

Communal Reverie

A Practice Primer for
Aspiring Revericians



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Reverician:

one who is skilled in the art
of wakeful dreaming

What *is* Communal Reverie?

Communal Reverie may be described as a *we-space* practice that brings together elements drawn from

1. *Collective Presencing*

and

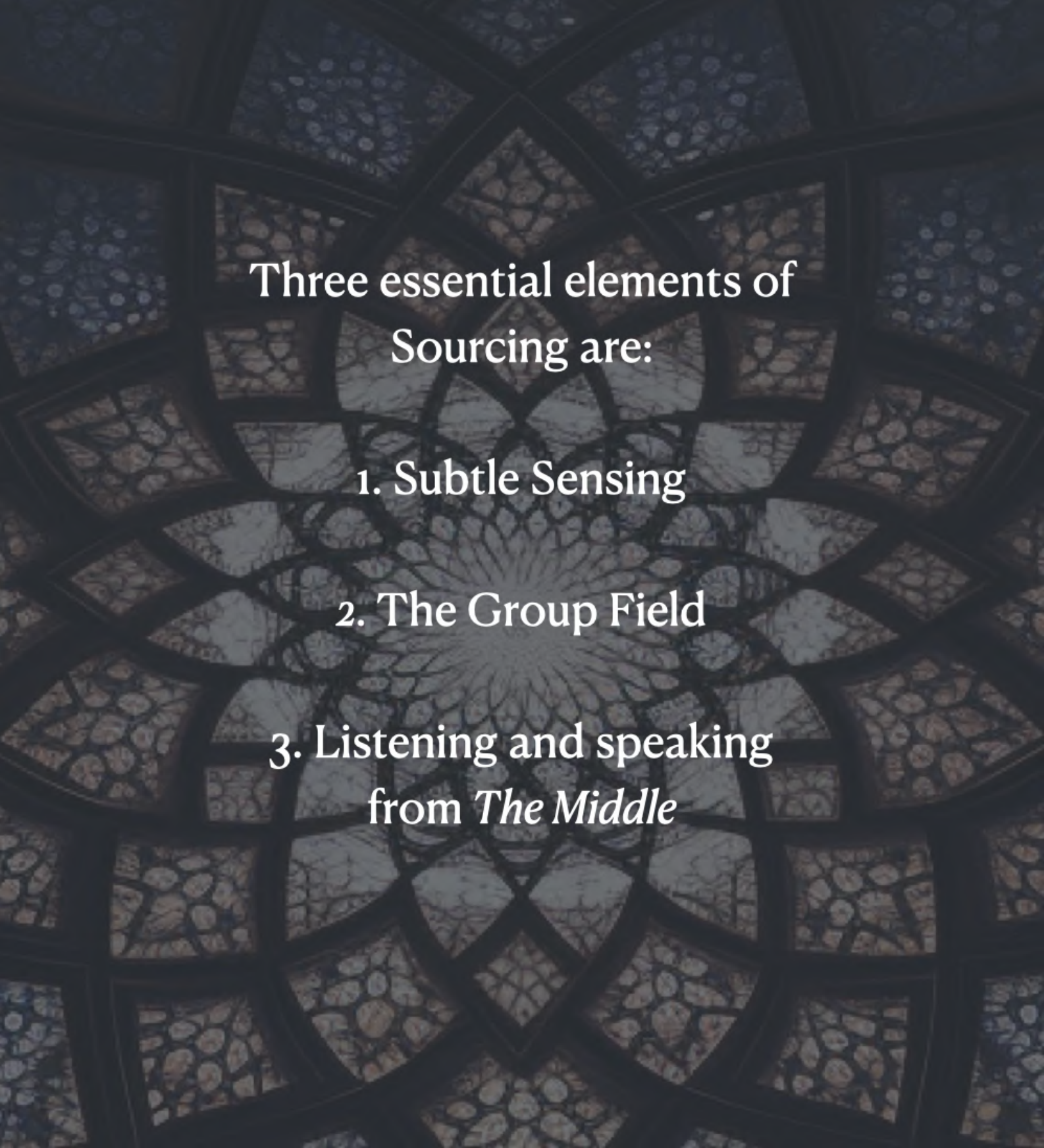
2. *Imaginal practices*



Collective Presencing

<https://www.collectivepresencing.org/>

A core component drawn from *Collective Presencing*,
a we-space practice based on the work of
Ria Baeck, is known as
“Sourcing”

