

# Circles

March 19-21, 2010

A retreat-conference-gathering for all women—and men whatever your sexual orientation, sex/gender designation at birth, whatever your age, race, or cultural affiliation, whether or not you are politically, socially, or anatomically, 'correct'. Circles embraces everyone whatever their gender identity/ies.

Circles is an opportunity to leave fear, shame, awkwardness, homophobia, and genderphobia behind and move toward an integration and acceptance of who we are as people. It is finding our way back to wholeness, reclaiming our lives, opening to the many dimensions of this journey - spiritual and personal, as well as cultural, social and political.

Together we will explore the varied landscapes of identity, gender, and sexuality. We will look at common ground, and common difference. What do we share in our souls? How can we support each other? Can we free ourselves from the many assumptions that are held by the dominant culture and that cause us isolation and fear? Can we embrace our deep diversity? What unique gifts can we bring to feminism and to the broader struggles for human rights? What can we learn as we uncover new aspects of ourselves that we may never have imagined existed?

For those who have felt excluded from other retreats and conferences, Circles is a chance to enjoy safe, inclusive, non-judgemental space. For those who have taken gender identity for granted, it may challenge your assumptions about gender and deepen your understanding of who you are.

If you are you ...

- ⊙ transgendered or gender-queer and looking for community and connection?
- ⊙ straight/bi/gay/gender-queer/trans/intersexed and still questioning!
- ⊙ in a relationship with a transgendered person, now or in the past?
- ⊙ a therapist or educator and who addresses issues of gender and gender-identity in your work?
- ⊙ seeking new directions for feminist or queer thought, identity, and action?

then Circles is for You!

## Registration:

The cost of the weekend, including accommodation, workshops, and fine vegetarian meals, is \$250. Space is limited to 20, so it is important to sign up early. A nonrefundable deposit of \$100 is required when you reserve our place, with the remainder due on arrival, April 10.

Please send your check for \$100 to:  
Ordinary Dharma, PO Box 67, Warner Springs CA 92086

or register by credit card on our website  
[www.manzanitavillage.org](http://www.manzanitavillage.org)

Confirmation and other details will be mailed, or e-mailed to you  
(please specify your preference).

Five Changes Foundation,  
[www.manzanitavillage.org](http://www.manzanitavillage.org)

CIRCLES. Sponsored by Five Changes Foundation, Los Angeles Gender Center, Manzanita Village Retreat Center

Scholarships are available for San Diego and Tijuana folks. Please contact us for info.

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Trans  
Space ?

## Schedule

### Arrival and Orientation:

Friday, March 19 between 1:00-6:00 pm

Conference Ends: Sunday, March 21 at 3:00 pm

Retreat participants who wish, can facilitate a workshop. These will be planned prior to the event. Also everyone will be asked to help in the kitchen and with final cleanup - (many hands make light work!)

In addition to scheduled workshops there will be time to rest, hike, journal, hang out etc. There are trails for hiking and plenty of open space. Clothing optional sauna will be available in cold weather.

Meals are delicious + vegetarian, served family-style.

Special diets can be handled with advance notice. (please let us know of your needs when you register)

## Location

"Circles" is now part of the regular program offered by Five Changes Foundation, based at Manzanita Village Retreat Center. We are in a secluded, unspoiled valley adjacent to several thousand acres of national forest in Northeast San Diego County. We are 2½ hours from Los Angeles and 1½ hours from San Diego. With advance notice, rides can be arranged. If you are flying into the area from elsewhere please let us know well in advance so that we can coordinate a ride for you.

## Questions? Please Contact Us

**Caitríona Reed, or Michele Benzamin-Miki**

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e-mail: manzanita@ordinarydharma.org

**Elise Turen**

Phone: 310-475-8880 x 2

e-mail: dreliseturen@gmail.com

## Creating Sanctuary

**Circles** is a retreat-conference for anyone who is transgendered (ftm or mtf), (*pre-, post-, and non-operative - at **any** stage of transition*), intersex, gender-queer, or people simply questioning gender and gender-identity; allies of trans women and men, and anyone interested in such exploration in a small, safe, non-sexual gathering of like-minded folk.

*the quiet beauty of the setting, and the grace and support of the participants reminded me of how wonderful life can be. I can't imagine anyone not being touched by the community of kindred spirits I encountered here . . .*

*—participant at a Circles retreat*

## Cost

The cost of the weekend is \$220, which includes dormitory-style accommodations, all meals from supper on Friday through, lunch on Sunday, the use of the sauna, and all workshops. A limited number of double rooms are available for an extra charge of \$44 per person, or \$66 for a couple. We also have some scholarship money available.

Financial Assistance. If you need financial assistance, please contact us as soon as possible.

Donate. If you can contribute a little extra to assist others in attending, your donation will be greatly appreciated.

## Workshops

YOU are the expert on your life. Your perspectives are uniquely valuable. We co-create these retreats so that anyone who wishes can facilitate a workshop, create a performance, or lead a discussion. There is no fixed form: movement, art, demonstration, ritual, music, theater, readings, dialog, photos, massage, improvisation—anything is possible. We encourage your participation.

Some areas of exploration are:

- Identity and identity stereotypes
- Communication and communication styles
- Community, connection, isolation
- Identity politics
- Hormones, surgery, emotions, libido
- Spiritual aspects of transition
- Poetry, art, performance, music, dance
- Mask making, party games, singalongs
- Politics of genderqueerdom '*Deep Queer*'
- Dealing with difficult emotions
- Finding our true voice
- Transition rituals
- TS employment issues
- Dating in transition and beyond
- Issues for partners of transsexuals
- Alternatives to surgery
- Sexual orientations and reorientations
- Trans Gods, Goddesses, and S/heroes
- Reclaiming our history
- Building coalitions, building community
- Women' space. Queer space
- Loving our bodies. Body image & self-esteem  
*and a whole lot more*

## Dates of next Circles

We hold these workshop/conferences twice a year. The next will be held in the Fall of 2010. See our website for details - [www.manzanitavillage.org](http://www.manzanitavillage.org).