



# **LEADER READER**



**Collected by David W. Jones**



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## Introduction

*The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *The Call of The Wild* were all introduced to me in abbreviated form through my family's subscription to *Reader's Digest Books*. In each volume, four famous novels arrived in a much smaller, easily digestible form.

In *Leader Reader*, I offer abridged versions of some of what have been to me the most helpful books, articles, and ideas on leadership. Though I have chosen a progressive order, feel free to skip from one to another. I encourage you to purchase and read the unabridged versions of the authors who inspire you most.

David Jones  
2015



## *A Failure of Nerve*

**Edwin Friedman**

The colossal misunderstanding of our time is the assumption that insight will work with people who are unmotivated to change. If you want your child, spouse, client, or boss to shape up, stay connected while changing yourself rather than trying to fix them.

(Healthy and effective leaders focus) on strength, not pathology; on challenge, not comfort; on self-differentiation, not herding for togetherness. This is a difficult perspective to maintain in a “seatbelt society” more oriented toward safety than adventure. This book is not, therefore, for those who prefer peace to progress. It is not for those who mistake another’s well-defined stand for coercion. It is not for those who fail to see how in any group or institution a perpetual concern for consensus leverages power to the extremists. And it is not for those who lack the nerve to venture out of the calm eye of good feelings and togetherness and weather the storm of protest that inevitably surrounds a leader’s self-definition. For, whether we are considering a family, a work system, or an entire nation, the resistance that sabotages a leader’s initiative usually has less to do with the “issue” that ensues than with the fact that the leader took initiative. It will be the thesis of this work that leadership in America is stuck in the rut of trying harder and harder without obtaining significantly new results.

Poor leadership training today (including courses on parenting) puts primary emphasis on others (children or employees) as objects to be motivated rather than on the systemic effects of the presence, or self, of the leader. A leader must separate his or her own emotional being from that of his or her followers while still remaining connected. Vision is basically an emotional rather than a cerebral phenomenon,

depending more on a leader's capacity to deal with anxiety than his or her professional training or degree.

(When consulting with a congregation or family) I learned to stop listening to the content of everyone's complaints and, irrespective of the location of their problem or the nature of their institution, began saying the exact same thing to everyone: "You have to get up before your people and give an 'I Have a Dream' speech." The outcome was dramatic! Most of those who followed through with what I had suggested found that the chaos in their group soon waned.

(The focus of healthy leaders is to change) the criterion from "Who has the problem?" to "Who has the motivation to focus on strength, not weakness, and on leadership, not pathology?" The focus on pathology rather than strength throughout our society is itself a form of displacement, since it protects us from the far more difficult task of personal accountability. If a society is to evolve, or if leaders are to arise, then safety can never be allowed to become more important than adventure. We are on our way to becoming a nation of "skimmers," living off the risks of previous generations and constantly taking from the top without adding significantly to its essence. In fact, the amount of chronic anxiety in a group is inversely proportional to its capacity for enduring pain. What makes the chronically anxious group's anxiety chronic is not its pain, but the way it deals with its pain. In fact, the root of the word anxiety means pain, as in angina, anger, anguish, or angst.

(To break barriers takes courage.) The attempt to run a mile in less than four minutes serves as an excellent illustration of the power such emotional barriers can have. Back when the great Swedish runners Gunder Haag and Arnie Anderson kept failing to run a "four-minute mile," despite prodigious efforts, sports pages would actually ask the question whether it was physically possible for a man (not to



mention a woman) to run a mile faster than four minutes. The goal seemed so beyond their endeavors that the four-minute mile took on the character of a constant, like the speed of light, a natural barrier. But when Roger Bannister finally broke that barrier in 1957, the following year three men broke it in the same race. We tend to attribute Bannister's feat to new training techniques rather than a capacity to get outside the emotional processes of running. But in 1994 an African runner understood. When asked how he thought his colleague was able to lower the mile record by one of the largest amounts ever accomplished in one race, he replied, "He is not caught up in the mythology of Western runners." Similar stories can be told about how Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier when he sped up at precisely the point where others slowed down because the plane began to rattle as it approached that "barrier." Another example of a well-known emotional barrier was the belief in biblical times that a god was chained to a geographic area as well as to the fate of the god's people. The god would never, therefore, punish them. It was the breaking of that barrier that led to universal and ethical, rather than parochial and self-justifying, religion.

As lofty and noble as the concept of empathy may sound, and as well-intentioned as those may be who make it the linchpin idea of their theories of healing, education, or management, societal regression has too often perverted the use of empathy into a disguise for anxiety, a rationalization for the failure to define a position, and a power tool in the hands of the "sensitive." It has generally been my experience that in any community or family discussion, those who are the first to introduce concern for empathy feel powerless, and are trying to use the togetherness force of a regressed society to get those whom they perceive to have power to adapt to them. I have consistently found the introduction of the subject of "empathy" into family, institutional, and community meetings

to be reflective of, as well as an effort to induce, a failure of nerve among its leadership. The great myth here is that feeling deeply for others increases their ability to mature and survive; its corollary is that the effort to understand another should take precedence over the endeavor to make one's own self clear. The constant effort to understand (or feel for) another, however, can be as invasive as any form of emotional coercion.

(Have you ever wondered,) why are the people who are the most dependent in charge in any relationship? Because they are the most invested. The responsibility of the leader is not the entire group but the position of leadership. As long as the leader is trying to change followers, the followers are in charge. If the leaders functioning is dependent on the functioning of others, the others are in control. When leader focuses on calling, the pressure changes, the dependents will find they are forced with choice and responsibility and will follow by default. When leader tries to change followers they gain power. When leader resists pressure to change, the followers try and force on him or her, power shifts. Leader is resistant one- which is a difficult position but far less stressful than overfunctioning, burnout, or sabotage. The more a leader can control his or her reactivity to others, the more likely their intensity will wane or fall short.

(Columbus offers a helpful example.) On the way to the Canaries, the Pinta's rudder broke down and the crew seemed to have trouble fixing it. After several becalmed days, Columbus began to sense that this might be an effort to sabotage his whole venture; his colleagues' will had already waned. Displaying an unusual awareness of the value of self-definition over efforts to coerce another, he signaled that he was going on to the Canaries by himself and would wait for them there, prepared to go on alone if he had to. He jots in his log, "I see that I'm going to have to accept what I cannot control." The Pinta arrived two days later. Columbus was

probably not the first member of his civilization to try to push out the end of its envelope. Others also ventured past Gibraltar into the Atlantic, but all went the northern route. Because they knew of the strength and danger of westerly winds, the way to play it safe was to stay in northern latitudes and thus be assured that those winds would eventually ensure one's return. But the cost of safety was great. It meant beating against those same winds on the way out, and that took its toll in terms of time, energy, supplies, and progress. What most differentiates Columbus is that he says in effect, "I'll worry about returning after I get there."



## *Generation to Generation*

**Edwin Friedman**

There is something remarkably similar about the efforts of all leaders to change their followers, whether it is a parent trying to motivate a child to do homework, a spouse trying to motivate a partner to change a habit, a healer trying to motivate a patient to take care of himself or herself, members of the clergy trying to motivate members of the congregation to attend more often, or even an entire group trying to change the mind of one of its members. In all such situations, the motivators function as though their followers did not know what is good for them and, furthermore, would never change were it not for their efforts. Teachers, salesmen, and therapists also tend to think this way. In addition, leaders tend to assume that if they have failed to change the heads of their followers, it is because they, the leaders, did not try hard enough. Almost universally, therefore, they respond to lack of change by trying harder to push, pull, tug, kick, shove, threaten, convince, arm-twist, charm, entice, cajole, seduce, induce guilt, shout louder, or be more eloquent. The resulting treadmill of trying harder is usually energized by an absolute belief in the "power of the word." Even when such efforts are successful, change tends to be short-lived and enervating because continued success depends so much on the continued triangulation of the leader between his or her followers, and some goal. It rarely occurs to the people at the top, at home or at work, that because of the nature of emotional triangles, some threshold has been reached so that further efforts not only will fail to bring change, but also will be converted into forces that stabilize the status quo.

One major effect of this power conversion is that it gives leverage to the follower. In system after system, it is the most dependent who are calling the shots. Successful leadership

depends not only on the ability to overcome inertial passivity, but it also must be able to avoid being side-tracked by active sabotage. Another paradox facing people at the top is the predictable fact that followers will work to throw them off course precisely when they are functioning at their best. It is probably a good rule of thumb that whenever you are feeling real good about things, watch out!

In the therapeutic form of the paradox, the counselee comes in and says, "I have such and such a problem. I want you to help me with it but . . ."—this is the part of the contract that is never spelled out— "I will do everything I can to prevent you from succeeding." When this kind of resistance shows up in the counselling process, it tends to be attributed to the client's personality conflicts and seems proof that the person is "screwed up" because he or she wouldn't otherwise have sought help. However, exactly the same paradoxical resistance shows up in political leadership, and, therefore, cannot be so easily explained away as simply a quirk or a neurotic tendency. And political contracts contain the same unwritten clause. People choose leaders because they promise to lead them to a happier or more fruitful state, but after the election, the followers invariably function, either individually or in concert, to frustrate their leaders' efforts. This is as true with Congress, as in Parliament, or as in any church or synagogue.

### **The Charisma to Consensus Continuum**

Almost all approaches to the aims of leadership—for example, promoting the welfare of a community and moving that community toward a mutually desired goal—falls somewhere along a continuum marked at one end by charisma and at the other by consensus.

## Charisma

Those who champion the charismatic approach to leadership try to make the most out of that indefinable, magnetic, personally attractive quality that is exuded by certain people. The charismatic style of leadership can bring about dramatic changes: It can unify disparate elements within a system, infect with contagious enthusiasm, galvanize a group into quick action, take an emotional system that has been down in the doldrums and lift it rapidly to great heights, and in a short period of time produce an efficient organization that moves as one toward a clearly articulated goal. It seems to work best, however, when the relationship system is despondent, helpless, confused, and hungry for change; and it seems to be most appealing when the group members are in need of a stimulator beyond themselves. Demagoguery, whether it is political, religious, or therapeutic, is always most attractive in a "depression." Some of the problems with a charismatic approach are as follows:

- Charismatic leadership can polarize as well as unify because the emphasis on the personality of the leader tends to personalize the issues facing the group, with the result that emotions and issues become harder to separate from one another.
- It can create polarization between the group itself and all other relationship systems. Where charismatic leadership does succeed in unifying a group, the results tend toward homogeneity. The group, thus, often comes to define itself by opposition to other groups. This paranoid quality is the major emotional characteristic of all cults, whether they are religious, therapeutic, or political.

- Leadership by charisma has difficulty with succession. Families or historical movements that become too dependent on their leaders tend to lose their purpose after the loss of such leaders. Sometimes another replacement can be found, but this will rarely continue for more than two or three "generations," and, as is always the case with the replacement phenomenon, when an unresolved issue that has long been avoided finally does surface, it will usually be all the more severe.
- Leadership by charisma ultimately is not healthy for the leader. He or she is perpetually forced to overfunction, most constantly balance all the triangles, and, in the long run, paradoxically finds that his or her functioning has become dependent on having a group to lead. For all these reasons, and more, the charismatic leader remains in a chronic state of stress.
- While charismatic leaders tend to be individualistic themselves, because of the high degree of emotional interdependency their style fosters, they tend to create clones among their followers rather than individuals. By some perverse logic, individuality cannot be replicated by cloning, no matter how individualistic the organism that is being copied. This last point is most important when it comes to leadership in religious or personal families. If one is a political leader whose main goal is to stay in power, or a sales manager who has a proven technique for creating a successful sales force, the cloning effect of charisma is not a problem. On the contrary, it is the leader's dream. But the leader of a religious or personal group must be concerned with the growth process that goes beyond "votes" and "sales." Effective leadership in religious and personal group



organizations, paradoxically, must be wary of too slavishly following the leader.

### **Consensus**

A counterpoint to the charisma philosophy of leadership is consensus. The strategies at this end of the leadership continuum, while designed to avoid the dilemmas of the opposite extreme, often wind up with similar effects. The basic emphasis in the consensus approach is on the will of the group. Consensus is prepared to wait longer for "results," being more concerned with the development of a cohesive infrastructure. It tends to value peace over progress and personal relationships (feelings) over ideas. It abhors polarization. In such a setting, the individualism of a leader is more likely to create anxiety than reduce it. Since the will of the group is supposed to develop out of its own personality, rather than come down from the top, the function of the leader becomes more that of a resource person or an "enabler." Some of the basic problems with the consensus approach to leadership are as follows:

- The group led by consensus will tend to be less imaginative. The major creative ideas of our species have tended to come from individuals rather than groups. Prophets are far more likely to hear "the call" in the wilderness. The muse rarely strikes the artist in a crowd. The world's most important ideas, philosophical, religious, and scientific, have tended to come to people in their own solitude. It is not that the consensus approach gives people less time to be alone but, rather, that it discourages the initiative to be solitary.

- Leaderless groups are more easily panicked and the anxiety tends to cascade. For all its advantages over autocracy, democracy can have a more difficult time dealing with anxiety when there is no self-differentiated individual who can say, "Here I stand!"
- Emphasis on consensus gives strength to the extremists. They can continue to push the carrot of unity further out on the togetherness stick as the price of their cooperation. In some absurd turnaround, when the main goal of a group is consensus, they actually make it harder to achieve that goal because they put themselves in the position of being blackmailed by those least willing to cooperate. This is as true in marriage as in the vestry.
- Consensus is no guarantee against xenophobia or polarization. Paradoxically, as a consensus-based approach to group leadership nears its goal, the degree of emotional fusion that results is likely to create or exacerbate the very problems its approach was designed to avoid.

### **Beyond Charisma, Consensus, and Control**

In contrast (to the charisma and consensus dichotomy), a systems perspective does not create this polarity between leader and follower. Instead, it focuses on the organic nature of their relationship as constituent parts of the same organism. Avoided once more is linear thinking where A causes B, that is, where a leader motivates a follower or a follower resists a leader. Instead of viewing the interactions of leaders and followers as the impact each has upon the other, a systems concept of leadership looks at how they function as part of one another. Like the charisma approach, a systems approach to leadership emphasizes the leader's position in the system

rather than his or her personality. The responsibility of the leader therefore ceases to be the entire group, a heavy load indeed, and becomes, instead the position of leadership. Like the consensus approach, a systems theory of leadership does not belittle the importance of an organization's coherence. But, because it distinguishes between togetherness and stuck-togetherness, it refuses to purchase the intactness of the group at the cost of the self-integrity of its members. Consensus while it is an important accessory, is not considered a style of life. The basic concept is this: If a leader will take primary responsibility for his or her own position as "head" and work to define his or her own goals and self, while staying in touch with the rest of the organism, there is a more than reasonable chance that the body will follow.

There may be initial resistance but, if the leader can stay in touch with the resisters, the body will usually go along. This is the ability of a leader to be a self while still remaining a part of the system. It is the most difficult thing in the world in any group. And yet, when accomplished, the process will convert the dependency that is the source of most sabotage to the leader's favor instead. There are (two components for leadership with keeps in balance) not only moving a group toward its goals but also maximizing its functioning, as well as the health and survival of both the group and its leader.

First and foremost, the leader must stay in touch. The concept is basically organic: For any part of an organism to have a continuous or lasting effect, it obviously must stay connected. This is not nearly as easy as it may seem. Remaining connected becomes increasingly difficult in direct proportion to the leader's success at defining his or her own being (the second component). It is far easier for a head to remain attached if it is content to merge its "self" with the body. Any leader can stay in touch if he or she does not try to stand out. The trick, as we shall see shortly, is to be able to

differentiate self and still remain in touch despite the body's efforts to counter such differentiation.

The second central component is the capacity and willingness of the leader to take nonreactive, clearly conceived, and clearly defined positions. Again, this is easier to accomplish in isolation when the leader is not in touch with (or beholden to) the rest of the system. The functioning of any organism, often its survival, and certainly its evolution are directly dependent on the capacity of its "head" to define self and continue to stay in touch. Note that the leader is not trying to define the followers, only himself or herself.

### **Soul Leadership**

As long as the leader is trying to change his or her followers, the latter are in the "cat-bird's seat." As long as the head, or the rest of the body, makes its functioning dependent on the other's functioning, the organism is in their control. But when the leader is concentrating on where he or she is "headed," the effects of that dependency are reversed. It is the dependents who now feel the pressure. The ball is in their court. The need of the more dependent for a leader now encourages them to follow through because they now fear losing the game by default! The same emotional interdependency that requires all flocks and herds to have leaders in order to function effectively is now put to the service of leadership.