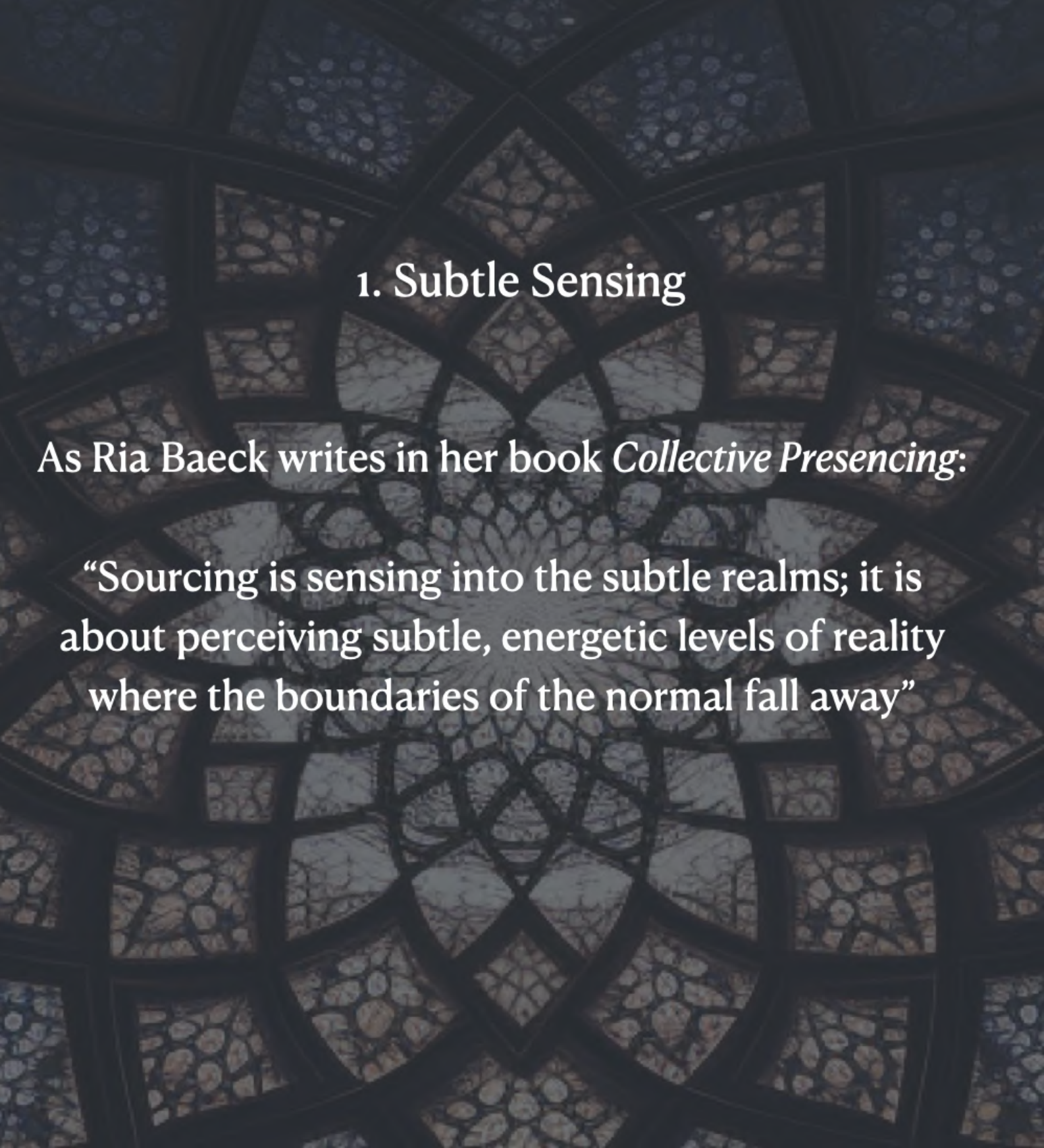


Three essential elements of
Sourcing are:

1. Subtle Sensing

2. The Group Field

3. Listening and speaking
from *The Middle*



1. Subtle Sensing

As Ria Baeck writes in her book *Collective Presencing*:

