

Practical Tips for Peaceful Living

(Volume IV ... August 2015 – August 2016)



*... a collection of brief commentaries
on the meaning of real Peace, and
on the making of a Peace-filled Life*

via Scaughdt
an (i)am publication

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“Every moment of every day, it is you and you alone who decides what you believe and how you act on those beliefs. It is you and you alone who chooses who you become ... And no matter what you have learned in your past, and no matter what is happening to you in your Here&Now, you always get a second chance -- in every second anew.” ~ unknown

*"Do more than belong: participate.
Do more than care: serve.
Do more than believe: practice.
Do more than be fair: be kind.
Do more than forgive: have compassion.
Do more than dream: **DO.**"*
~ inspired by William Arthur Ward



“One of the great tragedies of life is that men seldom bridge the gulf between practice and profession, between doing and saying. A persistent schizophrenia leaves so many of us tragically divided against ourselves. On the one hand, we proudly profess certain sublime and noble principles, but on the other hand, we sadly practice the very antithesis of these principles. How often are our lives characterized by a high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds! We talk eloquently about our commitment to the principles of Christianity, and yet our lives are saturated with the practices of paganism. We proclaim our devotion to democracy, but we sadly practice the very opposite of the democratic creed. We talk passionately about peace, and at the same time we assiduously prepare for war. We make our fervent pleas for the high road of justice, and then we tread unflinchingly the low road of injustice. This strange dichotomy, this agonizing gulf between the ought and the is, represents the tragic theme of man's earthly pilgrimage.”
~ Martin Luther King Jr.

An Introduction to what Follows

Being a Peace Pilgrim, it almost goes without saying that quite a few of my thoughts & writings from the past eleven+ years have to do with illuminating the profound “Inner Peace” that can be experienced by all those choosing to live the Way of selfless Kindness. Of course, it also almost goes without saying that this Way is more a practical manner of *living* than it is an abstract measure of philosophy or reason ...

And thus it makes significant sense that many of the aforementioned writings ended up describing several of the practical methods we humans can use to make real Peace a very real Reality in our everyday lives (as opposed to a mere theory, a mere hope, or a mere fantasy).

This is the fourth volume of my Blog’s collection of those written thoughts. May they inspire you to bring real, deep-seated Peace into the lives of others – and thereby rediscover that same Bliss in your own.

Amen ... Let it be so.

Scaughdt
(June 2015)



*“Out there, beyond all ideas of wrongdoing
and rightdoing, there is a field of Love ...
Go on ahead ... I'll meet you there.”
~ inspired by Rumi*

Hoping beyond HOPE (08/01/2015)

“In these times of great darkness – of greed and corruption and evil and deceit – hope seems to be one of the few Noble Truths left standing. And yet in whom can real Hope be found? Who can lead us to its lands of promise? In whom can we trust to validate our glimmering belief in a future where Justice reigns over all the victims of all forms of violence, and where Compassion reigns over those perpetrating those misdeeds? ... Rest assured, this hope will not come from trusting in the ultimate goodness of Barack Obama, who -- like Herod of old – has fully sold out his people. And this hope will not be realized by chanting packaged campaign slogans or attempting in any other way to influence the jaded vector of the feeble Democratic party. Nor will this hope come through any of our other bankrupt liberal institutions – not from the press, nor from the film industry, nor from the withered stump that is the labor movement.

No, my Friends, real & vibrant hope will only come now through *US* -- through us physically defying the violence of the state. Indeed, all of us who resist, all of us who do so courageously & peacefully, keep hope alive – just as all those who succumb to fear, despair and apathy become an enemy of that hope; enemies who, in their passivity, become active agents of injustice.

Hope is not comfortable or easy, my Friends ... Hope requires personal risk. It is not about the right attitude. Hope is not about peace of mind. Hope is action. Hope is doing something. The more futile, the more useless, the more irrelevant and



incomprehensible an act of rebellion is, the vaster and more potent hope becomes ... Indeed, hope never makes sense. Hope is weak, unorganized, and absurd. Hope, which is always nonviolent, exposes in its powerlessness the lies, fraud, and coercion employed by the state. Hope knows that an injustice visited on our neighbor is an injustice visited on all of us. Hope posits that people are drawn to the good by the good ... This is the secret of hope's power. Hope demands for others what we demand for ourselves. Hope does not separate us from them. Hope sees in our enemy our own face.

And if we gather the gumption to resist; if we gather the gumption to stand forth each day and carry out acts of open defiance -- no matter how small or trivial they might appear, then hope will never be extinguished ... If all that we accomplish today is to assure a grieving mother in Baghdad or Afghanistan that she is not alone ... or bulwark the spirits of a young man or woman crippled physically and emotionally by the hammer blows of war, then our act will have been a Success.

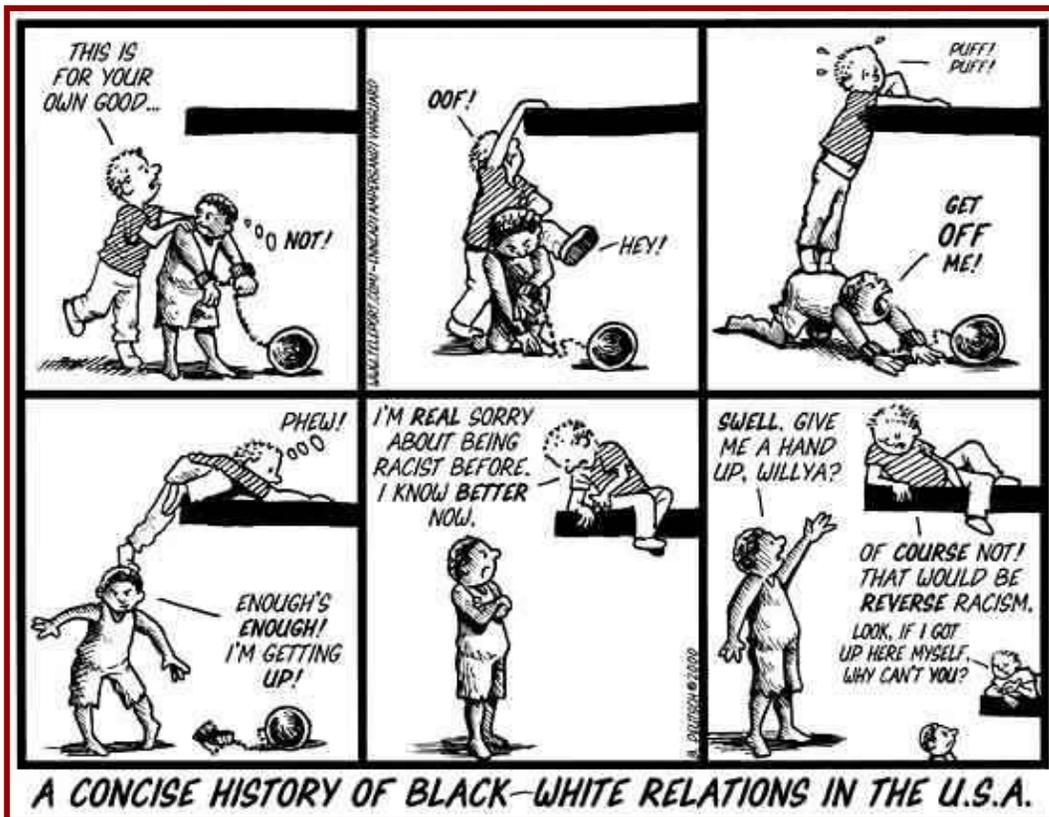
And yet such a hope cannot be sustained if it cannot be seen. And as such, any act of rebellion, any physical defiance against those who make war -- of those who perpetuate corporate greed and are responsible for state crimes; anything that seeks to draw the good to the good, that seeks to nourish our Souls and hold out the possibility that we can touch and transform the Souls of others, is the hope that affirms that which we must affirm ... And every such act that imparts this hope is a victory in & of itself.”