The notion of differentiated following has important theological consequences. Were the problems of group leadership simply a matter of getting congregational members to go along, then the will of the leader and the right motivational techniques would be the paramount factors in overcoming resistance. But, as mentioned earlier, for personal families and religious families, there is also the matter of "soul." It is perhaps only when this balance between achieving

goals and promoting growth is emphasized that the full value of leadership through self-differentiation can be appreciated, because it lines up the leader with what has worked throughout the ages to advance the evolution of our species and the image of our Creator. It is formation through the self-actualizing process of response to challenge rather than turning out copies from a mold. A leader (parent or spiritual) who is simply out to replicate his or her followers, as successful as the outcomes might appear, would be like a god who clones his or her image. This means, of course, that leaders have an obligation, to their group (following), to their Creator, and to their species, to keep working at their own self-differentiation. That, indeed, is leadership's basic challenge. When leaders accept that challenge, they automatically challenge their followers to do the same and, thus, maximize the process of self-differentiation throughout the entire group.



***Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times:  
Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What***

**Peter L. Steinke**

Neurosurgeon Frank Vertosick Jr. argues in his book *The Genius Within* that most living things operate according to the same general model—a network. Examples of living networks are ant colonies, immune systems, and brains. The genius of life, therefore, is that life is built of small, discrete things that are connected and interactive. Everything is connected to everything else. All parts are dependent on one another and mutually affect each other.

In relationships, a person acts along a continuum from automatic reactivity and mindlessness to responsibility and enlightened behavior. We can behave more or less instinctually or thoughtfully depending on anxiety's effect on us. Emotional forces drive behavior that is reactive, reflexive, and defensive.

Leaders often get into the position of thinking they are primarily responsible for preserving tranquillity. The last thing they want to do is upset anyone. Consequently, they hide embarrassing information or they avoid making changes that might spark controversy. The leadership position favors "togetherness forces"—that is, the leader feels responsible for keeping the system together, for everyone's happiness and comfort. Anything that might jostle or jar the equilibrium is instantly rejected. The congregation's unity supersedes anything else. Changes threatening to upset people are prohibited. Instead of leading, the leader pacifies: "I'll take care of you ... so you don't have to hear harsh things." so you don't have to struggle with making a decision." "I'll keep the lid on the pressure that threatens to boil over... so you are not forced to think." so you are not emotionally upset."

Friedman noted that when a leader is predominantly a “peacemonger,” a “failure of nerve” follows.

*By [peacemonger] I mean a highly anxious risk avoider, someone who is more concerned with good feelings than with progress, someone whose life revolves around the axis of consensus, a “middler,” someone who is so incapable of taking well-defined stands that their “disability” seems to be genetic, someone who treats conflict or anxiety like mustard gas—one whiff, on goes the emotional gas mask and they flit. Such leaders are often “nice,” if not charming.*

A congregation’s balance is disturbed more by people’s strong reaction to one another than by reaction to the issue or the event itself. What creates polarization is not the actual content of the issue on which a family “splits.” It is rather emotional processes that foster conflict of wills (efforts to convert one another). To the extent a leader can contain his or her reactivity to the reactivity of followers, primarily by focusing on self functioning rather than by trying to change the functioning of others, intensity tends to wane, and polarization or a cut-off that, like a tango, always takes two, is less likely to be the result.

Whatever the trigger of anxiety might be, whatever the anxious behaviors, the healthier way for leaders to function to affect this emotional field in pain would be to:

- recognize resistance as a normal reaction to leadership rather than taking it personally
- know that relationships are reciprocal and interactive and that our own calm, reflective functioning influences the congregation positively



- exercise patience because anxiety's effect on an emotional field is immediate, whereas our well-composed functioning influences the emotional system in the longer term
- consider their goals for the congregation to avoid giving in to the pressure of the moment, such as by quickly fixing problems and taking care of people's anxiety
- learn to tolerate anxious times in order to use them as opportunities for creative responses
- manage their own anxiety. This capacity to step back and think clearly allows you to withstand the urgent, automatic reactions prompted by pain and anxiety, both within yourself and others, brought on by crisis or any of the other three situations. By positioning yourself in this way, you will empower yourself.

To be a nonanxious presence, you focus on your own behavior and its modification rather than being preoccupied with how others function. In a hospital, a rule for caretakers reads: "In case of cardiac arrest, take your own pulse first."

The nonanxious presence is an anomaly, never a full-blown reality. It is intended to be a description of a way of being, the capacity to:

- manage our own natural reactions
- use knowledge to suppress impulses and control automatic reactions
- keep calm for the purpose of reflection and conversation
- observe what is happening, especially with oneself
- tolerate high degrees of uncertainty, frustration, and pain
- maintain a clear sense of direction.

The nonanxious presence involves engagement, being there and taking the heat if need be, witnessing the pain, and yet not fighting fire with fire. The nonanxious presence means we are aware of our own anxiety and the anxiety of others, but we will not let either determine our actions. Obviously this means that we have some capacity to tolerate pain both in ourselves and in others.

No choice is more important than whether you choose to be a leader who gets bogged down in survival or one who rises to the level of challenge. (Leaders geared toward survival and leaders open to challenge show distinct characteristics.)

### **Survival Leaders**

- Take expedient action based on emotional pressures
- Play it safe for the benefit of preserving stability
- Use quick fixes for restoring harmony
- Find scapegoats to blame, look outside of self for rescuing

### **Challenge Leaders**

- Take thoughtful action
- Risk goodwill for the sake of truth
- Stay the course (hold steady)
- Manage self

Your ministry of leadership is grounded in the freeing gift of God's grace. In Christ, you are no longer a slave in bondage to fear. Knowing yourself to be accepted as a child of God, you are free to serve in love. As a responsible representative of God's love, you are free to take initiative to test your thoughts, to honor your intuition, to see what requires doing, and to accomplish it.

***A Door Set Open:***  
***Grounding Change in Mission and Hope***  
**Peter L. Steinke**

Sydney Carter, who wrote the hymn “The Lord of the Dance,” composed songs that depict life as a journey. Once, he remarked:

*Everything is traveling: there is no way out of it. But there are different ways of doing it. You can travel inertly like a stone which is hurled in the air. You can travel reluctantly like a dog which drags against the lead. You can embrace the necessity of traveling: you can leap and dance along. The kingdom of heaven (if you like) or God: it lies ahead of us, yet it travels in us too. . . . We are pulled in two directions, and we have a choice. We are privileged or condemned to be free. We can drag or dance along.*

Edwin Friedman spoke about an odd pairing—maturity versus data. He contended that people usually believe *more*, particularly more data, will solve problems. But facts—no matter how many one introduces—do not motivate people to change. Friedman suggests we spend less effort in spawning data and more in helping individuals mature.

What Friedman suggests, as opposed to more data, is elevating the level of people’s maturity, their capacity to respond rather than react, to reflect instead of defend, and to choose wisely rather than jump on a bandwagon. What Friedman suggests is explicit in Matthew 28:18–20: the instruction to “make disciples.”

Disciples are learners—explorers, actors, and creators. Or to put it in a simple way: What would we rather have, one disciple and fifty members or five disciples and ten members?

Anxious people look outside of themselves for relief. They may hanker for a technique that will bring about results they want to achieve; they want to replicate what has been discovered by someone else: “Give me a copy of the wonderful plans.” Churches need to remember that no handbook is available on freelancing mission. Only by going out, being there, and seeing from a fresh angle will the process lead to learning. Discovering how to respond to shifts and changes is the learning. Self-confidence is a byproduct. But growth is in the struggle, the push, and the journey. Churches in decline need to look beyond the BIG RESULT and become the people of the way—tumble and all.

Edwin Friedman tells the story of the Holy One approaching his creatures before all forms of life are about to multiply in the creation story from Genesis: “I see that what some of you treasure most is survival, while what others yearn for most is adventure. So I will give you each a choice. If what you want most is stability, then I will give you the power to regenerate any part you lose, but you must stay rooted where you grow. If, on the other hand, you prefer mobility, you also may have your wish, but you will be more at risk. For then I will not give you the ability to regain your previous form.” Those that chose stability we call trees, and those that chose opportunity became animals.

Friedman mentioned in his postgraduate seminars something to this effect: All these organizations with which I have consulted think they have their own special problem. But in every one of them, I see the same thing. It is the whiners, the complainers, the least imaginative, creative, and motivated who are calling the shots in those organizations. (Sometimes, he listed the most recalcitrant, the most immature, or the ones

who take the least responsibility for their own wellbeing.) In short, Friedman indicts leaders who have had a failure of nerve, giving immediate and excessive attention to the No Nos. No wonder that Friedman calls handling people's resistance "the key to the kingdom." He believed that mature functioning in a leader incites reactivity in the least mature. It is simply not possible to lead successfully without inciting reactivity. The capacity of a leader to be aware of, to reflect upon, and to work through people's reactivity may be the most important aspect of leadership. It is "the key to the kingdom."

Immaturity has its payoffs. The immature quickly learn, "I can control a situation with bad behavior." Michael Jupin, an Episcopal priest and friend, sent me a cartoon in which a mother is holding the hand of her little daughter. The mother instructs the girl: "Remember, when life gives you lemons, be sure you pout, cry, and complain until life can't take the whining anymore and instead gives you cookies just to shut you up." When leaders become tyrannized by the cookie gouger, they function to soothe rather than to challenge—at the expense of progress. In short, Friedman sees the challenge of change as producing sparks of anxious reactivity. If you, the leader, do not overreact to anxiety, you will positively influence the emotional field. A minimum of reaction to others, especially the unmotivated, will not reinforce the sabotage. The challenge of change for leaders is to keep one's eye on the ball (stay focused), take the heat (remain nonreactive), stay connected (talk and listen), and get a good night's sleep.

"In times of crisis," historian Doris Kearns Goodwin states, "things become possible that would not be possible in ordinary times." Crisis opens up the system. Familiar landmarks, directional arrows, and clear paths disappear.

## **Characteristics of Change**

My observations as to what responses most contribute to the challenge of change are noted below. The first three responses have been present in every case.

- Without mature and motivated leaders, little happens.
- Resistance to change is far less intense and protracted when change is made for the sake of mission.
- How emotional processes are understood and handled plays a major role in outcomes.
- Leaders are able to reframe problems as opportunities.
- Leaders can be frozen in their frustration because they do not know how to effect change.
- Good intentions are fortified by good planning and action.
- Mistakes and failures can become learning events.
- Superimposing ideas and formulas to reshape the congregation that have been developed elsewhere can sometimes be helpful. Most effective, however, is the “ground-up” approach in which the congregation takes a course of action that coincides with its own situation and identity.
- Transformation involves crisis.
- People will be more receptive to ideas that are solidly grounded on Scripture and theology.
- People are motivated by both pain and hope.

## **Hope Empowers Change**

Hope provides a new angle of vision. When things look bleak or unmovable, hope sees more than what is there. If congregations are to respond to the challenge of change, half-

hearted actions will not achieve what is desired. Victim thinking will only reinforce a sense of powerlessness.

In *Change or Die*, Alan Deutschman, senior editor of the magazine *Fast Company*, sets forth a new model for the change process. In doing so, he mentions hope, or similar ideas, more than thirty times. Deutschman states, “The real key is to give people hope, not facts.” Following up this thought, he says, “The first key to change isn’t offering protection or admonition.” What counts is “inspiring hope” so that people believe and expect that they can and will change their lives. Yet again, he claims, “The first key to change is: you form a new emotional relationship with a person or a community that inspires and sustains hope.”

If not denial, despair can permeate people’s lives and render them helpless. Despair is an interesting word, as it derives from the Latin *desperare*, meaning “to give up hope.” *Spes* is the Latin word for hope, as seen also in the words desperation and prosperity. But despair is a form of self-imprisonment. Despair believes in limits only. Evidences of possibility are not seen or imagined. Locked into gloom, options are useless. For instance, Israel had forsaken its commitments to things larger than self (God, community, family), and instead turned to immediate self-absorbing things. “Why,” the prophet Isaiah asked, “spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?” (55:2).

Deep change, adaptive change, or system change—whatever one calls it—is no easy process. Change, even minor ones, can destabilize whole systems.. Reactivity reaches irrational highs. Polarization hardens. Seeding suspicion of others flourishes. Brazen behaviors multiply. Blaming metastasizes like cancer. Anne Lamott, who has written both fiction and nonfiction, and more recently on faith, sagely advises, “So when the seasons change, buckle up.”

## Seeing What Is and Envisioning What Might Be

Sitting on a park bench, a man observed a couple of workmen. At first he was baffled, but soon became amused. He thought to himself, "Am I seeing what I'm seeing?" One worker would take his shovel and dig a hole two to three feet deep. The second workman would use his shovel to return the dirt into the hole. After watching them do this digging ritual, the man left the bench and approached the two workmen. "May I ask what you are doing? I'm curious." The first worker said that they were planting trees. "I dig the hole," he stated, "and Charlie puts the plant in the hole, and Chester here fills the hole with dirt. Charlie is out sick today." Tree planting goes on the same way with or without Charlie. As facetious as the story is, it still portrays the sheer difficulty of changing what is emotionally encrusted.

Congregations ask me to help them move out of a mess, morass, or maze. The process I use eventually produces proposals for change. But someone or some group will grind their emotional axe in order to hatchet the process. If the change is not what they expect, they try to cut off its legs.

In twenty-seven of my last thirty-three interventions with congregations, battle lines were drawn relative to a particular change or to the process of change itself. In general, "significant change" is not a preferred future for congregations. I have not found much aptitude in clergy to guide such a change or much urgency among lay leaders to initiate it. More often, the leaders are expected to stay inside the box of day-to-day problems. Changes that might adjust the design or balance of the system are not pressing priorities. Many congregations take pride in their homeostatic ways. Further, many clergy are caught in a vise, having been trained to be priestly in their ministry but having received little assistance in being prophetic and visionary. The priest is the



consoler, the reconciler, and the soul friend. Relational abilities are paramount. Healing is the centerpiece of this activity. The prophet is one who speaks out, who is a truth teller, though not brash or cynical, for the prophet cares about people but at times may use militant words. Awareness and action are the heart of the prophet's work. The visionary role includes governance, oversight, and planning. Vision is the key to this ministry. Since about 80 percent of churches in the United States have two hundred members or fewer, the more relational role of priest remains the most prominent for clergy. The need for comfort is ongoing. Now, suddenly, with steep changes happening in our society, congregations have to ask themselves whether they are responding to a world that no longer exists and whether they have the sort of leadership required to shift to new understanding and practices. Surely, the priestly work is always needed, but now, especially now, clergy may need to become advocates for adaptive change. Ask yourselves—does your congregation need a more prophetic ministry? Do you need a more visionary type of ministry? My experience indicates that many congregations would opt for the priestly role: If we just had a pastor who loved us, we would be all right. Other congregations would not contest that, but would want the love to be engaged with justice, mission, and new visions.

### **Going is a Given**

In his classic study, *Transforming Mission*, missiologist David Bosch reported that the Bible passage called the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18–20, was not understood to be primarily about mission until the early nineteenth century. Before then, the verses were read as part of the rite of baptism. Biblical scholarship has revealed that the mandate “Go!” is not in the original Greek. It is a participle—“going.” The

translation would be “as you go.” Mennonite theologian David Augsburger notes how broad the mission is with this simple change of “as you go”: “As you live, as you go about your daily work, as you move to new settings for service, as you join or create new communities of discipleship, as you fulfill your vocation as a follower of Jesus— you shall be witnesses. This is not a sales strategy. This is not a mandate for mass media. This is not a justification for a state-church takeover of a people’s religious affiliation. This is not a method for achieving church growth. This is a call to authentic, faithful witness in all of life.” Whether you are a member of Hope Church in Hope, South Dakota, or a megachurch in an urban setting, you can be a witness to the gospel in all of life. Maybe that’s the way to transform your church.

Because God has a mission, a church arises. Apart from mission, the church is meaningless. The mission has churches. Seminary professor Craig Van Gelder notes, “The church does what it is.” In 1952, at a conference held by the International Missionary Council, a new phrase came into use—*missio dei*. Essentially, it means mission belongs to God. The church’s mission is not its own.

