee has asked the new executive director, Trish Becker to take off her co-host hat for a moment and step into the role of a keynote speaker.

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She. so we, sharing on a deeper level, what cohousing, what loving co housing means to her, so trish welcome in a different capacity.

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Thank you. hmm! Just a deep breath to settle in with each of you, and to to switch hats to a keynote.

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You may have gathered that the Co-ho Us.

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Community has recently experienced some loss, and that some among us are in the depths of personal turmoil.

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You may see this impacting today's agenda our ability to be present, our technical prowess or lack thereof.

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You may hear it in the cracking of our voices.

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And yet what is community if we only bring a part of ourselves to the whole?

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Certainly many of you in the audience are carrying with you your own griefs, fears, challenges.

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If you're anything like me it's precisely these challenges that actually draw us more deeply into a community moments of crisis, I look to those who surround me to wipe my tears nourish my body and calm my

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mind when I feel that my support net is thin or frayed.

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I recommit to nurturing my community, strengthening our ties, and I imagine that this is the catalyst for many of you being here today.

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This desire to nurture your community and build a stronger net.

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And so here we are today, celebrating the love that exists within our communities.

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The homemade meal delivered by a neighbor on a tough day.

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The captivated audience. When we share photos of our recent vacation.

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The feeling of having your whole story held by the people just across the sidewalk.

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We're also celebrating the love that we are better equipped to share with the world, because we are supported by community, because living in community allows us to live the fullest expression of ourselves.

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It allows us to give our time and labor because we are so held back at home.

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It allows us to grow by engaging in dialogue with our neighbors dialogue.

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That is sometimes challenging. But what we practice in our communities is replicated at scale.

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Intentional dialogue and conflict trains us to be active participants in a healthy democracy.

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We learn, and our communities to communicate, and hopefully to love across difference, our alignment with values of sustainability and ecological regeneration ripple outwards, too.

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We share, we consume less, we waste less. but even beyond a green committees and composting practices, we live our love for the earth by living a life of meaning.

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When we experience deep connection and meaning, we are actually called less to consume.

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So our love for one another is intertwined with our love for the planet Community is love in action.

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Whether you're in community now, or seeking one I imagine that you each have a dream in your mind.

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This is an image that you created in the ideation stage of what life would be like.

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Once you were finally living in the community of your dreams It's that image that you use as a reminder when times get rough when the land purchase falls through.

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When key members choose another path, when you just can't take another policy revision meeting, you return to this image to your Why? so?

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Here was my image. My partner, Adam and I are sitting on the common green at Aria.

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Years in hand. On a summer afternoon we've strung a white bed sheet from 2 trees in order to play an outdoor movie.

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Once the sun goes down, neighbors are chatting and snacking on shared dishes.

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My image. there's one neighbor is a nurse and they're advising another neighbor on a minor element.

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Ailment. Another neighbor, an artist, is passing out flyers for her upcoming art, show a teenager plays guitar in the background, and a multi-generational group is playing frisbee in the

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grass. there's a baby on a blanket in front of me playing peekaboo with a community elder.

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Of course, in the days before I joined my community in my imagination days that very baby in real life was in my belly, waiting to be born into her village.

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This was the scene that I imagined for her. For us this was the image that I called upon as my arrival point.

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As I speak about. Often I experienced deep loneliness before I found my way to aria.

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Cohousing community in Denver. For me, our home in the suburbs felt devoid of all the things that I call life.

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It lacked vibrancy, fun, the presence of other human beings.

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I felt like life was passing us by while we scrolled on our phones and waited for some transformation to take place.

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So my community fantasy, if you will centered around this visceral feeling of being awake and present in each of my life's moments.

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So my image wasn't about the movie on the screen the game that was being played, or the conversations being had.

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It was, how the cold beer felt in my palm, how the grass tickled my legs, and how the evening breeze cooled my skin.

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These simple pleasures just didn't seem possible from my Cul-de-sac.

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Everything felt so ray and stale. Why? Because I was missing a critical piece of being alive, a sense of belonging our world, as we know it, is not built for human connection, and therefore a deep sense of meaning our screens pull us away from

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one another. Capitalism requires us to prioritize production and consumption of all else.

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Our homes and neighborhoods are built to sustain privacy and accommodate our vehicles, but not the humans who drive them to live.

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A meaningful life takes conscious decision, making in every moment we must constantly choose to step out of the mainstream and into a new way.

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But to be in community is in our cells it's how we are meant to live, and in order to do so we must build our own villages, we have to rewrite the American dream i'd like to share with you a

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short video that was just released by the documentary film company. free Think it's part of a series that examines this idea of the American the American dream everything from our jobs to our lifestyles for our homes.

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And it looks at ways that humans just like each of you are creating a new American dream.

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So i'll share that here for you right now what exactly is the American Dream.

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What i've been told is that the American dream is to make it on your own.

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Get a big house, start a family in the 1,900 fiftys.

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The American dream became associated with the ideal of a house in the suburbs, and a white picket fence.

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But that's changing as we started to feel really lonely and isolated in the suburbs.

