

## Gaia Ambassador Manual

**Congratulations!** You're an Ambassador! Congratulations, and welcome.

Welcome welcome welcome.

We're glad you're here, and we're deeply grateful (and tremendously excited!) for the energy, spirit and heart you'll be bringing to the Community. Every day we get hundreds of new and beautiful Gaia members—curious souls attracted to the warmth and spirit of the place—and we rely on you, as Ambassadors, to help them feel comfortable and safe and supported. Your role here will make such a sweet and lasting difference in the lives of so many. After all, you'll *be* Gaia for so many new faces, and it's your energy that will create that first impression for those who visit. So thank you, deeply, for taking on this role, and thank you, even more, for listening to your own authentic self and applying.

(Take a moment, if you would, and to re-read that paragraph! Bask in it a bit. Allow yourself to really feel what it means to both accept that heartfelt welcome and profound appreciation, and think of what it means to extend that feeling of warmth and gratitude toward others. That—at least to our minds!—is at the heart of what being a Gaia Ambassador is all about.)

So again, a huge thank you (thank you thank you thank you!) for all you're doing within Gaia, both online and off. Our world depends on people like you—people who catalyze and create connections, who contribute to the synergy of the culture, who nurture and support others, who see the best in those around them, and who are personally committed to holding the space for peace and love and compassion and security and freedom. It's those like you who end up *really* shaping our future—be it by the external actions that flow from this deep sense of care, or at some deeper level, by changing the world from the inside out.

We're so glad you're here. :)

### **I. What is the role of an Ambassador?**

An Ambassador (as you know!) is a quintessential Gaia member, a community catalyst, dedicated peacemaker, steward, and facilitator of connection and inner transformation. You're here because you already have a strong sense of your own purpose: you're passionate about nurturing an incredible community both on and offline that supports personal and planetary interconnection, and a deep sense of understanding and care. You're here to help other Gaia members (both those who've signed up online and those who share the planet around

us!) feel at home and to help them be the change *they* wish to see, and to ensure that those around us feel heard, respected, loved and supported. You're here to cultivate those seeds of compassion and growth within yourself, so they might flourish in the world as a whole. And, you are here to work in tandem with the Team to make Gaia the best place it can be.

Of course, a community is only as strong (and wonderful and sweet and caring!) as its members, those beings who hold the overall values and intention behind it. Ambassadors are essential to maintaining the intention and integrity of Gaia, and making sure we continue to create the strong gravitational pull that attracts those who resonate with these values.

## II. Why is it important to foster community?

Well, since you applied to become an Ambassador, you probably already have some deep inner knowing of, or some calling for, this very task. In fact, if you just take a minute to be still and ask your heart this question, you'll likely find that inner whisper will do a better job of answering that question than we ever could.

But we'll share our view. :)

We feel that communities are fundamental to creating positive change in the world, and toward growing a future where we can all live in harmony—not just as human beings, but with the plants and animals that share our sphere.

By practicing the art of community-building, we do three things:

1. We learn how to live peaceably with others. We learn how to connect with those who might have differing opinions or beliefs. We learn how to get along despite our differences, and to honor the uniqueness of those around us. By practicing this in small ways (online and in our own neighborhood), we can begin to do the same in the global community.
2. We help create a space to which others might come to feel supported and upheld and appreciated. By building community, we can invite others to come be a part of our space, warmly welcoming them and serving as a model for a more collaborative and cooperative world. In doing this, we literally *create* our environment—creating a home of love and connection and trust rather than fear and alienation and suspicion.
3. We learn about our own unique power in affecting the energy of a group. In doing so, we learn how to be aware of our own emotional states within the group, and how those affect (and are affected by!) the whole. By setting the intention to bring compassion and trust and care to a place (and to not allow ourselves to be affected by any negative

energies but, instead, to transmute those feelings into something gentler and peaceful) we begin the practice of changing the world as a whole.

