

Notebook for

The Different Drum: Community-making and peace (New-age)

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Introduction

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The second section of this work will be much more “theoretical.” It is a word I hesitate to use, because “theoretical” implies “impractical” to many. But here I will attempt to build a bridge between

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The solution lies in the opposite direction: in learning how to appreciate— yea, celebrate — individual cultural and religious differences and how to live with reconciliation in a pluralistic world.

Part I: The Foundation

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Certain words become distorted over time. When people ask me to define myself politically, I tell them that I am a radical conservative. Unless it is Thursday, when I say I am a radical moderate. The word “radical” comes from the Latin radix, meaning “root”— the same word from which we get “radish.” The proper radical is one who tries to get to the root of things, not to be distracted by superficials, to see the woods for the trees. It is good to be a radical. Anyone who thinks deeply will be one. In the dictionary the closest synonym to “radical” is “fundamentalist.” Which only makes sense.

Someone who gets down to the root of things is someone who gets down to the fundamentals. Yet in our North American culture these words have come to have opposite meanings, as if a radical were necessarily some left- wing, bomb- throwing anarchist and a fundamentalist automatically some right- wing primitive thinker.

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“We must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body.” 1

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Secure though it was, my home was not a place where it was safe for me to be anxious, afraid, depressed, or dependent— to be myself.

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For that course I effortlessly produced four forty- page papers, each neatly typed, with abundant footnotes and bibliographies. Within a mere nine months a dreaded hurdle had become an enjoyable form of study. I was glad of the difference, of course, but hardly aware of the almost miraculous nature of the change.

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The subject of myth will continue to surface. This is because myths speak more eloquently to the truth of the human condition than do other kinds of prose. I never had a short- term community experience more pregnant than Mac Badgely's group. So the "myth of ourselves as a giant pregnant sea turtle that had come onto a beach to lay its eggs only to lumber back into the ocean to die" poignantly expressed the fecund reality of our so brief time together. Albert, the crippled hero, speaks of the reality that many of both the strongest and weakest of us are indeed crippled heroes. It is not a sine qua non that a community create its own myth, but most eventually do, and this fact reflects a collective creative genius of genuine community which is quite routine.

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There is no one else like me in this whole wide world.

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The process of human development is one of becoming fully individual.

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Most of us never totally complete the process and may never get very far at all. Most, to a greater or lesser degree, fail to individuate— to separate— ourselves from family, tribe, or caste. Even into old age we remain figuratively tied to the apron strings of our parents and culture. We are still dictated to by the values and expectations of our mothers and fathers. We still follow the direction of the prevailing wind and bow before the shibboleths of our society. We go with the crowd. From laziness and fear— fear of loneliness, fear of responsibility, and other nameless dreads— we never truly learn to think for ourselves or dare to be out of step with the stereotypes. But in light of all we understand, this failure to individuate is a failure to grow up and become fully human. For we are called to be individuals. We are called to be unique and different. We are also called to power. In this individuation process we must learn how to take responsibility

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We must attempt, as best we can, to be captains of our own ships if not exactly masters of our destiny.

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Let me cite an experience that many of us have shared. Lily and I have struggled together for years to make our marriage something of a community of two. From the beginning of our marriage Lily was mildly disorganized. Not infrequently she would become so engrossed in smelling the flowers that she would forget an appointment or neglect to write a promised letter. I, on the other hand, from the beginning was what has been called “goal oriented”— to put it mildly. I never had time to sniff a flower unless its bloom happened to coincide with my schedule, according to which every third Thursday afternoon from two to two-thirty was designated for flower sniffing, barring rain. I used to berate Lily for her inclination to speak in what I considered to be irrelevancies as well as to ignore civilization’s most significant instrument: the clock. She was equally harsh about my maddening punctuality and my stodginess and pedantic insistence on speaking in paragraphs that began “First of all,” “Second,” “Third,” or “In conclusion.” Lily believed hers was the superior psychology; I upheld the excellence of mine.

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“I’m not OK and you’re not OK, but that’s OK.”

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We can define or adequately explain only those things that are smaller than we are. I have in my office, for instance, a very handy

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Sooner or later we inevitably run into a core of mystery.

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Remember that to the uninitiated eye it would seem impossible for a stone ever to become a gem.

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Community is and must be inclusive. The great enemy of community is exclusivity. Groups that exclude others because they are poor or doubters or divorced or sinners or of some different race or nationality are not communities; they are cliques— actually defensive bastions against community.

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There was no pressure to conform.

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Our individualism must be counterbalanced by commitment.

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Begin to appreciate each others' gifts, and you begin to appreciate your own limitations.

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a group of people do these things— as they become a community— they become more and more humble, not only as individuals but also as a group— and hence more realistic. From which kind of group would you expect a wise, realistic decision: an arrogant one, or a humble one?