The church stands in service of God’s love for the world. Mission begins with “God so loved the world,” not simply those who show interest in him. Mission is about God turning toward the world in Christ. Mission is because God is a God of promise (*promissio*). God is trustworthy. God’s mission of love results in the defeat of death, the transformation of lives, and the renewal of the whole creation. The church is “called, gathered, and enlightened,” writes Martin Luther, to give witness to God’s generosity and generativity.

***The Underground Church:  
Reclaiming the Subversive Way of Jesus***  
**Robin Meyers**

There is no fight like a church fight. That's often because the intensity of such a battle is inversely proportionate to the significance of the subject matter. Should the youth group be allowed to eat pizza in the parlor? Why don't the "younger women" want to be part of the guild anymore? Who is that sitting in my pew? And then, of course, there is the minister—imperfection without end and certainly not like the imperfection we had before! Gone is the sign of the fish scratched on the doorpost to mark another secret meeting of the Jesus People. Gone is the common meal that was intended to feed the poor. Gone is the idea that a Christian should ever hang on to more than he needs in a world where so many have less than they need. Gone is the radical hospitality that made the first Christians a smelly, chaotic, unruly ship of fools. Gone, most of all, is the joy.

In fact, the church is in such disarray, so tempted to save itself by redecorating, changing ministers, or hiring the right band, that a dirty little secret must now be told. To ignore it any longer is akin to pretending that the bad odor hanging over the sanctuary is best treated by spraying, rather than by confessing, "Something stinks!" Of all the reasons given for the decline of the church in our time, the number one reason is often left unsaid: no one really expects anything important to happen. This makes church, for the most part, dull and dishonest. One gets the feeling that there are vital truths that must be told from the pulpit. There are painful confessions that need to come from the hearts of those at worship. There are deep and destructive illusions by which we are living unsustainable lives. But alas, we are too busy pretending that

they do not exist. Or we think that church should be lovely and “nice,” and if anything truly prophetic or indicting were said, people might gasp—as if a wild animal had suddenly wandered into the sanctuary and was stalking the pulpit with wild eyes, putrid breath, and mangy fur. It’s one thing to praise prophets for being visionaries after their time, but it would be quite another to actually encounter Isaiah, Amos, Micah, or Hosea in the vestibule not properly dressed for the occasion and speaking in what kindergarten teachers call an “outside voice.” Most of our churches are friendly, comfortable, and well appointed. But who goes there expecting to be “undone”? Who expects to weep at recognizing the world as it really is, or to shudder at the certain knowledge that until we start taking risks it is likely to stay that way? Who demands that worship should peel back the stupefying crust of a frantic, franchised culture? Who suggests that perhaps we should plan an attack on the mall that rivals the ferocity with which Jesus attacked the temple? Who dares to be a fanatic these days for something other than a football team?

Now for the good news: the church of Jesus Christ in the Western world is in terrible shape. That’s right—the good news is the bad news—and that’s good news. Why? Because, according to the distinguished scholar of religion Phyllis Tickle, apparently about every five hundred years the church holds a sort of giant rummage sale. It must decide what goes and what stays, what is dispensable and what is irreplaceable. Five centuries after the Protestant Reformation, we find ourselves passing through precisely such a time. Think of it as a kind of spring cleaning. We are sorting through our theological stuff and asking painful and disorienting questions about where it came from, what it’s worth, and why the once lucrative market for creeds and doctrines seems both depressed and depressing. Meanwhile, our kids have already moved on. They want deeds, not creeds. They want mission,

not musings. They think we talk too much. They think not all our music should sound like monks in mourning. They have nothing against the Middle Ages, but they don't live there. We say "text," and they think about something they should not be doing while driving. We say "lowdown," and they hear "download." They watch a lot of crime lab and hospital dramas, perhaps because these are the only places they hear serious conversations about life and death. But they are not dumb. They are wonderful, and they are watching us.

### **Beyond Goods to God**

Human beings are not commodities, so why do we continue live by the myth that the marketplace can solve all the problems of life? In the face of desperate need, abandoned children, and violence as a way of life, why are we still spending so much time and energy debating theological ideas? Which of the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount says, "Blessed are the theologically sound, for they shall be smug"? Are we Easter people or just the latest version of the Good Friday crowd? As the poet Yeats put it,

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

Those haunting final lines describe both politics and religion in our time. Alas, the American church is joined at the hip to a declining Empire. Because confession is good for the

soul, honesty demands that we admit how irrelevant we seem to most of the world, how quaint but clueless. After all, who really looks to the church these days for social change? Who fears its collective power to be leaven in the loaf of the Empire? Who suggests that Jesus Followers should be put on the no-fly list—not because we are violent, but precisely because we are not? Once, when a patient in crisis came to see his therapist, he began the session by saying, “Doc, I feel miserable.” “Good,” the therapist replied. “Can you stay with the feeling?” A crisis really is a terrible thing to waste.

After all, it doesn’t take a theologian to know that the world is full of lonely, frightened people. It doesn’t take a mystic to know that all of us are hungry and need bread. It doesn’t take a celebrity to remind us that fame and fortune are nothing compared to a community. We need one another. Because let’s face it, the age of the self-made man, the rugged individual, the rolling stone, has given us the most unhappy, the most addicted, the most broken, and the most fearful society on earth. Maybe that’s why everyone at least owes it to himself or herself to remember that before the gospel got turned into just another marketing strategy, it contained the two most powerful words ever to address the sickness of the age: fear not.

The object of life is to love and be loved. What is missing is trust, and without trust the whole human enterprise collapses. Without trust there is no covenant, and without covenant there are no relationships. Without relationships there is no happiness. Who could blame anyone these days for not trusting the church? Yet what we no longer trust is not the idea of a Beloved Community but the reality of a quarrelling collection of petty, frightened people who have forgotten where they came from, where they are going, and to whom they belong. Most of all, we have forgotten that we signed up to be crazy, like Jesus was crazy. Remember Jesus? The one

with the world's most recognized name disguising the world's best-kept secret? The one they said was out of his mind? That's right, as in loco, flip city, deranged, mad as a hatter, crazy like a loon, not wrapped too tight. Strange as it may sound, the renewal of the church must begin here, with an honest discussion about the Galilean sage whom everyone admires but nobody seems willing to follow—not really.

We forget that being a prophet cannot be divorced from the pain of being prophetic. That is the path of most resistance. Prophets do not tell us what we want to hear, but what we need to hear. When they walk among us, unkempt and fiery-eyed, they are pitied by their peers. They are despised and mocked for calling so rudely for the end to the unjust status quo. Good and decent people avoid them on the street. Parents tell their children to look away. They are the last people we invite to a dinner party. Indeed, prophets and poets have a lot in common. They are related through the blood of metaphor. For some reason, both find it impossible not to describe one thing as if it were another, instead of just calling something what it is. This habit of seeing as is deep in their DNA. Both see with the eyes of the heart, to save our souls from drying up. Both know that all our arguments about “taking the Bible literally” are literally foolish, considering that Jesus is often called the Lamb of God when in fact Mary did not have a little lamb!

Perhaps we should call for a truce in our search for the historical Jesus and turn our attention instead to something at least as important but often neglected: the search for the historical community. Asking, What would Jesus do? (WWJD) has become very popular these days. (Although the question seems mostly rhetorical, the answer might be truly frightening.) But there is another question that we need to be asking, one that is at least as important as questions about the historical Jesus: What did the historical community do? After

all, one of the ways that historians uncover the authentic message of a teacher is to study the behavior of his or her first students. Their questions were not our questions, of course, because they were not engaged in a search for true identity. Rather they were engaged in the politics of true discipleship. Their actions were their answers. What we have forgotten, much to the detriment of the church, is how strange and radical they really were—how truly subversive.

Instead of preparing for the next round in the never-ending quest for the historical Jesus, why don't we consider a quest for the historical follower? Why were those first Jesus People so strange, so peculiar despite all their differences? Why were they both bewildering and threatening to the status quo? Why haven't we worked just as hard to identify those who were first given the derogatory title of "little Christs" (Christ-ians) as we have to define the inviolate nature of their Lord? The noble effort to separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith has been helpful, but now we need a quest to separate the followers of history from the believers of faith.

So many Christians today are so intoxicated by the idea of being "right" about Jesus that when it comes to following him, we forget to do something much more important. We forget to warn people. We neglect to tell them not to get into the boat to begin with and then expect smooth sailing. We fail to be honest with them about how little difference the creeds and doctrines make compared to setting out on a journey with someone whose claim upon their lives will turn out to be a thousand times more frightening than the killer sea.

Whether we call ourselves liberals or conservatives, there remains a fatal flaw in the human species, a sin that clings to us as tribal creatures afflicted with a seemingly incurable disease: we would rather be right than loving. We would rather be correct than compassionate. We would rather be saved than seek justice. This is why it is so much easier to



reach a verdict than to become a disciple. This is why the church is dying.

We still argue endlessly over our precious doctrines in a perishing world. We fuss over music and flowers and whether the minister should drive a red car. So here is how we fiddle while Rome burns: Is it justification by works or by faith? Should baptism be by dunking, sprinkling, or dry cleaning? Should we use one communion cup or many? Should we speak in tongues or not speak at all? Should we use real wine for communion or grape juice? Can there be an American flag in a sanctuary that is a house of prayer for all people? Should women wear skirts or slacks, makeup or no makeup? While we're at it, what about the role of women in church leadership? What about gays and lesbians? What about politics from the pulpit? Not to worry. We know the answer, and if we don't, the church council will meet next Tuesday to discuss all this and take a vote. Meanwhile, in the time it takes to talk another problem to death, a thousand children will actually starve to death.

The first Jesus Followers were not, as so many churches are today, communities of conformity. Rather, they were communities animated by a common spirit—engaged in the mission of following their sovereign and no other. In an Empire crawling with gods, Rome allowed all sorts of local religious beliefs and practices to flourish, as long as loyal subjects of the realm also worshiped Caesar. Whether it was the Mithraism of Persia, with its ritual slaughter of bulls, or the Egyptian cults of Isis and Osiris, competing religions surrounded the early Christians—just as they do today. What is vitally important to remember, however, is that when these first Jesus People encountered such rival faiths, they responded in a strange and unexpected way. They did not fashion creeds and demand that they be taken as vows. Rather they simply refused to worship Caesar, stopped practicing

animal sacrifice, threw open the doors of their underground assemblies to all who would come, redistributed wealth, and made the dangerous claim that “Jesus Christ was Lord.” They would pray for the emperor, but not to him.

When Jesus taught his disciples “to pray for the coming Reign of God, ‘on earth as it is in heaven,’ it was all too evident to the current rulers that, if this really were to happen, they would be displaced.” Hence, execution by crucifixion was a political solution to a political problem. Except that it did not end the threat. Indeed, after the Roman goons were sent down to close the “Jesus file,” the movement refused to die. It became a community movement animated by the spirit of the risen Lord.

## *Resident Aliens*

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon

### **Not By Accident**

Christians don't believe in luck; we believe in God, a God who acts, who takes over the lives we thought we were living under the delusion that our lives were our own. What the world calls luck, we are taught to call Providence, the surprising machinations of a living God. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we get to live out stories we don't write by ourselves.

Martin Luther famously claimed that he just drank lots of good Wittenberg beer and the Reformation simply happened. The Acts of the Apostles alleges that Philip was just hiding out in Samaria, and next thing he knew, oops, he was baptizing Gentiles and eunuchs. Christians describe our lives in the fashion of Luther and Luke giving no credence to the pagan fantasy of luck but rather indicating our belief in Providence, those sometimes joyful, often terrifying moments when we lose control of our story, when we find ourselves commandeered by the Holy Spirit, and when we are being put to use for greater ends than we intended.

In Jesus we meet not a presentation of basic ideas about God, world, and humanity, but an invitation to join up, to become part of a movement, a people. By the very act of our modern theological attempts at translation, we have unconsciously distorted the gospel and transformed it into something it never claimed to be—ideas abstracted from Jesus, rather than Jesus present with his people.

In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, all human history must be reviewed. The coming of Christ has cosmic implications. He has changed the course of things. So the theological task is not merely the interpretive matter of

translating Jesus into modern categories but rather to translate the world to him.

Christianity is more than a matter of a new understanding. Christianity is an invitation to be part of an alien people who make a difference because they see something that cannot otherwise be seen without Christ. Right living is more the challenge than right thinking. The challenge is not the intellectual one but the political one—the creation of a new people who have aligned themselves with the seismic shift that has occurred in the world since Christ.

The American church was said, by commentators like Martin Marty, to consist of two types—the “public” church and the “private” church. The “private” church were those conservative evangelicals who thought that the business of the church was to stick to saving souls and to concern itself with the purely private world of religion. The “public” church felt that Christians were obligated to go public with their social agenda, working within given social structures to make a better society. American Christians, in the name of justice, try to create a society in which faith in a living God is rendered irrelevant or private. For some, religion becomes a purely private matter of individual choice. Stick to saving souls and stay out of politics, it is said. On the other hand, activist Christians who talk much about justice promote a notion of justice that envisions a society in which faith in God is rendered quite unnecessary, since everybody already believes in peace and justice even when everybody does not believe in God.

We argue that the political task of Christians is to be the church rather than to transform the world. One reason why it is not enough to say that our first task is to make the world better is that we Christians have no other means of accurately understanding the world and rightly interpreting the world except by way of the church. Big words like “peace” and

“justice,” slogans the church adopts under the presumption that, even if people do not know what “Jesus Christ is Lord” means, they will know what peace and justice means, are words awaiting content. The church really does not know what these words mean apart from the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. After all, Pilate permitted the killing of Jesus in order to secure both peace and justice (Roman style) in Judea. It is Jesus’ story that gives content to our faith, judges any institutional embodiment of our faith, and teaches us to be suspicious of any political slogan that does not need God to make itself credible.

(Rome) always demanded one, unified state religion in order to keep the Empire together. Today, the new universal religion that demands subservience is not really Marxism or capitalism but the entity both of these ideologies serve so well—the omnipotent state. We reject the charge (that the church as ‘resident aliens’ is a form) of tribalism, particularly from those whose theologies serve to buttress the most nefarious brand of tribalism of all—the omnipotent state. The church is the one political entity in our culture that is global, transnational, transcultural.

In the sixties, it became fashionable to speak of the need for the church to be “in” the world, serving the world. We think that we could argue that being in the world, serving the world, has never been a great problem for the church. Alas, our greatest tragedies occurred because the church was all too willing to serve the world. The church need not worry about whether to be in the world. The church’s only concern is how to be in the world, in what form, for what purpose.

The Gospels make wonderfully clear that the disciples had not the foggiest idea of what they had gotten into when they followed Jesus. With a simple “Follow me,” Jesus invited ordinary people to come out and be part of an adventure, a journey that kept surprising them at every turn in the road. It

is no coincidence that the Gospel writers chose to frame the gospel in terms of a journey: “And then Jesus went to,” “From there he took his disciples to,” and so on.

The church exists today as resident aliens, an adventurous colony in a society of unbelief. As a society of unbelief, Western culture is devoid of a sense of journey, of adventure, because it lacks belief in much more than the cultivation of an ever-shrinking horizon of self-preservation and self-expression.

In our day, unbelief is the socially acceptable way of living in the West. It no longer takes courage to disbelieve. As Alasdair MacIntyre has, we Christians have given atheists less and less in which to disbelieve! A flaccid church has robbed atheism of its earlier pretensions of adventure. The Good News, which we explore here, is that the success of godlessness and the failure of political liberalism have made possible a recovery of Christianity as an adventurous journey. Life in the colony is not a settled affair. Subject to constant attacks upon and sedition against its most cherished virtues, always in danger of losing its young, regarded as a threat by an atheistic culture, which in the name of freedom and equality subjugates everyone—the Christian colony can be appreciated by its members as a challenge.

Here we become uneasy with our image of the church as colony. To be a colony implies that God’s people settle in, stake out a claim, build fences, and guard their turf. Of course, in a hostile world, a world simplistic enough not to believe but sophisticated enough to make its attacks on belief in the most subtle of ways, there is reason for the colony to be *en garde*. Yet when the church stakes out a claim, this implies that we are somehow satisfied with our little corner of the world, our little cultivated garden of spirituality or introspection, or whatever crumbs are left after the wider society has used reason, science, politics, or whatever other dominant means it has of making sense of itself. Our biblical story demands an

offensive rather than defensive posture of the church. The world and all its resources, anguish, gifts, and groaning is God's world, and God demands what God has created. Jesus Christ is the supreme act of divine intrusion into the world's settled arrangements. In the Christ, God refuses to "stay in his place." The message that sustains the colony is not for itself but for the whole world—the colony having significance only as God's means for saving the whole world.

