



Spring/Summer Reading List 2023

This season's list highlights articles, texts and other creative and thoughtful offerings which address *interdependency, group identity and sharing of resources*.

The Cambridge dictionary defines *interdependence* as, "a mutually dependent relationship ..."

We began exploring this theme as The Toronto Maple Leafs launched into another playoff season. For those of you who are hockey fans, you may be well aware of the playoff 'drought' that Toronto hockey players and fans have experienced over many years. It has been 56 years since the Leafs last won the Stanley Cup - that's the longest in NHL history! And the last time the Leafs even won Round 1 in the playoffs was in 2004 - almost 20 years ago! Toronto is host to multiple sports teams, and we think it's fair to say that our city is full of 'die-hard' sports fans, but hockey is especially dear to Canadian fans, and every Spring during playoff season our collective hope builds ... again.



This is one of many images posted of fans watching outdoor TVs outside the arena in Toronto in Maple Leaf Square during a hockey game.

And this article by Cory Stieg in 2020 suggests that “Sports fans have higher self-esteem and are more satisfied with their lives (whether their teams win or lose)”

[Why being a sports fan and rooting for a team is good for you \(cnbc.com\)](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/14/why-being-a-sports-fan-is-good-for-you.html)

For our American friends, you may be familiar with the branding (‘We The North’) of our only Canadian NBA basketball team, The Toronto Raptors. Particularly during playoff season, these flags can be seen not only all over Toronto, but across Canada!



During basketball season, the same outdoor Square turns into what is affectionately known in Toronto as ‘Jurassic Park’ for basketball fans.

This concept of “We the North” particularly resonated with us as we discussed how groups come together during times of celebration, and in times of tragedy. And we have seen multiple recent examples of both. We have experienced the power of groups to effect positive change; And we have also seen extraordinarily damaging effects.

Peter Block has written extensively about belonging. His 2018 text, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc. is a thoughtful, beautiful presentation about how we can transform our communities and collective experiences. In his words, “this book is written to support those who care for the well-being of their community. It is for anyone who wants to be part of creating an organization, neighbourhood, city, or country that works for all, and who has the faith and the energy to create such a place. I am one of those people....”

We hope that some of the references in this list may also stimulate some interesting reflections for you, and the groups to which you belong!

No Man Is an Island

By John Donne (1572-1631, England)

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.*

*If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were:
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were.*

*Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

Group Related:

During our discussions about this reading list theme, our reflections kept returning to two of the large group presentations at this year's AGPA Connect Conference in New York in March 2023.

Rev. Ronald Hopson offered a remarkable, impassioned presentation, "[*Embracing the Other: The Fundamental Work of a Working Group*](#)" as the Conference Opening Address.

The Anne and Ramon Alonso Plenary, "[*Large group Identity Issues, Political Leader-Followers Interactions and Social Well-Being*](#)" was presented by Dr. Vamik Volkan. His talk addressed many issues from his recent 2020 text, [*Large-Group Psychology: Racism, Societal Divisions, Narcissistic Leaders and Who We Are Now*](#). Phoenix Publishing House.

Both talks will soon be made available through AGPA, and we look forward to reviewing them again!

Molly Castelloe, Ph.D. posted an interesting article in [*Psychology Today*](#) on October 7, 2021, titled, [*Group Identity and Its Making: Crowd Psychology and Undigested Grief*](#). [Group Identity and Its Making | Psychology Today](#) that references Dr. Volkan's work in understanding large groups and mourning processes.

The following three articles on social identity in groups resonate with this theme of large group identity that builds on concepts of interdependency, inclusion, and belonging:

Ron B. Aviram and Sherri Rosenfeld (2002) *Application of Social Identity Theory in Group Therapy with Stigmatized Adults*, *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 52:1, 121-130.

This article explores the application of social identity theory, which contends that social group membership, also called collective identity, has an impact on self-esteem. The authors describe how to enhance self-esteem by broadening one's awareness of collective identity.

Paul Gitterman (2019) *Social Identities, Power, and Privilege: The Importance of Difference in Establishing Early Group Cohesion*, *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 69:1, 99-125.

The authors elaborate on the importance of working with difference in order to foster group cohesion. They explore our developmental drive for sameness and the fears of differences which often manifest as resistance to exploring our social identities and working with this material in group.

Susan P. Gantt and Yvonne M. Agazarian (2010) *Developing the Group Mind Through Functional Subgrouping: Linking Systems-Centered Training (SCT) and Interpersonal Neurobiology*, *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 60:4. 515-544.

