

*Praise for*

# Our Moment of Choice

*“Our Moment of Choice* has come at the perfect time, a testament to the great work that all the Evolutionary Leaders are doing in the world. We are primed for an evolutionary leap. This book will definitely inspire you!”

—Jack Canfield, coauthor of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

*“Our Moment of Choice* is a soul-restorative salve of compassionate healing wisdom for our world, and a most timely and stirring visionary contribution to the Great Work. This lived understanding—our human capacity to cooperatively galvanize consciousness in service of beneficent species-wide planetary evolution, infuses each of the thirty-seven stellar chapters comprising this remarkable book. I gratefully anticipate the depth of visionary wisdom, cutting-edge scientific discovery, socially progressive economic and educational direction, and regenerative environmental and climate-change strategies, so brilliantly expressed by the authors and editors of *Our Moment of Choice*, shall be enthusiastically welcomed as a life-beautifying gift of Gaian medicine for our seven generations, and beyond.”

—Oscar Miro-Quesada, founder of The Heart of the Healer

# Our Copyrighted image oment of Choice

EVOLUTIONARY VISIONS AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

*Edited by Robert Atkinson, Kurt Johnson, and Deborah Moldow*



Copyrighted image



**ATRIA** PAPERBACK  
New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi

 **BEYOND WORDS**  
Portland, Oregon



**ATRIA PAPERBACK**

An Imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.  
1230 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020



**BEYOND WORDS**

1750 S.W. Skyline Blvd., Suite 20  
Portland, OR 97221-2543  
503-531-8700 / 503-531-8773 fax  
www.beyondword.com

Copyright © 2020 by Source of Synergy Foundation

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever without prior written permission. For information, address Atria Books/Beyond Words Subsidiary Rights Department, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

The information contained in this book is intended to be educational and not for diagnosis, prescription, or treatment of any health disorder whatsoever. It is intended to provide helpful and informative material on the subjects addressed in the publication. It is sold with the understanding that the authors and publisher are not engaged in rendering medical, health, or any other kind of personal professional services in the book. The reader should consult their medical, health, or other competent professional before adopting any of the suggestions in this book or drawing inferences from it. The authors and publisher specifically disclaim all responsibility for any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this book.

Managing Editor: Lindsay S. Easterbrooks-Brown

Copyeditor: Jenefer Angell

Proofreader: Kristin Thiel

Design: Sara Blum

Composition: William H. Brunson Typography Services

First Beyond Words/Atria hardcover edition September 2020

**ATRIA BOOKS** and colophon are trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

**BEYOND WORDS PUBLISHING** and colophon are registered trademarks of Beyond Words Publishing. Beyond Words is an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-866-506-1949 or [business@simonandschuster.com](mailto:business@simonandschuster.com).

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your live event.

For more information or to book an event, contact Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau at 1-866-248-3049 or visit our website at [www.simonspeakers.com](http://www.simonspeakers.com).

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Atkinson, Robert, editor. | Johnson, Kurt, editor. | Moldow, Deborah, editor.

Title: Our moment of choice : conscious evolution and hope for the future /

edited by Robert Atkinson, Kurt Johnson, and Deborah Moldow.

Description: New York : Atria Books [2020] | Includes bibliographical references. |

Summary: "This timely and compelling anthology is a rousing call to action for all of us to help transform the world into a just, peaceful, and thriving one—featuring creative and practical solutions to the many crises facing humanity today. Featuring entries by forty-three cutting-edge thinkers, such as Deepak Chopra™, Lynne McTaggart, and more."

—Provided by publisher

Identifiers: LCCN 2020014011 (print) | LCCN 2020014012 (ebook) | ISBN

9781582707624 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781982154233 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Humanity. | Social evolution.

Classification: LCC BJ1533.H9 O97 2020 (print) | LCC BJ1533.H9 (ebook) |

DDC 170/.44—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020014011>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020014012>

The corporate mission of Beyond Words Publishing, Inc.: *Inspire to Integrity*

# Contents

Preface: Evolutionary Visions at the Dawn of a New Era  
by Reverend Deborah Moldow and Diane Marie Williams ..... xiii

Introduction: The New Human Story: The Power to Thrive in  
Our Time of Extremes by Gregg Braden ..... xvii

## Circle One Bridge-Building

*Together, we can build a global community*  
*and create a culture of peace.*

1. The Great Map of Peace by James O’Dea ..... 3
2. Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century: A Quiet Revolution  
by Reverend Deborah Moldow ..... 11
3. Integrating an Evolutionary Vision of the Future with “Hard”  
Science by David Sloan Wilson, PhD and Kurt Johnson, PhD ..... 17
4. Jamming: Cultivating Connection, Community, Collaboration,  
and Co-liberation by Shilpa Jain ..... 25
5. Is World Peace Possible? by Reverend Michael Bernard Beckwith ..... 33

## Circle Two Restoring Ecological Balance

*We regard the universe as alive and conscious;  
we are planetary stewards.*

<u>6. Evolutionary Wisdom for a World in Great Transition</u> <i>by Duane Elgin, MBA, MA</i> _____	41
<u>7. Regenerating Earth and Her People</u> <i>by Daniel Christian Wahl, PhD</i> _____	49
<u>8. One Good Person</u> <i>by Constance Buffalo</i> _____	57
<u>9. Prophecies, Dynamic Change, and a New Global Civilization</u> <i>by Hereditary Chief Phil Lane Jr.</i> _____	65
<u>10. Reasons for Optimism: Transitioning to a Life Economy</u> <i>by John Perkins</i> _____	73

## Circle Three Conscious Enterprise and Social Change

*We are ethical stewards of the earth's economic  
and communications integrity.*

<u>11. The Dawn of a Conscious Business Movement</u> <i>by Steve Farrell</i> _____	83
<u>12. Youth-Led Social Enterprise Projects</u> <i>by Gino Pastori-Ng</i> _____	91
<u>13. A New Consciousness of Money</u> <i>by Sarah McCrum</i> _____	97
<u>14. The Core Principles of a Business Warrior Monk</u> <i>by Rinaldo S. Brutoco</i> _____	103
<u>15. Reinventing the Planet: A Bottom-Up Grand Strategy</u> <i>by David Gershon</i> _____	111