The colony is God's means of a major offensive against the world, for the world. An army succeeds, not through trench warfare but through movement, penetration, tactics. Therefore, to speak of the church as a colony is to speak of the colony not as a place, a fortified position, be it theological or geographical. The colony is a people on the move, like Jesus' first disciples, breathlessly trying to keep up with Jesus. It is an adventure with many unknowns, internal arguments over which turn to take in the road, conversations along the way, visits to strange places, introductions and farewells, and much looking back and taking stock. When we are baptized, we (like the first disciples) jump on a moving train. As disciples, we do not so much accept a creed, or come to a clear sense of self-understanding by which we know this or that with utter certitude. We become part of a journey that began long before we got here and shall continue long after we are gone. Too often, we have conceived of salvation—what God does to us in Jesus—as a purely personal decision, or a matter of finally getting our heads straight on basic beliefs, or of having some inner feelings of righteousness about ourselves and God, or of having our social attitudes readjusted. In this chapter we argue that salvation is not so much a new beginning but rather a beginning in the middle, so to speak. Faith begins, not in discovery, but in remembrance. The story began without us, as a story of the peculiar way God is redeeming the world, a story that invites us to come forth and be saved by sharing in the

work of a new people whom God has created in Israel and Jesus. Such movement saves us by (1) placing us within an adventure that is nothing less than God's purpose for the whole world, and (2) communally training us to fashion our lives in accordance with what is true rather than what is false. A pastor baptized a baby. After the baptism the pastor said to the baby, in a voice loud enough to be heard by parents and congregation, "Little sister, by this act of baptism, we welcome you to a journey that will take your whole life. This isn't the end. It's the beginning of God's experiment with your life. What God will make of you, we know not. Where God will take you, surprise you, we cannot say. This we do know and this we say—God is with you."

### **Story People**

The Bible is fundamentally a story of a people's journey with God. Scripture is an account of human existence as told by God. In scripture, we see that God is taking the disconnected elements of our lives and pulling them together into a coherent story that means something.

Early Christians, interestingly, began not with creedal speculation about the metaphysics of the Incarnation—that is, Christology abstracted from the Gospel accounts. They began with stories about Jesus, about those whose lives got caught up in his life. Therefore, in a more sophisticated and engaging way, by the very form of their presentation, the Gospel writers were able to begin training us to situate our lives like his life. We cannot know Jesus without following Jesus. Engagement with Jesus, as the misconceptions of his first disciples show, is necessary to understand Jesus. In a sense, we follow Jesus before we know Jesus. Furthermore, we know Jesus before we know ourselves. For how can we know the truth of ourselves as sinful and misunderstanding, but redeemed and



empowered without our first being shown, as it was shown to his first disciples? By telling these stories, we come to see the significance and coherence of our lives as a gift, as something not of our own heroic creation, but as something that must be told to us, something we would not have known without the community of faith. The little story I call my life is given cosmic, eternal significance as it is caught up within God's larger account of history. "We were Pharaoh's slaves . . . , the Lord brought us out . . . that he might preserve us." The significance of our lives is frighteningly contingent on the story of another. Christians are those who hear this story and are able to tell it as our salvation.

When Jesus commissioned his disciples and sent them out (Luke 10:1-24), he told them to take no bag, purse, or sandals—the sorts of accessories required for most journeys. Here was a journey in which they were to take only confidence in his empowerment. The story ends with disciples coming back, utterly surprised that the same power of good, which they had experienced in Jesus, was also working in them (10:17-24). When it comes to the confirmation of the truth of the gospel, disciples are often more surprised than anyone else when, wonder of wonders, what Jesus promises, Jesus really does give. In a way, although Jesus unburdened the disciples of so much of the baggage the world considers essential, he did not relieve them of all burdens. He relieved them of false baggage so he could lay upon them even more demanding burdens. For in laying upon them the necessity to trust not their possessions but only him, Jesus showed them that here was a journey which required the cultivation of certain virtues. One should not start out on a dangerous journey without being equipped for the dangers that one may face. So, in any good adventure story, we find a constant testing of the traveler's character and, during the testing, a transformation in the character of the adventurer. The quest requires the

adventurer to rely upon and develop his or her virtues in ever new ways.

Christian ethics, as a cultivation of those virtues needed to keep us on the journey, are the ethics of revolution. Revolutionaries, whose goal is nothing less than the transformation of society through revolution, have little patience with those among them who are self-indulgent, and they have no difficulty disciplining such people. The discipline they demand of themselves is a means of directing the others to what is true and good. Having no use for such bourgeois virtues as tolerance, open-mindedness, and inclusiveness (which the revolutionary knows are usually cover-ups that allow the powerful to maintain social equilibrium rather than to be confronted and then to change), revolutionaries value honesty and confrontation—painful though they may be. The stakes are high, the temptations to counterrevolutionary behavior are too alluring, the road ahead too difficult to accept anything less from the revolutionary community. To the outsider, particularly the outsider who is part of the powers-that-be, the ethics of the revolutionary may appear harsh, uncompromising, even absurd. But given the world view of the revolutionary, the ultimate vision toward which the revolution is moving, revolutionary ethics make sense. This is, in its own secular way, an ethics of adventure not unlike the ethics of Christians.

When people are very detached, very devoid of purpose and a coherent world view, Christians must be very suspicious of talk about community. In a world like ours, people will be attracted to communities that promise them an easy way out of loneliness, togetherness based on common tastes, racial or ethnic traits, or mutual self-interest. There is then little check on community becoming as tyrannical as the individual ego. Community becomes totalitarian when its only purpose is to foster a sense of belonging in order to overcome the fragility

of the lone individual. Christian community, life in the colony, is not primarily about togetherness. It is about the way of Jesus Christ with those whom he calls to himself. It is about disciplining our wants and needs in congruence with a true story, which gives us the resources to lead truthful lives. In living out the story together, togetherness happens, but only as a by-product of the main project of trying to be faithful to Jesus.

The most interesting, creative, political solutions we Christians have to offer our troubled society are not new laws, advice to Congress, or increased funding for social programs—although we may find ourselves supporting such national efforts. The most creative social strategy we have to offer is the church. Here we show the world a manner of life the world can never achieve through social coercion or governmental action. We serve the world by showing it something that it is not, namely, a place where God is forming a family out of strangers. The Christian faith recognizes that we are violent, fearful, frightened creatures who cannot reason or will our way out of our mortality. So the gospel begins, not with the assertion that we are violent, fearful, frightened creatures, but with the pledge that, if we offer ourselves to a truthful story and the community formed by listening to and enacting that story in the church, we will be transformed into people more significant than we could ever have been on our own. As Barth says, “[The Church] exists . . . to set up in the world a new sign which is radically dissimilar to [the world’s] own manner and which contradicts it in a way which is full of promise.”

For us, the world has ended. We may have thought that Jesus came to make nice people even nicer, that Jesus hoped to make a democratic Caesar just a bit more democratic, to make the world a bit better place for the poor. The Sermon, however, collides with such accommodationist thinking. It drives us back to a completely new conception of what it means for

people to live with one another. That completely new conception is the church. All that we have heard said of old is thrown up for grabs, demands to be reexamined, and pushed back to square one. Square one is that colony made up of those who are special, different, alien, and distinctive only in the sense that they are those who have heard Jesus say "Follow me," and have come forth to be part of a new people, a colony formed by hearing his invitation and saying yes.

## ***Different Drum: Community Making and Peace***

**Scott Peck**

Communities, like individuals, are unique. Still, we all share the human condition. So it is that groups assembled deliberately to form themselves into community routinely go through certain stages in the process.

These stages, in order, are:

- **Pseudocommunity**
- **Chaos**
- **Emptiness**
- **Community**

Not every group that becomes a community follows this paradigm exactly. Communities that temporarily form in response to a crisis, for instance, may skip over one or more stages for the time being. I do not insist that community development occur by formula. But in the process of community-making by design, this is the natural, usual order of things.

### **Pseudocommunity**

The first response of a group in seeking to form a community is most often to try to fake it. The members attempt to be an instant community by being extremely pleasant with one another and avoiding all disagreement. This attempt—this pretence of community—is what I term ‘pseudocommunity’. It never works.

The essential dynamic of pseudocommunity is conflict avoidance. The absence of conflict in the group is not by itself diagnostic. Genuine communities may experience lovely and

sometimes lengthy periods free from conflict. But that is because they have learned to deal with conflict rather than avoid it.

Pseudocommunity is conflict-avoiding; true community is conflict-resolving. What is diagnostic of pseudocommunity is the minimisation, the lack of acknowledgement, or the ignoring of individual differences. Another characteristic is that members will let one another get away with blanket statements; they will nod in agreement, as if the speaker has uttered some universal truth. Indeed, the pressure to skirt any kind of disagreement may be so great that even the very experienced communicators in the group— who know perfectly well that speaking in generalities is destructive to genuine communication—may be inhibited from challenging what they know is wrong. Once individual differences are not only allowed but encouraged to surface in some way, the group almost immediately moves to the second stage of community development: chaos.

## **Chaos**

The chaos always centres around well-intentioned but misguided attempts to heal and convert. In the stage of chaos individual differences are, unlike those in pseudocommunity, right out in the open. Only now, instead of trying to hide or ignore them, the group is attempting to obliterate them. Underlying the attempt to heal and convert is not so much the motive of love as the motive to make everyone normal—the motive to win, as members fight over whose norm might prevail. The stage of chaos is a time of fighting and struggle. But that is not its essence. Frequently, fully developed communities will be required to fight and struggle. Only they have learned to do so effectively. The struggle during chaos is uncreative, unconstructive, boring. It has no grace or rhythm.

The struggle is going nowhere, accomplishing nothing. It is no fun. The proper resolution of chaos is not easy. Because it is both unproductive and unpleasant, it may seem that the group has degenerated from pseudocommunity into chaos. But chaos is not necessarily the worst place for a group to be. Fighting is far better than pretending you are not divided. It's painful but it's a beginning. You are aware that you need to move beyond your warring factions, and it's infinitely more hopeful than if you felt you didn't need to move at all.

### **Emptiness**

There is only two ways out of chaos. One way is into organisation--but organisation is never community. The only other way is into and through emptiness. The most common (and interrelated) barriers to communication that people need to empty themselves of before they can enter genuine community are: Expectations and Preconceptions

**Letting go of preconceptions:** Community building is an adventure, a going into the unknown. People are routinely terrified of the emptiness of the unknown. Until such a time as we can empty ourselves of expectation and stop trying to fit others and our relationship with them into a preconceived mould we cannot really listen, hear, or experience. One reason to distrust instant community is that community building requires time -- the time to have sufficient experience to become conscious of our prejudices and then to empty ourselves of them.

**Letting go of simplistic ideologies and solutions:** Obviously we cannot move very far toward community with our fellow human beings when we are thinking and feeling (in terms of) ideological and theological rigidities that assume the status of 'the one and only right way'.

**Letting go of the desire to 'fix it':** The need to heal, convert, fix or solve Isn't it the loving thing to do to relieve your neighbour of her suffering or to help him to see the light? Actually, however, almost all attempts to convert and heal are not only naïve and ineffective but quite self-centered and self-serving. It hurts me when my friend is in pain. My most basic motive when I strive to heal is to feel good myself.

**Letting go of the desire for control:** The need for control -- to ensure the desired outcome -- is at least partially rooted in the fear of failure. For me to empty myself of my over-controlling tendencies I must continually empty myself of this fear. I must be willing to fail. The stage of emptiness in community development is a time of sacrifice. Such sacrifice hurts because it is a kind of death, the kind that is necessary for rebirth. This is an extraordinary testament to the human spirit. What it means is that, given the right circumstances and knowledge of the rules, on a certain but very real level we human beings are able to die for each other.

## **Community**

When its death has been completed, open and empty, the group enters community. In this final stage a soft quietness descends. It is a kind of peace. The room is bathed in peace. Then, quietly, a member begins to talk about herself. She is being vulnerable. She is speaking of the deepest part of herself. The group hangs on each word. No one realized she was capable of such eloquence. When she finishes there is a hush. Out of the silence another member begins to talk ... deeply; very personally ... Then the next member speaks. And as it goes on, there will be a great deal of sadness and grief expressed; but there will also be much laughter and joy. And then something almost more singular happens. An extraordinary amount of healing and converting begins to occur -- now that



no one is trying to convert or heal. And community has been born. It is like falling in love. When they enter community, people in a very real sense do fall in love with one another en masse.

Because I have spoken so glowingly of its virtues, some might conclude that life in community is easier or more comfortable than ordinary existence. It is not. But it is certainly lively, more intense. The agony is actually greater, but so is the joy. Life in community may touch upon something perhaps deeper than joy. When I am with a group of human beings committed to hanging in there through both the agony and the joy of community, I have a dim sense that I am participating in a phenomenon for which there is only word. I almost hesitate to use it. The word is 'glory'.



***Nonviolent Communication:***  
***A Language of Life***  
**Marshall B. Rosenberg**

**Introduction by Arun Gandhi**  
**Founder and President, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence**

As a person of color, growing up in apartheid South Africa in the 1940s was not something anyone relished. Especially not if you were brutally reminded of your skin color every moment of every day. To be beaten up at the age of ten by white youths because they consider you too black and then by black youths because they consider you too white is a humiliating experience that would drive anyone to vengeful violence. I was so outraged that my parents decided to take me to India and leave me for some time with Grandfather, the legendary M.K. Gandhi, so that I could learn from him how to deal with the anger, the frustration, the discrimination, and the humiliation that violent color prejudice can evoke in you. In the eighteen months I learned more than I anticipated. My only regret now is that I was just thirteen years old and a mediocre student at that. If only I had been older, a bit wiser, and a bit more thoughtful, I could have learned so much more. But, one must be happy with what one has received and not be greedy, a fundamental lesson in nonviolent living. How can I forget this?

One of the many things I learned from Grandfather is to understand the depth and breadth of nonviolence and to acknowledge that one is violent and that one needs to bring about a qualitative change in one's attitude. We often don't acknowledge our violence because we are ignorant about it; we assume we are not violent because our vision of violence is

one of fighting, killing, beating, and wars—the types of things that average individuals don't do. To bring this home to me, Grandfather made me draw a family tree of violence using the same principles as for a genealogical tree. His argument was that I would have a better appreciation of nonviolence if I understood and acknowledged the violence that exists in the world. He assisted me every evening to analyze the day's happenings—everything that I experienced, read about, saw, or did to others—and put them down on the tree either under “physical,” if it was violence where physical force was used, or under “passive,” if it was the type of violence where the hurt was more emotional.

Within a few months I covered one wall in my room with acts of “passive” violence which Grandfather described as being more insidious than “physical” violence. He then explained that passive violence ultimately generated anger in the victim who, as an individual or as a member of a collective, responded violently. In other words, it is passive violence that fuels the fire of physical violence. It is because we don't understand or appreciate this that either all our efforts to work for peace have not fructified or that each peace has been temporary. How can we extinguish a fire if we don't first cut off the fuel that ignites the inferno? Grandfather always vociferously stressed the need for nonviolence in communications—something that Marshall Rosenberg has been doing admirably for several years through his writings and his seminars. I read with considerable interest Mr. Rosenberg's book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* and am impressed by the depth of his work and the simplicity of the solutions. As Grandfather would say, unless “we become the change we wish to see in the world,” no change will ever take place.

## Introduction

Long before I reached adulthood, I learned to communicate in an impersonal way that did not require me to reveal what was going on inside myself. When I encountered people or behaviors I either didn't like or didn't understand, I would react in terms of their wrongness. If my teachers assigned a task I didn't want to do, they were "mean" or "unreasonable." If someone pulled out in front of me in traffic, my reaction would be, "You idiot!"

When we speak this language, we think and communicate in terms of what's wrong with others for behaving in certain ways or, occasionally, what's wrong with ourselves for not understanding or responding as we would like. Our attention is focused on classifying, analyzing, and determining levels of wrongness rather than on what we and others need and are not getting. Thus if my partner wants more affection than I'm giving her, she is "needy and dependent." But if I want more affection than she is giving me, then she is "aloof and insensitive." If my colleague is more concerned about details than I am, he is "picky and compulsive." On the other hand, if I am more concerned about details than he is, he is "sloppy and disorganized." It is my belief that all such analyses of other human beings are tragic expressions of our own values and needs. They are tragic because when we express our values and needs in this form, we increase defensiveness and resistance among the very people whose behaviors are of concern to us. Or, if people do agree to act in harmony with our values, they will likely do so out of fear, guilt, or shame because they concur with our analysis of their wrongness.

