

Foreword

BY PATCH ADAMS

I'M A COMMUNITY FOUNDER. I knew when I entered medical school in 1967 that I would create an intentional community to offer low-cost medical care. I knew health care delivery was in big trouble, and as a nerd activist interested in cybernetics, I wanted to create a model that addressed all the problems of care delivery. In order for health care delivery to be inexpensive, I thought the staff should live in the community and it would include farming and host of support facilities. I know the medicine I wanted to practice would include helping stimulate patients' living vital, independent lives. Concerned for the health of communities and society as much as of individuals and their families, I had read copious utopian and dystopian literature.

I was sure I wanted to do this in an intentional community. I visited Twin Oaks in 1969 and other communities as well, all of which all fed my hunger to live this lifestyle, which I knew would be good for both staff and patient. I knew I would start a community when I graduated in 1971, and wrote up an eight-page paper with our first mission statement.

The innocence of that document makes me smile today. Like any good nerd, I tried to find any literature to help guide me on how to make my community vision happen. Nothing. So I spoke with fellow communards and dove right in. I wonder what we would have done different-

ly if we had run into this thorough, intelligent book back then. Maybe looking at all we had to do would have scared us away. We probably had fewer meetings than any founded community in history. We also made every known mistake. Yet for me, community living was a magical nine years. At a certain point in our process we realized that in order to continue with our hospital dream we would have to take most of the steps this book lays out so well.

Only a few community members wanted to continue in our medical service mission. The rest have all have all stayed together these 33 years as family, though no longer as an intentional community. In 1993, the incredible people who chose to continue to create our medical community realized we needed to do things differently, and made a commitment to the kinds of organizational structures this book suggests.

Very few communities would survive long without the depth of structure you'll find here. Whether you use this wisdom or not — it still is worth all the efforts to create and live in community. I've had no burnout or regrets. Community has made everything in my life easier and has allowed me to have huge dreams, inconceivable without community. The skills I've learned, practical and human, seem infinite. My love for humanity has thrived and expanded. Nothing about community has been easy, but it all has

been fun. This is the work for political activists who want to live their solutions. If we are to survive as a species we will do so learning the ecstasy of community. We do have to get together.

Creating a Life Together shows what to pay attention to in forming new communities and ecovillages, and offers exercises to develop community intelligence. Do these exercises even if you don't agree with them; consider them training wheels. Of course no book can be complete; you

still might make a million mistakes. I suggest reading this book and then visiting ten communities to see how they did it.

I thought it would take four years to build our free 40-bed hospital in community. Now, in our 33rd year, we may finally break ground this year. We're ready. We've learned that the journey to community is nurturing, and so will you. Good luck!