## Circle Four Healing Ourselves and the Planet

*Working with the mind-body-spirit connection,  
we can heal the whole system.*

16. Survival, Consciousness, and the One Mind  
*by Larry Dossey, MD and Barbara Dossey, PhD, RN* ..... 121
17. Healing Ourselves, Our Children, and Our World  
*by Lori Leyden, PhD, MBA* ..... 129
18. The Noble Future: Becoming Fully Human  
*by Gordon Dveirin, EdD and Joan Borysenko, PhD* ..... 137
19. Elevating Our Spiritual Nature: The Pathway to Healing  
Humanity by Reverend Sylvia Sumter ..... 145
20. Conscious Evolution: A Theory We Can Thrive With  
*by Bruce H. Lipton, PhD* ..... 151
21. Is Wholeness Really a Choice? by Deepak Chopra™, MD ..... 157

## Circle Five Integrating Science and Spirituality

*We utilize research and education to awaken, elevate,  
and evolve consciousness.*

22. The Power of Eight by Lynne McTaggart ..... 167
23. The Current Science of Awakening by Loch Kelly, MDiv, LCSW ..... 175
24. Awakening to Our Limitless Mind by J. J. Hurtak, PhD and  
Desiree Hurtak, PhD, MSSc ..... 183

25. Authentic Education to Awaken, Elevate, and Evolve  
Consciousness by Nina Meyerhof, EdD ..... 191

26. A WholeWorld-View to Guide the Evolution of Consciousness  
by Jude Currivan, PhD ..... 197

27. Change our Story; Change Our World by Gregg Braden ..... 205

Circle Six  
New Frontiers Beyond Space and Time

From outer space to inner space, we view the cosmos  
as a fully integrated whole.

28. Liberating Human Potential by Eben Alexander III, MD  
and Karen Newell ..... 215

29. Vibrational Intelligence: Tapping into the Language of the  
Universe by Eve Konstantine, MPH ..... 221

30. Dawn of the New Day by Reverend Christian Sorensen, DD ..... 227

31. Putting on Our Red Capes, Activating Our Superpowers  
by Diane Marie Williams ..... 235

32. Humanity’s Change of Heart by Claudia Welss ..... 241

Circle Seven  
The Big Picture

We envision the whole to support sustainability,  
prosperity, and global transformation.

33. Evolving Our Culture: From Breakdown to Breakthrough  
by Justin Faerman ..... 251

<a href="#">34. The Way of the Social Artist by Jean Houston, PhD</a>	259
<a href="#">35. A Holistic Vision of Evolution and Consciousness by Robert Atkinson, PhD</a>	265
36. Reasoning and Experiencing Our Way to Oneness by Ervin Laszlo, PhD	273
37. A Synergistic Convergence of the Whole by Barbara Marx Hubbard	279
Afterword: Letter for the Future by Elisabet Sahtouris, PhD	285
<a href="#">Epilogue: Connecting the Threads of a Call to Collective Action by Robert Atkinson, PhD and Kurt Johnson, PhD</a>	293
Acknowledgments	299
<a href="#">Evolutionary Leaders</a>	302
Notes	309
About the Contributors	321
About the Editors	343



Copyrighted image



# Preface

## EVOLUTIONARY VISIONS AT THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

Reverend Deborah Moldow and Diane Marie Williams

**O**ur moment of choice is at hand. There has never been a more urgent moment than today for humankind to come together and prepare for the task ahead by taking on a new kind of evolutionary leadership grounded in the principle of synergy.

This book is about hope. It's about action. It's about innovation. It's about a synergistic convergence of the worldwide network of interconnected humanity ushering in the next level of human consciousness.

The future is fast approaching. Yet despite images of fast-flowing melting glaciers and cataclysmic natural disasters on our screens and the politics of division tearing at our collective soul, we are in the midst of the greatest evolutionary leap in consciousness in human history.

The Source of Synergy Foundation supports the release of synergistic energy that exponentially expands and creates global ripples in planetary consciousness. When individuals, organizations, communities, and nations unite in a shared sense of responsibility for the common good,

their collective efforts have a far greater effect on the whole. The Evolutionary Leaders Circle emerged from such synergistic momentum.

The Source of Synergy Foundation teamed up with Deepak Chopra™ and the Chopra Foundation in 2006 to unite visionary authors, educators, and social activists who are forging a conscious evolutionary movement for global transformation. In 2008, the Source of Synergy Foundation and the Chopra Foundation joined with the Association for Global New Thought in California to convene thirty-five evolutionary leaders who put forth “A Call to Conscious Evolution” that asks the question: *What can we do together to accelerate the shift in consciousness?* The Call, which has received support from close to fifty thousand members of the evolutionary community, continues to unify those who are inspiring, supporting, and serving humanity’s conscious evolution. (You are warmly invited to sign the call at [evolutionaryleaders.net/acalltoconsciousevolution](http://evolutionaryleaders.net/acalltoconsciousevolution).)

Today, the Evolutionary Leaders Circle is comprised of 186 individuals united by a shared commitment to strategically engage their collective field of potential and synergize with the evolutionary community around the globe, to reverse the current course we are on, and to support a shift to our next level of collective evolution. All the contributors to this book are members of this Evolutionary Leaders Circle, who have donated their chapters to cocreate a synergistic whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Our intention with this unique book, *Our Moment of Choice: Evolutionary Visions and Hope for the Future*, is to offer tools, insights, and inspiration that will support us as we each respond in our own way to the powerful call of our time. We believe that the evolution of consciousness happens when we make a commitment to lead our lives consciously, intentionally unleashing our greatest potential. We make this choice from moment to moment to drive evolution forward for the benefit of the whole.

The book’s seven areas explore where we are heading as we evolve toward a society dedicated to the collective good. Each section demonstrates the power of synergy as a key to building a coherent field and accelerating an evolutionary leap in consciousness.

You are reading this book because you are part of this evolutionary community leading the conscious evolutionary movement for global transformation. You are an integral part of the collective field of love and healing that will generate a heart-centered future based on co-creation, caring, compassion, appreciation, and cooperation.

We hope that this book will serve the evolutionary process by creating waves of momentum to help our fullest evolutionary potential transform today's challenges—and to help us to fully live in a whole new operating frequency that will show us the way forward to flourish on our beautiful Earth.

Let us dive into the new paradigm by activating the greatest vision of who we can become and what we can do together. The choice is ours.



For more information, please visit [sourceofsynergyfoundation.org](http://sourceofsynergyfoundation.org), [evolutionaryleaders.net](http://evolutionaryleaders.net), and [ourmomentofchoice.com](http://ourmomentofchoice.com) or contact [info@sourceofsynergyfoundation.org](mailto:info@sourceofsynergyfoundation.org).