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Once a group has achieved community, the single most common thing members express is: "I feel safe here."

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everyone enters a new group situation with his or her guard up. That

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health and wholeness and holiness. (All three words are derived from the same root.)

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When we are safe, there is a natural tendency for us to heal and convert ourselves.

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So they focus not so much on healing as on making their relationship a safe place where the patient is likely to heal himself.

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are free to discard defenses, masks, disguises; free to seek your own psychological and spiritual health; free to become your whole and holy self. A LABORATORY FOR PERSONAL DISARMAMENT Toward the end of a two- day community experience in 1984 a late- middle- aged lady announced to the group: "I know Scotty said we weren't supposed to drop out, but when my husband and I got home yesterday evening we were seriously considering doing just that. I didn't sleep very well last night, and I almost didn't come here this morning. But something very strange has happened. Yesterday I was looking at all of you through hard eyes. Yet today for some reason— I don't really understand it— I have become soft- eyed, and it feels just wonderful." This transformation— routine in community— is the same as that described in the story of the rabbi's gift. The decrepit monastery, a dying group, came alive (and into community) once its members began looking at each other and themselves through "soft eyes,"

seeing through lenses of respect. It may seem strange in our culture of rugged individualism that this transformation begins to occur precisely when we begin to “break down.” As long as we look out at each other only through the masks of our composure, we are looking through hard eyes. But as the masks drop and we see the suffering and courage and brokenness and deeper dignity underneath, we truly start to respect each other as fellow human beings. Once when I was speaking about community to the governing body of a church, one of the members wisely commented: “What I hear you saying is that community requires the confession of brokenness.” He was correct of course. But how remarkable it is that in our culture brokenness must be “confessed.” We think of confession as an act that should be carried out in secret, in the darkness of the confessional, with the guarantee of professional priestly or psychiatric confidentiality. Yet the reality is that every human being is broken and vulnerable. How strange that we should ordinarily feel compelled to hide our wounds when we are all wounded! Vulnerability is a two- way street. Community requires the ability to expose our wounds and weaknesses to our fellow creatures. It also requires the capacity to be affected by the wounds of others, to be wounded by their wounds. This is what the woman meant by “soft eyes.” Her eyes were no longer barriers, and she did, indeed, feel wonderful. There is pain in our wounds. But even more important is the love that arises among us when we share, both ways, our woundedness. Still, we cannot deny the reality that this sharing requires a risk in our culture— the risk of violating the norm of pretended invulnerability. For most of us it is a new— and, seemingly, potentially dangerous— form of behavior. It may seem odd to refer to community as a laboratory. The word implies a sterile place filled not with softness but with hardware. A laboratory can better be defined, however, as a place designed to be safe for experiments. We need such a place, because when we experiment we are trying out— testing— new ways of doing things. So it is in community: it is a safe place to experiment with new types of behavior. When offered the opportunity of such a safe place, most people will naturally begin to experiment more deeply than ever before with love and trust. They drop their customary defenses and threatened postures, the barriers of distrust, fear, resentment, and prejudice. They experiment with disarming themselves. They experiment with peace— peace within themselves and within the group. And they discover that the experiment works. An experiment is designed to give us new experience from which we can extract new wisdom. So it is that in experimenting with personally disarming themselves, the members of a true community experientially discover the rules of peacemaking and learn its virtues. It is a personal experience so powerful that it can become the driving

force behind the quest for peace on a global scale. **A GROUP THAT CAN FIGHT GRACEFULLY** It may at first glance seem paradoxical that a community that is a safe place and a laboratory for disarmament should also be a place of conflict. Perhaps a story will help. A Sufi master was strolling through the streets one day with his students. When they came to the city square, a vicious battle was being fought between government troops and rebel forces. Horrified by the bloodshed, the students implored, “Quick, Master, which side should we help?” “Both,” the Master replied. The students were confused. “Both?” they demanded. “Why should we help both?” “We need to help the authorities learn to listen to the aspirations of the people,” the Master answered, “and we need to help the rebels learn how not to compulsively reject authority.” In genuine community there are no sides. It is not always easy, but by the time they reach community the members have learned how to give up cliques and factions. They have learned how to listen to each other and how not to reject each other. Sometimes consensus in community is reached with miraculous rapidity. But at other times it is arrived at only after lengthy struggle. Just because it is a safe place does not mean community is a place without conflict. It is, however, a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace. A community is a group that can fight gracefully. That this is so is hardly accidental. For community is an amphitheater where the gladiators have laid down their weapons and their armor, where they have become skilled at listening and understanding, where they respect each others’ gifts and accept each others’ limitations, where they celebrate their differences and bind each others’ wounds, where they are committed to a struggling together rather than against each other. It is a most unusual battleground indeed. But that is also why it is an unusually effective ground for conflict resolution. The significance of this is hardly slight. There are very real conflicts in the world, and the worst of them do not seem to go away. But there is a fantasy abroad. Simply stated, it goes like this: “If we can resolve our conflicts, then someday we shall be able to live together in community.” Could it be that we have it totally backward? And that the real dream should be: “If we can live together in community, then someday we shall be able to resolve our conflicts”? **A GROUP OF ALL LEADERS** When I am the designated leader I have found that once a group becomes a community, my nominal job is over. I can sit back and relax and be one among many, for another of the essential characteristics of community is a total decentralization of authority. Remember that it is antitotalitarian. Its decisions are reached by consensus. Communities have sometimes

