

# The CRCRS Manifesto

for Connected, Resilient, Candid, Reciprocal Subsocieties (v2025-08-26. © 2025 John Pratt. Licence: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

## Problem Framing

- Changes to our modern Western lifestyles and culture:
  - Provide us great opportunity and independence — with pluralism and individuality taken for granted; but
  - Draw us into ever-increasing division, isolation and loneliness:
    - Which have been linked with misery, health problems and even early death — though not everyone is aware, and it may be hard to admit due to social stigma;
    - Even compared to times and places where many other problems are worse;
    - By continuing to gate connection and resilience behind conformity.
- Mainstream institutions and norms are adaptive for most people in many ways, but
- Some challenging human dispositions — instinctive and/or socially normalised — can lead to too few, or too shallow, human relationships.

## Solution Framing

Those of us who are affected — and are willing to engage in good faith — must associate into local subsocieties: social contexts where we can:

- Meet in person to form communal and personal bonds; and
- Rely on a shared philosophy which:
  - Actually addresses the core principles that are really necessary to satisfy our unmet social needs, and
  - Helps us understand and manage the challenging dispositions that hamper our efforts to connect in mainstream society;
  - Ties our practices directly to our motivation of real connection and resilience; and
  - Gives us confidence in getting better-than-normal results for our efforts — through the self-selection of those of us who share a discerning and productive attitude, but
  - Neither withdraws us from broader humanity and society, nor places us in foolish opposition to them.

## Our Core Principles

We must aspire — despite inevitable complications — to become:

### Connected

- Welcome all human beings who share our need — and follow our principles in good faith — to associate and belong with us.
- Seek personal bonds with other individuals — drawing on whatever we happen to share.
- Develop together our latent human social potential, including:
  - Customarily being around each other and involved in each-others lives — so we can effectively relate as human beings on instinctive and emotional

- levels,
- Building friendships that can eventually grow to be as close as kinship, and
- Showing up for the extremes of each others' lives: both joy & celebration and pain & hardship;
- Practicing assertiveness — setting and respecting reasonable boundaries;
- Building trust through more generous assumptions and interpretations of others' points of view, values and intentions,
- Nurturing the ability to relate and interact with almost anyone who cares to do the same, and
- Cultivating tolerance — or even forgiveness or respect — for those who make us uncomfortable or who we have a negative emotional attachment to.

## Resilient

- Practice real emotional and practical support — as a sufficient basis for personal connection.
- Practice mutual aid and protection — as a sufficient basis for group solidarity.
- Value loyal and dependable relationships that:
  - Are stable and long-term enough to have effective cooperation and mutual accountability;
  - Give mutual benefit that is worth both parties making sacrifices for; and
  - Outlast predictable minor setbacks:
    - Especially:
      - Interpersonal conflicts, or
      - Changes in lifestyle;
    - That have no necessary bearing on the viability of the relationship (i.e. not including serious betrayal, abuse or neglect).
- Value deep, well-maintained group interconnections and networking:
  - On the one hand, have a low barrier to entry and focus on individual relationships:
    - Give budding friendships the personal attention they deserve.
    - Prefer informal gatherings of like-minded individuals to limit organisational or regulatory burdens.
    - Reduce individual costs to involvement by keeping activities personal, flexible, local and free. (Unavoidable costs should be minimised and paid voluntarily.)
    - Don't introduce unnecessary attitudes or group dynamics that might inflame our challenging dispositions.
    - Be flexible in how we coordinate (e.g. online).
  - On the other hand, lean into group value and communal investment:
    - Have enough structure and custom within meetings to communicate and normalise:
      - Following the core principles, and
      - Managing our challenging dispositions.
    - Encourage a critical mass of members for group resilience, such that:
      - Each person's unique needs should align with someone else's available resources, and
      - We feel secure in our ability to adapt to life's challenges together.
    - Establish ways of coordinating that are known to meet our principles.

## Candid

- Share and respond to forthright admissions of need — giving connection and resilience problems the high priority they warrant.
- Make it a group custom to disclose, raise, ask or offer whatever will serve us in following our principles:
  - To unify our rational and emotional natures, and
  - To grow group trust and solidarity;
  - With an attitude of respect and sincerity for the ritual (though the structure

- may be flexible and our interactions comfortable and good-humoured).
- Nurture a gentle sense of irony about our judgements, opinions and stories about ourselves and others.
- Prefer engaged, meaningful discourse — however imperfect:
  - To allow others to really know us — showing openly and honestly what we really want, value and believe, and
  - To nurture mutual understanding, respect and connection — putting our differences out in the open where they can't fester.
- Admit vulnerability and expose ourselves to emotional risk — which is the courage necessary to:
  - Deeply connect,
  - Be open to other people and ideas, and
  - Trust that we will still belong despite interpersonal conflict.
- Give confidence that demonstrations of friendliness and goodwill are sincere and can be trusted:
  - Be frank about how close we do or don't want to be to people if our intentions or attitudes don't match.
  - Prefer neutrality, or even tolerance with stiff politeness, over fake friendliness or insincere goodwill.