# Introduction

THE NEW HUMAN STORY: THE POWER TO  
THRIVE IN OUR TIME OF EXTREMES

Gregg Braden

A single question lurks at the very core of our existence: It's the unspoken question lying beneath every choice we'll ever make; it lives within every challenge that will ever test us, and it's the foundation for every decision we'll ever face. The question at the root of all questions—one asked countless times by countless individuals during our estimated two hundred thousand or so years on Earth—is simply, *Who are we?*

## Our Story Matters

While the question itself is simple and brief, the story we tell ourselves about ourselves has implications that we simply cannot escape. It tears directly into the heart of each moment of our lives. Our story—what we believe about our past, our origin, our destiny, and our potential—defines

the way we see ourselves, other people, and the choices we make. It determines who we invite into our lives as friends, partners and life-mates, what careers we choose, and how we heal our bodies. The implications of our story are woven into the very fabric of our society. They show up in everything from how we choose to nourish our bodies, to the way we care for ourselves, our children, and our aging parents.

The implications of our story go even deeper. They inform the thinking at the foundation of civilization itself. Our story influences how we share the vital resources of food, water, medicine, and the basic necessities of life. It determines why, when, and how we go to war, as well as when we choose to accept peace. What we believe about ourselves even justifies our thinking for when we save a human life and when we choose to end one.

In what may be the greatest irony of our existence—at the dawn of the twenty-first century, following more than five thousand years of recorded history—we have still not clearly answered this most basic question about ourselves. And while at any time discovering the truth of our existence would be worth the needed energy and resources, faced with the greatest crises of life and survival in our species' memory, it's especially critical.

## Navigating a Time of Extremes

We're living in a time of extremes—*extreme* shifts in the world and *extreme* changes in our lives. To be clear, the extremes I'm talking about aren't all bad: extreme shifts in technology and the internet, for example, now provide the broadest levels of human connection and information sharing in recorded history. It's the extremes in unsustainable thinking and living that are the problems. The best minds of our time acknowledge that when it comes to factors such as climate, energy, poverty, and environment, if unchecked, our current trajectory of unsustainable practices places us on multiple collision courses that threaten local communities, global society, and ultimately, civilization itself.

In *Our Moment of Choice*, we explore the reasons for the extremes and how to embrace them in a healthy way. Their emergence presents a rare window of opportunity—*our moment of choice*. Will we choose to replace today’s broken and failed systems with the sustainable technologies and practices of healing, peace, and cooperation that are at our doorstep? Or will we ignore our window? Will we choose to cling to the familiar habits of ego, money, power, and competition that keep us locked in the turmoil polarizing our world today? Our success hinges upon us and the way we respond to two key factors—our willingness to (1) acknowledge the extremes and (2) embrace new ways of thinking and living that reflect the uniqueness of our time.

Although we face many unknown factors in our moment of choice, one thing we can know with absolute certainty: our lives are changing in ways that we haven’t been prepared for, and it’s happening at a speed that we’ve never known.

## Creating the World We Know Is Possible

We’re being asked to embrace new discoveries revealing who we are—the new human story—and through that new story to radically, and quickly, shift the thinking of the past when it comes to us and our relationship to the world.

I’m an optimist by nature. I see real reasons for optimism in our lives. At the same time, I’m also a realist. I am under no illusion when it comes to the effort—the work—that it takes to make such a shift. In his 1923 classic book *The Prophet*, philosopher and writer Kahlil Gibran described work as love made visible. This perspective reminds us that the tremendous effort required to thrive and transcend our time of extremes is the visible expression of our love for ourselves, one another, and the world. The world that we leave for our children, and theirs, will be our legacy to our love made visible.

Fortunately for us, we already have the solutions to the big problems of the world—the physical ones, that is. The scientific principles are

already understood. The technology is already available. They exist right here, right now, at our fingertips. What stands between us and the world we know is possible—where clean, abundant, and sustainable energy is accessible to every member of our global family; where live, healthy food and clean water is plentiful and accessible to every mouth on the planet; where every human is able to obtain the basic necessities of life and the support to live a healthy and meaningful life—is something that we can't build, touch, or measure. The elusive link that's missing in the equation that brings this world to life is the *thinking* that makes room in our world for what already exists in our minds.

Are we willing to embrace the vision that makes such possibilities a priority? Will we allow the discoveries that reveal the deepest truths of our relationships to ourselves, one another, and the earth to become the passport to the emerging world? Will we embrace the work it takes to expand our thinking—our love made visible for ourselves and our planet? This is where *Our Moment of Choice: Evolutionary Visions and Hope for the Future* comes in.

While there is certainly no shortage of books that identify the extraordinary conditions of change we face today, they typically fall short of addressing the single element at the heart of how we deal with the conditions. How can we possibly know what technology to choose, what policies to enact, what laws to pass, or how to build sustainable economies, share life-saving technologies, and bridge the issues tearing the fabric of our relationships and society, until we've answered that most fundamental question of our existence: *who are we?* As individuals, as families, as nations, and as a civilization, this most basic understanding becomes the cornerstone for the priorities in our choices and policies.

Without the answer to this question, making life-altering decisions is like trying to get into a house without knowing where the door is. While it's possible to break in through a window or knock down a wall, we'd damage the home in the process. And maybe this is a perfect metaphor for the quandary we find ourselves in. For our human family—which has more than quadrupled in a little over a century, from 1.6 billion in 1900 to about 7.7 billion in 2019—can use the key of understanding



who we are to move through the door of successful solutions, or we can continue to respond to crises with the knee-jerk reactions and false assumptions based in incomplete, or obsolete, science until we damage our home, both Earth and ourselves.

This book identifies seven areas of discovery that will radically change the way we've been led to think about our world and ourselves, as we open new horizons of hope and possibility. In the pages that follow, you will discover the keys to

- building a global community as a culture of peace,
- revisioning the universe as alive, conscious, and intelligent,
- renewing an ethic of deep integrity in conscious business, media, and entrepreneurship,
- healing the whole body as a way of living, rather than as a response to illness,
- awakening the power of a spiritually based science,
- understanding new scientific discoveries that reveal the cosmos as a deeply connected and fully integrated system, and
- knowing sustainable living and prosperity as a foundation for global transformation.