So in working within our online Gaia Community, and by practicing there, we're holding the vision for true planetary change—and not only this, but we're *being* that change, by sparking and supporting a similar transformation in others.

Our dream is for each and every member to realize this, and, in doing so, to create a ripple effect in the bigger Gaia “out there.” And it's through community that we can bring this about most effectively.

### III. What can I do as a Gaia Ambassador?

This one, too, is something that your heart knows far better than we do! The best advice we can give you as you go out there to help other Gaia members is just to be positive, be encouraging, and most importantly, to be you. :)

If you'd like specifics, though, well, there are countless ways to contribute! We ask just that you make a commitment to serve the community and choose whatever activities resonate. Here are some ways Ambassadors can play a role:

- Hosting discussions in our [Groups](#) section. <http://pods.gaia.com>
- Welcoming and helping new members feel at home.
- Spreading the word about Gaia through their friends, local community, organizations or websites, in person or online.
- Add your Gaia url to your email signature.
- Commenting in discussions or blogs, sending supportive messages to those who might need it, and helping other members feel supported and loved!
- Host [Gaia Gatherings](#) <http://pods.gaia.com/gaiagathering>, our face-to-face meet-ups, and helping people practice the art of true connection and conversation with others.
- Be a point person for events & Gatherings in your area.
- Participate in the [Mod pod](#).
- Volunteer with Gaia for special projects, like processing Gaia Community Scholarship entries. <http://scholarship.gaia.com/>
- Moderating the [Ambassador Group](#) (upon approval)
- Smiling. Lots. :)

But be creative! We've had people who decided to post interviews of fellow members in their blog every week, look into starting a member driven Gaia newsletter, created community film projects for Gaia artists and set up information tables about Gaia at their colleges. Be inventive, follow your heart

and let us know what you'd like - and we'll do everything we can to support it.

#### **IV. How will other members know I am an Ambassador?**

Once you become an Ambassador, you'll see a little badge as a signifier on your profile. It may take a few days to arrive. This will help other members find you when they need assistance. And of course, feel free to introduce yourself to new members and offer a helping hand! Be supportive. Be wonderful. Show others love and compassion, and in doing so, there'll be no question of your Ambassadorial role. If you have a question, please feel free to contact Jessica or the Team.

#### **V. How do I stay up to speed with the Ambassador Program and the site?**

##### **Ambassadors Group & Newsletter**

The Ambassadors Group is the best way to stay current with the program and other Ambassadors. Every month you'll receive an Ambassador Newsletter through Gaia's onsite email. Make sure to look out for this and check the Group for new posts. This is a great place to suggest projects, share ideas, mentor new Ambassadors, get mentoring and help each other grow as leaders.

We suggest you sign up for Ambassador Group Notifications and/or the RSS feed to really stay on top of all the Ambassador goodness.

##### **Resources & Links**

It's important for Ambassadors to be knowledgeable themselves about the responsibilities they choose. Below you'll find a list of Groups, blogs, links and FAQs that will help you stay up to date and find answers to common questions:

- [Ambassadors Group](#):  
<http://pods.gaia.com/ambassadorsgaia>  
As mentioned, the meeting place for Gaia community leaders.
- [Think Tank](#):  
<http://pods.gaia.com/thinktank>  
A place for new ideas to help the site & community.
- [Gaia FAQ](#):  
[http://pods.gaia.com/how\\_tos\\_and\\_faqs](http://pods.gaia.com/how_tos_and_faqs)  
Get your basics covered!
- [Gaia Lounge](#):  
<http://pods.gaia.com/zlounge>  
A great place to welcome new members and make them feel loved!
- [Gaia Community Group](#):  
<http://pods.gaia.com/gaia/>  
Connect with people & share your dreams about Gaia.

