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## The Training Academy of the Eschwege Institute

### Boiling Water: Experiencing Transforming Change

People sometimes come to the Eschwege Institute because they want something to change; somewhere in life they feel there is too much of something, or somewhere else they suffer because they feel something important is lacking. Maybe they have always wanted a baby and no baby comes, perhaps their job is difficult for them or too stressful. Many people come because they have heard of processes like Vision Quest or Journey of the Hero and they long for a deep experience that can bring meaning and a sense of value to their existence.

At one time or another almost all of us believe that for our happiness or health something must change. Men and women have sat in our councils and opened hearts full of longing and pain. They have shared stories of deep betrayal, tears of disappointment, and longing for wholeness and healing. Many believe that the change that they are seeking will come from the outside; from some ritual or peak experience. Actually this is not completely true.

We are all masters of transformative change. Every day of our lives we experience the major transformation of falling into deep dreamless sleep and then waking again. Every day we watch as water boils and magically goes from its liquid state into the gas of steam. In Eschwege we are always watching water boil and experiencing the magic of seeing men and women wake up to the potential they are already carrying within. Waking to this potential is like water turning into steam.

There was a woman who felt that her life had passed her by. She did not get the education she wanted, her job was meaningless and lacked inspiration. She sat in our circles and recounted her experiences in her time wandering in the mirror of nature. It seemed that on every walk she was seeing many snails. After a few days she had a good collection of beautiful empty snail shells before her on the floor of the room where we meet in council. After one very intensive afternoon she cried as she shared her realization that the reason she felt so disappointed and un-inspired was that she was living in an empty shell and her way to meaning and inspiration was to take the risk of leaving this "snail house" where she had been hiding. After this she was a "transformed person" making changes in her life and in accepting new challenges she was finding satisfaction and inspiration.

An older man came believing that he would soon be dead. After a long and successful career his life had lost meaning. Physical sickness and depression caused by a very painful childhood was consuming his life as he no longer had the challenge of going to work every day the dark thoughts began to grow stronger. On a warm summer afternoon he was asked to take a walk with the question "what is the next step in life for you?" He told us that for him the answer seemed clear, the next step was either to wait for death or maybe to even take his own life. He returned from the walk grinning, with lightness in his step. He said "before I even left the house, I saw a small sign where books were being sold. It said "the

proceeds of this sale will flow further into a special fund....” Then laughing he said “I guess that’s my next step, the proceeds of my life will flow on to benefit others”. The water had boiled! Something magic had happened and since then for many years he has been sharing his life with others and drawing great strength from that experience.

One young man came who had just graduated from college with honors. He was not only intelligent but also had been a kind of sports star at the university. But no matter what he achieved the feeling that there was no place for him in life plagued him. It was amazing to hear this strong, good-looking very intelligent man describe feeling small and unimportant. One day he sat looking very hopeless and said that many times in a room full of people he felt as if no one could even see him standing there and feeling so alone and starving for attention. One windy day in early fall he came back to the circle from a walk in the forest. The question he carried was “what is your greatest wound in life and what decision did you make because of that wound?”. When the circle was opened he signaled that he would be the first to talk. Usually he waited until all had finished, but on this day he had a strong energy and almost aggressively took the floor to tell his story. He recounted that after walking aimlessly for a long time feeling that there was not much hope for him and he would also probably not get an answer to his question he heard a strange bird calling. He followed the sound not paying much attention to where he was going when suddenly he saw the small bird sitting on the branches of a strong tree. But what really caught his attention was that in order for this tree to grow strong it had to push its way through a group of other trees finding a space for itself where it could get enough sun to grow straight and tall. At that moment he knew that he too could find that space in his life where he got both attention and space to grow – but he had to use the drive coming from his roots, just as the tree in the forest did. The water boiled.

In story after story we have watched people find that when the pot is full and the temperature is right that water always boils. Transformative change is our birthright and when it comes to our own lives we are the master cooks who know what needs to be in the pot and how hot we want the fire.

Dr. Ron Kunga Lacoste