(~ inspired by Chris Hedges)



Cherishing your FAMILY (08/01/2015)

The nationwide furor over the growing number of black men inexcusably murdered by white police officers in recent months (184 in the first seven months of 2015 alone -- with only 3 of those cases leading to the offending officer or officers being charged with a crime) has put the public spotlight on one of American culture's more uncomfortable realities – **systemic racism**. And the very real problem that this spotlight indeed illuminates is made even more uncomfortable by the fact that national surveys have consistently shown that the majority of white Americans have been conned into believing that systemic racism doesn't even exist at all.



To that end, please consider the following **FACTS**:

***Fact** ... The Institute on Assets & Social Policy reported that the racial wealth gap actually tripled between 1984 & 2009 (that's right – it tripled *after* the civil rights movement was supposedly in full swing), with the average white family having a net worth of roughly \$265,000 -- and the average black family having a net worth of just under \$29,000.

* **Fact** ... The Urban Institute reported that blacks were two times more likely to be rejected when applying for a home mortgage loans than whites.

* **Fact** ... A massive 2004 University of Chicago study found that job applicants traditionally African-American names were 50% less likely to receive call-backs from potential employers than identical resumes sent using traditionally Caucasian names.



* **Fact** ... Indeed, an American Journal of Sociology study shows that young whites with felony convictions were actually more likely to receive job application callbacks than young blacks with clean records.

* **Fact** ... A recent Department of Education report showed that black students were punished more frequently and more severely for similar behavioral infractions than their white classmates.

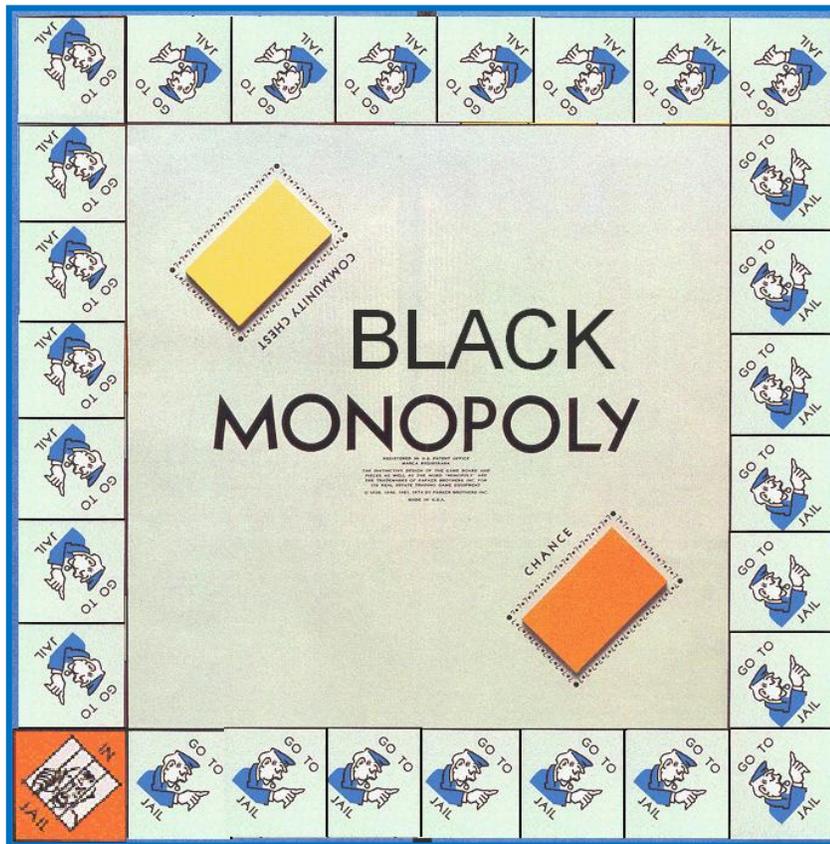
* **Fact** ... A 2010 American College of Physicians report noted that racial minorities regularly receive poorer-quality healthcare than white Americans.

* **Fact** ... Even though whites statistically use drugs more frequently than blacks, blacks are three times more likely to be arrested for drug possession.

* **Fact** ... Even though whites have a significantly higher “contraband hit rate” than blacks (i.e. the likelihood that police will find illegal material or paraphernalia in a stopped vehicle), blacks are stopped & searched two times more often.

* **Fact** ... One in three black males born today can reasonably expect to go to prison at least once in their lifetimes. Blacks are also more likely to be sentenced to life in prison than whites for similar crimes, and it has also been shown that the longer a prison sentence is, the more likely it becomes that the prisoner doing that time is a member of a racial or ethnic minority.

* **Fact** ... A 2014 U.S. Sentencing Commission report admitted that black males generally receive prison sentences that are 19.5% longer than whites for the same crimes committed. Just as disturbing, this racial gap in sentencing has actually been *increasing* over the past ten years.



* **Fact** ... Black people (specifically black males) are significantly more likely to be shot & killed by the police than white males, and this even though over 70% of those blacks killed by the police were unarmed, “non-dangerous” suspects. Indeed, Vox’s Dara Lind analyzed FBI data and found that blacks – who make up just 13% of the U.S. population – accounted for over 31% of U.S police shooting victims in 2012 (and this data is probably severely low-balled, seeing as how it is based on reports that are voluntarily provided by police departments from around the country).

So, even though the questions of **why** systemic racism is a reality in the United States are best left to the experts, I have faith that it is fair to say that the reality that is systemic racism in America really cannot be denied. And rather than leave the discussion at that admittedly depressing conclusion, I would like to focus now on **HOW WE CAN MAKE IT BETTER** – specifically several ways that white people can make it better ... Please consider:

Solution #01) LISTEN attentively & non-defensively to people of color when they talk about their experiences with systemic racism and white privilege. Even if you happen to disagree, and especially if you are one of the many white folks who are not perpetrating racism in your community, **LISTEN** anyway. Some blacks might very well be unjustifiably condemning you for their disadvantage & daily distress (and such attacks can indeed be rightfully clarified & soothed) and yet the vast majority of African Americans are simply venting to be heard, not to accuse or vilify. So **LISTEN** appropriately – with empathy & respect. Don't walk away, don't make excuse and whatever you do, and don't offer solutions or encouragement or backdoor advice ... Just **LISTEN**.

