



Playful Inquiry Institute

Cultivating Reflective Teaching Practices
to Embolden Joy and Meaning

October 27-28, 2023 - Surrey

Esteemed Colleague:

We are thrilled and honored that soon we'll be sitting with you in Surrey, considering together how reflection in our practice with children, families, and colleagues invigorates joy and meaning. We hope that you are as excited as we are to spend time together reflecting on reflection!

The two of us have come to see reflection as essential to making meaning and finding greater possibility in our work. We grew much of that understanding through our time as teachers and leaders of professional development at Opal School and have continued to build that since its closure as we work with educators through [The Studio for Playful Inquiry](#) and in other experiences with educators around the world.

We've already had the pleasure of meeting some of you; for others, this will be our first time together. Over the last two decades, we've treasured our encounters with folks from BC: the work you're doing excites us. Collectively, you've created a framework along with lived experience that gives so much hope to people around the world who feel like a strong image of children and a commitment to flourishing lives at the heart of our work in early childhood education. We treasure that ongoing relationship.

Over the course of our time together next month, we'll write, immerse ourselves in the arts, and engage in facilitated conversation. At different points, you'll likely find yourself delighted, stretched, and a little uncomfortable. We hope that you'll arrive having anticipated how you respond to each of those feelings, prepared to give yourself what you need to stay open, engaged, and present to what the experience offers you.

We know that you are coming from a wide range of contexts and backgrounds, so we wanted to offer a few readings to have some shared points of connection. We imagine that some of these might be texts that you've read many times and others will be new to you: in either case, we hope that they will be fresh given their application to this gathering. At some point before we come together, please read the following, noticing how what is popping up for you as you encounter them:

1. Carlina Rinaldi, [The Pedagogy of Listening: The Listening Perspective from Reggio Emilia](#) (from [Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange](#))
2. Robin Wall Kimmerer, [The Gift of Strawberries](#) (from [Braiding Sweetgrass](#))

3. [Democracy, Fractals, and Sci-Fi \(adrienne maree brown\)](#) (Season 4, Episode 1 of the How To Citizen Podcast - listen through your browser or any podcast service, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and others)

As you read each - and as you consider the collection as a whole - we encourage you to capture your responses to these questions:

- *What stands out to you? How do these pieces inspire or provoke you?*
- *What connections do you see between the three pieces?*
- *How do the texts help you frame your recent experiences?*
- *How are the themes and ideas in these pieces supportive of joy and meaning?*
- *How do they expand your idea of the relationships between joy, meaning, and reflection?*
- *What new questions do these pieces inspire you to bring to our gathering?*

Through these texts, we're bringing in voices we value from afar - but we want to be rooted in yours. At some point soon before October 18, please write a note introducing yourself to us and other workshop facilitators. Let us know what you'd like us to know about you, your practice, and what brings you to this gathering? Please send that email by October 18 to mattandsusan@centerforplayfulinquiry.com. Receiving your message will help us set the table with you in mind.

One final request about setting that table: Would you please bring some beautiful items to the session? These might include natural materials you gather as you're walking with wonder between now and then and should only be items you're willing to leave at the session.

Until then, with great enthusiasm,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, on the left, is 'Matt' written in a cursive, slightly slanted script. The second signature, on the right, is 'Susan' written in a more fluid, cursive script with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Matt Karlsen and Susan Harris MacKay
The Center for Playful Inquiry