## Reciprocal

- Give mutual support and protection the high priority they warrant — by looking for opportunities to help each other.
- Seek a proportionate degree of care and assistance from others:
  - To ensure our own involvement is sustainable;
  - Including:
    - Reciprocation of effort in personal relationships (not to be confused with superficial transactional relationships), and
    - Reciprocity of effort within the larger group: gratefully receiving the help we need to compensate for the help we have given.
- Have a sense of fairness and even-handedness:
  - Treat others as we would be treated.
  - Only expect those rights and privileges we grant others.
  - Include and accept others in the way we ourselves deeply desire to be included and accepted.
  - See others' flaws in ourselves and tolerate them accordingly.
- Vindicate others' trust in their security and belonging.
- Honour a truce with anyone we just can't connect with, rather than acting or manoeuvring against each other.

# Challenging Human Dispositions

## Dispositions Framing

The challenging human social dispositions that we must understand when forming subsocieties:

- Are present in all of us to some extent,
- Can be seen as common ground — part of our shared humanity, and
- Can sometimes be channeled into pro-social behavior; but
- Often regress into counterproductive behaviours for our purposes,
- Can undermine the will and effort necessary for us to create real connection and resilience, and
- Can form vicious, mutually-reinforcing cycles when any of them are left unmanaged; so
- Unless we:
  - Are aware of them,

- Accept their influence on us — instead of normatively denying them,
- Evaluate our groups' progress by how well we're managing them, and
- Channel them in more adaptive directions;
- We will inevitably act upon them:
  - Without proper restraint — if we knowingly and uncritically condone them; or
  - Without the necessary self-awareness — if we are deeply oblivious or in denial of them, or too hastily overcompensate for them or assume we can erase them completely;
- Which — if uncorrected — will leave our group in a downward spiral of following our dispositions instead of our core principles, until the group has become denatured and worthless.

## Dispositions List

### Conditionality

- To measure stake in potential relationships using extraneous criteria that are disconnected from the fundamental motivations of connection and resilience:
  - Especially:
    - Shared beliefs or opinions — usually religious or political;
    - Activities — usually hobbies, causes or vices;
    - Social gatherings where we must compete for social status and continued inclusion; and
    - Proficiency at social protocols and customs:
      - Regardless of their moral and practical limitations,
      - Possibly including denial of our lack of real connection and resilience;
  - As the only socially endorsed ways of forming relationships without attracting shame and stigma,
  - To the point where we are effectively excluded or rejected — by others or ourselves — because we don't share them;
  - Even when they have not satisfied our fundamental motivations for pursuing them in the first place;
  - Instead of investing directly in each-other's lives and wellbeing out of more principled social obligation.

### Tribalism

- To only connect with people based on superficial demographic similarity.
- To filter people into in-group vs out-group:
  - Us; our tribe; people like us who want and do good things; individual human beings worthy of empathy, understanding and good treatment; vs
  - Them; the Other; people who want and do bad things; the inferior and contemptible; our designated scapegoats, fit to be remorselessly dehumanised, de-individualised, diminished, accused, judged harshly and/or warred against.
- To live in siege mindset, where a sense of being under attack by the out-group leads to prejudiced opinions and responses to anyone associated with them.
- To have cliquey group identity and labels (as opposed to "human beings", "members of this group", or "friends").
- To judge, ostracise or exclude others based solely on the grievances or opinions of others in the group.
- To normalise blind support for each other's claims or actions:
  - To signal solidarity, or
  - To purport high social or moral standing;
  - Uncritically echoing and championing group claims about what is right — rather than independently valuing truth, empathy or substance;
  - Especially when there is a norm of protecting each others' egos from the

- possibility of being in the wrong; and
- Especially to curry favour with higher-status people — including cronyism or cultishness based on power rather than earned respect.