Solution #02) EDUCATE YOURSELF about the insidious depth and remarkable pervasiveness of systemic racism in the United States. The more you know about the facts, the more you can empathize with those who are suffering from racism in your community, and the more able you will be to see and engage opportunities to be a force for positive change.

Solution #03) Gently yet firmly challenge your white friends, family members, associates, classmates & even strangers to think differently about race & race relations. If you hear something or see something that is even remotely racist, **SPEAK UP** ... Do it kindly & do it respectfully, and be sure to **DO IT**.

Solution #04) When racial prejudice is brought up, avoid conflating other social injustices with racism. In the moment that a person of color is expressing frustration or disgust over systemic racism, it doesn't matter that you are gay, or a woman, or a Jew, or a vegan animal rights advocate. What matters in **that** moment is that you



respectfully listen, that you compassionately empathize, and that you openly respect the person doing the venting.

Solution #05) If you make a mistake & inadvertently offend a person of color, openly apologize, humbly offer to **ATONE** for your error, and ask the one offended how you can best do so.

Solution #06) GET INVOLVED with the minority members of your community. Volunteer with black &/or Latino youth, attend a black church, patronize black-owned business, volunteer in mostly minority neighborhoods. There are literally hundreds of opportunities in your neighborhood to get involved in this way – to reach out with your presence and your peace and build bridges between yourself and those still deemed “other”. For until we start pro-actively caring for each other as ONE, we will continue to be divided by our ignorance, separated by our fears, & blinded by our delusions.

Peace to All ... Let it be so.
(inspired by Joe Posner & Derrick Clifton et al)

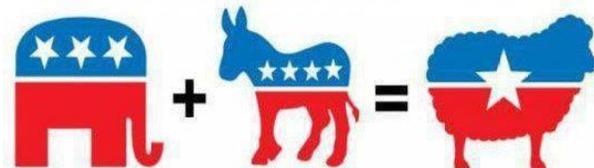


Remembering who is in Charge (08/01/2015)

“No matter how corrupt, greedy, and heartless our government, our corporations, our media, and our religious institutions become, the music they make will still be wonderful to ignorant ears ... As such, to be truly free, it is necessary to fully forget the politicians; so-called leaders who are put in positions of influence to give us the idea we have freedom of choice -- which, of course we do not have. We have no choice ... We have owners. Our leaders -- under the flagrantly false pretenses of serving our interests and fulfilling our desires, are actually our slave masters, and we in actuality are *their* servants ...

Indeed, they own everything. They own the important land, and they own and control the largest corporations that have long since bought and paid for every single member of the U.S. Congress; every single representative in every single State house, and every single mayor in every single city hall. They have almost all the judges in their back pocket, and they own all the big media companies too -- regulating not only which laws apply to you and which do not apply to them, but also regulating the information you get to hear and therefore the ‘truth’ you get to believe ...

In essence, they have us by the balls (and/or the ovaries, as it were). They spend billions of dollars every year lobbying to get what they want -- and we all know exactly what they want. They want more for themselves and less for everybody else ... But I'll tell you what they don't want. They don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking and free thought. They don't want well-informed, well-educated people capable of seeing injustice & cruelty and demanding remedies for the same. And they certainly don't want a liberated citizenry who has decided to right their own culture's wrongs instead of begging for salvation from their ‘leaders’ ... They're not interested in that. That doesn't help them at all.” ~ inspired by Kurt Vonnegut & George Carlin



The Great NOTHING (08/02/2015)

*"War ... (Huh!) ... Good God.
What is it good for?
Absolutely NOTHING!"
~ Edwin Starr*

Every terrorist killed in the Middle East creates at least three new terrorists literally dying to take his or her place ... Indeed, the more we use violence to “ensure our security”, the less safe the world's children will continue to be ... My Friends, violence always begets violence; aggression always begets aggression, and war always begets war. These Truths are self-evident and have been empirically confirmed for thousands of years ... To deny them now -- when so much rests in the balance, is an act of immoral cowardice that we can no longer afford.

Yes, we are still a young species, it is true, and yet our youth is no longer an excuse. Those who are perpetrating war (this means YOU, war-hawk Republicans -- and this means YOU, corporate kiss-ass Democrats -- and this means YOU, Mr. Obama) already know better, and are thus choosing to become a vile embodiment of evil ... And those who do not yet know any better -- those who have willingly bought into the myths of “self-defense” and “justified war” and “preventative justice” -- are JUST AS GUILTY ... For we live in an age when the Truth about who is attacking whom and **why** they are *actually* doing so is there for the learning, and anyone who refuses to seek that information and find it -- especially when the consequences are the imminent pain and massive suffering (and ultimate extermination) of thousands upon thousands of innocent lives -- is just as culpable as those pulling the triggers and those pushing the buttons.

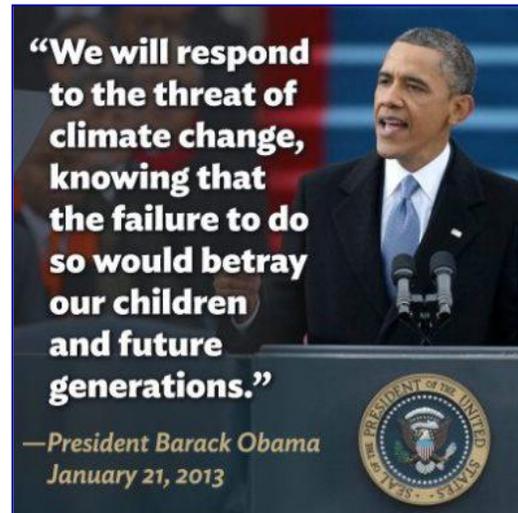


“How sick that we live in a world where billion-dollar corporations have to reassure their investors that peace is not on the horizon.” ~ Lee Camp

Building a better Boat (08/04/2015)

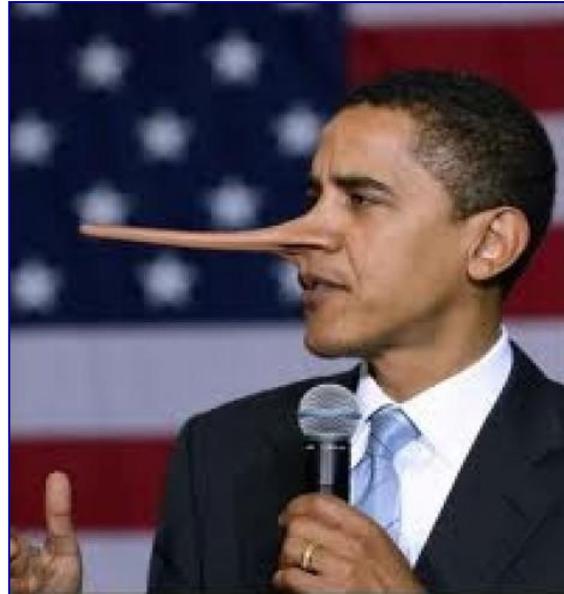
Well, Barack Obama is at it again, my Friends -- trying to save his crumbled legacy by talking the Big Talk near the end of his (thankfully) final term in office. Yesterday he did so by unveiling his Clean Power Plan yesterday, and stating boldly that “no challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than a change in climate”.