“A camel is a horse created by a committee”

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To the contrary, a group possessed by a spirit of competitiveness is by definition not a community. Competitiveness is always exclusive; genuine community is inclusive. If community has enemies, it has begun to lose the spirit of community— if it ever had it in the first place.

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is as if noise had been replaced by music.

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even the agnostic and atheist members will generally report a community- building workshop as a spiritual experience.

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But I am reminded of the Chinese word for crisis, which consists of two characters: one represents “danger” and the other “hidden opportunity.” Certainly

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Oddly, the best measure of psychospiritual health is how many crises we can cram into a lifetime.

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to challenge the platitudes or generalizations. When Mary says, “Divorce is a terrible thing,” I am likely to comment: “Mary, you’re making a generalization. I hope you don’t mind my using you as an example for the group, but one of the things people need to learn to communicate well is how to speak personally— how to use ‘I’ and ‘my’ statements. I wonder if you couldn’t rephrase your statement to ‘My divorce was a terrible thing for me.’”

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distaste for “bad news.”

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True community is joyful, but it is also realistic. Sorrow and joy

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primary task may be no more than simply to enjoy that experience— and benefit from the healing that accompanies it. It

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Such groups should always bear in mind the rule: “Community- building first, problem- solving second.”

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The consequences of long- term commitment are major and should not be taken lightly.

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They have forgotten that maintaining themselves as a true community should take priority over all the other tasks of their community.

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“Working group” suggests efficiency and effectiveness, but it does not imply the love and commitment, the sacrifice, and the transcendence required to build community.

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healthy as well as unhealthy conflict. Another frequent variety of flight occurs during the period of chaos when the group attempts to avoid the path of emptiness by fleeing into organization.

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This proposal is particularly seductive because of the prevailing false dogma that fifteen or so is the “ideal” maximum group size.

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“You keep asking what ‘emptiness’ means,” I might say. “One of the things it means is to shut up long enough— to be empty long enough— to digest what someone has just said. Whenever someone says something painful, the group runs away from it into noisiness.”

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conglomeration of amateur psychotherapists and preachers, all attempting to heal or convert one another.

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utterly uncreative kind of fighting.

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making moon eyes

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The problem of pairing can be particularly intense in those workshops that are designed to build community among previously disparate groups. For example, my colleagues and I have been requested

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Religious communes— convents and monasteries— have dramatic staying power in relation to secular communes. The greatest reason for this is that monks and nuns clearly gather for some purpose higher than the mere pleasure of being together. Still,

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In advance literature we inform the participants that the experience will be participatory and experiential rather than didactic. At

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“Each one of us has no more and no less responsibility than any other for the success of our work together.”

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until it becomes a community, a group of all leaders—

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I empty myself of my need to talk,

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Experiential learning is tough learning.

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Every living organism exists in tension.

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She immediately replied, “At the school, Daddy, they laugh a lot.” I’m not sure there can be a community that is truly successful when its members do not laugh and celebrate with frequent gusto.

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I’m a psychologist and a Christian. That’s not a usual combination.

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I’m sick of their superficiality.

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The only rule was vulnerability. The members agreed to push themselves to be as vulnerable as possible. They shortly came to realize vulnerability required not only that they speak of intimate matters but also that they listen to one another with openness and a relative emptiness of judgment. They had become a true community.

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All by itself it came to the wisdom that attempts to heal or convert were generally more destructive than supportive.

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“It is our purpose to love, not to heal.”

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But it should be borne in mind that community is not possible with either no structure or total structure. With no structure there is chaos. With total structure there is no room for emptiness.

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The longevity of a community is no more adequate a measure of its success than the length of an individual human life attests to its fulfillment. I have known many beautiful people in their eighties. I have also known some chronically hateful and vicious people of equal age who have lived destructive lives for years. And I have further known saints who died young.

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either to strive more vigorously for vitality and renewal or get on with the business of dying more efficiently and gracefully.

