



MOVEMENTS, CHANGE, AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY (with guest Robert Putnam) 2 January 2026

2026-01-02 14:15:22 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/enroll>

2026-01-02 14:15:34 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
Check out courses there^
Gwen Olton: ★

2026-01-02 14:16:25 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
<https://www.mcnallyjackson.com/attensity-book-launch>

2026-01-02 14:18:31 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
That website!

2026-01-02 14:18:31 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
<https://attensity.net/>

2026-01-02 14:19:10 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
henry@sustainedattention.net <- any inquiries about seminar programs!

2026-01-02 14:19:13 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
peter@sustainedattention.net my email!

2026-01-02 14:20:12 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:
Are there translations of the book in the works / plans?

2026-01-02 14:20:29 From David Landes to Everyone:
Replying to "Are there translations of the book in the works / ...":
Yves Citton is doing one iirc!

2026-01-02 14:20:53 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:
Replying to "Are there translations of the book in the works / ...":
... what languages are happening, and what is needed?

2026-01-02 14:21:11 From Yves Citton to Everyone:

Coming out in June 2026 in French at La Découverte publisher
Peter Schmidt, Masami Kubo, Eric Nadler, Etienne Turpin, David Landes: ❤️

2026-01-02 14:21:43 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/join-our-coalition>

2026-01-02 14:21:49 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:
Is the toolkit available online?

2026-01-02 14:21:52 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
JOIN OUR COALITION link above!

2026-01-02 14:22:17 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Yes, toolkit here:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/647e2e2c944dab371f654149/t/69120d4804f3af7c6b757fb8/1762790728524/SoRA+Attention+Activism+Toolkit+1.1.pdf> (also at the "Attensity!" dropdown on our homepage)

2026-01-02 14:22:33 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
Replying to "Are there translations of the book in the works / ...":
The book has literary agents submitting internationally, all connections/intros welcome!

2026-01-02 14:22:57 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:
thanks!

2026-01-02 14:24:02 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
<https://friendsofattention.org/>
Donica Bettanin (she/her): 🔥

2026-01-02 14:24:07 From Lobbin Liu to Everyone:
Oh!!! really great part!

2026-01-02 14:29:10 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Thank you. Beautiful.
Lauren Guilmette: ❤️

2026-01-02 14:34:12 From Catherine Despont to Everyone:
The flowering isn't only outward, but the pollination returns back into seed.
Lauren Guilmette: ❤️

2026-01-02 14:34:31 From asú to Everyone:
Looking at the banana tree, I became very aware of its (our) juiciness, its full of water. Also that the beautiful bananas first need to be irresistible flowers and I kinda forget about that

2026-01-02 14:34:33 From Carter Minnick to Everyone:
Bush was wilted. Cloudy day in Tallahassee. Felt raw and rough around the edges to try and soak up the sunlight but possible with deep attention. Seems like a good metaphor for the beginning of the year.

2026-01-02 14:34:38 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
I visualized a monstera in a neighboring room that, this morning, I had a static electric shock from/with. When I became the monstera just now, I noticed that INTEROCEPTION was the only accessible sense, and my entire body became a latent thing, waiting to come up as a result of just being; it would DO without me doing anything. It resulted in a deep sense of relaxation and trust.
asú: ❤️

2026-01-02 14:34:39 From Amy Kurzweil to Everyone:

Becoming a plant makes me think about my essential needs: food, water, sleep, air, friends

2026-01-02 14:34:40 From Amy Hassinger (she/hers) to Everyone:

I thought about the way energy surges upward through the plant's core from roots, and also downward, from light. How the plant is always all of its total being, and always connected, physically, to air and earth.

Lauren Guilmette, Catherine Despont: 

2026-01-02 14:34:55 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

On the subject of "inner flowering"... I can hear my fiancé in the other room, taking bread out of the oven (one of my New Years explorations). The thought of "light on my skin" translated into "I want to go give her a hug," and my attention, too...

2026-01-02 14:35:10 From Melissa (she/her) to Everyone:

I found myself focused on a lot of contrasts - the cold, dry earth vs the (imagined?) warmth in the center of the tangle of branches; the freedom to sway in the breeze vs the groundedness of being stuck in one place. The branches at the top that sway the most vs the bits of branch and leaf that have died and will get swept away in the wind.