Please don't buy this BS, my Friends ... If Obama *really* wanted to do something to save our planet and combat the climate catastrophe that is rapidly approaching, he would have used his Executive Power to enact sweeping environmental mandates long before now ... Yes, if President Obama was truly serious about doing something to stop climate change, he would have already withdrawn Shell oil's permit to drill in the Arctic -- and he would have already extinguished the Keystone Pipeline permit (instead of merely shelving it for Hillary to approve later) -- and he would have already terminated all fossil fuel infrastructure projects in the United States -- and he would have already legislated to ensure that U.S. timetables for greenhouse gas emission reductions would be in sync with what the consensus of climatologists are demanding (namely, **zero** emissions by 2050 -- or we're screwed) -- and he would have already instigated a massive mobilization of the American workforce (including providing jobs to millions of the currently unemployed) to have the U.S become a 100% renewable energy society -- and he would have already demanded that those who are polluting & destroying our planet (not the American taxpayer) pay for the costs of all of these policies.



AND in addition to all of these highly sensible and quite feasible policies, Obama – if he was truly sincerer in his professed desire to combat global warming - - would have already long since announced the presence of the largest elephant in the room: he would have long since informed the American public (and indeed, the rest of the world) what well-informed people already know: that animal agriculture is *by far* the greatest threat to the ultimate survival of the human race, and that **going vegan** is the most powerful thing any of us can do to combat climate change & the massive environmental destruction that will almost certainly come therefrom.

And yet Obama hasn't done any of these things, and he won't do any of them either ... You see, despite all his smooth-sounding HOT AIR (pun intended), Obama is in bed with Big Oil -- and he is in bed with them *deeply*. So even though he might talk pretty over the course of the next year in a futile attempt to save his irreparably diseased legacy, it will all be just that -- empty words & hollow talk; the feeble mewlings of a man who knows that his own moral cowardice has screwed over not only his country but his entire planet.



No, my dear Friends, I am afraid almost all of your politicians have essentially been bought & paid for on this matter, and that we the “little people” simply do not have the cash necessary to compete with Big Oil & Big Auto & Big Coal ... So, since our politicians are clearly **not** going to save us, **WE WILL HAVE TO DO THE SAVING.**

Every bit of revelation about Obama -- both what he has done and what he has failed to do -- in his first 6+ years in office is a service to those still deluded into thinking that he is not significantly responsible for the suffering of many ... He had the opportunity to effectuate Great Good for millions, and yet sold out to personal comfort, status & wealth instead. If he were open & honest about his intentions, it would be one thing, and yet he continues to portray himself as a “good man” who can't get anything done because of a “bad Congress”. Congress is disgustingly corrupt as well, of course, and yet Obama's hypocrisies should not be overlooked. Presidents of the future need to know that they will not get away with abandoning the people they have sworn to protect & serve.



As such, seeing as how far too few on the “left” are willing to acknowledge how horrific he has behaved, I will personally see to it that the facts are regularly relayed. And I do so not to blast Obama per se (his conscience is doing that enough as it is), but rather to wake folks up to the fact that **THERE ARE NO MORE POLITICAL SOLUTIONS** to America's (indeed, the world's) problems. All of the money & all of the time & all of the energy that people are investing into U.S. politics is wasted money, wasted time & wasted energy -- all of which should not be channeled into getting out there and rebuilding our communities ourselves.

Indeed, the danger for our species lies in those who **COULD** actually save our ship -- to the “liberals” and the “progressives”; to all the would-be doers & would-be shakers & would-be social activists who are campaigning instead of doing & voting instead of shaking & debating instead of acting. These are the people who **COULD** be the voice & the face and the bodies of real change in the world -- and these are the people who are still delusionally duped; the ones who still believe that they actually have a choice -- that the Democrats & the Republicans actually have different agendas (they do **not**) and that they actually have different corporate sponsors (they do **not**); that there will actually be improvement made to American society if Hillary wins in 2016 (there will **not**).

My dear Friends, we are running out of time with all of this disturbingly ignorant and embarrassingly cowardly stick-our-heads-in-the-sand-and-hope-the-next-President-will-finally-fix-things BS ... Every minute you & yours waste attending to American politics is a minute that could have spent caring for the downtrodden ... Every dollar you & yours waste donating to American politicians is a dollar that could have been spent on those truly in need ... Every ounce of energy & Care you waste on any issue or event related to the American political system is a vital ounce of energy that could have done real Good in your own community that very day.

The ship that is the American democracy isn't just sinking, my dear ones -- she has long since sunk. And you & yours are clinging desperately to her wreckage somehow thinking that the next captain will somehow be able to raise her from the jagged shoals upon which she is hopelessly foundering. Well, that simply is not going to happen ... So let her go, my Friends ... Let the ship go down, swim to the shore (i.e. your own community) and **start rebuilding your world** by strengthening those in need around you.

It's not too late, and yet we don't have a lot of time left to save our ship, so please join me today in my efforts to turn us around and head towards a future that is filled with Health instead of illness, Peace instead of conflict, and Joy instead of despair ... Please start today by going VEGAN, and please enCourage others to do likewise ... It really is our only hope.

Thank you ... Peace.



The Greenhouse Gas impact of different types of diets per person and per year represented in car kilometers



Diet without meat and dairy products (= pure plant-based/vegan)

org. **281 km**

conv. **629 km**



Diet without meat, but with dairy products (vegetarian)

organic **1978 km**

conventional **2427 km**



Diet with meat and dairy products

organic **4377 km**

conventional **4758 km**

More about climate change on the internet: www.vegetarismus.ch/km/index_en.htm



Being Fair – Roasting the Republicans (08/08/2015)

At the request of a dear Friend, I will now offer an equal-exposé of the U.S. Republican Party and its gaggle of troglodytes posing as civil servants ... Please note as I do so that this post is NOT in any way, shape, or form an endorsement of Hillary Clinton in next year's Presidential election. Indeed, it is actually my earnest personal opinion that it would actually be far better in the long run for American citizens to have any one of the 17 (18? 19? 20?) currently-running Republican reprobates win the 2016 American Presidency -- if for no other reason than each & every one of them (far unlike Hillary) is quite open about their adoration of egregious levels of military spending, their unjust & illegal military conflicts, their kissing up to Monsanto & Big Insurance & Big Ag & Big Paper & Big Oil, and their deep-seated disregard for minorities & women & homosexuals & the poor. With a Republican winner, only the most deluded of Americans (unfortunately about half the U.S. population) would fail to finally understand that the American political system is completely broken, and that they will have to rebuild their communities themselves. If a Democrat wins, on the other hand, the insidious illusion of change &/or progress &/or repair &/or restoration will remain, and humanity will fall yet another four years behind in the ever-grimmer (and ever-tighter) race against time to save our species.