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the Hitler regime achieved an extraordinary cohesiveness among the majority of Germans by whipping up hatred against a minority, the Jews.

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The process of enemy formation is perhaps the most devastating form of all human behavior.

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Enemy formation is invariably a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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And is not the formation of special friendships or alliances a manifestation of the task-avoidance assumption of pairing, destructive to the development of global community?

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At a time when war could so easily cause the destruction of the world we continually behave according to rules that seem almost perfectly designed to lead us ever closer to war.

Part II: The Bridge

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Above all we have learned that, given the right conditions, it is indeed possible for small groups of people to live together routinely with love and in the spirit of peace.

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the acceptance of the fact that we are not, nor can we ever be, all the same.

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The Christian Church is divided into dozens of denominations.

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community is a state of being together in which people, instead of hiding behind their defenses, learn to lower them, in which instead of attempting to obliterate their

differences, people learn not only to accept them but rejoice in them. It is not a place for “rugged” individualism. As a place for “soft” individualism, however,

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could actually win some of these arguments. I could change his mind. In

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And for the first time in my life I realized that we do not have to grow old mentally.

Physically, yes, we must age and become decrepit. But mentally, spiritually, no.

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we have become transformed or have transformed ourselves in different ways. And it is these profound differences of temperament, character, and culture that make it so difficult for us to live together harmoniously.

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Yet by exercising this same capacity for transformation, it is possible for us to transcend our own childhoods, our cultures, and our past experience, and hence, without obliterating them, to transcend our differences. Thus what was originally the cause of war can eventually become its cure.

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six months. That is because they are romantics. I would define romantic as one who not only believes in the capacity for transformation of human nature but also believes it is easy. It isn't easy.

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Their basic function was to create a society that would maximize people's freedom to change— change their religions, change their dwelling places, change their life styles, change their minds through the free flow of information, change their governors.

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Again it didn't compute— until I realized that we are not all in the same place spiritually. With that realization came another: there is a pattern of progression through identifiable stages in human spiritual life. I myself have passed through them in my own spiritual journey. But here I will talk about those stages only in general, for individuals are unique and do not always fit neatly into any psychological or spiritual pigeonhole. With that caveat, let me list my own understanding of these stages and the names I have chosen to give them: STAGE I: Chaotic, antisocial STAGE II: Formal, institutional STAGE III: Skeptic, individual STAGE IV: Mystic, communal

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For some the institution may be a prison. Most people who have worked in prisons know of a certain type of “model prisoner”— cooperative, obedient, well disciplined, favored by both the inmates and the administrative population. Because he is a model prisoner, he may soon be paroled, and three days later he has robbed seven banks and committed seventeen other felonies, so that he lands right back in jail and, with the walls of the institution to govern him, he once again becomes a “model prisoner.”

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Although frequently “nonbelievers,” people in Stage III are generally more spiritually developed than many content to remain in Stage II. Although

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While Stage IV men and women will enter religion in order to approach mystery, people in Stage II, to a considerable extent, enter religion in order to escape from it. Thus there is the confusion of people entering not only into religion but into the same religion—and sometimes the same denomination—not only for different motives but for totally opposite motives. It makes no sense until we come to understand the roots of religious pluralism in terms of developmental stages.

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Much of the art of being a good teacher, healer, or minister consists largely in staying just one step ahead of your patients, clients, or pupils. If you are not ahead, it is unlikely that you will be able to lead them anywhere. But if you are two steps ahead, it is likely that you will lose them. If people are one step ahead of us, we usually admire them. If they are two steps ahead of us, we usually think they are evil.

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Indeed, one of the things that seems to characterize all the great religions— Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism— is their capacity to speak to people in both Stage II and Stage IV. In fact, I suspect this is why they are great religions.

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They are threatened by anyone who thinks differently from them, and so regard it as their responsibility to convert or save the other 90 or 99 percent of humanity who are not “true believers.” It is this same style of functioning that characterizes the second stage of the community process in which the group members, rather than accepting one another try vehemently to fix one another.

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To enter Stage IV they must begin to empty themselves of some of the dogmas of skepticism such as Anything that can't be measured scientifically can't be known and isn't worth studying. They must begin to doubt even their own doubt.

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the light years you have traveled beyond it." A tear trickled down Ralph's cheek.

"You've hit the nail on the head," he acknowledged. "The funny thing about it is that there's a certain joy along with the sadness. I'm glad to be back here with my wife and you and my patients. I had no desire to stay down there. I belong now right where I am. But it's not the simple, unconscious kind of belonging that those people have down there. I sort of regret that lost simplicity, that innocence. But I know it isn't a holy innocence down there; it's just innocence. They have more than their share of pain and worries worse than mine. But they don't have to worry about the whole world."