CJ The X: 

2026-01-02 14:35:16 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:

Synchronicity with two texts I've been thinking about in recent days: Hans Christian Andersen's The Fir Tree (I couldn't dwell on my Christmas tree for this reason); and Wintering by Katherine May, which reminds us of all that is nurtured in the dark/cold...the promise of blossoming always within

2026-01-02 14:35:25 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:

That was sweet. Love the Kinnell poem! Use it in my class meditations all the time.

2026-01-02 14:35:26 From Carla Nappi to Everyone:

Being with an orchid in the green, and the thought: "Nurture me even when I'm not blossoming"

2026-01-02 14:35:26 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:

Replying to "Synchronicity with two texts I've been thinking ab...":

Great books!!

Donica Bettanin (she/her): 

2026-01-02 14:35:40 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:

that was brilliant. efflorescence is, meanwhile, such a delicious term

Lauren Guilmette: 

2026-01-02 14:36:46 From CJ The X to Everyone:

Flower purchased in a store, kept alive in a vase. Highly aware of being valued, being grown from seed to sprout for the purpose of beauty as part of a bunch, cut off from the source and transplanted somewhere else, advertised in a store, selected, purchased, diagonally cut and placed in water and sunlight to last longer. Treasured. Growing at all because valuable.

Julian Chehirian, Peter Schmidt, Lauren Guilmette: 

2026-01-02 14:38:20 From Ben Berger to Everyone:

I also recommend the earlier Making Democracy Work (about Italy) and the more recent Our Kids for tremendously important Putnam works.

Donica Bettanin (she/her), Ana Cristina (Tininha): 

2026-01-02 14:38:55 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:

Allowing to lose the protective shape of the bud and opening up to the world, risking and being available to positive surprises as much as deceptions. I watched a bud in one of my house plants to flower between yesterday and today. Great coincidence to have this practice offered today.

2026-01-02 14:41:30 From Masami Kubo to Everyone:

I chose a plant in a beautiful pot that's been dead for years (which might defeat the purpose of this exercise). People often think it's alive, a plumosa fern that has maintained its shape and leaves, but lost all its color. I think it's easy to anthropomorphize this plant, or psychoanalyze my choice in keeping it around. I often imagine I'm an inanimate object, like a chair or a rock. But this isn't quite either. Ironically, this undead plant is next to a prayer orin (bowl gong), much like the chime used in this exercise.

Lobbin Liu: 😊

2026-01-02 14:45:31 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

embodiment of a plant...
a phalenopsis set on a chilly windowsill in the Fall
for some time
at least 10 days then a handful more
to provide exposure to a natural life cycle moment
to then encourage something built in
something that is fundamental to the culture of an orchid
tho it was inducted and raised in a commercialized setting
a supermarket phalenopsis
it still is what it is
an orchid that periodically flowers
and so the chilly windowsill serves
as a channel
an airstream
a weather occurrence and trend
and then they emerge
roots
spikes
some upward, some downward
all outward and reaching for resources
and projecting outward forward
with synchronicity within its own realm
to exemplify beauty
in a natural rendering of what is true

2026-01-02 14:49:15 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

Umm...

2026-01-02 14:49:37 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

He froze for a bit there...

2026-01-02 14:56:15 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:

We lost your sound again

2026-01-02 14:56:17 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:

Lost his sound again

2026-01-02 14:56:29 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

It's his connection... he's freezing

2026-01-02 14:56:30 From Amy Kurzweil to Everyone:

I think he just froze briefly

2026-01-02 14:56:31 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
It's back

2026-01-02 14:56:32 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:
I think he just froze

2026-01-02 14:56:39 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
Yes

2026-01-02 14:58:03 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
He invented selfish norm

2026-01-02 14:58:06 From CJ The X to Everyone:
That was awesome. Thank you

2026-01-02 14:58:07 From Yves Citton to Everyone:
thank you!

2026-01-02 14:58:11 From Lauren Guilmette to Everyone:
Thank you!

2026-01-02 14:58:15 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Go Young, Go Local, Go Moral!
Ben Berger:👍

2026-01-02 14:58:19 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:
Thx Robert!!
Ben Berger:👍

2026-01-02 14:58:19 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:
Thank you. This was an amazing and highly informative frame.
Ben Berger:👍

2026-01-02 14:58:44 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Thank you so much! That was great and crucially informative!
Ben Berger:👍

2026-01-02 14:59:04 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:
“Where in your life do you see high levels of social cohesion and/or cultural solidarity? What factors have contributed to this connectedness?”