In his book *How to Make Yourself Miserable*, Dan Greenburg demonstrates through humor the insidious power that comparative thinking can exert over us. He suggests that if readers have a sincere desire to make life miserable for

themselves, they might learn to compare themselves to other people. For those unfamiliar with this practice, he provides a few exercises. The first one displays full-length pictures of a man and a woman who embody ideal physical beauty by contemporary media standards. Readers are instructed to take their own body measurements, compare them to those superimposed on the pictures of the attractive specimens, and dwell on the differences. Comparisons are a form of judgment. This exercise produces what it promises: we start to feel miserable as we engage in these comparisons.

Another kind of life-alienating communication is denial of responsibility. Communication is life-alienating when it clouds our awareness that we are each responsible for our own thoughts, feelings, and actions. The use of the common expression have to, as in “There are some things you have to do, whether you like it or not,” illustrates how personal responsibility for our actions can be obscured in speech. The phrase makes one feel, as in “You make me feel guilty,” is another example of how language facilitates denial of personal responsibility for our own feelings and thoughts. In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, which documents the war crimes trial of Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann, Hannah Arendt quotes Eichmann saying that he and his fellow officers had their own name for the responsibility-denying language they used. They called it *Amtssprache*, loosely translated into English as “office talk” or “bureaucratese.” For example, if asked why they took a certain action, the response would be, “I had to.” If asked why they “had to,” the answer would be, “Superiors’ orders.” “Company policy.” “It was the law.” Our language obscures awareness of personal responsibility. We deny responsibility for our actions when we attribute their cause to factors outside ourselves: Vague, impersonal forces— “I cleaned my room because I had to.” Our condition, diagnosis, or personal or psychological history— “I drink because I am an alcoholic.”

The actions of others—"I hit my child because he ran into the street." The dictates of authority—"I lied to the client because the boss told me to." Group pressure—"I started smoking because all my friends did." Institutional policies, rules, and regulations—"I have to suspend you for this infraction because it's the school policy." Gender roles, social roles, or age roles—"I hate going to work, but I do it because I am a husband and a father." Uncontrollable impulses—"I was overcome by my urge to eat the candy bar."

### **Nonviolent Communication: Observing Without Evaluating**

*I can handle your telling me  
what I did or didn't do.  
And I can handle your interpretations,  
but please don't mix the two.*

*If you want to confuse any issue,  
I can tell you how to do it:  
Mix together what I do  
with how you react to it.*

*Tell me that you're disappointed  
with the unfinished chores you see,  
But calling me "irresponsible"  
is no way to motivate me.*

*Yes, I can handle your telling me  
what I did or didn't do,  
And I can handle your interpretations,  
but please don't mix the two.*

—Marshall B. Rosenberg,

The Indian philosopher J. Krishnamurti once remarked that observing without evaluating is the highest form of human intelligence. When I first read this statement, the thought, "What nonsense!" shot through my mind before I realized that I had just made an evaluation. For most of us, it is difficult to make observations, especially of people and their behavior, that are free of judgment, criticism, or other forms of analysis.

**Distinguishing Observations From Evaluations** The following table distinguishes observations that are separate from evaluation from those that have evaluation mixed in.

Here are types of evaluations:

1. Use of verb to be without indication that the evaluator takes responsibility for the evaluation

- Evaluation: You are too generous.
- Observation: When I see you give all your lunch money to others, I think you are being too generous.

2. Use of verbs with evaluative connotations

- Evaluation: Doug procrastinates.
- Observation: Doug only studies for exams the night before.

3. Implication that one's inferences about another person's thoughts, feelings, intentions, or desires are the only ones possible

- Evaluation: She won't get her work in.
- Observation: I don't think she'll get her work in. or She said, "I won't get my work in."

4. Confusion of prediction with certainty

- Evaluation: If you don't eat balanced meals, your health will be impaired.



- Observation: If you don't eat balanced meals, I fear your health may be impaired.

5. Failure to be specific about referents

- Evaluation: Immigrants don't take care of their property.
- Observation: I have not seen the immigrant family living at 1679 Ross shovel the snow on their sidewalk.

6. Use of words denoting ability without indicating that an evaluation is being made

- Evaluation: Hank Smith is a poor soccer player.
- Observation: Hank Smith has not scored a goal in twenty games.

7. Use of adverbs and adjectives in ways that do not indicate a evaluation has been made

- Evaluation: Jim is ugly.
- Observation: Jim's looks don't appeal to me.

8. The words *always*, *never*, *ever*, are used as exaggerations, mixing observations and evaluations:

Evaluation: You are always busy.

Observation: The last three times we've tried to meet you've been working.

**Exercise: Observation or Evaluation?**

Circle the number in front of any statement that is an observation only, with no evaluation mixed in.

1. "John was angry with me yesterday for no reason."
2. "Yesterday evening Nancy bit her fingernails while watching television."
3. "Sam didn't ask for my opinion during the meeting."

4. "My father is a good man."
5. "Janice works too much."
6. "Henry is aggressive."
7. "Pam was first in line every day this week."
8. "My son often doesn't brush his teeth."
9. "Luke told me I didn't look good in yellow."
10. "My aunt complains when I talk with her."

*Here are my responses for Exercise 1:*

1. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "for no reason" to be an evaluation. Furthermore, I consider it an evaluation to infer that John was angry. He might have been feeling hurt, scared, sad, or something else. Examples of observations without evaluation might be: "John told me he was angry," or "John pounded his fist on the table."

2. If you circled this number, we're in agreement that an observation was expressed without an evaluation.

3. If you circled this number, we're in agreement that an observation was expressed without an evaluation.

4. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "good man" to be an evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: "For the last 25 years my father has given one tenth of his salary to charity."

5. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "too much" to be an evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be, "Janice spent over 60 hours at the office this week."

6. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "aggressive" to be an evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: "Henry hit his sister when she switched the television channel."

7. If you circled this number, we're in agreement that an observation was expressed without an evaluation.

8. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "often" to be an evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: "Twice this week my son didn't brush his teeth before going to bed."

9. If you circled this number, we're in agreement that an observation was expressed without an evaluation.

10. If you circled this number, we're not in agreement. I consider "complains" to be an evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: "My aunt called me three times this week, and each time talked about people who treated her in ways she didn't like."

### **Observation and Evaluation in Matthew 7**

Matthew 7: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. (NRSV)

Matthew 7: (Paraphrase) Do not evaluate others because in doing so, you have already evaluated yourself. The valuation you place on another returns to you with the same force you attempted to send it out.

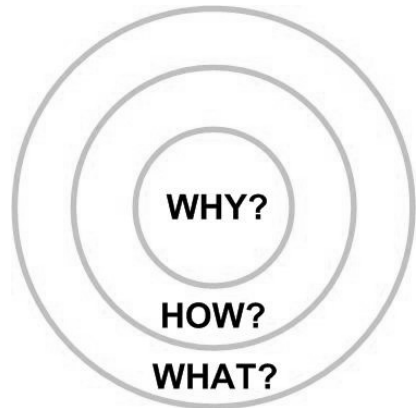


## *Start with Why*

**Simon Sinek**

About three and a half years ago, I made a discovery. And this discovery profoundly changed my view on how I thought the world worked, and it even profoundly changed the way in which I operate in it. As it turns out, all the great inspiring leaders and organizations in the world, whether it's Apple or Martin Luther King or the Wright brothers, they all think, act and communicate the exact same way. And it's the complete opposite to everyone else. All I did was codify it, and it's probably the world's simplest idea. I call it the golden circle.

Why? How? What? This little idea explains why some organizations and some leaders are able to inspire where others aren't. Let me define the terms really quickly. Every single person, every single organization on the planet knows what they do, 100 percent. Some know how they do it, but very, very



few people or organizations know why they do what they do. And by "why" I don't mean "to make a profit." That's a result. It's always a result. By "why," I mean: What's your purpose? What's your cause? What's your belief? Why does your organization exist? Why do you get out of bed in the morning? And why should anyone care? As a result, the way we think, we act, the way we communicate is from the outside in, it's obvious. We go from the clearest thing to the fuzziest thing. But the inspired leaders and the inspired organizations -- regardless of their size, regardless of their industry -- all think, act and communicate from the inside out.

Let me give you an example. I use Apple because they're easy to understand and everybody gets it. If Apple were like everyone else, a marketing message from them might sound like this: "We make great computers. They're beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly. Want to buy one?" "Meh." That's how most of us communicate. That's how most marketing and sales are done, that's how we communicate interpersonally. We say what we do, we say how we're different or better and we expect some sort of a behavior, a purchase, a vote, something like that. Here's our new law firm: We have the best lawyers with the biggest clients, we always perform for our clients. Here's our new car: It gets great gas mileage, it has leather seats. Buy our car. But it's uninspiring.

Here's how Apple actually communicates. "Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently. The way we challenge the status quo is by making our products beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly. We just happen to make great computers. Want to buy one?" Totally different, right? You're ready to buy a computer from me. I just reversed the order of the information. What it proves to us is that people don't buy what you do; people buy why you do it.

This explains why every single person in this room is perfectly comfortable buying a computer from Apple. But we're also perfectly comfortable buying an MP3 player from Apple, or a phone from Apple, or a DVR from Apple. As I said before, Apple's just a computer company. Nothing distinguishes them structurally from any of their competitors. Their competitors are equally qualified to make all of these products. In fact, they tried. A few years ago, Gateway came out with flat-screen TVs. They're eminently qualified to make flat-screen TVs. They've been making flat-screen monitors for years. Nobody bought one. Dell came out with MP3 players and PDAs, and they make great quality products, and they can

make perfectly well-designed products -- and nobody bought one. In fact, talking about it now, we can't even imagine buying an MP3 player from Dell. Why would you buy one from a computer company? But we do it every day. People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. The goal is not to do business with everybody who needs what you have. The goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe. If you don't know why you do what you do, and people respond to why you do what you do, then how will you ever get people to vote for you, or buy something from you, or, more importantly, be loyal and want to be a part of what it is that you do. The goal is not just to sell to people who need what you have; the goal is to sell to people who believe what you believe. The goal is not just to hire people who need a job; it's to hire people who believe what you believe. I always say that, you know, if you hire people just because they can do a job, they'll work for your money, but if they believe what you believe, they'll work for you with blood and sweat and tears. Nowhere else is there a better example than with the Wright brothers.

Most people don't know about Samuel Pierpont Langley. And back in the early 20th century, the pursuit of powered man flight was like the dot com of the day. Everybody was trying it. And Samuel Pierpont Langley had, what we assume, to be the recipe for success. Even now, you ask people, "Why did your product or why did your company fail?" and people always give you the same permutation of the same three things: under-capitalized, the wrong people, bad market conditions. It's always the same three things, so let's explore that. Samuel Pierpont Langley was given 50,000 dollars by the War Department to figure out this flying machine. Money was no problem. He held a seat at Harvard and worked at the Smithsonian and was extremely well-connected; he knew all the big minds of the day. He hired the best minds money could find and the market conditions were fantastic. The New York

Times followed him around everywhere, and everyone was rooting for Langley. Then how come we've never heard of Samuel Pierpont Langley?

A few hundred miles away in Dayton Ohio, Orville and Wilbur Wright, they had none of what we consider to be the recipe for success. They had no money; they paid for their dream with the proceeds from their bicycle shop; not a single person on the Wright brothers' team had a college education, not even Orville or Wilbur; and The New York Times followed them around nowhere. The difference was, Orville and Wilbur were driven by a cause, by a purpose, by a belief. They believed that if they could figure out this flying machine, it'll change the course of the world. Samuel Pierpont Langley was different. He wanted to be rich, and he wanted to be famous. He was in pursuit of the result. He was in pursuit of the riches. And lo and behold, look what happened. The people who believed in the Wright brothers' dream worked with them with blood and sweat and tears. The others just worked for the paycheck. They tell stories of how every time the Wright brothers went out, they would have to take five sets of parts, because that's how many times they would crash before supper.

And, eventually, on December 17th, 1903, the Wright brothers took flight, and no one was there to even experience it. We found out about it a few days later. And further proof that Langley was motivated by the wrong thing: The day the Wright brothers took flight, he quit. He could have said, "That's an amazing discovery, guys, and I will improve upon your technology," but he didn't. He wasn't first, he didn't get rich, he didn't get famous, so he quit.

In the summer of 1963, 250,000 people showed up on the mall in Washington to hear Dr. King speak. They sent out no invitations, and there was no website to check the date. How do you do that? Well, Dr. King wasn't the only man in America who was a great orator. He wasn't the only man in America



who suffered in a pre-civil rights America. He didn't go around telling people what needed to change in America. He went around and told people what he believed. "I believe, I believe, I believe," he told people. And people who believed what he believed took his cause, and they made it their own, and they told people. And some of those people created structures to get the word out to even more people. And lo and behold, 250,000 people showed up on the right day at the right time to hear him speak.

How many of them showed up for him? Zero. They showed up for themselves. It's what they believed about America that got them to travel in a bus for eight hours to stand in the sun in Washington in the middle of August. It's what they believed, and it wasn't about black versus white: 25% of the audience was white. Dr. King believed that there are two types of laws in this world: those that are made by a higher authority and those that are made by men. And not until all the laws that are made by men are consistent with the laws made by the higher authority will we live in a just world. It just so happened that the Civil Rights Movement was the perfect thing to help him bring his cause to life. We followed, not for him, but for ourselves. By the way, he gave the "I have a dream" speech, not the "I have a plan" speech.

Listen to politicians now, with their comprehensive 12-point plans. They're not inspiring anybody. Because there are leaders and there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power or authority, but those who lead inspire us. Whether they're individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead, not because we have to, but because we want to. We follow those who lead, not for them, but for ourselves. And it's those who start with "why" that have the ability to inspire those around them or find others who inspire them.



## *The Art of Possibility*

Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander

### *It's All Invented*

A shoe factory sends two marketing scouts to a region of Africa to study the prospects for expanding business. One sends back a telegram saying,

*SITUATION HOPELESS. NO ONE WEARS SHOES*

The other writes back triumphantly,

*GLORIOUS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY. THEY HAVE NO SHOES*

To the marketing expert who sees no shoes, all the evidence points to hopelessness. To his colleague, the same conditions point to abundance and possibility. Each scout comes to the scene with his own perspective; each returns telling a different tale. Indeed, all of life comes to us in narrative form; it's a story we tell.

The roots of this phenomenon go much deeper than just attitude or personality. Experiments in neuroscience have demonstrated that we reach an understanding of the world in roughly this sequence: first, our senses bring us selective information about what is out there; second, the brain constructs its own simulation of the sensations; and only then, third, do we have our first conscious experience of our milieu. The world comes into our consciousness in the form of a map already drawn, a story already told, a hypothesis, a construction of our own making.

The British neuropsychologist Richard Gregory wrote, "The senses do not give us a picture of the world directly; rather they provide evidence for the checking of hypotheses about what lies before us." And neurophysiologist Donald O. Hebb says, "The 'real world' is a construct, and some of the peculiarities of scientific thought become more intelligible when this fact is recognized ... Einstein himself in 1926 told

Heisenberg it was nonsense to found a theory on observable facts alone: 'In reality the very opposite happens. It is theory which decides what we can observe.'"

We see a map of the world, not the world itself. The world appears to us sorted and packaged in this way, substantially enriched by the categories of culture we live in, by learning, and by the meanings we form out of the unique journey each of us travels.

In a famous experiment, the Me'en people of Ethiopia were presented for the first time with photographs of people and animals, but were unable to "read" the two-dimensional image. "They felt the paper, sniffed it, crumpled it, and listened to the crackling noise it made; they nipped off little bits and chewed them to taste it." Yet people in our modern world easily equate the photographic image with the object photographed—even though the two resemble each other only in a very abstract sense. Recognizing Pablo Picasso in a train compartment, a man inquired of the artist why he did not paint people "the way they really are." Picasso asked what he meant by that expression. The man opened his wallet and took out a snapshot of his wife, saying, "That's my wife." Picasso responded, "Isn't she rather small and flat?"

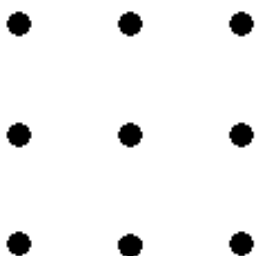
For the Me'en people there were no "photographs," although they lay in their hands as plain as day. They saw nothing but shiny paper. Only through the conventions of modern life do we see the image in a photograph. As for Picasso, he was able to see the snapshot as an artifact, distinct from what it represented.