## Taking a Personal Journey

*Our Moment of Choice* is written with one purpose in mind: to empower us with an honest, truthful, and factual understanding of our relationship with the earth, one another, and perhaps most importantly,

ourselves. In doing so, we develop new insights and discover new answers to the ancient and timeless question: *who are we?*

The key to our moment of choice is simply this: the better we answer this question, the better we know ourselves and the less we fear change in the world. In the absence of fear, we are better equipped to make conscious and informed choices.

I invite you to take the discoveries in these pages and explore what they mean to you. Talk them over with the people in your life; discover if, and how, they change your story and the story that is shared in your family. New discoveries regarding our origin, our past, and the most deeply held ideas about our existence give us reasons to rethink the traditional beliefs that define our lives. When we do, the solutions to life's challenges become clear and the choices become obvious. This book is dedicated to revealing the discoveries that have yet to show up in our textbooks and classrooms; they hold the key to awakening our new human story.

Copyrighted image

# Circle One

# Bridge-Building

*Together, we can build a global community and  
create a culture of peace.*

Copyrighted image



# I

## The Great Map of Peace

James O'Dea

Peace may seem an elusive concept in a world with horrific violence, brutal conflict, and exploitation, yet never in humanity's history has such a comprehensive map of peace emerged as is now evident to individuals, communities, activists, spiritual practitioners, educators, health professionals, researchers, and academics alike.

What we call a culture of peace comes from a whole-systems perspective, which sees all things as interconnected and influencing each other. We can map whole societal shifts and transformations from ancient cycles of violent division and conflict to demonstrated strategies for conflict resolution, social healing, and reconciliation. We are increasingly aware of our interconnection and interdependence, and we act accordingly. We can embody a visionary activism as conscious evolutionaries, integrating previously separate fields of knowledge.

### Accountability and the Law

A foundational building block for creating a global culture of peace is the contribution of the rule of law and its protections. In 1945, as the world

was recovering from a cataclysmic world war, the trials in Nuremberg laid out a pivotal new framework that defined crimes against humanity: flagrant violations of basic human rights by genocidal, ethnocentric, and totalitarian regimes. In 1948, the fledging United Nations proposed a comprehensive vision for the creation and protection of every person on planet Earth, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a binding legal covenant to be signed by all the world's governments. Many believed, and still do, that this sounded the call for the new global story for humanity.

Instead, this covenant was never adopted; ideological differences split it into two covenants. One, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, was signed by the governments of the West, while the other—the Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—was signed by the Communist bloc and the governments of the Global South. These differences have kept most governments from fulfilling the vision contained in both.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this regrettable fracture, the last decades of the twentieth century saw a profound contribution to a global culture of peace with legislation, international treaties, and a new level of consensus on the rights of refugees, minorities, women, and children. Civil rights, political rights to organize and express dissent, labor rights, humane treatment in conflict zones, freedom from torture, and freedom of the press were also part of this stream of international law in which we see an evolutionary trend of greater and greater inclusivity, which now also includes support in the areas of sexual orientation, health, and environmental protections.

We also see that law as a driver of evolutionary progress and cultural transformation has its limitations. In Nuremberg, for example, we saw the issue of selective application of law—one law for the victor and another law for the vanquished. (Do not the Allied bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki also fall into the category of war crimes?) We can find many other examples of governments selectively applying human rights and peace treaties they have ratified while lacking a full commitment to their enforcement. In response, human rights

movements all over the globe continue to mobilize, pressing for accountability and transparency in violations of law.

## Restoring Justice

The legal paradigm is also limited by the worldview of the accompanying punishment. Laws violated require violators to be punished and regimes to be sanctioned. The punitive worldview often includes lengthy prison sentences with little effort made to rehabilitate prisoners, leading to high recidivism. The punitive worldview does not deal with underlying narratives of trauma and wounding, which often erupt as cyclical patterns of violence and revenge, so it becomes self-perpetuating. Fortunately, the punitive worldview is not the only one we have.

A potent configuration of elements has been converging to open up worldviews that are more transformational and healing. One of those elements was a shift in psychology away from a focus on pathology to positive strategies that bring about change. As positive psychology gained momentum by the end of the twentieth century across the planet, people began to engage in democratic change. Participation became a central theme, and people's movements began to flourish. The Berlin Wall was torn down, apartheid ended, and many dictatorships were brought to an end, as the positive psychology principle of creating the change you want to see in your life was also expressed on the political stage in the notion that we not only have rights but also responsibilities to create the culture we wish to live in.

There was a blossoming of citizen activism on strengthening civil rights, confronting racism, exposing gender bias, promoting fair trade, and establishing environmental protections. A guiding vision for this call to assume responsibility for deep cultural transformation, for many NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), was expressed in *The Earth Charter*, drafted through an international consultative process in the late 1990s.

While people continue to be imprisoned and tortured and to give their lives for social justice, a sea change occurred in the fifty years

from Nuremberg to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa in 1995. The most important change there was not just making apartheid illegal or punishing those responsible for maintaining its systemic abuses but rather demonstrating an extensive effort toward restoring justice. The goal of the TRC was to address accountability while also examining the roots of the nation's deep trauma and creating a context to help heal its wounds. The TRC's restorative approach to post-conflict justice environments moved beyond a retributive or punitive justice. It also created a benchmark in honoring not only the truth as reflected in factual narratives but the truth as reflected in traumatic experience. During the TRC process, tears were welcomed and the subjective experience was primary in the restorative approach.

While restorative justice has been gaining interest and serious attention on the global political stage, it is by no means a new approach. Restorative justice, built on victim/offender interaction and accountability, has strong roots in a variety of indigenous practices. It can be found, for example, in Bedouin, Polynesian, Native American, and several African societies. I was personally privileged to be given permission to observe a Gacaca trial in Rwanda dealing with the aftermath of the genocide there. I was so impressed with the degree of active and energetic participation by so many villagers connected to the case and their inspiring commitment to get to the whole truth and to forgive when real contrition was expressed.

Forgiveness, and its role in personal and societal healing, has seen a surge of interest in recent years. Forgiveness moves the victim beyond the trauma of violation and the trap of wound-attachment syndrome. Without forgiveness, victims are often left with unresolved resentment and even hatred. Forgiveness does not have to be unconditional; the restorative justice process highlights the benefits of reparation and atonement that reinforce the sense of genuine remorse by the perpetrator. Forgiveness offers a path of redemption for the perpetrator and a path to healing for the victim. Forgiveness work contributes to the map of peace, the connection between inner healing and outer relational repair at individual and community levels. This concept



of integral mapping of the inner and outer is a key driver of evolving peace paradigms.