## **Hypocrisy**

- To hide — often from ourselves — what lies behind our socially and morally unassailable personas:
  - The many flaws that we judge in others but don't want to admit we have (often due to social taboo), even though they are part of our shared humanity.
  - The desire to have ourselves and our beliefs be dominant:
    - Especially wanting:
      - Resolution in favour of our own beliefs or preferences — which are often the only ones we think should be tolerated, and
      - To feel in control and raise our status by having others defer to us and follow rules that suit us;
    - Often framed as though noble using excuses like "fighting for what we believe".
  - Deep self-absorption or selfish motivation — often hidden behind other motivations we prefer to admit to — including:
    - The desire to benefit from other people's efforts (whether they like it or not);
    - Internal motivations for altruism that may be misaligned with our surface altruistic goals; and
    - The tendency to twist things to suit our own preferences at others expense.
  - Vulnerability, as though it would:
    - Indicate weakness (due to social stigma, or emotional unawareness or immaturity), or
    - Be too dangerous (due to conditioned mistrust or anxiety).
  - Negativity that we prefer not to feel or admit to:
    - Especially:
      - Loneliness and isolation,
      - Defensiveness, fear and insecurity (which often prompt us to defend our personas),
      - Pain, shame, sadness, helplessness, envy, resentment, superiority, suspicion and mean-spiritedness;
    - Hidden by a veneer of positivity — which we resent anyone uncovering or refusing to share;
    - With the perverse exception of righteous anger, which is often normalised to everyone's detriment.
  - Impaired rationality and ethics in the presence of instinctive and emotional reactions:
    - Especially:
      - Minds which routinely rationalise and/or moralise to justify irrational, short-sighted decisions,
      - Difficulty discerning reasons (actual criteria or ulterior motives) from excuses, and
      - Diminished empathy;
    - Especially when incentivised by:
      - Perceived threats to our security,
      - Unmet needs, or
      - The potential to gain:
        - Power and status,
        - Mating or sexual opportunities, or
        - Money or other resources.

## **Superficiality**

- To uncritically conflate social normality with goodness, through:
  - Judging each other's worth, trustworthiness or respectability based on normative appearance, presentation and signalling — rather than how we actually treat each other;
  - Failing to discern harmless, eccentric weirdness from shady or predatory weirdness; and
  - Overturning our default suspicion of others only — and then too easily — when they present a nice, conforming, agreeable face.
- To present — and expect from others — an image or persona that:
  - Must remain pleasing or even perfectionistic by purported social or moral standards to gain any social acceptance;
  - Is beyond what is required for healthy social adaptation; and
  - Creates a persistent restriction on authenticity.

## **Pretentiousness**

- To believe in our own relative sophistication.
- To think we can't be wrong about ourselves — even when our self-belief is made of poorly-examined identifications and labels that are received from our cultural or ideological groups.
- To have an impenetrable sense of righteousness about our desires, actions and causes.
- To divert our desire to help others away from humbly and personally assisting people we know, towards grandiose and impersonal efforts to help people in the abstract.

## **Superiority**

- To always compare ourselves hierarchically to others — socially and morally.
- To try to elevate ourselves (or groups we identify with) — socially or in our own heads — by lowering others:
  - Especially to judge, shame, disparage or scapegoat others — through either overt haughtiness or manipulative maneuvering;
  - Even regarding failures or attitudes we actually share — especially where there is a social expectation of pretence;
  - Implicitly assuming that we are some of the best people to have ever lived when setting standards for others.
- To neglect, reject, or be embarrassed by connections due only to perceived low social status:
  - Basing status judgements on trivial social proof — including admission of lack of close connections, vulnerability or the need for support that we all share;
  - Even when their status says nothing about whether they would meet better criteria for connection (like those espoused in our principles).

## **Complacency**

- To value comfort and familiarity over growth and fulfilment.
- To ignore the emotional, health and opportunity costs of the lack of deep personal relationships.
- To treat only the symptoms of disconnection and vulnerability, through means such as:
  - Shallow social connections that avoid the risk and exposure necessary to form deeper relationships;
  - Replacing meaningful social obligations with financial ones, for example:
    - Relying on social interaction with people who are just colleagues as though they were personal friends, or
    - Paying professionals to service minor care or practical needs, in lieu of relationships where others naturally want to look after us;
  - Media, especially:

- Social media and online connections that require little investment,
- Para-social relationships, or emotional opinions about far-removed, higher-status people, or
- Excessive escapism;
- Pets that are personified and doted on to make up for lacking human connections; or
- An endless parade of excuses for why we can't, needn't or shouldn't invest more in close connections, including:
  - Hiding behind cynicism about other people's likely reactions,
  - Tactical overestimation of our desire for solitude,
  - Assuming that we will get what we need via existing approaches — even when we consistently have not,
  - Tactical focus on our other privileges or good fortune when it comes time to admit to what we lack, or
  - Always being tactically too busy with things less challenging — but also less rewarding — than good relationships.

## Call to Action

For those of us disconnected and vulnerable despite our best efforts at solving the problem in normative ways:

- A group based on these principles may be the best opportunity we'll ever have to transform our lives; and
- We cannot sit passively by and expect:
  - Others to take responsibility and action for us, nor
  - Our lot to improve without each of us exercising courage and effort, nor
  - To find a thriving group that we can just join and benefit from without investment; so
- We must each make the most of this opportunity to help form Connected, Resilient, Candid, Reciprocal Subsocieties.