

A Milestone Event

By Sat Amrit Kaur

Last month more than 430 people from 47 different countries gathered on Zoom for the first ever Global Aquarian Trainer Forum & Online Summit. At this pivotal time in our Kundalini Yoga community it was essential to create an event that was inclusive and accessible to all people, voices, thoughts and ideas. The Forum took place over three days with two different schedules to accommodate all time zones. It included an amazing team of translators in seven different languages. Participants interacted around three central themes: *connect, engage, lead*. The Forum served as a starting point for how we as a community choose to move forward.

Like many other in-person events the Forum was moved online because of the pandemic. No one on the planning committee, a team of KRI staff and volunteers, could have imagined what the Forum would become. “We made the impossible possible,” said Hari Charn Kaur. It truly was a co-creative experimental process by both the organizers and the participants. At one point Gurudev Singh explicitly asked for us all to practice forgiveness: forgiveness of the technology and of ourselves. It required a tremendous amount of patience and acceptance – we had to be ok with imperfection and trust it would all work out.

Establishing connection on Day One was key for creating a safe container so authentic and meaningful communication could be fostered. Participants met in small groups and in regional meetings. We also had a rock-paper-scissors tournament for added fun! Day Two and Three were devoted to Open Space Technology (OST), a participant-driven process where topics are sourced by participants at the event. More than 150 topics were proposed and scheduled into seven OST sessions. Some of those topics included: *How to Find Common Ground after the Allegations, The Future of KRI: Horizontal Leadership, Who Owns Kundalini Yoga Now?, The Importance of Self Initiation, White Tantric Yoga, Racism in the Yoga Community, and Joy, Fun & Humor in Teaching Kundalini Yoga*. Notes from each topic discussion will now be the starting points for more self-directed and self-organized work by the trainer community, leading to concrete proposals, new policies, and informed actions by the KRI Board of Directors, KRI Staff, or ongoing, community-initiated committees.

One of the intentions was a call for new leaders to show up, which meant existing leadership needed to create the space for that to happen. The Forum did so in a way that was organic (given the unplanned circumstances of hosting an online event) and courageous. There was a meaningful exchange throughout the entirety of the event between different generations of trainers and leaders. And while we can all agree this is a time of change and transformation, may we also keep in mind the value for each individual’s unique contribution that will support the progress and future of our community.

Here’s what some have said about the Forum:

I don't know if a few years from now when we look back at this Summit, we will understand as a milestone event in our community, but I suspect that we will.

The work we have done together has modeled a new way to communicate with each other, to hold our communal space, and to honor our past yet give ourselves permission to have real conversations about how we want to walk together into our future.

There were voices of skepticism or others of resistance to change or course, but they too were heard and allowed to be expressed. – Gurudev Singh, Mexico

I really feel myself engaged with the inspiration of contributing to a global open and wide community serving the consciousness where everyone who wants to join is welcome. I don't really know how to do that, and maybe we can all find the way together. – Hari Avtar Singh, Chile

I love how our forum/summit was so fierce and fully inclusive! – Sukhdev Kaur, Estonia