“Sourcing is sensing into the subtle realms; it is about perceiving subtle, energetic levels of reality where the boundaries of the normal fall away”

1. Subtle Sensing

While we may consider a subtle, energetic level of existence, as attested to by many wisdom traditions, this is by no means necessary

Subtle sensing can also be thought of as *a kind of attention* that leads to a certain *kind of experience*

As we practice subtle sensing in group settings, cultivating it over time, we begin to notice that we can experience being together in a different way, and that this opens certain possibilities

Learning thus practice, it is sufficient to simply remain open to the mystery of this shift in experience without applying any concepts or ideas about what it is

1. Subtle Sensing

In practice, subtle sensing begins with *slowing down*, leaving space for silence and allowing our consciousness to settle by quieting the chatter of mental activity that typically stands at the foreground of our awareness

From this settled silence, we bring our attention to the subtle dimensions of our *bodily* experience

Tuning into the subtle energies of the body in this way, we can then begin to sense the *group field*

2. The Group Field

As Ria Baeck writes, “we use the notion ‘group field’ to denote the inner dimension that seems to be present in any kind of group . . . there are always subtle energies present that we can learn to detect, to trust, amplify and nurture”

2. The Group Field

When we practice subtle sensing in the context of a group, the shift in experience that opens up for us appears to be connected with, and made possible by, the group itself

As participants begin to focus on the felt quality of intersubjectivity, a kind of subtle “field” emerges

The palpability of this intersubjective field generally seems to intensify in direct correspondence with the degree of collective attention that is brought to it

The more we tune in to it *together*, the more noticeable it is

2. The Group Field

Again, no particular ideas are necessary about what this group field is, including the idea of the group field as a *thing*, as though it were “out there” separate from us

What is more important here is the *felt experience* that the term gestures toward

As we practice speaking directly from the felt sense of the field, we may begin to notice how it feels *different* when we source our speech from that place as compared with commonplace ways of relating to others

In Collective Presencing, this is described as speaking to and from *the middle*

3. The Middle

As Baeck explains in *Collective Presencing*:

“We invite participants in the circle to speak to and from the middle so as to increase the likelihood of speaking from that subtle place [i.e., the intelligence of the group field].”

3. The Middle

In Collective Presencing practice, this is aided by the use of a “talking piece,” which ensures that the pace of exchange slows down, guiding the attention of the group to focus on one speaker at a time

While we do not explicitly use a “talking piece” for Communal Reverie practice, we do observe the practice of listening to one speaker at a time until that speaker indicates that they are finished

This supports the essential processes of deep listening, continuous subtle attunement, and ongoing alignment of collective attention

Imaginal Practice

This brings us to *imaginal* practices

These practices entail adopting a stance of hospitality toward, and receptivity to, the imaginal

The term “imaginal” is used to draw a distinction from what is often meant by the term “imaginary”

Imaginal Practice

“Imaginal” is a difficult term to define exhaustively. Typically, it implies the following three assumptions:

1. Not everything that arises in the imagination is simply “made up” and therefore “unreal”
2. What arises in the imagination can have its own autonomy and intelligence, independent of our conscious intentions and control
3. The autonomy and intelligence of the imaginal can give rise to imagery that is deeply meaningful, often communicating purposes and creative potentials

Imaginal Practice

Becoming hospitable toward the imaginal—a stance I call *imaginal attunement*—entails settling the mind and temporarily suspending our *conceptual* and *intentionally directed* mental activity while tuning into our bodily experience

This clears the necessary space within our awareness for the imaginal to come to presence

Imaginal content typically arises spontaneously, taking the form of dreamlike imagery, at times accompanied by intuitions

This is more likely to happen when we intentionally adopt a stance of *receptivity* to the imaginal, as if we were clearing space in our awareness and holding it open to welcome its arrival

Imaginal Practice

While there are a variety of belief systems, ideas, and conceptual frameworks regarding the imaginal, the framework of Communal Reverie does not endorse or rely upon any one perspective

A stance of curiosity and openness to *a wide variety of possibilities* regarding the imaginal is encouraged



Playing with Possibilities...

The imaginal may bring us into contact with
dimensions of *our own psyche*

The imaginal may reveal subtle processes coursing
through the constellations of our *relationships*

The imaginal may connect us with regions of the
collective psyche—historical, cultural, ancestral, planetary



Playing with Possibilities...