That having been said, it is indeed only fair to give the Republicans their fair & factual due ... And hence, the following:

*The Republican Party expresses an open disdain for the poor ... While the Democratic Party at least talks like they want to help the downtrodden (they don't, of course, but at least they SAY they do), it is a long-standing and openly-professed belief of the Republicans that the poor should essentially fend for themselves. Republicans want to repeal the 14th Amendment and deal harshly with all immigrants (legal & illegal alike) ... Republicans want to limit (or entirely do away with) the federal food stamp program that helps feed 45.5 poor Americans every month ... Republicans want to privatize the social security benefits of the 67+ million Americans that currently receive them, and they want to severely limit unemployment benefits to those in need thereof as well.

*The Republican Party is notoriously biased towards the richest 5% of the American population, at the direct expense and to the direct detriment of the other 95%.

*The Republican Party is filled with climate change deniers ... Yes, I realize that most climatologists are in agreement now that it is probably already too late to completely prevent an imminent climate catastrophe, AND YET every bit we do to at least try and stop the same will help to minimize the damage that is sure to come. And yet how can Republicans try to stop a catastrophe that they refuse to admit even exists?

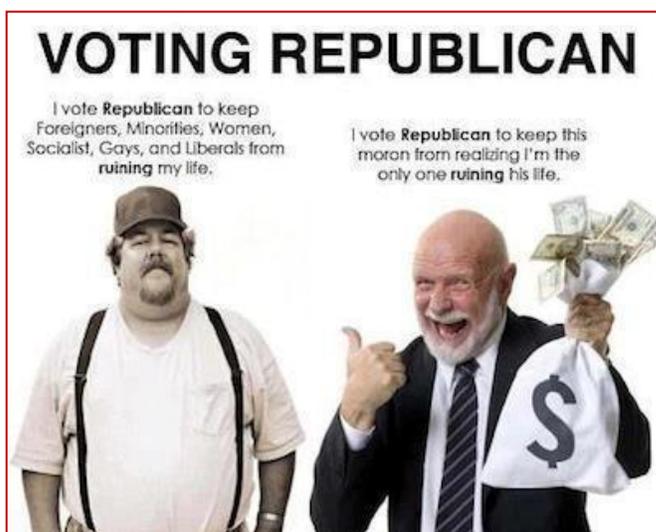
*The Republican Party has made its allegiance to Big-Oil & Big-Coal quite open ... They have been favoring personal profit over environmental preservation ever since the Reagan years, and they show no signs of letting up until there is no more environment left to rape & no more Nature left to pillage for profit.

*The current Republican Party is about as pro-military & about as pro-war as any political establishment since the “glory days” of Tojo, Hitler & Mussolini. They want a war in the Middle East in the worst way, and they are Hell-bent (literally) on getting involved in one as soon as possible. And this makes perfect sense -- for politicians in general are interested in personal power & personal wealth above all else, and the best way to fulfill both of those objectives is to use one's political pull & congressional connections to start an international conflict. It works every time -- just ask Bush & Cheney & their Iraq-war Halliburton cronies.

*The Republican Party wants to continue their longstanding abandonment of both America's crumbling education system (especially inner-city public schools) and its equally crumbling infrastructure.

*The Republican Party wants to repeal Obamacare and fully privatize health care ... Say what you will about the watered-down version of Obamacare (that is indeed far too weak to adequately serve many of those it should be serving), the solution to the American health-care crisis is NOT privatization. There are literally dozens of countries around the world with fully functional health-care systems. As such, American politicians have NO EXCUSE for not emulating any one of those systems (or combining the best facets of several) to care for the American people they have promised to serve ... To do any less is (and will continue to be) and absolute moral outrage.

*The Republican Party is in favor of perpetuating the privatization of prisons and the intensification of sentencing severity to keep those prisons full ... In essence, the “land of the free” is anything but -- and the Republican Party is primarily responsible for this embarrassment.



*The Republican Party has totally sold out to Big-Ag -- in the form of huge monetary subsidies for the insane cruelties inherent in the Big-Meat & Big-Dairy industry, and in the form of pro-GMO legislation designed both to control the content of what you eat AND keep you from knowing the same.

That having all been said, Hillary is indeed on track to become the Democratic candidate in 2016, and -- as I have stated before -- Hillary would be a FAR WORSE President than any of the current Republican candidates (and yes, this includes Donald Trump) ...

Like most of her Democratic comrades, Hilary talks the sweet talk while walking the slimy walk ... Just like the Republicans, she is funded by Big-Ag & Big-Oil & Big-Insurance & Big-Military (and she will owe them all once elected -- BIG time) ... Just like the Republicans, Hillary will provoke international conflicts & engage U.S. troops in illegal wars that will claim thousands & thousands of innocent lives (a la Libya in 2011 -- disgusting!) ... Just like the Republicans, Hillary will cop out to climate change deniers and anti-environmental corporations (Just watch her approve the Keystone pipeline within a few months of becoming President) ... Yes, my Friends, just like the Republicans, Hillary will lie & manipulate & cheat & steal -- not only to ensure her own continued poshness & power, but also to give her monetary providers the political & economic favors she has already promised them.

**“I would like to ask Clinton supporters...
What is it that you support?”**

- “Hillary Clinton opposes single-payer healthcare.
- She opposes reinstating Glass-Steagall.
- She opposes a \$15 minimum wage.
- She is in favor of the death penalty.
- She wants to send special forces into Syria and have a no-fly zone.
- She thinks the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel is wrong.
- She opposes marijuana legalization.
- She opposes free tuition at universities.
- She supports the Clinton-Gingrich welfare reform.
- She supports hydraulic fracturing.
- She supports the Patriot Act and thinks Snowden is a criminal.
- She wants to make flag burning a felony.”

– Thom Hartmann



Secretary Hillary Clinton
Democratic Debate, NBC News, 1/17/16

So, I have now fully & factually exposed the Republican Party for the corrupt institution it has long-since been & long-since become. **AND** -- at least this time around -- it still goes without saying that *if* you are truly determined to vote ---- then I encourage you to vote Republican.

Peace to ALL ... S



Opening your HOME (08/06/2015)

Anybody can look at a successful man and see an upstanding citizen -- anyone can glance at the handsome man in the suit & tie and feel admiration ... An artist, on the other hand, can look at that same man and see the gnarled old beggar he will one day inevitably become (We can't take any of it with us, after all).

