

The CRCRS Manifesto

for Connected, Resilient, Candid, Reciprocal Subsocieties (v2025-09-27. © 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 to whom we have a negative emotional attachment.

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,
- Parasocial 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.