Our minds are also designed to string events into story lines, whether or not there is any connection between the parts. It is these sorts of phenomena that we are referring to when we use the catchphrase for this chapter it's all invented. What we mean is, "It's all invented anyway, so we might as

well invent a story or a framework of meaning that enhances our quality of life and the life of those around us."

Most people already understand that, as with cultural differences, interpretations of the world vary from individual to individual and from group to group. This understanding may persuade us that by factoring out our own interpretations of reality, we can reach a solid truth. However, the term it's all invented points to a more fundamental notion—that it is through the evolved structures of the brain that we perceive the world. And the mind constructs. The meanings our minds construct may be widely shared and sustaining for us, but they may have little to do with the world itself. Furthermore, how would we know?

To gain greater insight into what we mean by a map, a framework, or a paradigm, let's revisit the famous nine-dot puzzle, which will be familiar to many readers. As you may or may not know, the puzzle asks us to join all nine dots with four straight lines, without taking pen from paper. If you have never seen this puzzle before, go ahead and try it ... before you turn the page!

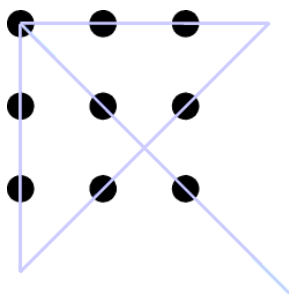


If you have never played this game before, you will most likely find yourself struggling to solve the puzzle inside the

space of the dots, as though the outer dots constituted the outer limit of the puzzle. The puzzle illustrates a universal phenomenon of the human mind, the necessity to sort data into categories in order to perceive it. Your brain instantly classifies the nine dots as a two-dimensional square. And there they rest, like nails in the coffin of any further possibility, establishing a box with a dot in each of the four corners, even though no box in fact exists on the page.

Nearly everybody adds that context to the instructions, nearly everybody hears: "Connect the dots with four straight lines without taking pen from paper, within the square formed by the outer dots." And within that framework, there is no solution. If, however, we were to amend the original set of instructions by adding the phrase, "Feel free to use the whole sheet of paper," it is likely that a new possibility would suddenly appear to you.

It might seem that the space outside the dots was crying out, "Hey, bring some lines out here!"



The frames our minds create define—and confine—what we perceive to be possible. Every problem, every dilemma, every dead end we find ourselves facing in life, only appears unsolvable inside a particular frame or point of view. Enlarge the box, or create another frame around the data, and problems vanish, while new opportunities appear.

This practice we refer to by the catchphrase, it's all invented, is the most fundamental of all the practices we present in this book. When you bring to mind it's all invented, you remember that it's all a story you tell-not just some of it, but all of it. And remember, too, that every story you tell is founded on a network of hidden assumptions. If you learn to notice and distinguish these stories, you will be able to break through the barriers of any "box" that contains unwanted conditions and create other conditions or narratives that support the life you envision for yourself and those around you. We do not mean that you can just make anything up and have it magically appear. We mean that you can shift the framework to one whose underlying assumptions allow for the conditions you desire. Let your thoughts and actions spring from the new framework and see what happens.

A simple way to practice it's all invented is to ask yourself this question:

*What assumption am I making,  
That I'm not aware I'm making,  
That gives me what I see?*

And when you have an answer to that question, ask yourself this one:

*What might I now invent,  
That I haven't yet invented,  
That would give me other choices?*

And then you can invent spaces, like the paper surrounding the nine dots, where four lines can do the work of five.





## *Birth of the Chaordic Age*

Dee Hock

(Through founding Visa, Dee Hock pioneered a transformation in world finance from a banking controlled model where every purchase had to be authorized through a bank in a checking account system to the creation of credit which facilitated direct connection between buyers and sellers empower individuals in a new way. His model of leadership applies in many venues by focusing on personal power, choice, and possibility over organizational control.)

Our current forms of organization are almost universally based on compelled behavior – on tyranny, for that is what compelled behavior is, no matter how benign it may appear or how carefully disguised and exercised. The organization of the future will be the embodiment of community based on shared purpose calling to the higher aspirations of people

Today, it doesn't take much thought to realize we're in an accelerating, global epidemic of institutional failure. Not just failure in the sense of collapse, but the more common and pernicious form: organizations increasingly unable to achieve the purpose for which they were created, yet continuing to expand as they devour scarce resources, demean the human spirit, and destroy the environment.

True leaders are those who epitomize the general sense of the community – who symbolize, legitimize, and strengthen behavior in accordance with the sense of the community – who enable its conscious, shared values and beliefs to emerge, expand, and be transmitted from generation to generation – who enable that which is trying to happen to come into being. The true leader's behavior is induced by the behavior of every individual who chooses where they will be led.

Without question, the most abundant, least expensive, most underutilized, and constantly abused resource in the world is human ingenuity. The source of that abuse is mechanistic, Industrial Age, dominator concepts of organization and the management practices they spawn.

People are not “things” to be manipulated, labelled, boxed, bought, and sold. Above all else, they are not “human resources.” They are entire human beings, containing the whole of the evolving universe, limitless until we start limiting them.

It is true leadership; leadership by everyone; leadership in, up, around, and down this world so badly needs, and dominator management it so sadly gets.

Principles are never capable of ultimate achievement, for they presume constant evolution and change. “Do unto others as you would have other do unto you” is a true principle, for it says nothing about how it must be done. It presumes unlimited ability of people to evolve in accordance with their values, experience, and relations with others.

There is no way to give people purpose and principles, nor can there be self-governance without them. The only possibility is to evoke the gift of self-governance from the people to themselves.

Healthy organizations are a mental concept of relationship to which people are drawn by hope, vision, values, and meaning, and liberty to cooperatively pursue them.

If one is to properly understand events and to influence the future, it is essential to master four ways of looking at things: as they were, as they are, as they might become, and as they ought to be. It is no less essential to synthesize and hold them in mind as a single perspective.

Making good judgments and acting wisely when one has complete data, and knowledge is not leadership. It's not even management. It's bookkeeping. Leadership is the ability to

make wise decisions, and act responsibly upon them when one has little more than a clear sense of direction and proper values; that is, a perception of how things ought to be, understanding of how they are, and some indication of the prevalent forces driving change.

The possibility of that which has never occurred cannot be determined by opinion. Attempting the impossible is not rational, though reason may play some part in it. It is beyond reason. It is a matter of hope, faith, and determination. Heaven is purpose, principle and people. Purgatory is paper and procedure. Hell is rules and regulations. The future is not about logic and reason. It's about imagination, hope, and belief.

### **Mini-Maxims for a New World**

*A clear sense of direction and compelling principles about conduct in pursuit of it are far more effective than long-term plans and detailed objectives.*

*Only fools worship their tools.*

*If you think you can't, why think?*

*Fear is an internal narcotic that paralyzes the mind, body, and spirit. The power of things we fear lies solely in our opinion of them.*

*When we fish for absolutes in the seas of uncertainty, all we catch are doubts.*

*Life will never surrender its secrets to a yardstick.*

*People must come to things in their own time, in their own way, for their own reasons, or they never truly come at all.*

*Compelled behavior is the essence of tyranny. Induced behavior is the essence of leadership. Both may have the same objective, but one tends to evil, the other to good.*

*Failure is not to be feared. It is from failure that most growth comes; provided that one can recognize it, admit it, learn from it, rise above it, and try again.*

*Mistakes are toothless little things if you recognize and correct them. If you ignore or defend them, they grow fangs and bite.*

*Leadership is to go before and show the way.*

## *The Path of Least Resistance*

Robert Fritz

Leadership is rooted in one of three approaches. The first two, the reactive and the responsive approaches, focus on external circumstances. The third, the creative approach, focuses on an internal vision.

**The Reactive/Response Approach** is when circumstances are the driving force in your life. You either react against or respond to the situation. The circumstances are the driving force.

- Quality of life is contingent upon external circumstances.
- Power is outside, never within.
- Generally cynical expecting the worst.
- Have a short emotional fuse, often react suddenly.
- Hold conspiracy theories about people in power.
- Presume powerlessness in the world. Perceive life to be full of situations that require overcoming to survive.

**The Creative/Generative Approach** focuses on the power individuals and groups to shape their lives and the world around them. In this approach, the driving force is not the situation you are in, but your desires, your aspirations, your vision, and your values.

- Driving force in life is internal not external.
- Choices shape a person's quality of life.
- Visionary, not cynical.
- Nonreactive. Don't have an emotional short fuse.
- Don't hold conspiracy theories.

Has an enabled, creative imagination that envisions a world that might be. Asks, "What do I want to create?"



## *Good to Great*

**Jim Collins**

Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life. The vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority become quite good—and that is their main problem.

That good is the enemy of great is not just a business problem. It is a human problem. If we have cracked the code on the question of good to great, we should have something of value to any type of organization. Good schools might become great schools. Good newspapers might become great newspapers. Good churches might become great churches. Good government agencies might become great agencies. And good companies might become great companies. So, I invite you to join me on an intellectual adventure to discover what it takes to turn good into great. I also encourage you to question and challenge what you learn. As one of my favorite professors once said, "The best students are those who never quite believe their professors." True enough. But he also said, "One ought not to reject the data merely because one does not like what the data implies." I offer everything herein for your thoughtful consideration, not blind acceptance.

### **Get the Right People on The Bus**

You are a bus driver. The bus, your company, is at a standstill, and it's your job to get it going. You have to decide

where you're going, how you're going to get there, and who's going with you.

Most people assume that great bus drivers (read: business leaders) immediately start the journey by announcing to the people on the bus where they're going—by setting a new direction or by articulating a fresh corporate vision.

In fact, leaders of companies that go from good to great start not with “where” but with “who.” They start by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats. And they stick with that discipline—first the people, then the direction—no matter how dire the circumstances.

When it comes to getting started, good-to-great leaders understand three simple truths. First, if you begin with “who,” you can more easily adapt to a fast-changing world. If people get on your bus because of where they think it's going, you'll be in trouble when you get 10 miles down the road and discover that you need to change direction because the world has changed. But if people board the bus principally because of all the other great people on the bus, you'll be much faster and smarter in responding to changing conditions. Second, if you have the right people on your bus, you don't need to worry about motivating them. The right people are self-motivated: Nothing beats being part of a team that is expected to produce great results. And third, if you have the wrong people on the bus, nothing else matters. You may be headed in the right direction, but you still won't achieve greatness. Great vision with mediocre people still produces mediocre results.

### **Be a Hedgehog**

Are you a hedgehog or a fox? In his famous essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable:



“The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” The fox is a cunning creature, able to devise a myriad of complex strategies for sneak attacks upon the hedgehog. Day in and day out, the fox circles around the hedgehog’s den, waiting for the perfect moment to pounce. Fast, sleek, beautiful, fleet of foot, and crafty—the fox looks like the sure winner.

The hedgehog, on the other hand, is a dowdier creature, looking like a genetic mix-up between a porcupine and a small armadillo. He waddles along, going about his simple day, searching for lunch and taking care of his home. The fox waits in cunning silence at the juncture in the trail. The hedgehog, minding his own business, wanders right into the path of the fox. “Aha, I’ve got you now!” thinks the fox. He leaps out, bounding across the ground, lightning fast. The little hedgehog, sensing danger, looks up and thinks, “Here we go again. Will he ever learn?” Rolling up into a perfect little ball, the hedgehog becomes a sphere of sharp spikes, pointing outward in all directions. The fox, bounding toward his prey, sees the hedgehog defense and calls off the attack. Retreating back to the forest, the fox begins to calculate a new line of attack. Each day, some version of this battle between the hedgehog and the fox takes place, and despite the greater cunning of the fox, the hedgehog always wins.

Berlin extrapolated from this little parable to divide people into two basic groups: foxes and hedgehogs. Foxes pursue many ends at the same time and see the world in all its complexity. They are “scattered or diffused, moving on many levels,” says Berlin, never integrating their thinking into one overall concept or unifying vision. Hedgehogs, on the other hand, simplify a complex world into a single organizing idea, a basic principle or concept that unifies and guides everything. It doesn’t matter how complex the world, a hedgehog reduces all challenges and dilemmas to simple— indeed almost

simplistic—hedgehog ideas. For a hedgehog, anything that does not somehow relate to the hedgehog idea holds no relevance. Princeton professor Marvin Bressler pointed out the power of the hedgehog during one of our long conversations: “You want to know what separates those who make the biggest impact from all the others who are just as smart? They’re hedgehogs.” Freud and the unconscious, Darwin and natural selection, Marx and class struggle, Einstein and relativity, Adam Smith and division of labor—they were all hedgehogs. They took a complex world and simplified it. “Those who leave the biggest footprints,” said Bressler, “have thousands calling after them, ‘Good idea, but you went too far!’”

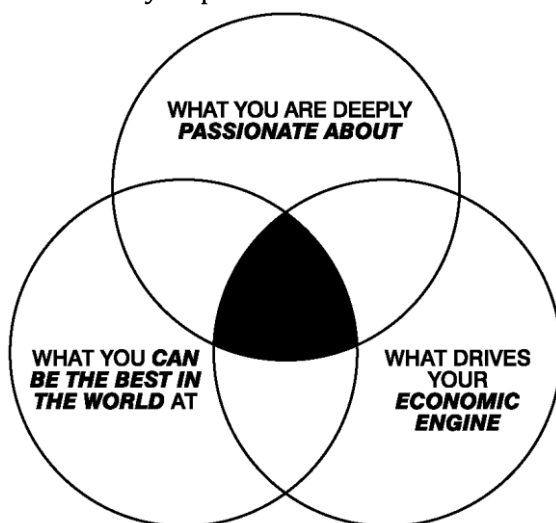
To be clear, hedgehogs are not stupid. Quite the contrary. They understand that the essence of profound insight is simplicity. What could be more simple than  $e = mc^2$ ? What could be simpler than the idea of the unconscious, organized into an id, ego, and superego? What could be more elegant than Adam Smith’s pin factory and “invisible hand”? No, the hedgehogs aren’t simpletons; they have a piercing insight that allows them to see through complexity and discern underlying patterns. Hedgehogs see what is essential, and ignore the rest. What does all this talk of hedgehogs and foxes have to do with good to great? Everything. Those who built the good-to-great companies were, to one degree or another, hedgehogs. They used their hedgehog nature to drive toward what we came to call a Hedgehog Concept for their companies. Those who led the comparison companies tended to be foxes, never gaining the clarifying advantage of a Hedgehog Concept, being instead scattered, diffused, and inconsistent.

A Hedgehog Concept is a simple, crystalline concept that flows from deep understanding about the intersection of the following three areas:

1. What you can be the best in the world at (and, equally important, what you cannot be the best in the world at). This discerning standard goes far beyond core competence. Just because you possess a core competence doesn't necessarily mean you can be the best in the world at it. Conversely, what you can be the best at might not even be something in which you are currently engaged.

2. What drives your economic engine. All the good-to-great companies attained piercing insight into how to most effectively generate sustained and robust cash flow and profitability. In particular, they discovered the single denominator—profit per x—that had the greatest impact on their economics. (It would be cash flow per x in the social sector.)

3. What you are deeply passionate about. The good-to-great companies focused on those activities that ignited their passion. The idea here is not to stimulate passion but to discover what makes you passionate.



To quickly grasp the three circles, consider the following personal analogy. Suppose you were able to construct a work life that meets the following three tests. First, you are doing

work for which you have a genetic or God-given talent, and perhaps you could become one of the best in the world in applying that talent. (“I feel that I was just born to be doing this.”) Second, you are well paid for what you do. (“I get paid to do this? Am I dreaming?”) Third, you are doing work you are passionate about and absolutely love to do, enjoying the actual process for its own sake. (“I look forward to getting up and throwing myself into my daily work, and I really believe in what I’m doing.”) If you could drive toward the intersection of these three circles and translate that intersection into a simple, crystalline concept that guided your life choices, then you’d have a Hedgehog Concept for yourself. To have a fully developed Hedgehog Concept, you need all three circles. If you make a lot of money doing things at which you could never be the best, you’ll only build a successful company, not a great one. If you become the best at something, you’ll never remain on top if you don’t have intrinsic passion for what you are doing. Finally, you can be passionate all you want, but if you can’t be the best at it or it doesn’t make economic sense, then you might have a lot of fun, but you won’t produce great results

This brings me to one of the most crucial points of this chapter: A Hedgehog Concept is not a goal to be the best, a strategy to be the best, an intention to be the best, a plan to be the best. It is an understanding of what you can be the best at. To go from good to great requires transcending the curse of competence. It requires the discipline to say, “Just because we are good at it—just because we’re making money and generating growth—doesn’t necessarily mean we can become the best at it.” The good-to-great companies understood that doing what you are good at will only make you good; focusing solely on what you can potentially do better than any other organization is the only path to greatness.