2026-01-02 15:09:53 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Group 6 (1/2):

Jennifer: I belong to the Midcoast Forum on Foreign Relations via the Elks Club in Rockland. There's a strong social cohesion there because people have different political views. Lots of ex-CIA's and ex-Foreign Service personnel. I also sail on a schooner out of Maine with 17 ppl. Lots of political differences. We have the most profound dinner conversations.

Bob: We have lots of community. The problem is, it's very homogeneous. There's almost no cross-class community (unlike bowling leagues). And there's not even cross-political. We go out to protests, but it's not bridging any gaps. It's not too hard to find community, but it IS hard to bridge these gaps!

Jonathan: Times of crisis have been the moment in which I have seen the most "bridging."
George Floyd was murdered about 5 blocks from my apartment...

2026-01-02 15:10:06 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Group 6 (2/2):

The uprising that followed brought out the entire neighborhood, which was one of the few cross-class neighborhoods in Minneapolis - gentrifying, but with long-time black communities and immigrant groups. I met every single one of my neighbors because we had the fear of the Ku Klux Klan coming in.

Bob: Worth noting that there *wasn't* a lot of bridging between that neighborhood and the suburbs.

Jonathan: Also happened for a shooting on my block. Everyone came out in response. I met people I had never been friendly with before. I'm curious about how to create those moments without the violence that inspired them.

Bob: It's true that crises create community. Hurricanes create togetherness for a year or two. Snowstorms create increases in connection. Jonathan is right about the general pattern.

2026-01-02 15:10:08 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:

Lobbin - example - educator teaching graphic design, though spoiled as a student in private school; visiting public school, realized students support and critique each other more generously and how the work reflects experience and personal reality; they see each other more honestly according to their life; moving and inspiring.

Carter - 2 examples - 1) working in a lab, mindfulness support is available for pain, and that brings people together in a beautiful way and centers attention; 2) in family, I : We is very evident there: go young / local / moral; a lot to discuss about parenting.

Per - I am in Norway, so things are different. Less I centric, but also feels socially cohesive is related to gathering around a reading circle at the local library and that is one place where people are coming together around a joint interest. The factor of common interest stands out. The really powerful message is that the US slide to individualism is not inevitable.

Lobbin Liu: 😊

2026-01-02 15:10:09 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:

Alyssa - I have a baby here but filmmaking is a community but very competitive, but baby is both community and very social dispersion.

Etienne - Note taker

2026-01-02 15:10:12 From David Landes to Everyone:

Spaces: Protests, Parades, Public space (where left), Libraries, sidewalks, public transportation, classrooms, SoRA, yoga and spiritual communities, civic participation in govt (see below for VT example!), CRISES bring us together in states of exception to our separateness (e.g., power outages bring people outdoors)

Factors: "naming it" (having explicit terms of convening to be among people)

Shared practices and habits: shared norms among stranger

Catherine D: Vermont has direct democracy at village level, no counties, every village has village mtg with own agenda, everyone in VT knows how to follow Roberts Rules of Order,

2026-01-02 15:11:03 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:

Part 1

Asu - in an organized community of folks in Brazil

Agrarian ecology. Organized people who want to live together for fight of land. Place where I experience most social cohesion. And practice of capoeira and community of resistance around that

Karishma - Struck by the way the Mayor's campaign hit all the notes that Bob was discussing. (in Brooklyn). Part of a monthly care collective, mutual aid space. Cross class collaboration and coming together in community

Tom - In UK, Principal College as a form of community. Investment in that idea from some of the students. Not across broad social spectrum. Climb back up the trend, wonder if we need to not be counter-cultural but become normative, culturally.

2026-01-02 15:11:09 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

Amy:

Amy spoke of the impact of social breakout rooms, FOA style, that she incorporated into a class that she is teaching. it was very much appreciated. remarked on the cohesion this builds in a digital/immaterial call. What does it mean to have local-digital? The digital redefines locality.

Henry:

mentions a community -- fractal -- in brooklyn that is organized around co-living, grew out of a post-rationalist twitter community online. maybe ~500 people. co-living space in brooklyn that grew to take over an apartment building. fractal university - non-commercial. not exactly an intentional community, rather, a dispersed network. they want to call it a "civica" (sp?).

