



Head, Hand & Heart Gathering

By [Charles Vogl](#)



Recently I've been thinking ever more deeply about how we can use the digital tools we got to help deepen the connections we want during this terrible Covid time. I went back to one of my favorite books, *The Mystic Heart* by Br. Wayne Teasdale. He reminded me that in spiritual contemplative communities members gather in at least three different ways. He refers to them as the Head, Hand, and Heart.

Head gathering is exactly what you think it is, discussing thinking and reflecting things. A lot of words get used. Hand gatherings include times we do or create something together. All of us have experienced times when collaborating made us feel more connected. The heart gathering in contemplative communities often embraces silence. This can mean contemplation, meditation, or silent reflection. I strongly suspect this can include chanting or singing together. I also suspect adoration together counts. For example, adoring art, nature, or spiritual experience together.

The reason this is important is many organizations and people are trying to connect through video calls (as well they should) but we're almost always defaulting to head gathering alone. Head gathering isn't bad, but it's insufficient. We've got to experiment with how we can use our digital tools to support hand and heart gathering too.

One organization I'm working with is experimenting with more ritual among professionals. Goodness knows we won't get this right out of the gate, but we do know we've got to do better.

The reflection has also helped me think about how and why shared meals are so often the most effective activity to grow connections among strangers, colleagues, and family. I suspect that especially when we prepare and serve a meal together, all three types of gathering happen over a meal or even the whole day together. I really long for a return to a time where friends gather in my home and we cook together, laugh together, spend three to five hours next to one another, never considering it a particularly long engagement. My life will be so much better, and a hole in my life will get filled.

Until then, let's hold on to the wisdom that shared meals repair a lot of hurt and we'll get back to them again.

[Read more articles here](#)