The imaginal may produce images that act like “zip files,” condensing clusters of wishes, motivations, perceptions, reactions, thoughts—whether conscious, semi-conscious, or unconscious—into metaphorically apt representations

The imaginal may give rise to *mythological* motifs—whether in the form of familiar patterns long evident throughout human culture and history, or in the form of new mythic signatures coming to birth in our own time

The imaginal may reveal deep *archetypal* powers at work in our lives, which dance across the permeable membrane between nature and spirit



Playing with Possibilities...

The imaginal may enable our ability to expand and deepen our perceptual flexibility, leading the way to new and varied *ways of looking* at situations we are involved in

The imaginal may spontaneously weave *narrative* patterns which resonate with or impact the narratives we hold regarding processes unfolding in our lives

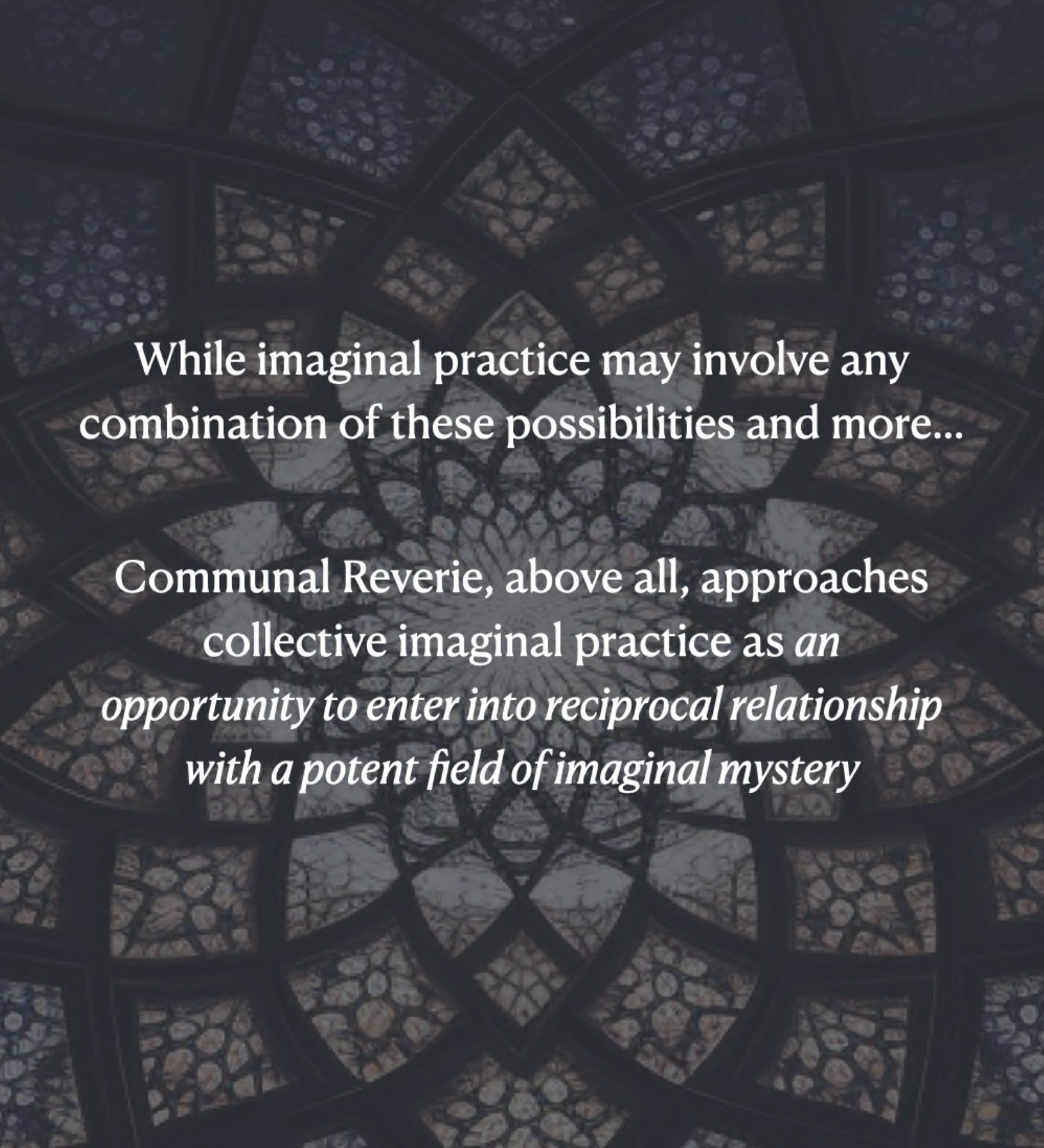
The imaginal may appear as a dwelling place populated by a variety of *nonphysical presences* with their own *agency, personalities, and perspectives*



Playing with Possibilities...