- [The Mod Pod](#), or Gaia Groups Community  
[http://pods.gaia.com/gaia\\_groups\\_community](http://pods.gaia.com/gaia_groups_community)  
 A place where Group cultivators and moderators can share insights, challenges & ideas.
- [Support Pod](#):  
[http://pods.gaia.com/zaadz\\_support](http://pods.gaia.com/zaadz_support)  
 Get support from the Team or offer help & advice to other members.
- [Team Blog](#):  
<http://team.gaia.com/blog>  
 Find updates from the Team and get the latest Gaia news.
- [Community Newsletter](#):  
<http://www.gaia.com/newsletters>  
 Make sure you're subscribed for the latest in Gaia highlights and happenings.

### Monthly Projects

Every month we'll announce a new project as a suggested focus and call to action for Ambassadors. The Gaia Team will propose Monthly Projects that might have to do with the current needs of the community, but ideas are always, always welcome. (Again, please keep in mind our essential values and commitment to internal, follow-your-heart support; we're here to connect and inspire and accept others, not to force change upon them. ;)

These projects were created in response to Ambassador requests for more guidance from the Gaia Team and with the intention to help the community in incredibly powerful and positive ways, and so your participation is completely up to you! Of course, we'd love your help and believe our combined efforts will make an amazing impact in the community—and the world beyond.

### VI. How Do I Get Help?

If you need help with an idea or project you can:

- Post in the Ambassador Group discussion  
 Visit the [Think Tank](#): <http://pods.gaia.com/thinktank>
- Contact [Jessica](#) or the [Team](#): <http://jessica.gaia.com>, <http://team.gaia.com>  
 Check out the [Mod Pod](#): [http://pods.gaia.com/gaia\\_groups\\_community](http://pods.gaia.com/gaia_groups_community)
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And if you're having trouble with something technical, just check out the Support Pod, [http://pods.gaia.com/zaadz\\_support](http://pods.gaia.com/zaadz_support)

Chances are you're not alone.

## VII. Gaia Gatherings: From Online to In-Person

Organizing a [Gaia Gathering](#) (a face-to-face meet-up) is an incredible, life-changing way to serve as an Ambassador. It helps us take our extraordinary online experience into our local communities. From our experience, it makes the connections, the resonance and the shared vision we create every day on Gaia come alive.

Our online community is incredibly powerful, so imagine the impact when Gaia members meet face-to-face, bringing their authenticity, joy, depth and wonder together. These events can be life-changing because beautiful and unexpected things always happen when Gaia members come together. Trust us: it's pretty transcendent.

Organizing and hosting Gatherings is also one of the best ways to sharpen your skills as a community leader. And what's more, it's easy! All it takes is the desire to bring people together and a tiny bit of planning. Gaia Gatherings are very open and we encourage you to host in whatever style you choose. It can be a casual conversation, party or a more structured salon. Your role can be that of party planner, facilitator or guide. It's up to you.

Gaia has also partnered with [Conversation Café](#) for [Conversation Week](#), <http://www.conversationcafe.org>. This organization has some excellent guidelines and offer their own process for facilitating group discussion. Check them out here. You also might want to visit [Utne](#), <http://www.utne.com/archives/TheSalon-KeeperCompanion.aspx>, which has guidelines for their salons. The role of host or facilitator is very natural; you lead but don't control, guide, but allow the conversation to occur organically.

If you have never hosted an event or organized before, but want to take this important step in being a community leader, we're here to help. Gaia will offer personal coaching to any Ambassador who might need help in getting started.

Here is a list of our top ten things you should know to get your Gathering off the ground:

- 1) Choose a location, activity and time: As mentioned, it can be simple or elaborate—it's up to you! One member suggested arranging an entire concert for the Gaia community, another a volunteer project for coastal cleanup, and others have just met for coffee or a walk in the park. Your Gathering can be any size, shape or color: big or small, active or peaceful, regular or just a one-time event. What you do is far less important than the fact that you connect, bringing the energy on the site into the real world and turning the virtual relationships into real ones.