Amy Kurzweil: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:11:10 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

Lauren:

Attention is so broad that we can input our different practices. Gave example of responses to concrete needs. Lives in a relatively conservative, less wealthy part of NC. A community garden brought people together. Queer and Trans activism at the local bookshop brought people together. A broader need to provide that commonality?

Alex:

My kids' rugby team. Cuts across class lines. People who played rugby in Ireland and who went into banking. For a very violent game, it is also a very moral one. Respect for people you're playing against, without whom you would never be able to play or get better. You never have to tell kids to put their phones away... it naturally demands full attention.

Amy Kurzweil: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:11:30 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:

I'll add something I didn't get to add in my group: The community I mentioned, Fractal, grew up around dinner parties that expanded and expanded, and from an ethos of "You can Just Do Things," which led folks to encouraging and supporting their friends in all their projects and enterprises. Now it's a dispersed community throughout BK with several hundred "members," and an unofficial "university," co-living set ups, co-parenting, and a bunch more

Amy Kurzweil, karishma: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:11:50 From Ben Berger to Everyone:

One of us sees it in church even if she doesn't go much anymore. Younger relative goes to church, is drawn to the youth group, it's fun as well. He went without his parents, even in spite of his parents. But something about the fun/ social aspect keeps him coming back.

Another participant focused on sports teams/ athletic activities. Not so much fandom but participation at the club / team level. Requires cooperation and trust.

We also talked about a wine/ spirits club activities: Shared, passionate, geeking-out activity without anyone being the "master," everyone being students and enthusiasts together. Crucially, it is a cross-class collaboration, not all upper or upper-middle class.

We also heard about volunteering in local election s, an interesting way of getting to know one's community.

All of these things were open to cross-class collaboration and bridging.

2026-01-02 15:11:58 From CJ The X to Everyone:

Eric: *Internal* Open Studio worktime rather than Publicly Accessible Open Studio, Focuses on studio *members* all working in the same space at the same time

Oliveira: Workshops where you spend a lot of 'unstructured' time together, for work or for play. Spontaneous intrinsic interest, instead of trying to create work groups out of nothing.

Brazil: Carnival, celebration, fighting for something. Festive, ritual moments.

When infrastructure BREAKS. elevator breaks down, trains are cancelled, practically frustrating things create social cohesion and spontaneous bonding

2026-01-02 15:12:21 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Replying to "Eric: *Internal* Open Studio worktime rather than ...":

Carnaval! 🎉

Vitória Oliveira, Christopher Mole: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:12:24 From Melissa (she/her) to Everyone:

Group 8:

Molly: goes to weekly spiritual/meditation group, cross class, overwhelmingly female, feels very cohesive

- Lives in rural VT - physicality, fun and food contribute to cohesiveness

Ana: lives in US, from Brazil - immigrant status give many opp to experience both cohesion and separation

- Meets lots of immigrants whose status is complex, feels empowered by interactions
- Goes to all BoE and town council meetings - feels very engaged w/ American community
- Feels like she's living 2 lives, tough to converge them
- Every month she has concert in her house, invites Brazilian musicians
- Has to fight for cohesion, or only sees it in pockets

Yves: local eco movements where people gather to do things like picking up trash - kids very motivated by it

- Raises consciousness - can be communicated easily

Mel: we've been trying to build community

◦ Do people have more fun when they're accomplishing something together than just getting together?

2026-01-02 15:12:28 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:

Part 2

Phillip - teach in honors college at university of Utah. Radical quiet and attention - there's a cohesiveness. Another area is concerts and music - a folk music community. And classical musician. Sense of community - all paying attention to a piece of music, something together

Gwen - Mutual aid groups. Roller derby community - across lots of political, racial lines, and age.
Some across class - depending on area

2026-01-02 15:13:03 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:
Replying to "Part 2 Phillip - teach in honors college at unive...":
Apologies to my group for spotty notes!! Please correct the record!

2026-01-02 15:13:19 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
Replying to "Eric: *Internal* Open Studio worktime rather than ...":
We also talked about how crises can promote cohesion/solidarity

2026-01-02 15:13:23 From Ben Berger to Everyone:
SUMMARY: each of us described club or religious or civic collaborations which used to be MUCH more common. At other points in our history, people would have been able to come up with many examples in their own lives. Now we have fewer. But all of the ones we described had "bridging" capabilities, open to people from different backgrounds.