Of course, an even better artist can look at an old beggar and see the successful young man that he used to be ... And a truly great artist -- a true Master of his or her craft -- can look at an old beggar; a homeless man who is fully bedraggled & openly bemoaned, portray him exactly as he is, and somehow force every viewer of that vision to see the Kind & Successful young man he used to be ... Even more than that, the Master can make anyone -- even one with the suffocated sensitivities of a greedy politician -- see that the Kind & Successful young man *is still alive* within that dirty, depressed body; that the beggar is not “lazy” or “ugly” or “dangerous” at all, but simply imprisoned inside a life ruined by poor choice or cruel happenstance (or both) ...

Yes, the Master is the one who can remind us all of the clear yet quiet Truth that there never was a man or woman born who ever became less than the Kind & Caring community leader who still resides in his Heart -- and that this remains ever true, no matter what the harsh winds of fate or the stupidity of self or the callousness of others have done to his or her outward appearance.

So, my Friends, the next time you pass a poor, homeless person on the street, have the humility to pause for a moment to remember the Good Man or the Good Woman who still lives within his or her downtrodden shell ... Please have the humility to pause and look into their eyes with Kindness -- and then please have the Courage to reach out and treat them like the more-than-worthy person of Success & Honor they to this day still truly are.

Thank you. (inspired by Robert Heinlein)

“The pragmatics are clear: when the homeless are housed, cared for, fed, and given access to healthcare, their needs for emergency services decreases dramatically, their criminality and drug use decreases dramatically, and certainly, their well-being increases dramatically. An ethical argument for why the least among us ought, in the richest country on the planet, to have access to minimally decent housing and essential services is so self-evident it hardly needs emphasizing, and yet I emphasize it nonetheless: Who are we to turn our hearts cold to the plight of those most in need? It seems almost embarrassingly unnecessary to remind ourselves that the homeless are far more likely to have mental and physical disabilities, far more likely to have served in the military, and far more likely to have had traumatic experiences in their lives than the average person.”

~ credit to Heleana Theixos



Faith in LOVE

(08/13/2015)

The ways in which Kindness & Compassion work are rarely if ever seen in full, and yet it is quite reasonable to have faith that Work they do ... Indeed, not a single one of us will ever fully witness or comprehend the Universe-altering Goodness that most surely follows every one of our deeds of Love -- every selfless gift we give; every humble forgiveness we grant; every kind word we utter; every gentle tenderness we display.

The frequency of Oneness -- that energetic emission we often call "Love" -- by its very nature never stops flowing. It washes ever over & ever around those to whom we directly give it, and then it continues ever-onward -- fully covering or lightly caressing or gently circumnavigating everything in its path as it flows on forever towards the very edge of the Cosmos ... And as such, each & every selfless deed we courageously enliven quickly leaves the realm of our perception, rapidly departs from our immediate surroundings, and ripples outward far further than we can ever hope to see or know.

And yet flow ever-outward it does -- subtly yet powerfully touching life after life after life after life as it goes ... That this Truth remains mostly hidden from us does not make it any less True; and that we can often only perceive the smallest fraction of the Peace & Joy our Love brings does not take away from the fact that each and every one of our acts of self-sacrifice do indeed bring many, many others great Peace & great Joy.

Yes, my Friends, the way selfless LOVE works will forever remain a great Mystery -- and yet we can know that such LOVE always Works nonetheless.

Consider going forth today and living accordingly ...

Peace ... S (~ inspired by Albert Schweitzer)



Awakening IS

(08/18/2015)

Awakening is realizing that Happiness has nothing to do with what is happening *to* us, and everything to do with what we choose to do with what is happening **FOR** us ... Awakening is realizing that life becomes Beauty-full when we make it not about what we have or what we can obtain or what we can achieve, but rather about what we give and what we can share and how we can be towards others ...

Awakening is realizing that every rainbow that ever was and every rainbow that ever will be has already landed at our feet; that our lives become radiant and powerful and full of wonderment in every moment we choose to set aside our judgments & criticisms of others long enough to Care for them instead; ... every time we set aside our worries & our hopes for the future long enough to Serve others in the now instead; ... every time we set aside our fears of pain & rejection long enough to reach out to others with acts of simple Respect & open Kindness.

So, with that said: ***Gooooood Morning!***



The Way back to Now (08/19/2015)

My dear Friends ... So many of us choose to see life as a journey towards a particular goal or dream or vision -- a destination, so to say -- only to realize at its end that life is something else entirely; something far more wondrous and far more -- well, important.

You see, we each only get one shot at this thing called Life; we each only get one chance to embrace the great gift of consciousness we have been given -- the truly majestic opportunity to use our power of choice to make a positive difference for future generations -- and indeed, for our own generation as well.

And yet so many of us (myself often included) choose instead to see life as a journey -- a certain place to get to; a dream job &/or a dream relationship to obtain; a particular mission to fulfill; a specific status or success to achieve ... And so we scan the horizon every day -- constantly on the lookout for potential storms to avoid; persistently gazing at the horizon ever hoping for the next sunrise; always searching for things joyous or pleasurable or comfortable to fill our time while we wait to get there -- wherever “there2 might be.

And yet this is **not** what Life IS, my Friends ... Life is **not** a destination, Life is **not** a set of goals or dreams, and Life is **not** even a journey to walk -- it is **not** even the road that lies beneath our feet. No, all of these things are part of the future, that elusive & illusory ever-someday that never quite makes it to today ...

And yet today is where Life **IS**, and today -- every day -- there is Life. In **this** one moment and in **this** single space, there is Life -- all the Life you could ever hope for ... For right Here & right Now -- right in this instant & right where you already are, your complete Life awaits you. It waits for you to embrace it by embracing others ... It waits for you to cherish it by cherishing others ... It waits for you to honor it by honoring others ... And it waits for you to Care for it by Caring for others.

And not just the others you find it easy to embrace; not just the friends you find it easy to cherish; not just the loved ones you find it easy to honor; not just the strangers & the associates for whom you find it easy to care ... No, my dear ones, Life truly awakens -- Life truly **IS** -- when Life itself is truly Loved. And we can only do so when we stop walking down Life's “road2; when we pause to look around us in awe & appreciation; when we seek & find the one person or one being nearby who needs our Kindness the most (hint: this is the one nearby to whom we least wish to give the same); and then when we reach out to give that being our everything -- when we reach out to gently give that fellow being our Love.

May your journey pause often today in this most sacred Way ...

Amen ... Let it be so.



Grooving to LOVE's Noble Sound (09/26/2015)

Though we are told to mourn the passing of LOVE from humanity's collective mind, we must continue to know that it was a most Noble Sound. The LOVE to which we were awakening several decades ago (in the 60's & 70's) had a deep, potential majesty. It held promise ... It held Peace ... It held a glimmering destiny of Greatness.

And yet even though the last 4+ decades have seen this great LOVE's dream steadily dwindle & fade, that LOVE still remains viable; waiting on the fringes of our collective Soul -- a still-steady bridge spanning a chasm of violence & chaos; leading to our species' tenuously trembling Salvation ... should we ever choose to make that Noble Journey.