## Practicing Peace

The accelerating contribution of two previously distinct areas—neuroscience and mindfulness practices—has also strengthened an integral approach to building a global culture of peace. Neuroscience has revealed, through neuroplasticity and other concepts, that we are designed for adaptability and fresh insight. Even long-established neural pathways that convey reactivity and prejudice can be rewired to become more open to empathy, connection, and commitment to others. This creates new opportunities that help us integrate new meaning, by softening fight-flight-freeze triggers and allowing us to relate more deeply to others.

Research on meditation and mindfulness suggests regular meditative practices, including loving-kindness meditations, significantly reduce anxiety, stress, and emotional reactivity. In addition, a variety of breathwork and heart-centering techniques help support peaceful communication, peaceful heart resonance, and compassionate listening.

New, more intentional, nonviolent communication approaches that are more skilled in diplomacy and conflict resolution are also propelling the evolution of a culture of peace. Effective heart-centered communication builds environments where people listen deeply and feel seen and heard while expressing their truth. Dialogue of this type can be profoundly healing when it allows us to experience a deep sense of unity in diversity. These skills are especially needed culture-wide—in the home, at school, at work, in our communities, and in our political discourse—as they create fields where people feel nourished and even loved despite their differences.

This heart-centered communication leads us to the door of spiritual growth where we can explore the terrain of inner peace. As we evolve in the outer world, we also ascend an inner pathway to unconditional

and lasting peace. Meditation and mindfulness are one facet of creating inner peace, but as progress on the path is made, a self-reflective consciousness emerges that helps surface blind spots and conditioning. This spiritual work has a transformative effect on how we view and do peace work. More people now, especially activists, are seeing how ego, personal agendas, and the projection of unresolved issues sustain polarities and breed a sense of superiority and self-righteousness. We realize that we ourselves must be the change we seek in the world. We know we can no longer channel our own unresolved hostility, anger, and frustration in the name of peace. We know that being against is not the same as cultivating an openness to working together.

In the last decade, this integrated form of activism embodied by the great peacemakers Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. has started to be known as sacred activism, mystical activism, conscious activism, evolutionary activism, and visionary activism. This type of activism calls for cultivation of wisdom and passion for engaging the whole person and the whole truth; it is deeply dialogic and informed by the integration of new science and spirituality. It expresses deep ecological and environmental awareness, mobilized by new forms of conscious organizing. It envisions the birth of a new humanity.

Our vision of a culture of peace includes the following:

- School classrooms where teachers know how to set the field of heart coherence so emotional intelligence can flourish and support optimal learning
- Whole educational systems committed to teaching and practicing nonviolent communication
- Communities where restorative justice gathers momentum
- More governments framing policies that honor multicultural values and appreciate that ecology and economy can be

designed to sustain the interconnection and interdependence of all life

- Spiritual movements taking people beyond dogmatism and competing religious claims to affirming universal oneness and infinite diversity
- Societies healing the multiple traumas of the past and ending the intergenerational transmission of wounds
- A new generation of mindful, compassionate, and ethically evolved political and social leaders who are integrated visionaries
- An awakening of collective responsibility transforming gross destructive materialism into whole-Earth planetary service
- The emergence of a cosmology of consciousness evolving and blossoming into sustainable and lasting peace

How will *you* participate in creating this evolutionary culture of peace?

---

### Chapter 1 Spotlight

To bring the story of wholeness and peace into being, our challenge is to build bridges where there are none and strengthen those that already exist. James O’Dea says we are becoming increasingly aware of our interconnection and interdependence, and as we act accordingly, peace will be the culmination of this long and convulsive evolutionary process. Our inner and outer transformations—including many social, scientific, and spiritual advances, such as global efforts of restorative justice, personal and social healing through compassion, accountability, and forgiveness, heart-centered communication, and meditation and mindfulness—are all part of that path, where we eventually live in the understanding that we must be the change we seek in the world.

---

## Call to Action

Each morning, take five minutes to meditate on the evolutionary process leading humanity toward a culture of peace. Then, throughout the day, make a conscious effort to bring your own inner peace outward by being kind to everyone you encounter.

Copyrighted image

## 2

# Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century: A Quiet Revolution

Reverend Deborah Moldow

**W**e are living in extraordinary times. Almost the moment we learned to feed ourselves abundantly, to live in relative peace and easily communicate across the planet in minutes, we have awakened to the great destruction industrialization has caused to the very Earth that sustains us. So far, we tend to approach this existential crisis through the narrow lens of our individual nationalities and cultures instead of the global family we truly are. Yet the turbulence and chaos of this crisis provide us with the fertile soil in which to plant the dream of a new human civilization blossoming into a worldwide culture of peace. And the light that will help bring it to fruition is inside each and every one of us.

Something different is emerging: a new consciousness that is our best hope for planet Earth to renew her invitation for us to inhabit the only home we know. At this level of consciousness, we see ourselves—for the first time in history—as members of one planetary family sharing

one common home. At the same time, decades of interfaith engagement have led us to understand that all religions point to a truth beyond our comprehension. All express, through different languages, cultures, and eras, the need for us to be kind to one another and to tame our natural instinct to act for our own benefit in favor of acting for the greater good.

This realization is now building a sense of community based on shared values that transcend our diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Those on the leading edge of this trend are taking part in a yet-unrecognized movement that is increasingly giving meaning to people's lives and nurturing a growing appreciation of the sacredness of every person and every aspect of the world around us.

This profound spiritual emergence has the power to unify us, at long last, as one humanity. The United Nations was a major attempt to build peace among nation states, but with so many agendas often in conflict with one another, in practice it has rarely been able to act in the common interest of all stakeholders. In contrast, when we unite at the heart level and put our tribal, national, and religious identities aside in service to the whole, we will be able to surmount even the greatest challenges that face us today and threaten our tomorrows.

This quiet revolution extends an open invitation to all people to develop their individual gifts, to manifest their purpose in joyful service to something greater than us all. We are called to live into the next level of our collective evolution and create together a future beyond our imagining, where peace on Earth is only the beginning.