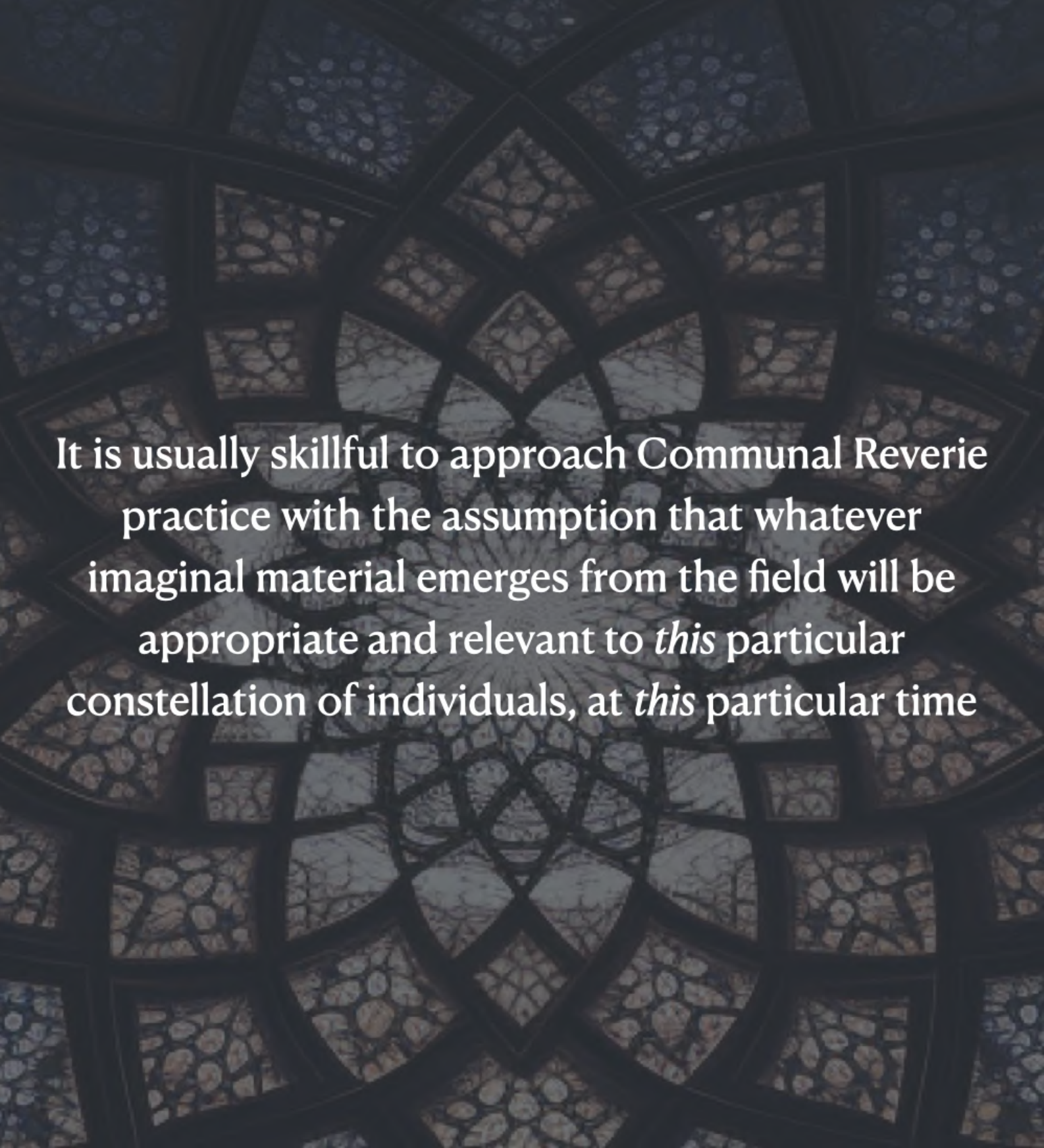
The imaginal may
lead to encounters evoking
a profound sense of *beauty* or *sacredness*

The imaginal may serve as a wellspring
from which we can draw
creative *inspiration*



While imaginal practice may involve any combination of these possibilities and more...