And yet on this bridge today sits a great Dragon; a Dragon bloated in the overconfidence of years & years of our massive failings -- wars over land &/or oil; insane poverty caused by corporate gluttony, persecution brought on by religious bigotry; acts of terrorism & the acts of terror in response thereto; the needless & brutal massacre of billions & billions of innocent animals; the steady destruction of our planet's biosphere ... The list goes on & on.

And yet all hope need not be tossed aside, my Friends. Indeed, this dragon has grown so fat on his recent "successes" that he has also become weak & careless. He no longer attempts to hide his evils behind the masks of patriotism or piousness; blatantly trouncing on the innocent and arrogantly crushing the weak right out in the open for all to see.

And yet this arrogance will ultimately be his undoing ... For in his sloth & indolence, our Dragon has drastically underestimated the Noble Sound -- the pulsing beat & polyphonic harmony of Compassion & Justice & Goodness that still hums strong, deep within every human Heart.



We all have this Noble Sound still coursing through our veins ... We all know that the innocent are to be defended with acts of self-sacrificial courage, we all know that the poor are to be uplifted with acts of selfless generosity, and we all know that the wicked are to be redeemed with acts of bold forgiveness. If we turn off our TV's and shut down our cell phones -- if we silence our minds and even briefly quell our fears, we can all still hear its smooth & brilliant tune buzzing within our breasts ...

And because this Sound forms the essence of who we truly are, we will never know Peace -- and we will never rest from seeking it -- until that Sound once again comes bursting forth from Heart to mind, from mind to mouth, from mouth back to Heart, and from Heart to hands & arms & legs & feet -- until the Noble Sound that is now still but a buzz becomes a whisper – then becomes an utterance – then becomes a song – then becomes a shout; until it becomes *real* again and re-makes us all into what we were all Born to Be: namely -- Agents of the Divine ... Defenders of the downtrodden ... Champions of Peace ... Harbingers of perfect LOVE.

So, my Friends, won't you all pause with me now and Listen awhile?

Can you hear It? ... Can you hear your Noble Sound?

Keep listening until you do ...
...and then let it ROAR FORTH!

Amen ... let it be so.
(~ inspired by Stanley Crouch)

“As we gather here to mourn the passing of this noble sound, we should take the pains to remember something. There are some of us who don't accept the dreams of dragons as their own, no matter how grand those dragons might say they are. Yes, there are some who will refuse to drop the candle even when pushed into a dark cave and locked there behind a stone ... There is, you must recall, a kind of serious study that will give you the confidence to strike your match to the mighty wick that will illuminate yet another portion of the darkness. Out there somewhere are the kind of people who do not accept the premature autopsy of a noble art form. These are the ones who follow in the footsteps of the gifted and the disciplined -- who have been deeply hurt, but not discouraged; who have



been frightened, but have not forgotten how to be brave; who revel in the company of their friends and sweethearts, but are willing to face the loneliness that is demanded of mastery ... You have to beware of premature autopsies. A noble sound might not lie still in the dark cave where the dragons have taken it. A noble sound might just rise up and push away the stones that were placed in its path. A noble sound might just rise up on the high side of the sky, it might just ring the silver bells of musical light that tear through the cloak of the dragon's shadow that blacks the sun. ... A noble sound is a mighty thing.”

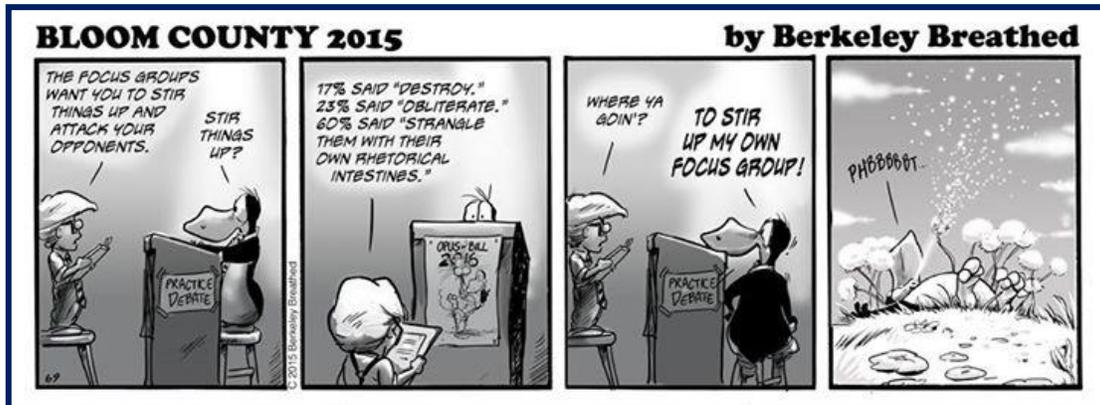
~ Stanley Crouch

Solving the election riddle (10/11/2015)

“Tell me and I’ll be confused.
Explain it to me and I will forget.
Show me and I will look away.
Involve me and I will understand.”
~ Chinese Proverb

My American Friends, you are being told by many that they can fix your broken country (and rest assured, it is definitely quite broken) ... And these same many are explaining to you just how they plan to do so (Hint: they don't plan to do so at all -- they just want you to *think* they do).

And yet because you have been conned for so long -- conned into believing that the Republicans' way is the safest; or conned into believing that the Democrats' way is the most caring; or simply conned into believing that the members of either of these parties actually care about you, the citizens of the United States (when all 99% of them truly care about is their own prestige & their own power & their own wealth & their own job-longevity) -- many of you are quite understandably starting to “check out”; starting to head for the nearest meadow, as it were, and take your own “dandelion break” from it all.



Well, my dear ones, it is true that you have been conned in the past -- conned by Reagan, and conned by Bush, and conned by Clinton, and then conned by a Bush again. And yes, it is indeed true that you have been wickedly conned by Obama for these past six+ years as well ... AND YET waking up to this abuse does **not** mean that it is time for you to “check out”. To the contrary, once you realize that you have been conned -- and once you steadfastly refuse to be conned ever again, that is the time for you to get up from your dandelion break -- that is the time for you to head back into your community and do what your past & current “leaders” should have done for you & yours long ago -- that is when it is time for you to stop waiting for help to come from above, and to start becoming the change you & yours need to see instead.

Well, my Friends, the alarm clock of Truth has rung once again, and once again you have been awakened to a new day -- a day of renewed clarity; a day of refreshed self-responsibility; the very first day of your now un-connable life.

And so I wonder ... What will you do with it?

*“When one realizes one is asleep,
at that moment one is actually already half-awake.”
~ P. D. Ouspensky*



Healing Homophobia (10/16/2015)

In many regards, we've come a long way as a species -- human slavery still exists, and yet is judged by most of us to be repulsive; repression against women still exists, and yet is seen by most of us as primitive; cruelty towards animals still exists, and yet more & more true animal rights activists (a.k.a. vegans) are openly exclaiming that treating other sentient beings as mere commodities is both immoral & barbaric; homophobia still exists, and yet more & more people around the world are waking up to the simple fact that members of the LGBT community deserve every bit the same respect, every bit the same honor, & every bit the same Respect that the world's "straight" citizens already receive.