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potential for elitism,

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Our responsibility as individuals to empty ourselves in order to achieve peace was stated clearly by the Hindu mystic Krishnamurti twenty years ago in his book Freedom from the Known:

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in our moments of meditation and emptiness. True contemplation, therefore, requires meditation.

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If you continually ask questions of life and are continually willing to be open and empty enough to hear life's answer and to ponder the meaning, you will be a contemplative.

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We can truly listen to him or truly hear her only out of emptiness.

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"more than one half of Beethoven is silence."

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The clamor escalated until our little group of adults became as noisy as a third- grade classroom after the teacher had been absent for an hour.

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After all, knowledge of the past, the present, and even the future— and above all self- knowledge— are touted as the ultimate goals of the human experience.

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I can only say further, “The unconscious is always one step ahead of the conscious mind, and it is therefore impossible ever to know that you are doing the right thing (since knowing is a function of consciousness). However, if your will is steadfastly to the good, and if you are willing to suffer fully when the good is ambiguous, your unconscious will always be one step ahead of your conscious mind in the right direction.” In other words, you will do the right thing even though you will not have the consolation of knowing at the time that it is the right thing.

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we have great trouble with ambiguity in our culture. It is not until we move into Stage IV of our spiritual growth that we even begin to become comfortable with ambiguity.

Note - Chapter X: Emptiness > Page 220

Applicable in any field including trading the markets

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Elisabeth Kübler-Ross was the first person to have the courage to talk with people who were dying and ask them how they felt. Out of her work she wrote the classic *On Death and Dying*, in which she elucidated the five successive stages people go through as they face their impending death: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. 7

First,

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people tend simply to deny the reality of the situation. “They must have gotten my lab test mixed up with someone else’s,” they will think or say. Then, as they realize this is not the case, they get angry— angry at the doctors, the nurses, the hospital, angry at their families, angry at God. Then they bargain: “Maybe if I go back to church and start praying, my cancer will go away” or “Maybe if I start being nicer to my children, my kidney disease will stop progressing,” they tell themselves. But when they realize that there really is no way out— that the jig is up— they become depressed. If they are able to do what we therapists call “work through” their depression, however, they can reach the fifth stage, in which they truly accept their death. It is a surprisingly beautiful stage of peace, tranquillity, spiritual light— almost like a resurrection of sorts. But most people who are dying do not go through all these stages. The majority die still denying, still angry, still bargaining, or still depressed, because when they hit the stage of depression it is so painful that they retreat into denial, anger, or bargaining. They are unable to “work through” their depression.

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The greatest tragedy of the Vietnam War, to my mind, is that this nation was never willing to suffer a true and full psychological depression over it. We have failed to acknowledge collectively our national sin. We have never publicly apologized. We have never fully admitted that we were wrong. Having been unwilling to do the work of depression, we have been unable as a nation to grow from our failure, to learn how to be different. So, by and large, our policies toward communism and Third World nations have not changed as a consequence of their failure. We have not changed. Much of the time Americans act as if Vietnam had never happened.

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There is no way that we can live a rich life unless we are willing to suffer repeatedly, experiencing depression and despair, fear and anxiety, grief and sadness, anger and the agony of forgiving, confusion and doubt, criticism and rejection.

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What happens when I say, "I wrote a book all about discipline, and I don't even have the self-discipline to stop smoking. Sometimes I think I'm a hypocrite, a real phony. Sometimes I think I'm not even on the right road myself. Sometimes I feel I don't know where I am. I feel lost and scared. And tired. Although I am only fifty, sometimes I'm so very tired. And lonely. Will you help me?" The effect on others of that kind of vulnerability is almost invariably disarming. They are most likely to respond, "You seem like an authentic person. I'm tired and scared and lonely too. Of course I'll help you in any way I can."

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But what happens when we behave invulnerably, when we gird ourselves with psychological defenses and pretend that we are cool cats who have got it all together, rugged individualists who seem to be in complete control of our lives? What happens is that other people gird themselves with their psychological defenses and pretend that they too are cool cats who have got it all together, and our human, personal relationships become nothing more than that of two empty tanks bumping against each other in the night.

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The laying down of physical weapons is not the only way that we humans, individually or collectively, can make ourselves vulnerable. When we lecture together on these matters, Keith Miller will say: "I'm not sure I agree with Scotty that the best thing to do is to get rid of half of our nuclear weapons. What I think we should do is to apologize to the Russians. We should tell them that we have not behaved as Christians toward them.

We have not loved them with our whole hearts. We have not wished the best for them. We have not rejoiced in their successes. We have not loved them as ourselves. We should say that we are sorry and humbly ask them to forgive us.” Vulnerability in whatever form always requires at least a small step of faith, and for some it might even be easier to relinquish half our weapons than acknowledge imperfection.