Communal Reverie, above all, approaches collective imaginal practice as *an opportunity to enter into reciprocal relationship with a potent field of imaginal mystery*



It is usually skillful to approach Communal Reverie practice with the assumption that whatever imaginal material emerges from the field will be appropriate and relevant to *this* particular constellation of individuals, at *this* particular time

Communal Reverie

In *Collective Presencing*, we deepen into presence and incline our intentionality toward Sourcing from the group field through our capacity for subtle sensing

In *imaginal practice*, we deepen into presence and incline our intentionality toward contacting the imaginal by making ourselves hospitable and receptive to it

In **Communal Reverie**, we deepen into presence and weave these intentionalities together, approaching the *middle*, or *group field*, as a place from which imaginal material can be mutually sourced by a group of co-sensing practitioners

Together, we *imagine* from the middle



Approaching practice...

Approaching a Communal Reverie session, participants begin by agreeing to largely set aside the *directive* and *conceptual* activity of their minds, mostly bracketing this from the interaction

Collectively, the group settles down and senses into the group field, maintaining a receptive stance of hospitality toward the imaginal

Once any member of the group sources any imaginal content from the field, they may share it into the middle, as soon as they feel ready to do so, by describing what they are sensing to the group

When one practitioner is speaking, others agree to listen until the speaker indicates they are finished speaking, at which point the floor is open again



Approaching practice...

Most frequently, the initial offering of imaginal material shared into the middle serves as an *entry point* from which other practitioners can continue—receiving the shared imagery and *sensing further into it*, intuiting or apprehending new facets and dimensions, further disclosing and deepening what has previously been sensed and voiced



Approaching practice...

There are also times, however, when *new* imagery or material is sensed and shared that may not immediately appear connected to what has initially been shared into the middle

The key to practice lies in being, to the best of our ability, *discerning* in our subtle sensing and imaginal attunement, *trusting* what the field reveals to us as well as our own intuitive sense for what to share into the middle and when




Approaching practice...

While it is generally recommended, as a guideline, to “stick with the images” by limiting what is spoken to descriptions of the imagery that is emerging, it is inevitable that more reflective, conceptual material arises

With regard to this, there is an additional recommendation....




It can be all-too-easy to fall into the habit of speaking “about” the imagery from a place that is removed from it, taking distance from the resonance of the group field, looking at what emerges as though it were a separate object, adding one’s comments or reflections upon what is emerging from a more “distant” place... This tends to include our thoughts about, or personal reactions to, the imagery that arises

A group of approximately seven people are sitting in a circle on a large, patterned rug. They are looking towards a large, vibrant, multi-colored energy field or aurora that is glowing in the center of the room. The energy field is composed of swirling, ethereal light in shades of purple, blue, green, and yellow. The background is dark, and the overall atmosphere is mystical and energetic.

Again: The base practice of Sourcing entails *continuous attunement to the group field*, with the aim of speaking to and from the middle as much as possible...

This means either describing the imagery, speaking from the felt sense of the body, or describing the immediately felt intuitions that arise



This means that what is spoken is felt to be *in resonance* with the field from which the imagery mysteriously arises...

The reflections are alive, in close contact with what is felt as *coming through* the field...

This is admittedly a subtle distinction, and can at times be difficult to discern with clarity

In some rare instances, Communal Reverie practice
can lead to the emergence of a process I've called
Imaginal Translucency