- 2) Inviting People #1: This is the most important part of creating a Gathering! A Gathering is nothing without others. You might first want to look for local [Groups](http://pods.gaia.com), <http://pods.gaia.com>. If there isn't one, you can be the first to start it! You can also contact the individual members and the Group cultivator to reach out. You should also post in Events, <http://events.gaia.com>.
- 3) Inviting People #2: After that, go to the [Members](http://www.gaia.com/people), <http://www.gaia.com/people>, section and put your city or region into the search field. It may take a bit of time to contact people individually, but it's definitely worth it: people generally feel honored and touched by that personal invitation, and you never know who you might meet. Another great strategy is to recruit people to help you plan. No need to go it alone.
- 4) Inviting People #3: Of course, you can invite non-members and tell everyone to bring a friend who would love to meet some beautiful & conscious people.
- 5) RSVPs: Ask people to RSVP in your invite so you have at least a general idea of how many people are coming.
- 6) Provide Contact Info: You want to give people clear directions to the place you will meet including a link to the website or Google maps. You should also provide your contact info so people can reach you to RSVP or get last minute info on the day of the event. If you don't want to post this on site, you can wait for people to RSVP and then give it to them. If you just give your Gaia info, they might not be able to get in touch on the day.
- 7) Activities for the Gathering: Here are a few things you can do by using the tools already on Gaia:
  - [Questions & Reflections](http://qar.gaia.com), <http://qar.gaia.com>, for icebreakers! Choose your favorite three and bring them to the group. You can even bring art supplies and create a work of art out of your answers.
  - [Quotes!](http://www.gaia.com/quotes) <http://www.gaia.com/quotes>, Ask everyone to pick out his or her favorite quote and share it at the Gathering.
  - Grapevines: Some members have brought big pieces of paper and colorful crayons to be passed around, so that each visitor was able to leave with a sheet covered with heartfelt messages from others who came.
  - Conversation: Engage in conversation! Imagine a book club where the

topic is not a book or author, but a collection of values, or a question of resonance. Consider asking what brought people to Gaia, or asking what their dream of the future is, or inviting them to share what matters most to them, or what gives them hope for the future. Taking an hour or two to practice this sort of deep connection helps us more relate more authentically to *everyone* in our lives, and the difference that level of relationship makes can't be underestimated. (We tend to be very good at small talk, and less skilled at true dialog, and a group of Gaia members is one of the best places in the world to practice. And don't forget, too, the importance of *listening* when it comes to these meetings.)

- 8) Blog, Take Photos or [Video](#): Blog about your Gathering experience and inspire others to build community too. Don't forget your camera and to post your pictures on Gaia! Tag your blogs and photos with the word "Gathering."
- 9) Stay in Touch: Use your local pod to stay in touch and plan conversations and Gatherings for the future.
- 10) Contact Us: [Jessica](mailto:jessica@gaia.com) (jessica@gaia.com) I'm at you're service... as your personal party consultant and little Gathering elf. :)

#### More Resources:

[Utne Salons](http://www.utne.com/archives/TheSalon-KeepersCompanion.aspx): <http://www.utne.com/archives/TheSalon-KeepersCompanion.aspx>

[Conversation Café](http://www.conversationcafe.org): <http://www.conversationcafe.org>

#### Articles about why you are so important:

[Community Gone - Or Just Harder to Find](http://humanresources.about.com/library/weekly/aa020302a.htm):

<http://humanresources.about.com/library/weekly/aa020302a.htm>

[The Global Brain](http://www.peterrussell.com/GB/GBtext.php):

<http://www.peterrussell.com/GB/GBtext.php>

#### One Final Note...

Well, there you have it. You're an Ambassador of Gaia—you've got the heart and spirit and energy and courage to literally *create* the values that have brought this site into being into the world at large. And we believe, quite firmly, that the more dedicated you are (the more dedicated each of us are!) in holding this intention, the more powerful a role we'll play in shifting the whole wide world.

We're so glad you're here. And now, let's go spread some love. :)