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It felt like we treated in community and relationships for the big house.

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We didn't want to raise our kid alone in a big house in the suburbs.

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It may have different expressions, but at its core the American dream is the freedom and opportunity to build the life you want.

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The white picket fence. you're with me mmm I wonder if any of my co-hosts could help me share that.

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Let me try once more, and if not hopefully, someone we can come up with the backup plan.

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I told you we'd have a lack of technical prowess today.

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Give me a second. All right. we're gonna be all right I think I can make it work if you want

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That would be great, Neil. Thank you. House start a family in the 1,900 fiftys.

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The American dream became associated with the ideal of a house, and the suburbs, and a white picket fence.

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But that's changing as we started to feel really lonely and isolated in the suburbs.

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It felt like we treated in community and relationships for the big house.

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We didn't want to raise our kid alone in a big house in the suburbs.

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It may have different expressions, but at its core the American dream is the freedom and opportunity to build the life you want.

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The white picket fence single family home. we crave something different.

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And so we committed to a different life. This family has dusted off an old housing concept to create something they call a micro village designing something different here than the American dream would otherwise tell us to do.

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These are stories of people reimagining the American dream for a new generation.

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Okay, Trish are a tour. Take one. This is Trish, a mom, social worker and housing advocate.

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We were really lonely in the suburbs we had lived there for 2 years and realized we didn't know any of our neighbors, and so we just craved a deeper sense of community.

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So. fortunately we found this forming group, so we joined the aria residence. Before the building was even complete.

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I got out she's amazing yeah she's just creative, too, the difference between cohousing and a traditional neighborhood, or any type of people living in close proximity is really just intention.

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So the people who live here live here because they want to live more communally.

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And so when they join, they agree to participate in the community to attend community dinners, to give their labor towards bettering the community and the surrounding spaces.

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Cohousing isn't a new idea and It isn't very different from traditional homeownership.

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You still own your own apartment or house, but you gain access to shared spaces like community gardens, common rooms where residents can cook, eat, and hang out together.

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So much about cohousing is exactly what we wanted but cohousing in itself is not affordable, and many people think that it is because there's so much sharing.

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So we looked around for different housing models that could bring that communal spirit, and that togetherness, but have more affordability.

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We couldn't find one. so we decided to create a micro village in 2,020.

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One church started work on the Chase Street Commons, a one-acre piece of land being developed into an affordable, multi-generational, cohousing community.

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I mean this is all unused. space so it's perfect for common green, and ideally we wouldn't even like the cars, would stop right here, so as you designed.

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We can have parking all there. the conventional approach to real estate development would be to demolish these buildings and build new properties to maximize the land's, value trisha's approach is to optimize

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the land's potential to create connection and community Well, what if one home goes back here and one home goes here.

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Community gardens step on. We want to transform the existing space to include 4 or 5 households.

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We want to move cars to the periphery, and instead put in walking paths in green space, so that we can facilitate connection with one another.

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We want to convert our existing structures into common spaces, and one way that we're making sh street commons more accessible is by utilizing a land lease model.

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So typically when someone buys a single family, home they're paying for the house that's built as well as the land underneath it, we are trying to separate those 2, so that folks only have to come with the money to pay for the

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home, but they can purchase the land over time. so It is an opportunity for people to own a home without bringing so much money up front for a variety of reasons, millennials, aren't buying as many homes as

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prior generations. One of those is the high cost of entry.

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Even if you can afford a monthly mortgage payment, you might not be able to afford the down payment up to 20% of the house and land combined.

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Do up front would chase. Street is working to do is break out the cost of the land.

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So people have the option to purchase just the home initially and least the land underneath it, until they're able to purchase that, too.

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This would lower the cost of the initial down payment, making home ownership more accessible.

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Co-housing is 1 point on a spectrum of collective housing models.

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It's not for everyone, but I also believe that we all have the power to create little villages by just taking some of the principles of cohousing and infusing them in traditional neighborhoods.

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Co- housing is one way younger Americans are re-conceptualizing the dream of homeownership.

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Others are downsizing, finding ways to reduce their carbon footprint, or completely redefining what a home even means in the age of remote work These trends all speak to a generational desire to customize the American dream to fit

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personal values and emissions. Perhaps the beauty, even of the American dream is that it doesn't have to take any particular shape. For some it could be a life of adventure for trish.

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It means a life of community. My dream is to find a sense of purpose and meaning.

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It's a world where we're each feeling connected to one another, and in a space where we can support one another, and I think that we can do that.

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Thanks for your technical help you know I think it's really fun to point out that that last scene of that video is the precise realization of the community fantasy that I described earlier.

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It's it's the exact scene that I envisioned the outdoor movie.

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The cold beer. the kids running around and this in itself is important because there's power in realizing our dreams.

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And there's power, too, and seeing others realize their dreams especially when they resonate with our own, because each of you are rewriting the American dream for yourself, whether you're forming a community helping others to build theirs or

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looking for others to remind you that. Yes, there is another way that we can live.