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Of all variants of vulnerability the one most difficult is the revealing of some imperfection, problem, neurosis, sin, or failure— all of which tend to be subsumed under the heading of “weakness” in our culture of rugged individualism. It is a ridiculous cultural attitude, because the reality is that, as individuals or nations, we are all weak. We all have problems, imperfections, neuroses, sins, failures. And to attempt to hide them is a lie.

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The central problem of the arms race is not that we are risking too much but rather far too little on behalf of peace. Our strategy needs to be far more complex and multidimensional than “peace through strength.” Specifically, we need to pursue additionally, with at least equal vigor, the “peace through weakness” strategies that build community. Otherwise there is no hope. For the reality is that there can be no vulnerability without risk; and there can be no community without vulnerability; and there can be no peace— ultimately no life— without community.

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community is always characterized by integrity. It is no accident that Erik Erikson also labeled the final stage of individual psychosocial development “Integrity.”

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We psychologists use a verb that is the opposite of the verb “to integrate”: “to compartmentalize.” By it we refer to the remarkable capacity we human beings have to take matters that are properly related to each other and put them in separate, airtight mental compartments where they don’t rub up against each other and cause us any pain. An example would be that of the businessman who goes to church on Sunday mornings, believes that he loves God and God’s creation and his fellow human beings, and then on Monday morning has no trouble with his company’s policy of dumping toxic wastes in a nearby stream. He has put his religion in one compartment and his business in another and is what we call a “Sunday morning Christian.” It may be a very comfortable way to operate, but integrity it is

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Integrity is never painless. It requires that we let matters rub up against each other, that we fully experience the tension of conflicting needs, demands, and interests, that we even be emotionally torn apart by them. Take, for example, the fact that this country, on whose coinage is written the words “In God We Trust,” is also the leading manufacturer and seller of weapons in the world. What are we to do with this? Should we be perfectly comfortable about it? Should we keep these matters in separate compartments? Or should we wonder if there is a conflict between them and agonize over the tension of trying to resolve that conflict? Should we consider, for instance, with integrity, changing the inscription on our coinage to read “In Weapons We Trust” or “In God We Partially Trust?”

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That was when I stopped believing everything I read in the newspapers. Nothing in the years since has caused me to begin again.

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Approximately a decade later I read a massive and engaging novel by Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*.¹ In it she made a seemingly compelling case for her philosophy of rugged individualism and unrestrained free enterprise. Something about that philosophy, however, bothered me— something I couldn’t quite put my finger on. It kept gnawing at me until one day I finally realized that there were essentially no children in the book, which was a panoramic novel of around a thousand pages recounting the sweep of society and the drama of many lives. But there were virtually no children. It was as if children did not exist in her society; they were missing. And of course that is exactly one of the social situations in which rugged individualism and unrestrained capitalism fall short: where there are children and others who, like children, need to be cared for.

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My favorite light- bulb joke is “How many Zen Buddhists does it take to change a light bulb?” The answer: “Two: one to change the light bulb and one to not change the light bulb.”

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If a concept is paradoxical, that itself should suggest that it smacks of integrity, that it gives off the ring of truth. Conversely, if a concept is not in the least paradoxical, you should be suspicious of it and suspect that it has failed to integrate some aspect of the whole. Take, for example again, the ethic of rugged individualism. There is nothing paradoxical about it. It runs with only one side of the truth: that we are called to individuation, wholeness, and self- sufficiency. Its fallacy is that it ignores the other side

of that same truth: that we are also called to recognize our inadequacy, our brokenness, and our interdependence. And being fallacious, it fosters a dangerous self-centeredness. For the reality is that we do not exist either by or for ourselves. Indeed, Buddhism teaches that the very notion of the self as an isolated entity is an illusion. It is an illusion that many fall prey to because they do not or will not think with integrity.

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Indeed, the more I strive toward integrity, the less I find myself using the word “my.” “My” wife is not my possession. The identity of “my” children is only very slightly of my own making. In one sense the money I have earned is mine, but on a more profound level it has been a gift to me from all manner of good fortune, including parents, fine teachers, and fine universities, a public that reads what I have written, and a few personal talents I didn’t even have the wisdom to ask for. The law may say that the property I own in Connecticut is “my” land, but it has been farmed by many generations of white and red people before me and I hope will continue to be farmed by generations of strangers to come. The flowers in the garden are not “my” flowers. I do not know how to create a flower; I can merely steward or nurture one. As stewards we cannot be isolationists.

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There are atheists who behave like Christian saints and properly professing Christians who behave like criminals— who are criminals.

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Conversely, the attempt to exclude individuals because of their beliefs, however silly or primitive, is always destructive to community.

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That is why I referred to the issue of separation of Church and State as a problem. No separation means the demise of religious freedom. Total separation means the demise of genuine religion.