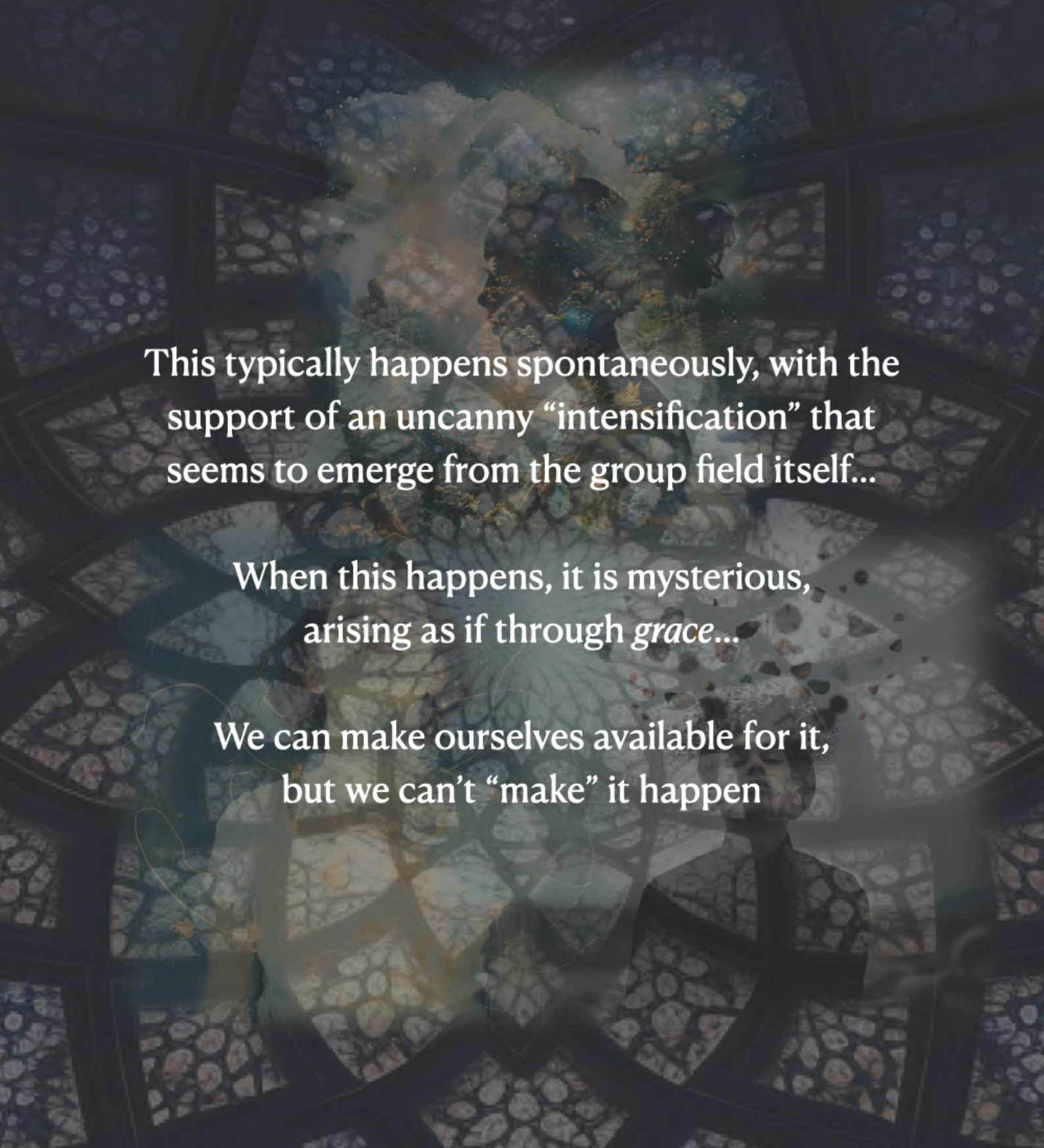
Imaginal Translucency is characterized by a
heightened awareness of the mutually enriching,
complementary interplay between:

1) bodily felt sense

2) imagery

3) conceptual thought





This typically happens spontaneously, with the support of an uncanny “intensification” that seems to emerge from the group field itself...

When this happens, it is mysterious, arising as if through *grace*...

We can make ourselves available for it, but we can’t “make” it happen

Because modern cultures have so favored the rational/conceptual mode above the imaginal and somatic, it is advised to favor bodily felt sense and imagery while practicing Communal Reverie, until conceptual material really “comes through” in such a way that is difficult to resist speaking it because it is undeniably present in the field



While these guidelines are valuable to keep in mind and strive for, there is no need to be overly “serious” about implementing them perfectly

Communal Reverie is a practice *and* an experiment, and is best approached in a spirit of *playful reverence*...

So, with this...



Experiment!

Play Reverently...

Reverently Play...