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You are rewriting the American dream something that this piece leaves out, but that we all know is the American dream never included everyone, and not by chance.

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But we, as a society, have built as our symbol, of success is based on a very narrow set of values, and doesn't reflect how many of us want to live.

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The traditional American dream excludes others by design. White supremacy and capitalism dissolve community by design.

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So the movement that we build must work in direct opposition to the forces that seek to separate, subjugate, and placate us.

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I believe that the future of cohousing must be expansive.

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In order to include everyone, it must be creative in order to honor the planet and her limited resources.

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Every single day i'm inspired by a new story of how people are finding creative ways to live in community with one another, whether it's buying up all the homes on a block for a retrofit community or considering the

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shifting trends of the workforce, by including co-working space in the community design.

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The micro village that we're building here at chi Street, Commons is another example.

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It is, of course, born from the values of coal housing, and will function much like a traditional cohousing community. but it will also look pretty different.

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We're using existing buildings and relying upon the rezoning of a traditional lot.

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Our community. Chase Street, Commons was also proud to include the surrounding neighborhood, and everything from common meals to childcare exchanges.

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We believe that the micro village should have no walls, and neither should our movement.

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I believe that we must tackle affordability, not because solving the housing crisis is our responsibility alone, but because community can and should be available to everyone.

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We truly believe that cohousing is an element of a better world, then we are called to ensure that that future is possible for everyone, regardless of economic status.

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We must come together in a shared commitment to racial and social justice, both as co-housing communities and this community of communities.

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And these commitments must be prioritized, revisited, supported with resources, racist housing policies, colonial and genocidal land grabs.

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Even this problematic notion of property ownership which commodifies what truly cannot be owned.

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These are all parts of our story. We must not look away from how we got here, how Collectivism has been intentionally degraded specifically in communities of color, and as a movement there's a reckoning in order every

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step forward must be informed by our history, and this journey forward starts with each of you.

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It starts with the communities you're building and sustaining it starts with the dream in your heart.

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So in the spirit of my favorite co-hosting speaker, Courtney Martin, I will end with the provocation, though in the words of another idol of mine, Adrian Marie Brown. Adrian writes do you already

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know that your existence, who and how you are, is in and of itself a contribution to the people and place around you, not after, or because you do some particular thing, but simply the miracle of your life and that the people around you and the places

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have contributions as well. Do you understand that your quality of life and your survival are tied to?

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How authentic and generous the connections are between you and the people, and place you live with and in?

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Are you actively practicing generosity and vulnerability in order to make connections between you and others clear, open, available, durable generosity here means giving of what you have without strings or expectations attached and

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vulnerability means showing your needs. So here, in this community of communitarians, I offer both a gift and a request.

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Give to you a commitment to furthering this movement.

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I see an opportunity for co- housing as an ethos, and not only an architectural model.

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I see a not so distant future where coal housing is a household term where our time is no longer spent debunking myths about these strange little enclaves.

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We've created, but rather celebrating the countless communities popping up on every corner.

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I will do what I can to support each of you who make this movement possible.

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The burning souls, the established communities, the professionals who build with us allow me to be the fuel in your fire, because you are illuminating a better future.

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And of course I also have a request. My request is that you bring your whole selves, not only to your communities, but to this movement as well, that you share your stories of dreams that were handed to you by society and the more meaningful

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ones you built in its place? echoing adrian's words?

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Do you understand that your quality of life and your survival are tied to?

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How authentic and generous the connections are between you, the people and place you live with, and in your survival we need each other now more than ever.

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So, please, I ask of you. Keep building. keep connecting and keep showing up, because together we can and will build a more loving future.

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Thanks for your time today. Wow! take a breath, everyone. Thank you, Trish so much.

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What a fantastic glimpse of who you are and what you're passionate about!

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So thank you. And what a great video I saw that you plugged the link to that video in the chat.

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Thank you very much. Very well done. Thank you. Huh! Fill in a lot of love today.

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I love this co- housing community of communities and I think trish!

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Let's go ahead and start connecting everybody yeah indeed so i'm sorry.

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Give me a moment to catch up there. We Go Okay, So we are inviting you now to a networking time with a randomly selected small group.

Chat & Links

01:07:06 LaDona Knigge: Teaching in zoom during the pandemic taught me to be patient! No worries.

01:11:34 Trish (she/her) - CohoUS Co-host: Here is the video link for this:
https://www.freethink.com/series/hack-the-dream?media_id=h1XadX7B

01:15:40 Cheuyengther: Very nice presentation.

01:16:08 ROBERT's iPhone: Trish what a beautiful and inspiring opening.

Robb



01:16:40 LaDona Knigge: Well done. I love the idea of retrofitting neighborhoods to create cohousing community!

01:16:41 Cheuyengther: I agree 100%

01:20:06 Jennie (she/her) Sunnyside Viliage Coho: Trish is terrific! I'm so happy she is the new ED!!

01:22:45 Cheuyengther: I love it Trish!

01:22:48 Kelly, Liseanne:

01:22:54
please?

Becky-Rachel Carson Ecovillage: could you put the video link in again,