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infuriates

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So we have come full circle. Any form of behavior that stems from a lack of integration, that represents compartmentalization, is blasphemy. The “businessman who goes to church on Sunday mornings, believes that he loves God and God’s creation and his fellow human beings, and then on Monday morning has no trouble with his company’s policy of dumping toxic wastes in a nearby stream”— who is “a Sunday morning

Christian”— is guilty of blasphemy. Regardless of its intensity, regardless of the degree of consciousness or deliberateness involved, such compartmentalization of religion is invariably blasphemous. And “the fact that this country, on whose coinage is written the words ‘In God We Trust,’ is the leading manufacturer and seller of weapons in the world” means that we are a largely blasphemous nation.

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Evil is inherent in excessive specialization. During the Vietnam War days I used to wander around the halls of the Pentagon talking to officials about the war. “Oh, yes, Dr. Peck, we understand your concerns, yes, we do,” they would say. “But you see, we’re just the Ordnance Branch. We are responsible for seeing to it that the napalm is manufactured and shipped to Vietnam, but we’re not responsible for the war. That’s policy. You want to talk to the people in the Policy Branch down the hall.” So I would go down the hall to hear again, “Oh, yes, Dr. Peck, we understand your concerns, yes, we do, but you see, here in the Policy Branch we just execute policy. Policy is made in the White House. You need to talk to the people in the White House.” So it was that in 1971 the entire Pentagon acted as if it didn’t really have anything to do with the war. This phenomenon occurs in all large institutions with specialized departments and subdepartments— including business corporations, universities, and even churches— where there is a tendency for the group conscience to become so compartmentalized, fragmented, and diluted as to be nonexistent. The movement out of an age of excessive specialization into an age of integration is not visible just in the integration of religion and science; it can be seen in all quarters: Alcoholics Anonymous, the holistic medicine movement, the ecology movement. These are all movements of integration. Just as encouraging is the increasing integration of religion with politics and religion with economics. The Pastoral Letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the nuclear arms race is no historical accident. Its critics spoke out of the old age of specialization, screaming, “You bishops should not be talking about such matters. The arms race is not your specialty. You are violating the separation of Church and State. You should stay in your cathedrals where you belong. The arms race is the specialty of the politicians and should be left up to them.” But fortunately these old specialties are breaking down. For the movement out of an age of excessive specialization into an age of integration is a movement toward integrity. A dramatically increasing number of people who are transcending traditional culture “don’t buy it anymore.” They have learned how to spot blasphemy for what it is, and they are insisting upon integrity with all the power at their disposal.

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We are beginning to be suspicious of the media, which are so largely controlled by big business and big government.

Part III: The Solution

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When I was a child, for instance, the dictum that “children should be seen and not heard” was no joke. Children and parents were separated—specialized—into very separate castes, with all the attendant barriers to communication involved in a caste system. So also were husbands and wives. I can remember my mother explaining why she could not take an expensive but longed-for trip to a health spa: “I cannot spend your father’s money for something he doesn’t approve of.” But this division of the family into first-, second-, and third-class citizens is breaking down. Husbands and wives are no longer necessarily or totally specialized into breadwinners and child raisers. And authorities are largely in agreement that healthy families actually encourage children to “talk back” to parents in certain ways. We are moving.

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And there remain some marriages in which role specialization of husbands and wives is not only efficient but healthy.

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A community is a group of all leaders.

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Psychiatrists, for instance, know intellectually the benefits of a “therapeutic community.” Yet almost never do psychiatric treatment units fulfill their potential in this regard. Neither physicians nor nurses desire to make themselves vulnerable to each other, much less to the patients. So the necessary authority system is also a specialized caste system in which the patients—supposedly the ones being served and most in need of self-esteem—are a kind of untouchables at the bottom of the heap. Similarly, when I speak to college students about community, the one refrain I hear repeatedly is “The teachers not only hang together; they don’t respect us.” Nonetheless, in a college here or a hospital there, occasional experiments are being conducted in the active recognition of common humanity. We are moving.

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Unfortunately, the arms race is very much an institution. It has buildings, bricks and mortar, and real estate aplenty. When I was in the army, one of its basic training centers, Fort Leonard Wood, was the fourth-largest city in Missouri. Speaking recently on the

northern Gulf Coast of Florida, I saw a region that looked more like an overgrown military base than a diocese or other civilian center of population. As for budget, the arms race has the largest in the world— over a trillion dollars annually, to which the citizens of the United States contribute approximately a third. It is not only big business, it is the biggest business, employing tens of millions of men and women.

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Dag Hammarskjöld

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Since the city hospital was really something of a snake pit, I asked her whether she really wouldn't rather sign into our hospital. The answer was again no.