It took about four years on average for the good-to-great companies to clarify their Hedgehog Concepts. Like scientific insight, a Hedgehog Concept simplifies a complex world and makes decisions much easier. But while it has crystalline clarity and elegant simplicity once you have it, getting the concept can be devilishly difficult and takes time. Recognize that getting a Hedgehog Concept is an inherently iterative process, not an event. The essence of the process is to get the right people engaged in vigorous dialogue and debate, infused with the brutal facts and guided by questions formed by the three circles. Do we really understand what we can be the best in the world at, as distinct from what we can just be successful at? Do we really understand the drivers in our economic engine, including our economic denominator? Do we really understand what best ignites our passion? One particularly useful mechanism for moving the process along is a device that we came to call the Council. The Council consists of a group of the right people who participate in dialogue and debate guided by the three circles, iteratively and over time, about vital issues and decisions facing the organization.

### **Characteristics of the Council**

1. The council exists as a device to gain understanding about important issues facing the organization.
2. The Council is assembled and used by the leading executive and usually consists of five to twelve people.
3. Each Council member has the ability to argue and debate in search of understanding, not from the egoistic need to win a point or protect a parochial interest.
4. Each Council member retains the respect of every other Council member, without exception.

5. Council members come from a range of perspectives, but each member has deep knowledge about some aspect of the organization and/or the environment in which it operates.
6. The Council is a standing body, not an ad hoc committee assembled for a specific project.
7. The Council does not seek consensus, recognizing that consensus decisions are often at odds with intelligent decisions.

## *What is the Mission of Missions?*

(Article) Dan Hotchkiss

Most congregations engage in some form of social ministry—or believe they should. Some call it missions, others outreach, social action, or benevolence. From relatively modest actions like collecting canned goods for the local food bank to major projects like building a house in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, the collective contribution of churches, mosques, and synagogues to the welfare of the needy is enormous. By contributing, they set an example of generosity and faithful stewardship.

But why do they do it? If the question seems impertinent, let me rephrase it: Why, exactly, should a congregation feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, or free the oppressed? For Christians, I have almost answered my own question: in these words Jesus taught that service to "the least of these" was necessary for salvation. He was not saying anything especially original. For Jews, charity (*tzedakah*) is a basic part of being a good person. In these traditions, as in others, it is pretty clear that individuals ought to help others.

But why congregations? When other social agencies exist to help the needy, won't they usually have more expertise and skill? Why not simply encourage members to give time and money to the best nonprofits in each field of service? Some congregations take a sort of clearing-house approach: they collect money and write checks and recruit volunteers but do not organize outreach ministries of their own. By soliciting their gifts and passing them along, the congregation sets a good example and guides its members' stewardship of time and money.

Most congregations, though, feel called to organize for service on their own. Instead of—or in addition to—relying on other charities, they claim some piece of the action and engage

directly. The Salvation Army puts service to the poor at the top of its priority list each day-and attains a level of professionalism rare in a church.

Typically, though, socially active churches cast a wide and shallow net: a soup kitchen downtown, a mission trip to Haiti, socks for service people, quilts for hurricane survivors, plus a contributions budget dispensed to many worthy causes local and denominational. A few brave congregations go beyond helping individuals and families and advocate changes in government or corporate policies that are among the causes of the suffering they see.

Why do they do it? In budgeting and planning for this work, most congregations say their mission is to help others. That's a good answer. For many congregations, though, a better answer is to say the purpose of social ministry is instead to change the lives of its own members.

The mission of a hospital is to heal the sick. I am suggesting that for many congregations, a better analogy would be a medical school, whose mission is to train doctors and nurses. Medical schools (and their associated teaching hospitals) treat lots of patients; you can't train doctors without giving them a chance to practice. The purpose of the medical professions is to heal. The purpose of the school, though, is not to heal but to create healers.

Some of my church clients have found it fruitful to reframe their social mission from "We serve the needy," to "We transform our members into Christian disciples who live lives of service." It is a small but important shift. Some existing outreach ministries continue without change. But the criteria for initiating, evaluating, staffing, and funding social ministry change quite a bit.

For instance, if our main goal is to change our members' lives, we will not be satisfied to write a check from the church treasury. We would prefer to send some of our people along



with it so they can engage in the kind of service that may change their lives.

Few visitors arrive at congregations' doors hoping to be transformed—least of all to be made generous. But most do have at least a vague desire to be of service. Once they are surrounded by people for whom generosity with time and money have become a way of life, in a congregation that offers manageable entry-point opportunities to serve, the transformation comes.

Many congregations already act as though the mission of their missions program is to change their member's lives. They send people of all ages overseas on mission trips. Usually the work accomplished by the missionaries does less good than a good agency or local leaders could do with a check for the cost of the trip. But the trips continue, largely because of the testimonies of those who return: "My life was changed." How would the trip be different if transforming the participants were the congregation's primary goal rather than a side-effect?

When congregations focus on transforming their own people into servants, they may find ways to link their social ministries to members' work lives. What would happen if a congregation partnered with a poor community nearby and offered to provide professional services? By linking social ministry to members' work lives, congregations can provoke reflection on how work itself might be transformed into a social ministry..

Congregations can and do make a difference to the lives of those they help through the outreach ministries they sponsor. But they make an even greater difference in the lives of their own members. In planning outreach ministries, it is important to remember that the lives we can transform the most may be our own.



## *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*

Kathryn Schulz

It's 1995, I'm in college, and a friend and I go on a road trip from Providence, Rhode Island to Portland, Oregon. And you know, we're young and unemployed, so we do the whole thing on back roads through state parks and national forests -- basically the longest route we can possibly take. And somewhere in the middle of South Dakota, I turn to my friend and I ask her a question that's been bothering me for 2,000 miles. "What's up with the Chinese character I keep seeing by the side of the road?" My friend looks at me totally blankly. And I'm like, "You know, all the signs we keep seeing with the Chinese character on them." She just stares at me for a few moments, and then she cracks up, because she figures out what I'm talking about. And what I'm talking about is this, the famous Chinese character for picnic area.

I've spent the last five years of my life thinking about situations exactly like this -- why we sometimes misunderstand the signs around us, and how we behave when that happens, and what all of this can tell us about human nature. In other words, I've spent the last five years thinking about being wrong. This might strike you as a strange career move, but it actually has one great advantage: no job competition. In fact, most of us do everything we can to avoid thinking about being wrong, or at least to avoid thinking about the possibility that we ourselves are wrong. We get it in the abstract. The human species, in general, is fallible. But when it comes down to me, right now, to all the beliefs I hold, here in the present tense, suddenly all of this abstract appreciation of fallibility goes out the window -- and I can't actually think of anything I'm wrong about. And the thing is, the present tense is where we live. So effectively, we all kind of wind up traveling

through life, trapped in this little bubble of feeling very right about everything.

I think this is a problem. I think it's a problem for each of us as individuals, in our personal and professional lives, and I think it's a problem for all of us collectively as a culture. So what I want to do today is, first of all, talk about why we get stuck inside this feeling of being right. And second, why it's such a problem. And finally, I want to convince you that it is possible to step outside of that feeling and that if you can do so, it is the single greatest moral, intellectual and creative leap you can make.

So why do we get stuck in this feeling of being right? One reason, actually, has to do with a feeling of being wrong. How does it feel -- emotionally -- how does it feel to be wrong? Dreadful. Embarrassing... These are great answers, but they're answers to a different question. (These are answers to the question,) How does it feel to realize you're wrong? Realizing you're wrong can feel like all of that and a lot of other things, right? I mean it can be devastating, it can be revelatory, it can actually be quite funny, like my stupid Chinese character mistake. But just being wrong doesn't feel like anything.

I'll give you an analogy. Do you remember that Loony Tunes cartoon where there's this pathetic coyote who's always chasing and never catching a roadrunner? In pretty much every episode of this cartoon, there's a moment where the coyote is chasing the roadrunner and the roadrunner runs off a cliff, which is fine -- he's a bird, he can fly. But the thing is, the coyote runs off the cliff right after him. And what's funny -- at least if you're six years old -- is that the coyote's totally fine too. He just keeps running -- right up until the moment that he looks down and realizes that he's in mid-air. That's when he falls. When we're wrong about something -- not when we realize it, but before that -- we're like that coyote after he's gone off the cliff and before he looks down. You know, we're

already wrong, we're already in trouble, but we feel like we're on solid ground. So I should actually correct something I said a moment ago. It does feel like something to be wrong; it feels like being right.

1,200 years before Descartes said his famous thing about "I think therefore I am," this guy, St. Augustine, sat down and wrote "Fallor ergo sum" -- "I err therefore I am." Augustine understood that our capacity to screw up, it's not some kind of embarrassing defect in the human system, something we can eradicate or overcome. It's totally fundamental to who we are. Because, unlike God, we don't really know what's going on out there. And unlike all of the other animals, we are obsessed with trying to figure it out. To me, this obsession is the source and root of all of our productivity and creativity.

For good and for ill, we generate these incredible stories about the world around us, and then the world turns around and astonishes us. If you really want to rediscover wonder, you need to step outside of that tiny, terrified space of rightness and look around at each other and look out at the vastness and complexity and mystery of the universe and be able to say, "Wow, I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong."



## **Prophetic Leadership**

### **Quotes for Leaders from the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**

Man is man not because of what he has in common with the earth, but because of what he has in common with God. The Greek thinkers sought to understand man as a part of the universe: the prophets sought to understand man as a partner of God.

The true motivation for prayer is not, as it has been said, the sense of being at home in the universe, but rather the sense of not being home at home in the universe. Is there a sensitive heart that could stand indifferent and feel at home in the sight of so much evil and suffering, in the face of countless failures to live up to the will of God? On the contrary, the experience of not being at home in the world is the motivation for prayer. That experience gains intensity in the amazing awareness that God himself is not at home in the universe. He is not at home in a universe where His will is defied and where His sovereignty is denied. God is in exile; the world is corrupt. The universe itself is not at home. To pray means to bring God back into the world, to establish His sovereignty for a second at least. God is transcendent, but our worship makes God immanent. To pray means to expand God's presence

The predicament of prayer is twofold: Not only do we not know how to pray; we do not know what to pray for. We have lost the ability to be shocked. Should we not pray for the ability to be shocked at atrocities committed by humanity, for the capacity to be dismayed at our inability to be dismayed?

Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods. The liturgical movement must

become a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, the vision.

The great problem in the life of man is whether to trust, to have faith in God. The great problem in the life of God is whether to trust, to have faith in man. The central issue is not man's decision to extend formal recognition to God, to furnish God with a certificate that he exists, but the realization of our importance to God's design; not to prove that God is alive, but to prove that man is not dead; not to prove him, but to prove ourselves. The purpose of faith is not to satisfy curiosity or to fulfill a human need, but to confront man with a sublime challenge, to satisfy a divine need. What will make us worthy of faith? What will give us the strength to pray? This is how the religion of Abraham begins. "The Lord said to Abraham, 'Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Genesis 12:1). Religion begins as a breaking off, as a going away. It continues in acts of nonconformity to idolatry.

The truth, however, is that the valid test of a student is his ability to ask the right questions. I would suggest that we evolve a new type of examination paper, one in which the answers are given—the questions to be supplied by the student.

We are pregnant with a thought for which we have no image. We are endowed with a song which we cannot utter, with a word we do not know how to spell. Then we open a Psalm, and there is the song and the word. Only that the song within us grows. We pour it into a deed; we fashion it into words, but the song is never exhausted. What we must do is to nurse the song in the recesses of the soul. Over and above all



frustrations, there is a certainty that we are never alone in doing the good. We love with Him Who loves the world.

The prophet is a person who feels fiercely. God has thrust a burden upon his soul, and he is bowed and stunned at man's fierce greed. Frightful is the agony of man; no human voice can convey its full terror. Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world. It is a form of living, a crossing point of God and man. God is raging in the prophet's words.

Little does contemporary religion ask of man. It is ready to offer comfort; it has no courage to challenge. It is ready to offer edification; it has no courage to break the idols, to shatter callousness. The trouble is that religion has become "religion"—institution, dogma, ritual. It is no longer an event. Its acceptance involves neither risk nor strain. Religion has achieved respectability by the grace of society, and its representatives publish as a frontispiece the nihil obstat signed by social scientists. There is no substitute for faith, no alternative for revelation, no surrogate for commitment. This we must remember in order to save our thought from confusion. And confusion is not a rare disease. We are guilty of committing the fallacy of misplacement. We define self-reliance and call it faith, shrewdness and call it wisdom, anthropology and call it ethics, literature and call it Bible, inner security and call it religion, conscience and call it God. However, nothing counterfeit can endure forever.

Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather

than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion, its message becomes meaningless. Religion is an answer to ultimate questions. The moment we become oblivious to ultimate questions, religion becomes irrelevant, and its crisis sets in. The primary task of religious thinking is to rediscover the questions to which religion is an answer, to develop a degree of sensitivity to the ultimate questions which its ideas and acts are trying to answer.

You can only sense a person if you are a person. Being a person depends upon being alive to the wonder and mystery that surround us, upon the realization that there is no ordinary person.

The central commandment is in relation to the person. But religion today has lost sight of the person. Religion has become an impersonal affair, an institutional loyalty. It survives on the level of activities rather than in the stillness of commitment. It has fallen victim to the belief that the real is only that which is capable of being registered by fact-finding surveys. By religion is meant what is done publicly rather than that which comes about in privacy. The chief virtue is social affiliation rather than conviction. Inwardness is ignored. The spirit has become a myth. Man treats himself as if he were created in the likeness of a machine rather than in the likeness of God. The body is his god, and its needs are his prophets. Having lost his awareness of his sacred image, he became deaf to the meaning: to live in a way which is compatible with his image. Religion without a soul is as viable as a man without a heart. Social dynamics is no substitute for meaning. Yet, the failure to realize the fallacy of such substitution seems to be common in our days. Perhaps this is the most urgent task: to save the inner man from oblivion, to remind ourselves that we are a duality of

mysterious grandeur and pompous dust. Our future depends upon our appreciation of the reality of the inner life, of the splendor of thought, of the dignity of wonder and reverence. This is the most important thought: God has a stake in the life of man, of every man. But this idea cannot be imposed from without; it must be discovered by every man; it cannot be preached, it must be experienced.

We no longer know how to justify any value except in terms of expediency. Man is willing to define himself as “a seeker after the maximum degree of comfort for the minimum expenditure of energy.” He equates value with that which avails. He feels, acts, and thinks as if the sole purpose of the universe were to satisfy his needs.

Religion begins with the certainty that something is asked of us, that there are ends which are in need of us. Unlike all other values, moral and religious ends evoke in us a sense of obligation. They present themselves as tasks rather than as objects of perception. Thus, religious living consists in serving ends which are in need of us.

The Bible is an answer to the question, What does God require of man? But to modern man, this question is suppressed by another one, namely, What does man demand of God? Modern man continues to ponder: What will I get out of life? What escapes his attention is the fundamental, yet forgotten question, What will life get out of me?

One must live as if the redemption of all men depended upon the devotion of one's own life. Thus life, every life, we regard as an immense opportunity to enhance the good that God has placed in His creation. And the vision of a world free of hatred and war, of a world filled with understanding for God

as the ocean is filled with water, the certainty of ultimate redemption must continue to inspire our thought and action.

Ultimate truth may be hidden from man, yet the power to discern between the valid and the specious has not been taken from us. Surely God will always receive a surprise of a handful of fools—who do not fail. There will always remain a spiritual underground where a few brave minds continue to fight. Yet our concern is not how to worship in the catacombs but rather how to remain human in the skyscrapers.

## **Selections for Clergy and Congregations**

### **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the personhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater....Whoso would be a person must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness.

I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure.

The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself, and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right, and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances, and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this.

Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom, and trade, and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the center of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you, and all men, and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of

nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much, that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching.

Prayer that craves a particular commodity,—anything less than all good,—is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view.

Prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The

Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare. Do that which is assigned to you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses, or Dante, but different from all these.

As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves. Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other.