There are three primary factors driving the emergent global culture:

## Globalization

This large term encompasses many areas of technology, travel, and communications. But ever since the first cameras penetrated untouched indigenous tribal domains, it's been clear that one day we would reach the point where the entire globe was mapped out and its populations known. This process speeded up during the twentieth century with the rise of jet planes, television, the United Nations, and, finally, the

World Wide Web. At the same time, the technologies of agriculture and commerce have spread a uniformity of production that has seriously undermined the rich biodiversity of our ecosystems and created a culture of disposability that has filled our planetary home with useless trash instead of following the cycle of life that is nature's design.

While great changes are needed to clean up vast amounts of pollution and find healthier ways to live in harmony with the earth, our common bonds around the world are strengthened through sympathy in times of natural disaster and political unrest, drawing us together in spite of the recent spike in nationalistic backlash. Our feeling of sharing one planet cannot be denied.

## Climate Change

The crises set in motion by our melting glaciers and rising oceans are already being experienced as harsh weather events across the globe. Our coastlines are changing as we face increasingly powerful hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes, fires, and floods. And although governments have consistently failed to agree to measures powerful enough to mitigate the effects, it is clear that no nation alone can successfully address what is coming.

Those of us fortunate enough to have been born in the world's richest countries are being called upon to examine the costs of our privilege and to revisit our relationship with the beautiful planet that gives us life.

## Spirituality

One hundred years ago, most people practiced the religion into which they were born—and many still do, particularly in less developed areas of the world. But now that educated people everywhere have access to all sorts of religious and indigenous traditions, there is a quietly growing appreciation of value in all spiritual teachings and that all belief systems lead to universal values such as compassion, generosity, and kindness.

The secularism that developed in the West as it embraced the impressive march of science since the Renaissance has proven insufficient to address humankind's deep need for meaning in the face of the vastness of the universe or the suffering of an individual. A new kind of spirituality not tied to a particular dogma is breaking through into everyday life. People in Western countries are seeking healing and strength through practices with Eastern spiritual roots, such as yoga and tai chi. They are seeking stress relief through meditation, and transcendental meditation is even being taught in schools. People of all faiths and no faith may bless their food or participate in a Native American ceremony or take a minute of silence together for world peace.

This evolution stands on the shoulders of the interfaith movement of the late twentieth century, which greatly increased dialogue among leaders of different religions and opened the door to greater mutual understanding. Interfaith services, once a rarity, are now common in response to hate crimes or natural disasters.

In an age of enormous individual empowerment, we hunger for community that cannot be sated by adding more Facebook friends. And we are yearning for a deeper connection to nature, as many of us reawaken to the knowledge long held by indigenous people everywhere that we belong to the natural world as unique expressions of the web of life that we lost touch with while we were busy making ourselves safe and comfortable.

In the past, religious people felt motivated to do good within their own communities. Today's spiritual seekers wish to be of service to all of humanity. This may seem a bit daunting, but it is the way of the future and the momentum is building as the stakes get higher. The will-to-good—the essence of every religion and spiritual tradition—is breaking through the tribal strictures of the past into a planetary impulse to serve that is giving people a highly enhanced sense of meaning and purpose to their lives.

This spiritual revolution, combined with and amplified by the massive waves of immigration caused by globalization and climate change, is melting the previously calcified divisions of nationality, language,



culture, tradition, and even that great challenge to human oneness: race. While we are currently experiencing a serious backlash against this rising tide in the form of extreme nationalism and no end to the current militarism in sight, the gentle yet powerful shift in consciousness is actually taking place quite rapidly. The question is: will this new consciousness reach a tipping point in time to allow humanity to thrive for future generations?

It's up to us.

---

### Chapter 2 Spotlight

The process of practicing inner peace while striving for spiritual growth, Deborah Moldow points out, is leading us in the direction of a new consciousness that is enabling us to see ourselves—for the first time in history—as members of one planetary family sharing one common home. This, in turn, after decades of interfaith engagement, is leading us to understand that all religions point to universal truths, allowing us to build a sense of community based on shared values that is melting away previous barriers and divisions that stood in the way of unity.

---

### Call to Action

All wisdom traditions share universal values through different windows. Take the time to learn about a new religious or spiritual worldview that is different from your own. Let this be your call to see the light of the Divine in everyone.

Copyrighted image

# 3

## Integrating an Evolutionary Vision of the Future with “Hard” Science

David Sloan Wilson, PhD and Kurt Johnson, PhD

In the spring of 2019, the Mind and Life Institute invited one of us (David) to have a one-on-one conversation with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamsala, India.<sup>1</sup> David’s work has helped revolutionize evolutionary biology where, through refinement of science’s understanding of natural selection (namely, “group” and “multilevel” selection), the place and role of cooperation and altruism in evolution can now be clearly understood.<sup>2</sup>

David was allowed to bring a guest and immediately extended the invitation to the other of us (Kurt), who had introduced David to the evolutionary leaders. Both of us have doctorate degrees in evolutionary biology and qualify as “hard” scientists. We also share a deep interest in conscious evolution, which would be regarded as “fringe” by many of our evolutionary biology colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

David told His Holiness that when he entered the field of evolutionary biology in the 1970s, it was confined to the study of genetic evolution, leaving the study of cultural and personal evolution to other disciplines. All genes were labeled “selfish,” and the evolution of altruism was regarded as highly implausible. Evolution was said to have no purpose, with mutations taking place at random and the effects of natural selection limited to how organisms adapted to their immediate environments.

At face value, that Western vision of evolution shared little common ground with Buddhism, the root tradition of His Holiness, and its abandonment of the self with the goal of ending suffering! But, David continued, hard evolutionary science has expanded to include epigenetic, personal, and cultural change in addition to genetic change. It can explain the evolution of altruism in addition to selfishness. And it is no longer heretical to say that evolution can have a directed component, especially in the case of human cultural evolution. These developments in evolutionary thought are transforming our exploration for common ground with the twenty-five-hundred-year-old tradition of Buddhism, as well as all the religious and spiritual traditions of the world.

David’s message to His Holiness is equally relevant to the group of people who call themselves evolutionary leaders, whose vision of evolution is far more expansive than genetic evolution, including personal, cultural, and even cosmic evolution. For them, evolution has a conscious dimension and is even heading toward a global consciousness that the paleontologist and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) called the Omega Point.<sup>4</sup> And their vision of ecology tends to be holistic, treating the whole earth as a single organism that deserves to be revered—the metaphorical goddess, Gaia.