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Each one of these presumably wise men knew that we humans have evolved out of tribes into city- states and out of city- states into nation- states, yet not one of them had the vision to suggest there might be any further evolution beyond the nation- state system. Not one had the temerity to propose what is seemingly obvious, that international peace ultimately requires the sacrifice of at least some external sovereignty of the nation- state.

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acculturated

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United States of Earth.

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The psychiatrist Eric Berne, in his famous book *Games People Play*, essentially defined a psychological game as repetitive interaction between two or more individuals in which there is an unspoken payoff. 5 Although

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There is no clear evidence to indicate that the United States has ever truly recovered from the Great Depression of the 1930s. Despite the New Deal measures the economy continued to stagnate— even continued to go downhill— until the buildup for World War II began with the Lend- Lease program. We have been on a war economy ever since 1938, almost fifty years ago. No matter how healthy our economy might look, I wonder if we are not like a man walking around with an intravenous tube in his arm, carrying his life- giving IV bottle up and down a hospital corridor, proclaiming, “There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.” There is considerable reason to believe that we are dependent upon the arms race to maintain our economic stability and our generally high

standard of living— that, in fact, the military- industrial complex of this country behaves in such a way as actually to support the arms race in order to maintain the economy.

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conservation. A branch could still be maintained for the purpose of self- defense through nonviolent means: a cadre of brave men and women thoroughly trained in the techniques of passive resistance and nonviolent action.

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One of the more bizarre aspects of our American culture is that we somehow expect and think that career military people are proponents of peace. The reality is that when there is peace, career military personnel have a very miserable time of it: mass firings occur, promotions are frozen, awards are not forthcoming, salaries are unreasonably low, and the whole role of soldier is denigrated. But let there be a war and suddenly prestige is regained, salaries are escalated, bonuses are available, medals pour in, and self- esteem is more than reestablished. To expect a career military person to want peace and not war is to expect that person to be a saint. What possible right do we have to expect or think that the military should be so much more than we are ourselves?

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This issue of voluntary economic depression raises a basic problem of the relationship between economic pain and capitalism. The central problem of capitalism is that it is, in and of itself, amoral. Its thesis is that the general welfare is best served by the individuals motivated by profit in a competitive environment. It does not speak of any other motives. Indeed, it places such faith in the profit motive precisely because it is the primitive motive of individual self- interest. But as such the profit motive requires no submission of the self to anything higher or beyond the self. It is unabashedly self- centered. And a will unsubmitted to anything higher than itself is, or will inevitably become, evil. So it is that capitalism, in and of itself, has a profound tendency to “refuse progress.”

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The genocidal Nazi concepts of the “master race” were also symptoms of nationalism in action.

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Black South Africans need to forge their identity as a nation, with or without the cooperation of white South Africans.

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So it is that the proper pattern for the development of nations is, first, growth into nationalism, then growth out of and beyond nationalism.

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vulnerability. Why then has the Christian Church not fought against the arms race from the beginning? How could Cardinal Spellman have worked for the escalation of the Vietnam War? How is it that the builders of weapons systems attend national prayer breakfasts? What is the American flag doing at the entrance to the sanctuary of my little Protestant New England church (and most every other Christian church across the land) when Jesus walked with Canaanites and Samaritans, and when, in imitation of Him, the very first decision of the Church was to be international? What happened to Jesus?

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The particular evil of being forced at knife- point to bow down and pledge allegiance to pagan gods had passed away.

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We try to keep it a pseudocommunity where everything is all smiles and politeness, all sweetness and light. If any fighting is to go on, it should be restricted to vestry meetings — or better yet, to prevestry meeting political caucusing. The problem is that this has nothing to do with real community—

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A budget is a concretization of priorities.

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soulless, paranoid, bureaucratic mentality

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Do not underestimate the cost of courage and integrity. No

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In my imagination, the president of the future will refrain from selecting yes- people for her cabinet. Beyond choosing on the basis of emotional maturity, she will select the members of her cabinet/ community for their variety, for the differences in their backgrounds, outlooks, and personalities. She will also have a high tolerance for conflict. Genuine community is a safe place where appropriate conflict is actually welcomed and faced rather than dreaded and avoided. It is a group that has learned how to fight gracefully. Although her primary role will be to facilitate the development and maintenance of her cabinet/ community, the president of the future will not simply stand aloof from the fray. She will be a member of the community, as responsible to the other members as they are to her. She will need their encouragement but no more than she will

need their doubt and disagreement, criticism, and confrontation for her integrity. As a member of a genuine long- term community once said: “We love one another too much to let anyone get away with anything.”

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Remember that being takes precedence over doing. If

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Focus your energy and being on what you are for (peace, love, community) rather than what you are against (military industrialists, child abusers, organized crime). It