2026-01-02 15:13:34 From Amy Hassinger (she/hers) to Everyone:
A: In a summer arts camp, we made community by living with the hosts, having to maintain those relationships, and also by not having an achievement or performance we were trying to achieve. Just by focusing on being together. Evaluation can get in the way of community. B: This is true in a writing workshop, too. At the University broadly, I feel a sense of cohesion sometimes, just being in a place with so many (60K) different kinds of people, all engaged in the shared project of learning. Also, in a public space where my community is listening to music together. C: In a lot of places where I would expect to find it, I don't. I have a relative who works for the railroads and is a union member. RRs have been evil over history. In the unions, there is not a lot of solidarity, despite the workers. Not a feeling of power in solidarity. Negative unification, but not a positive.

2026-01-02 15:13:57 From Phillip Bimstein to Everyone:
good notes, gwen!
Gwen Olton: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:14:31 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Mihir's Q&A: <https://schoolofattention.substack.com/p/rules-on-engagement>

2026-01-02 15:16:29 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:
I'd like to add something we didn't have time for: some people, including me, are working on open source software to DIVERT and REPURPOSE social media distract for community-building; if you are interested, you can check out <https://cognicity.info/>
Lauren Guilmette, Masami Kubo, Gwen Olton, karishma: ❤️
Per Esben Svelstad: 👍

2026-01-02 15:16:54 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
😊

2026-01-02 15:17:01 From Alex Soojung-Kim Pang to Everyone:
Mihály Csikszentmihalyi had a similar experience— giving talks on flow in Silicon Valley to people who only wanted to use his insights to sell more loot boxes
Ben Berger: 👍

2026-01-02 15:17:03 From CJ The X to Everyone:
Sheesh. Great anecdote
Lauren Guilmette: ❤️

2026-01-02 15:17:12 From Henry Kramer to Everyone:

Wow. They said the quiet part out loud...

Gwen Olton, Amy Kurzweil: ¹⁰⁰

2026-01-02 15:17:47 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:

Replying to "Wow. They said the quiet part out loud...":

And imagine saying it to Bob Putnam. wowowow

Henry Kramer, Lauren Guilmette: 🤔

Donica Bettanin (she/her), Henry Kramer: 🤔

2026-01-02 15:17:55 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:

we need to raid the resources of the enemy - to use their systems against their own purposes -
<https://cognicity.info/>

2026-01-02 15:17:59 From Ben Berger to Everyone:

There's definitely a lot of overlap b/w Csikszentmihalyi and Putnam, not least of which in their critiques of passive TV watching.

2026-01-02 15:18:04 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:

Replying to "Eric: *Internal* Open Studio worktime rather than ...":

@Peter Schmidt Yes! But even then many are left out of the social/cultural cohesion. Part of the "magic" is to blind those who are "in" to the existence of the problems, including all those who are out.

2026-01-02 15:18:05 From Yves Citton to Everyone:

Thank you Robert! Thank you Graham! Thanks to everyone!

2026-01-02 15:18:09 From Catherine Despont to Everyone:

Thank you so much Bob

2026-01-02 15:18:22 From Amy Kurzweil to Everyone:

Thank you! Wonderful info and question to discuss.

2026-01-02 15:18:23 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you Bob!!

2026-01-02 15:18:25 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

To clarify... I've experienced that community building (in my studio building, for example) happens best when there is discussion and questioning amongst peers with something in common — to created strength and reinforcement around those common interests and then to very consciously seek other communities to seek out commonalities across disciplines and interests. To find that common ground, common interests, and to contribute shared and common skills, knowledge and dedicated TIME to others and other communities and collectives.

2026-01-02 15:18:33 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:

Thank you Bob!

2026-01-02 15:18:34 From Amy Hassinger (she/hers) to Everyone:

Thanks—very inspiring!

2026-01-02 15:18:35 From Gwen Olton to Everyone:

Thank you so much, Bob!!

2026-01-02 15:18:44 From Eric Nadler to Everyone:

Hurrah F of A!!

2026-01-02 15:18:46 From Ben Berger to Everyone:
Thank you, Bob! Great as always.

2026-01-02 15:18:51 From Anthony Acciavatti to Everyone:
Thank you! 🙏

2026-01-02 15:31:44 From Etienne Turpin to Everyone:
etienne@helpmap.global