

Piecing Together



a Better World

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Oregon Convention Center

Shifting the Adversarial Paradigm

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It would be wonderful indeed if a group of persons should arrive on earth who were for something and against nothing. This would be the *summum bonum* of human organization, wouldn't it? –Ernest Holmes

Our planet's greatest awakening thus far was when our human predecessors became self-aware of their own individual and collective actions. Upon recognizing both the nature and the consequences of their existence, they inaugurated the social evolution of our species, and the eventual emergence of *homo sapiens sapiens* – our present human species, presumed to be twice wise.

Today we are on the threshold of the next great awakening. In and as the collective consciousness of our species, planet Earth is likewise becoming self-aware of the nature and consequences of its existence, both locally and globally as well as over time. We collectively embody Earth's self-awakening to the way it works and to its further evolutionary possibilities.

Ken Carey announced this awakening 15 years ago in *Starseed: The Third Millennium*:

The field of collective human consciousness is now entering the final stages of the awakening process, congealing into awareness of itself as the organ of consciousness (similar in function to a brain) of *a single planetary being*, a being with internal organs of oceans, forests, ecosystems and atmosphere. Humankind is its system both for processing information and for directing its future development.

Peter Russell also foresaw this awakening a quarter-century ago in *The Global Brain*:

It takes about 10 billion atoms to form a complex living cell, then 10 billion cells to form a complex self-conscious brain. As we approach the same number of human brains that are rapidly interlinking via global electronic networks, this could represent a similar clumping of the nerve cells of an emerging global brain.

Unlike Carey and Russell, most of us have yet to recognize that our species is the means by which our planetary household is becoming mindfully self-aware of its evolutionary process and potentials. Our lack of such recognition is understandable, for Earth's self-awakening isn't taking place outside of ourselves where we can see it occurring. Rather, it is awakening subliminally within ourselves, where it calls upon us to *be* its occurrence.

Earth's Fifth Geological Force

As with all other collective perceptual makeovers (a.k.a. “paradigm shifts”), Earth’s awakening to itself is occurring in and as the awareness of our species, as did our earlier recognition of the sun as the center of a planetary system rather than Earth’s being the center of the universe. Since that perceptual makeover some five centuries ago, the planet’s evolution has become increasingly subject to the enormous collective impact of our species’ global presence. We are now Earth’s fifth geological force, wielding mighty evolutionary powers of which we have yet to become mindfully aware.

Our species’ impact on planetary change is now comparable to that of the four geological forces that preceded us: the energetic dynamics of our planet’s electromagnetic field; the erosive dynamics of wind and water; the terrestrial dynamics that give rise to mountain ranges, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis; and the ecological dynamics of organic evolution. As the global impacts of our urban sprawl and technological thrall interact with Earth’s other geological forces, we are shape-shifting our planet (a.k.a. “terra-forming” it) quite dramatically.

Lest we short circuit Earth’s evolutionary automatic pilot, its further evolution must receive more mindful human piloting. As the only species that is aware of both the nature and the extent of its global impact, we have an awesome capability and response-ability: the capability of learning how life’s collaborative dynamics work, and the response-ability of emulating such co-operation by living more compatibly with our planet.

Earth’s Greatest Evolutionary Hope

The collective consciousness of our species is Earth’s only means of becoming aware of itself to the point of mindfully directing its further evolution. Thus for all practical purposes we have met the “missing link” between the apes and civilized man, and it is us.

The most civilizing thing for us now to do is to bring our species into alignment with the living *kindom* of the Earth. It is time for us to cease being a divisive planetary dis-ease and instead become a collaborative planetary mind.

The prospect of humanity’s being Earth’s greatest evolutionary hope may incline some folks to throw up their hands in utter dismay and say, “There goes the neighborhood.” Yet the good news is that each day more of us are awakening to our individual and collective conscious evolutionary roles as we honor an ancient commandment to be fruitful and multiply on behalf of collaboratively *replenishing* the Earth instead of partisanly and adversarially hastening its depletion.

What is now required of our species is a collective perceptual makeover that awakens us to our evolutionary destiny: to be a beneficial presence to the kindom of all that lives. As mindful bearers of that destiny, we are the progenitors of the next human species: *homo custodiens*, i.e., the custodians of lifekind.

Making Over Our Perception

Those who are already awakening to our species’ custodial role are distinguished by their advocacy of three overlapping objectives: greater well-being (individual, social, and economic), peace, and environmental integrity. These overlapping objectives are so mutually interdependent that none can be realized by itself. There can be no peace in the absence of well-being and environmental integrity, nor well-being or environmental integrity in the absence of either of the other two. Pursuing any of these quests independently of the others diffuses rather than focuses the energy that we devote to their realization.

Accordingly, what Benjamin Franklin once said of the American colonies may now be said of our three great advocacies on behalf of a better world: they will either hang together, or else be hung separately by those whose relationship to the world persistently promotes ill-being, warfare, and environmental degradation.

What presently keeps our advocacies from hanging together is their adversarial nature. Adversarial advocacy is like an opposing wall of an A-frame building, holding in place what it opposes via the principle that "What you resist persists." Adversarial advocacy focuses our attention and energy on what we are against rather than on what we are for, thus fueling and escalating conflict rather than resolving it. For example, peace advocates tend to focus their energy on resisting war rather than on establishing mutual harmony. This may in part be why we have thus far won only wars, and have yet to win any peace other than intermittent seasons of warfare's absence.

Awaking from our Adversarial Trance

Neither well-being, peace, nor environmental integrity is obtainable or sustainable via adversarial advocacy. Only as we stand for something and against nothing may our advocacy collaboratively unite us rather than conflictively dissociate us.

What we require is a heart-felt commitment to collaborative, non-adversarial forms of advocacy that unify us in co-operative advancement of all three quests for a better world, in the manner of a rising tide that lifts all boats. Our great challenge in meeting this requirement is to create strategies and models of collaborative advocacy with which to displace our prevailing adversarial syndrome.

The most prominent model of collaboration is the ecology of living systems, the kingdom of all that lives. Lifekind's kingdom is the most co-operative model of mutuality in the universe, and is presently known to exist only on Earth. For those of us who would live in a better world, therefore, the fullness of time is at hand to emulate lifekind's kingdom, and to do so as its enlightened global brain.

On behalf of thus piecing together a better world, over 2,000 persons are gathering on September 24 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, to witness to and generate self-transforming practices, projects and programs of collaborative, non-adversarial advocacy. For further information on this conference, please visit its website: www.gbenetwork.com.

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