In some respects, hard evolutionary science is catching up with the evolutionary leaders’ visions. And it has something to give in return. Evolution can become a conscious process, and the whole Earth can become like a single organism, but the particular conditions to enable this will not self-organize. Specific conditions must be met, and they must be socially constructed. When this happens, cultural evolution will have become a fully conscious process.

evolutionary processes with our normative goals. Otherwise, evolution becomes the problem rather than the solution. Fortunately, conscious evolution makes such an alignment possible.

## Conscious Evolution

The idea that evolution has no purpose, that mutations are arbitrary, and that organisms only adapt to their immediate environments were the main tenets of the so-called modern synthesis that emerged in the 1940s. These claims have proven to be too simple in a number of ways, even for genetic evolution. For example, artificial selection, whereby humans consciously select for traits in their domestic plants and animals: this is a form of genetic evolution with a conscious component supplied by humans. But animals select traits in each other all the time, and self-domestication has become a hot topic in the study of human evolution.<sup>9</sup> If organisms qualify as conscious and their choices influence genetic evolution, then genetic evolution acquires a conscious component. This kind of directed evolution was proposed in the early twentieth century but only now is receiving the attention it deserves.<sup>10</sup>

Human cultural evolution clearly has a conscious component. The outdated dogma helps explain why it has taken so long for this realization to emerge in science, even though it has always seemed obvious for the world's spiritually directed communities. However, it is important to realize that human cultural evolution also has a large undirected component, based on the collisions and unforeseen consequences of our intentions. In many respects, life consists of many inadvertent social experiments, a few that hang together compared with many that fall apart. What works evolves largely without anyone knowing how or why. Also, as mentioned, what works at a small scale—such as an agricultural practice or new military technology—can become part of the problem at a larger scale. In the future, human cultural evolution must become more intentional and directed toward the global good than ever before.

## Steering toward the Omega Point

Hard evolutionary science today is far more supportive of the vision of evolutionary leaders than when we entered the field in the 1970s. It is like sailing with rather than against the wind. However, even with the evolutionary wind at our backs, a lot of scientific know-how will be required to steer cultural evolution in a direction that provides the solutions rather than causing the problems. We look forward to more communication between evolutionary leaders and hard evolutionary scientists in the future.

---

### Chapter 3 Spotlight

Bridging science and spirituality, David Sloan Wilson and Kurt Johnson report a revolution in mainstream science leading to the multilevel understanding of natural selection. The old view of post-Darwinian science was that natural selection always selects for the best competitor—and this view of survival of the fittest (social Darwinism) came to dominate global economics, business, and politics. Mainstream science now holds that selection in nature for the best competitor happens only at the lower levels of complexity. Among groups or hierarchies, natural selection selects the best cooperators. This timely sea change aligns science's view of evolutionary process with the heart of the wisdom traditions.

---

## Call to Action

Consider the spiritual law of cooperation, how this guides humanity's collective evolution, and how this is reflected in the natural world, as well. Seek out people in your business, school, or community with whom you can work collectively for the benefit of all.

Copyrighted image





## 4

# Jamming: Cultivating Connection, Community, Collaboration, and Co-liberation

Shilpa Jain

**T**hese days, my husband, Austin, and I have taken to saying, “I am and we are 100 percent blessed.” It is partly a recognition of all the gifts, privileges, and support we have been given in our lives: our families and friends, our respective educations, work and travel opportunities, our home and community in the Bay Area. “One hundred percent blessed” is also about taking a stand. We are choosing to see the challenges in our lives and in this world as blessings too. They open us up to our tenderness and awaken our creativity and imaginations. We see them as invitations to go further and deeper and use all that we are, all that we have, on behalf of all that we love.

I have the honor of serving as the executive director of YES!, a thirty-year-old nonprofit organization, which connects, inspires, and collaborates with young and multigenerational changemakers at the

without taking on and without judging, interpreting, or fixing; sharing from the heart; slowing down during conflict; and participating in appreciative inquiry. Embedded through and bolstered by these structures and skilled practices are life- and world-changing mindsets, such as presence, compassion, generosity, spaciousness, and love. Jams counter the dominating culture of separation, of divide and rule, and instead call forth a culture of interconnection, wholeness and shared, dynamic leadership.

Each participant gives to and receives from Jam culture, as we weave together powerful webs of meaning, learning, and support, embodying the world we want to see. Jam culture also supports changemakers, so they learn to dig deep during difficult conflicts. By learning to identify and slow down our fight-flight-freeze reactions, we experience opportunities for growth and connection. Jams provide space for both inner and outer healing so that we can choose a generative path in challenging moments. The culture encourages each of us to reshape our interactions with existing systems, to find the spaces within them that transform polarization and separation into understanding and relationship.

After Jammers individually and collectively dig deep and live out their responses to these questions, they “spread the Jam,” with their families, friends, colleagues, movement-builders, neighbors, and strangers. They integrate practices and shift structures and operate with transformative mindsets, still rooted in the value of and respect of each person they encounter. It’s not theoretical change; it’s practically lived through ways of doing and ways of being. Step by step, breath by breath, Jammers shorten the distance between Jam life and daily life; they transform the rest of the “real” world into one of true authenticity: calling, connection, commitment, and community.

## An Invitation to Jam

Jams invite each of us to consider and practice: How can our work, play, and lives increase connectivity in our world? How can each of us learn to respect and “re-spect”—to look again, past our first judgments and

reactions, and be willing to listen, share our truths, and recognize the complex and whole picture of our shared humanity? How can each of us celebrate the divine presence of each being, uplift heart, soul and body wisdom, and move beyond right and wrong? How can each of us be in service, generate common ground, and build visionary futures together?

Every single person plays a role in shaping the collective container, and the depth and breadth of that container are what give way to higher-order solutions and previously unimagined outcomes. Just as every solution we need is already here, so is every person on the planet here with a genius and purpose. Sometimes, all that is missing are the loving mirrors from one another to help us see ourselves more clearly and the companionship to move ourselves forward.

Of course, I would love for you to one day experience a Jam, but I realize that may not be possible for you. So, I invite you to take Jamming—as a set of practices and principles—into your own lives, workplaces, and communities:

**Practice listening without taking on, judging, interpreting, or fixing.** At the heart of Jamming is a different form of listening—one that leaves plenty of room for the speaker and plenty of room for yourself. Try listening to others in your context without thinking about what you're going to say or how you're going to respond. That kind of spacious listening creates powerful connections and allows creativity and awareness to come forth.

**Bring in play wherever you can.** Instead of working to build the world you want, can you play your way toward it? A sense of play and practices of play—such as games, improvisation, and humor—transforms the field of what is possible. When you come together with others, infuse play and watch the energy expand and the intimacy grow.