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience with them. And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long, that they have come to esteem the religious, learned, and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is.

It may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity intrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?



## **Stories for Leaders**

### **Stories of Two Brothers**

Consider the following two versions of the same family.  
What makes the difference?

#### **Version One**

There once were two brothers. They lived on adjoining pieces of property and together worked the family farm they had inherited from their father. One brother was single and lived alone. One brother was married and had four children.

The brother who lived alone thought, "I am single. My brother has a large family to take care of. I have plenty. It is not right that I should get the same share of the farm as my brother when he needs it far more than I do."

Therefore, each night, after he was sure his brother had gone to bed, he snuck over taking a bag of grain from his barn to his brother's.

In a similar manner, the other brother thought, "I have a large family. As I get older, I will have my wife and children to help take care of me, but my brother has no one. It doesn't seem right that he and I should get the same share of the crop when he will need the money from the farm more than I."

Therefore, each night, after his family had gone to sleep, he snuck over taking a bag of grain from his barn to his brother's.

Then, one night, the two brothers bumped into each other as they were carrying grain each a bag from his barn to his brother's. They laughed immediately knowing what the other was doing and embraced.

## Version Two

There once were two brothers. They lived on adjoining pieces of property and together worked the family farm they had inherited from their father. One brother was single and lived alone. One brother was married and had four children.

The brother who lived alone thought, "My future is uncertain, I am single. My brother has a large family to take care of him should something go wrong. He has plenty. I likely won't have enough. He is selfish to take an equal share of the crop with me. I should get more. It's only right."

So, each night, after he was sure his brother had gone to bed, he snuck over taking a bag of grain from his brother's barn and stored it in his.

In a similar manner other brother thought, "I have a large family. I need more of the farm to take care of my family. It isn't right that my brother who is single gets the same amount as I do for he only has to take care of himself. How can he be so selfish when he knows my situation? With an uncertain future, what if I don't have enough?"

So, each night, after his family had gone to sleep, he snuck over to his brother's barn and took a bag of grain and then carried it back to his barn.

Then, one night, the two brothers bumped into each other as they were carrying grain. They immediately knew what the other was doing and began to fight.

Each bought guard dogs, locked their barns, refused to talk to each other, and soon after the bank foreclosed on the farm.

What's the difference between the two situations?

Anxiety. As pointed out in the ancient proverb,  
*All experience is preceded by mind,  
led by mind, made by mind.*

*The Bridge*  
Edwin Friedman

There was a young woman, who had given much thought and prayer to her life. Over time, she developed a vision for her future, she felt, though in a very unclear way, that God was calling her to leave her family, her village, and go out into the world beyond, to head to the city. Though she couldn't quite say exactly what that vision was, she committed to pursuing it. She headed toward the city. After several days travel, she could see the city in the distance. She came to a tall bridge which arched high over the river.

As she walked up the bridge, almost at its crest, she saw another woman coming toward her. She thought, 'Perhaps this woman is coming from the city, coming to greet me.' She got even more excited about her journey. She noticed then that the approaching woman was about her same size and had something around her waist. It was a big rope, wrapped around her many times, and it looked to be quite long.

"Hello," she said to the woman.

"Hello," the other replied and then began to unfurl the rope. "Would you hold this?" she asked extended the end of the rope to her.

She took it in her hand. "No, no," the other said. "Use both hands."

She did.

"Hold tight."

She did.

"Thank you," the woman said and then let the rest of the coils fall to the ground and with the rope securely around her waist. She climbed to the rail of the bridge and jumped off. The rope chased after her. The girl on the bridge startled in fright and grasped the rope as tight as she could. Loop after loop went over the edge of the bridge. She set for impact and the

jerk pulled her hard into the side of the bridge. Her hands ached, burned from the rope, but she still held on. When she caught her breath she looked down to see the other dangling above the bridge, high above the raging river. "What are you trying to do?" she yelled to the other below as she braced herself against the edge of the bridge.

"Just hold tight," said the other.

"This is crazy!" yelled the girl from the bridge.

She could not pull the girl up. It was as though the weight of the other and her weight had been calculated so that she could neither pull her up or be pulled over. They were stuck. 'Was she waiting for me?' the girl wondered. "Why did you do this?" the girl yelled over the bridge.

"Just remember," yelled back the other. "If you let go, I will be lost."

"But I can't pull you up," the girl yelled. "I can't pull you to safety."

"You must hold on. I will be lost if not for you. You are responsible for my safety."

This went on for some time. The girl looked around for help, but there was no one. The city was ahead, her calling in front of her. Had God brought her here for this? So many questions. She looked for a place to tie the rope. Again she yelled, "What do you want? How can I help? I cannot pull you in, and there is no place to tie the rope so that I can go and find someone to help me help you."

"I know. Just hang on. Tie the rope around your waist. It will be easier."

Fearing that her arms could not hold out much longer, she tied the rope around her waist. "Why did you do this? Don't you see what you've done? What possible purpose could you have in mind?"

"Just remember," the other yelled back. "My life is in your hands."

The girl took a deep breath, she was now pulled hard against the bridge by the rope. 'What should I do? If I let go, all my life I'll worry about what happened to this person whether they survive or not. If I stay, I'll be stuck her, never finding my calling. Never chasing my dream. Either way I'm stuck.'

Ironically, she thought about jumping over the bridge herself, but she wanted to live, live fully. Her calling, her hunger was so strong. She then realized, while she could not pull the other up on her own, if she would shorten the rope from her end by curling it around her waist again and again, they could do it together as long as she stayed strong and steady on the bridge.

She yelled over the side and explained her plan, but the other wasn't interested.

"You won't help me? I'll fall!"

"It's up to you," the girl said calmly. "I will try to help you. But I won't do for you what you won't do for yourself."

"What? You'll let me perish? I'll drown!"

There was no tension, no pull, no attempt at the rope. The girl untied the rope and let go. Without looking over the bridge, she headed toward the town.

## **What Shall I Write In Your Dust?**

**David M. Briebner**

The Spirit leads you out, not to the desert, but to a table covered with not sand, but dust.

God is on one side of this table, and you are on the other. You realize two things:

The dust on the table before you is your life, and...

God has brought you here to make you an offer.

God says, "I will write one thing in the dust and one thing only. I will write whatever you ask me to write, and whatever it is it will become a part of your life. You may ask for anything: any knowledge, any virtue, and any gift, any hope any dream, any grace, any possession, anything. I will write it in the dust, and it will become a part of you and your life."

"Could I be rich?" you ask..

"Yes, if that is the one thing you want," God answers.

"Happy?"

"Certainly."

"Powerful?"

"Yes."

"Famous?"

"Yes."

"What if I wanted to be able to see into the future?" he asked.

"Even that is possible," answered the Other One.

While each choice fulfilled one hope or dream, it left some other hope or dream unprotected and potentially unfulfilled. You sit there for a long time.

"It's time," God says.

You look up and smile.

"You know what I want."

"Are you sure," God asks.

“I want something more than all those other wishes could give me.”

“Then say it,” God says. “What shall I write in your dust?”

Then you take a deep breath.

“Your Name,” he declared to the Other One. “Write your Name in my dust.”

Suddenly it seemed as if light and song surrounded them as the God moves a single finger toward the table top.





## Reflections for Leaders

The world can no longer be left to mere diplomats, politicians, and business leaders. They have done the best they could, no doubt. But this is an age for spiritual heroes- a time for men and women to be heroic in their faith and in spiritual character and power. The greatest danger to the Christian church today is that of pitching its message too low. (Dallas Willard)

When you find your path, you must not be afraid. You need to have sufficient courage to make mistakes. Disappointment, defeat, and despair are the tools God uses to show us the way. (Paul Coelho)

If you haven't lost the path, you haven't found the way. (R.N. Prasher)

Freedom is only part of the story and half the truth.... That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplanted by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast. (Viktor Frankl)

In the hero stories, the call to go on a journey takes the form of a loss, an error, a wound, an unexplainable longing, or a sense of a mission. When any of these happens to us, we are being summoned to make a transition. It will always mean leaving something behind,...The paradox here is that loss is a path to gain. (David Richo)

The moon and sun are travellers through eternity. Even the years wander on. Whether drifting through life on a boat or climbing toward old age leading a horse, each day is a journey, and the journey itself is home. (Matsuo Bashō)

Paths are made by walking, (Franz Kafka)

When you're lost in those woods, it sometimes takes you a while to realize that you are lost. For the longest time, you can convince yourself that you've just wandered off the path, that you'll find your way back to the trailhead any moment now. Then night falls again and again, and you still have no idea where you are, and its time to admit that you have bewildered yourself so far off the path that you dont even know from which direction the sun rises anymore. (Elizabeth Gilbert)

As soon as I saw you, I knew an adventure was going to happen. (Winnie the Pooh)

Life moves on, whether we act as cowards or heroes. Life has no other discipline to impose, if we would but realize it, than to accept life unquestioningly. Everything we shut our eyes to, everything we run away from, everything we deny, denigrate or despise, serves to defeat us in the end. What seems nasty, painful, evil, can become a source of beauty, joy, and strength, if faced with an open mind. Every moment is a golden one for him who has the vision to recognize it as such. (Henry Miller)

You risked your life, but what else have you ever risked? Have you risked disapproval? Have you ever risked economic security? Have you ever risked a belief? I see nothing particularly courageous about risking one's life. So you lose it, you go to your hero's heaven and everything is milk and honey 'til the end of time. Right? You get your reward and suffer no earthly consequences. That's not courage. Real courage is risking something that might force you to rethink your thoughts and suffer change and stretch consciousness. Real courage is risking one's clichés. (Tom Robbins)

Imagine a man selling his donkey to be with Jesus.  
Now imagine him selling Jesus to get a ride on a donkey.  
This does happen. (Rumi)

Do not be naive. Criminals cannot go unpunished. Nor can heroes. (Devin Grayson)

The thing about a hero, is even when it doesn't look like there's a light at the end of the tunnel, he's going to keep digging, he's going to keep trying to do right and make up for what's gone before, just because that's who he is. (Joss Whedon)

Many of us, unfortunately, have experienced "confirmation" with strings attached. We have been offered a contract that reads: "We will confirm you only if you will conform to our model of the good child, the good citizen, the good soldier." We cannot become ourselves without other people who call us to realize our created uniqueness. Most of us fall somewhere between feeling we have a right to exist because we are persons and feeling our right to exist must be justified at every moment by producing, accomplishing, or performing. Have you ever been criticized in a way that made you feel that not only what you do but who you are is being attacked? Maybe you have known someone who is driven to perform because they feel they must justify their existence at every turn. (Maurice Friedman)

Certainly the relation of faith is no book of rules which can be looked up to discover what is to be one now, in this very hour. I experience what God desires of me for this hour – so far as I do experience it – not earlier than in the hour. But even then it is not given me to experience it except by answering

before God for this hour as my hour, by carrying out the responsibility for it towards him as much as I can. What has now approached me, the unforeseen, the unforeseeable, is word from him, a word found in no dictionary, a word that has now become word – and it demands my answer to him. (Martin Buber)

Faith is about what you do. It's about aspiring to be better and nobler and kinder than you are. It's about making sacrifices for the good of others-- even when there's not going to be anyone telling you what a hero you are. (Jim Butcher)

We can be in our day what the heroes of faith were in their day - but remember at the time they didn't know they were heroes. (A.W. Tozer)

Rationalization is a cover-up, a process of providing one's emotions with a false identity, of giving them spurious explanations and justifications—in order to hide one's motives, not just from others, but primarily from oneself. The price of rationalizing is the hampering, the distortion and, ultimately, the destruction of one's cognitive faculty. Rationalization is a process not of perceiving reality, but of attempting to make reality fit one's emotions. (Ayn Rand)

The moment God is figured out with nice neat lines and definitions, we are no longer dealing with God (Rob Bell)

If the First Layer of human interaction is the common ground of manners, kind speech, polite greeting, and working agreements; if the Third Layer is the area of deeply shared humanity, the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all people, of the underlying, fundamental oneness of human love, justice, and peaceful coexistence; then the Second Layer is the

territory of anger, hatred, wrath, rage, outrage, jealousy, envy, contempt, disgust, and acrimony. It is the Via Negativa, the field of Conflict, the plain of Discord, the hills of Turmoil. And, the Second Layer always exists between the First Layer the Third. All three layers are necessary for a society to continue, for a relationship to endure, for an individual to endure. (Michael Meade)

I think joy and sweetness and affection are a spiritual path. We're here to know God, to love and serve God, and to be blown away by the beauty and miracle of nature. You just have to get rid of so much baggage to be light enough to dance, to sing, to play. You don't have time to carry grudges; you don't have time to cling to the need to be right. (Anne Lamott)

Stoning prophets and erecting churches to their memory afterwards has been the way of the world through the ages. Today we worship Christ, but the Christ in the flesh we crucified. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Why couldn't Jesus command us to obsess over everything, to try to control and manipulate people, to try not to breathe at all, or to pay attention, stomp away to brood when people annoy us, and then eat a big bag of Hershey's Kisses in bed?" (Anne Lamott)

Whatever the response to loss and tragedy, the experience seems to boil down to one journey--searching for Jesus. (W. Scott Lineberry)

Courage: the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently. (Maya Angelou)

Just as the addition of however many zeros will never make a unit, so the value of a community depends on the spiritual and moral stature of the individuals composing it. For this reason one cannot expect from the community any effect that would outweigh the suggestive influence of the environment—that is, a real and fundamental change in individuals, whether for good or for bad. Such changes can come only from the personal encounter between (persons), but not from communistic or Christian baptisms en masse, which do not touch the inner (person). (Carl Jung)

In the degree that I cease to pursue my deepest passions, I will gradually be controlled by my deepest fears. When Passion no longer waters and nurtures the psyche, fears spring up like weeds on the depleted soil of abandoned fields. I suspect that the major cause of the mood of depression and despair and the appetite for violence in modern life is the result of the masses of people who are enslaved by an economic order that rewards them for laboring at jobs that do not engage their passion for creativity and meaning.

We need a new word –comjoyment – as a companion to compassion, to remind us that our greatest gift to the world may be in sharing what gives us the greatest joy. (Sam Keen)

To complain is always nonacceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself a victim. Leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness. (Eckart Tolle)

If you understand, things are just as they are;  
if you do not understand, things are just as they are.  
(Zen Proverb)

A couple of soldiers in northern India were riding in a rickshaw when they saw another with a couple of sailors in it. They challenged them to race.

The sailors pulled ahead and were yelling victory until they saw the soldiers blow past them. They had gotten out of their rickshaw and were helping pull. (Indian Fable)

Everyone thinks of changing the world,  
but no one thinks of changing himself.  
(Leo Tolstoy)

See if you can catch yourself complaining in either speech or thought, about a situation you find yourself in, what other people do or say, your surroundings, your life situation, even the weather.

In the final analysis, says the Christian ethic, every man must be respected because God loves him. The worth of an individual does not lie in the measure of his intellect, his racial origin, or his social position. Human worth lies in relatedness to God. An individual has value because he has value to God. Whenever this is recognized, “whiteness” and “blackness” pass away as determinants in a relationship and “son” and “brother” are substituted. (Martin Luther King)

One day a swan, a trout, a crab,  
Resolved a load to haul  
All three were harnessed to the cart,  
And pulled together all.  
But though they pulled with all their might,  
The cart-load on the bank stuck tight.  
The swan pulled upward to the skies;  
The crab did backward crawl;  
The trout made for the water straight —

It proved no use at all!  
Now, which of them was most to blame  
'Tis not for me to say;  
But this I know: the load is there  
Unto this very day. (Ancient Fable)

A neighbor came over to help his friend unload a big box from a truck. He pushes and pushes while his neighbor works as hard. Exhausted he says, "I don't think we'll ever get this box off this truck."

"Off?" his neighbor replies. "I'm trying to get it on!"

Your vision will become clear  
only when you look into your heart ...  
Who looks outside, dreams.  
Who looks inside, awakens. (Carl Jung)

One day Chuang Tzu and a friend were walking by a river. "Look at the fish swimming about," said Chuang Tzu, "They are really enjoying themselves."

"You are not a fish," replied the friend, "So you can't truly know that they are enjoying themselves."

"You are not me," said Chuang Tzu. "So how do you know that I do not know that the fish are enjoying themselves?" (Taoist Fable)

We need to teach the next generation of children from day one that they are responsible for their lives. Humanity's greatest gift, also its greatest curse, is that we have free choice. We can make our choices built from love or from fear. (Elisabeth Kubler-Ross)