The concept of the 'group mind' is explored using an interpersonal neurobiology frame to discuss how functional subgrouping can be used as a tool for developing the group mind to foster emotional regulation, secure relational context and neural integration.

It was impossible for us to contemplate the concepts of group identity and interconnectedness without reflecting on the curative factors inherent in groups. The following three references address these factors:

Irving D. Yalom and Molyn Leszcz (2020). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy 6th edition*, New York: Basic Books.

Colijn et al (1991) *A comparison of Curative Factors in Different Types of Group Psychotherapy*, *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, vol. 41, 365-378.

Paul Dierick and Germain Lietaer (2007) *Client Perception of Therapeutic Factors in Group Psychotherapy and Growth Groups: An Empirically- Based Hierarchical Model*. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 58(2), 203-230.

Of Interest:

The arts can often give a voice to the collective experience and build community...power of the arts to express what may not yet be named...

April each year is recognized as 'Earth Month', and in celebration of our interconnectivity with nature, below is an excerpt from poet Rupi Kaur's 2017 collection, *the sun and her flowers*:

"...

there is

nothing left

to worry about

the sun and her flowers are here."

The Textile Museum of Canada's new installation *Gathering* "centres community and artist collaboration."

The recent edition of AGOInsider, May 3, 2023, describes the exhibition: "Baby blankets, passed-down clothing, and traditional cultural attire – textiles provide some of the first and most significant places where we find comfort, identity and belonging. In its current installation *Gathering*, the Collection Gallery at the [Textile Museum of Canada](#) explores human experiences through themes of diaspora and migration, ancestral reclamation, resilience, and everyday life."

[https://ago.ca/agoinsider/gathering-](https://ago.ca/agoinsider/gathering-together?utm_source=AGO+email+communications&utm_campaign=22b10a06b6-AGOinsider_May+03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d4ab708299-22b10a06b6-246083481)

[together?utm_source=AGO+email+communications&utm_campaign=22b10a06b6-AGOinsider_May+03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d4ab708299-22b10a06b6-246083481](https://ago.ca/agoinsider/gathering-together?utm_source=AGO+email+communications&utm_campaign=22b10a06b6-AGOinsider_May+03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d4ab708299-22b10a06b6-246083481)

And in the spirit of community, interconnectivity and sharing of resources...

Rose Patten (2023) Intentional Leadership: The Big 8 Capabilities Setting Leaders Apart. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

“She is highly sought-after as an authority on the study and practice of leadership and has extensive experience as an advisor in the fields of senior leadership development and succession, strategy execution, and governance, in corporate and community settings. At U of T, currently she is Executive in Residence and Adjunct Professor in executive leadership programs at the Rotman School of Management.”

Chancellor Patten will be speaking about her recently launched book at U of T on May 30th at a reception for University of Toronto alumni and friends as part of a series of lectures being hosted in cities around the world.

In a recent article, *18 Ways Kindness can Save your Life and Change it for the Better*, Dr. Frank Lipman (February 2021), explores ways that showing kindness to others also supports our own physical and emotional health:

<https://drfranklipman.com/2021/02/22/18-ways-kindness-can-save-your-life-and-change-it-for-the-better/>

David Johnston, Canada’s 28th Governor General, and best-selling author of *Trust*, has just released his newest book, *Empathy: Turning Compassion into Action (2023)* Penguin Random House Canada. The text “explores how awakening to the transformative power of listening and caring permanently changes individuals, families, communities, and nations.” (cover)

And to boot, he was himself an accomplished hockey player who captained the Harvard hockey team while at University.

As a nod to our hockey-themed introduction, some of you may remember several years ago in Toronto during the singing of the teams’ National Anthems before the game began, the microphone cut out in the middle of the singer’s rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Without skipping a beat, the Toronto hockey crowd finished singing the American National Anthem. We’d like to end this season’s list with that wonderful ‘group’ moment, which you can watch and listen to below:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=toronto+fans+finish+american+anthem&oq=toronto+fans+finish+&aqs=chrome.0.0i512j69i57.6558j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&bshw=bshwcqp/1#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:76368f6b,vid:mHSaHRd4Q48>

(At the time of writing, our Toronto Maple Leafs made it past Round 1 - yahoo! And ‘we’ are currently in Round 2 against the Florida Panthers. Go Leafs Go!)