**Make space for all the feelings that arise.** We can support more healing and freedom in the world by allowing for all of our and

others' feelings: love, grief, satisfaction, anger, joy, frustration, and so on. Again, by not trying to fix or change these feelings—in yourself or others—they can flow through us and offer us the medicine we need in the moment. On the other side of our expressions are opportunities for unlearning and co-learning.

**When things get hot, slow down.** So many times our misunderstandings are just that: missed understandings. Rather than letting them spiral into judgments, assumptions, and stuck stories, take some time to slow down, breathe, and see if you can become curious about the person or situation. Follow that spark as a guide and use your wonder to regenerate a connection together.

**Value the person over the plan (agenda/outcomes/goals).** To counter the dehumanization of modern institutions and systems, we need to do things differently. As human *beings*, not human *doings*, making the shift to prioritize people's experiences, with love and truth, over "getting things done" will help us embody to the world we want to see.

---

### Chapter 4 Spotlight

Shilpa Jain shares another form of bridge-building with us: the YES! Jams, developed for multigenerational changemakers who come together to connect, inspire each other, and collaborate for personal, interpersonal, and systemic transformation toward healing, love, justice, and connection in the world. Putting community at the center of everything, she and her Jammers know the power of a beloved community—we move forward by turning to each other, not *on* each other. This model contains at least five practices and principles that can be applied in any community setting for coming together as one.

---

## Call to Action

Look at someone in your life, even someone with whom you seem to have little in common. Bring curiosity and listen for their truths, seeing deeply into their struggles, gifts, and purpose; then share your own vulnerably with them as well. Catalyze a connection that reflects your heart's values and deepens community.

Copyrighted image



issues, water shortages, poverty, famine, or a lack of adequate housing—all potential triggers for future wars—only today is the part of the brain capable of addressing these issues through mutual cooperation coming to the fore.

Even for those who disagree so violently on entrenched issues, such as the Israelis and Palestinians, peace is still achievable. They may seem to have little in common, but the truth is that they agree on most things. They come from the same religious roots; they eat a similar diet. They want protection and peace for their families and the freedom to pursue an education for their kids, work they enjoy, and time to relax with their families. They agree on most things.

The issue is the land. This is where we have to separate the government from the people. Riddled with self-centered politicians voted in by fearful people, governments get in the way of peace. Coming from a myopic position, they use the media to get the masses to buy into their self-serving policies. If it weren't for governments, Israelis and Palestinians would get along just fine, as many already do.

Throughout the land, you don't find a lot of individuals who are filled with hatred. You find people who have been hurt. The healing begins with forgiveness. Place a number of Palestinians in a circle and invite them to talk to each other concerning their heartbreaks, the death of people close to them, and their children being killed in Gaza. Surround them with Israelis who just listen to them without interrupting. Then reverse the situation, with Israelis sharing their experiences. Let each group witness the tears and sadness of the other group.

Seeing something from the other person's point of view leads to the birth of compassion. With compassion, there is understanding; from understanding comes dialogue. When dialogue emerges, then a way out of no way emerges. With empathy, compassion, understanding, and dialogue, people can see a solution that wasn't there before; a shift in consciousness happens to enable a new insight.

But the people who sing and dance together and the thousands who are in school together don't make the headlines. Where the media is concerned, *if it bleeds, it leads*. News is projected from an old paradigm

of fear. And even though corporate news isn't interested in conveying it, the old paradigm is still being replaced. A vision of how peaceful the world could be is taking form.

War is part of our dysfunction; it's not a reflection of who we are in our highest form. Wars emerge over resources and when myopic leaders enforce the idea that their nation is "number one." However, the idea of being number one isn't reality. It represents a pseudo form of patriotism. A new paradigm is now emerging in which we want to rise up and be one with the One, meaning, recognize that the human race is one whole. The real news, which the headlines haven't caught up with yet, is that individuals are embracing peace in increasing numbers across the globe. Emerging peaceful markets, like the green markets, with solar panels, and the holistic medicine markets, are starting to outstrip traditional markets. These are all clear signs that we are in the midst of a great transformation toward a peaceful world.

Many levels of this transformation exist at the same time. On an individual level, the peace I have in mind is deep within us. It emerges as a result of taking time each day to connect with the universal Presence that's at the heart of our being. In a regular spiritual practice, where we become really still, the "peace that passes understanding" progressively infuses every aspect of our day so that it becomes realer than anything that may happen to us. This is the kind of peace that breaks in upon people in the worst of circumstances, as it did in a prison cell for Nelson Mandela. This is a level of spiritual maturity that happens either through pain or insight; it is a peace that never leaves us.

This type of peace naturally extends to a community level. If we become activists, the mental vision of how the world could be springs from our essence, maintaining our energy and commitment. This peace doesn't have to be put aside, waiting for the world to change before we can enjoy it. We become the instrument of that change, this peace already within us.

You can hear it in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words: when he spoke about all brothers and sisters being one, in the midst of a time of tremendous bigotry and racism, he tapped into that love and peace even while



that wasn't necessarily a fact in the world. All of us have access to that love and peace—we just have to find our way to it, to tap into that kind of vision and that kind of spiritual sustenance, even while working for peace, or ecology, or justice.

In other words, peace isn't the end goal. Peace is in the journey, with every step we take. We carry it with us, and its impact is felt on a much wider scale. We all have to find our own neighborhood, in our own community, where we're willing to share our gift. It might mean joining a neighborhood watch or a community group or volunteering in a way that brings hope and joy to others.

On the national level, different states of consciousness exist within the local, state, and national scene. You don't opt out of that, but you participate in it without attachment, without hate of the so-called other side. You get into a great discovery as to who most represents your particular point of view, that point of view that's going to bring about a greater sense of oneness on the planet, and you support that. When we get involved with others in a way that aligns with our particular gifts, we seed society with possibilities.

Many people don't realize that small groups of people around the world doing things with compassion have an impact on the mental and emotional atmosphere of the entire world. That's how all the levels of building peace are interconnected.

By having peace within, we build peace all around us. We seed all levels of society with possibilities at the same time. Great change happens when we seed what we want. I agree with Victor Hugo that this process would create an idea whose time has come. We all need to continue to cast a vision, bring that into focus, step up, and walk in that direction. In the words of the hymn, I say to you, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."<sup>1</sup>