Of course, this Waking UP process does not come without its fair share of resistance or arrive without its fair share of opponents -- those people who would just as soon keep our society mired in its darker, callously ignorant past; those who would just as soon still own slaves &/or subjugate women &/or abuse animals for personal pleasure &/or punish homosexuals and transgenders merely for being born how they were born -- merely for being who they innately ARE.

A few years ago, a member of the latter group wrote to Amy Dickinson asking for advice on how to get her gay son to stop being gay ... Amy's response is as priceless and as powerful as it is (hopefully) prescient ... Enjoy!



Parent pressures gay son to change

DEAR AMY: I recently discovered that my son, who is 17, is a homosexual.

We are part of a church group and I fear that if people in that group find out they will make fun of me for having a gay child.

He won't listen to reason, and he will not stop being gay. I feel as if he is doing this just to get back at me for forgetting his birthday for the past three years — I have a busy work schedule.

Please help him make the right choice in life by not being gay. He won't listen to me, so maybe he will listen to you.

— FEELING BETRAYED

DEAR BETRAYED: You could teach your son an important lesson by changing your own sexuality to show him how



AMY DICKINSON
Advice

askamy@tribune.com

be accepted by his parents for being exactly who he is.

When you "forget" a child's birthday, you are basically negating him as a person. It is as if you are saying that you have forgotten his presence in the world. How very sad for him.

Pressuring your son to change his sexuality is wrong. If you cannot learn to accept him as he is, it might be safest for him to live elsewhere.

A group that could help you and your family figure out how to navigate this is Pflag.org. (In Canada, see pflagcanada.ca.) This organization is founded for parents, families, friends and allies of LGBT people, and has helped countless families through this challenge. Please research and connect with a local chapter.

Not-so-random Acts of Kindness (10/17/2015)

When it comes to life, most of us are just worried about getting through the day -- getting to work, getting the job done, getting home again. And yet recently, a young man in Canada gave us all a very important reminder -- a reminder that life is **not** merely about “getting somewhere” or “getting yours” or “getting things done”, but rather, life is about *GIVING* -- giving of your material possessions, yes, but more importantly, giving of your time and giving of your attention and giving of your Kindness. Indeed, life is about giving of your Self.

You see, 22-year-old Godfrey Cuotto was headed home on a crowded bus a few weeks ago when a man named Robert sat down beside him and asked to shake his hand. Cuotto complied ... What Godfrey didn't know was that Robert was deaf -- *and* that Robert had cerebral palsy -- *and* that Robert was having a really rough time that day and actually needed much more than a mere handshake. So Robert kept holding on to Godfrey's hand and didn't let go.

And that's when the magic happened ...

You see, while he could have angrily pulled his hand away or openly shamed Robert's clinginess or even gently removed himself from Robert's needy presence, Godfrey Cuotto let Robert hold on -- and he let Robert stay there next to him -- and he offered Robert his shoulder to lean on -- and the pair of them stayed that way until the bus's very last stop, when a fellow rider snapped the attached picture of their beautiful exchange.

The person who took the photo then shared it on a Facebook page called “Only In Hamilton”, and it then went on to quickly rack up over 68,000 likes and over 14,000 shares from people all over the world who were deeply moved by Godfrey's gentle act of selfless kindness ... And the best part of the story is the Truth



underlying the deed -- the Truth that Godfrey himself already knows, namely, that his Good Deed was actually no big deal at all -- that what he did for Robert was actually the simple, beautiful reflection of the way that **all** of us could be dealing with **all** our own lives neighbors & strangers & even enemies every single day.

So I tip my hat to you, Godfrey. Well played, my Friend ... Well played in-deed!

“He just needed comfort ... and I just allowed it ... Sometimes you just have to put someone else's needs above yours.” ~ Godfrey Cuotto

(inspired by Godfrey & Ashley Austrew)

Our early days of Peace (10/17/2015)

Recently I was involved in a mildly feisty discussion on the nature of “practical selflessness” -- namely, whether or not it is truly unfeasible (if not irresponsible -- if not even downright masochistic) to reach out with acts of humble Kindness to the people in our lives we have deemed to be “mean” or “crazy” or “dangerous” or even “evil” ... My counterpart, whom I will re-name “Fred”, took the position that “radical Kindness” would never work in “dangerous” situations or with “violent people”; that I would only end up getting hurt if I reached out with charity in such times or with raw Generosity towards such individuals.

I, of course, took the opposite position -- the position that the past eleven years of personal experience & radical experimentation has shown to indeed be True; namely, that because “mean people” are -- just like the rest of us humans -- herd animals by nature, they will find it impossible to repeatedly harm another individual who is openly treating them as a member of their own “herd”; someone who is openly treating them with undeserved respect & unconditional Kindness. Likewise, because “mean people” are actually looking for the sense of personal empowerment that comes from creating victims -- from harming others and making them feel sad or angry or afraid, these people have no idea what to do when they receive the exact opposite response; namely, when they receive Gratitude instead of sadness, Kindness instead of anger, & Love instead of fear. In those moments, these “bad” men & women have only one choice remaining -- either stop being mean (or dishonest, or provocative, or annoying, or aggressive, or even evil) and start being Kind in return, **or** leave the scene to find their victims elsewhere.

I explained to Fred that this was no mere intellectual theory either ... I explained to him that I had actually rediscovered & redeveloped this beautiful Reality through over a decade of radical experimentation; that I was not sharing a mere mental concept that I had formulated by thought or reason or reading, but was rather advocating a Truth that I had *experienced* firsthand to be True -- one that I continue to Live to this very day!

Of course, Fred was having none of it, and with his last comment blasted me with the following: “Again your vanity and ego shout arrogance and delusions of grandeur without actual intelligence or experience ... I have spent a lot of time researching effects and learning what is real. However you seem to be drowning in self righteousness rather than reality ... The difference in our approach to peace, is you are trying to change people, and I'm trying to educate them to make sound choices ... Throwing caution to the wind is a stupid choice by an ignorant mind. What you suggest is like telling someone to walk a tightrope over the Grand Canyon without experience ... What I suggest is getting some training before attempting the feat, and knowing your limitations to avoid a fall to your death.”

After reading this comeback I paused and took a deep breath, knowing that we had probably hit a wall of unwillingness over which Fred would not ever choose to climb ... Frankly, at this point I really didn't know what to do. It was obvious that Fred was intelligent enough to grasp the Truth I was sharing, **and** it was just as obvious that he was so fully invested in the “sacredness of safety” and the “cult of comfort” and the “religion of responsibility” that he was not likely to start listening to me anytime soon (if ever) ... As such, I shrugged my shoulders, smiled and typed the following concluding response: “No arrogance here at all, my Friend ... I am merely offering you (and everyone else reading along) a very powerful gift -- one that I have not only researched, but also one that have actually radically tested and am actively **LIVING**. I repeat: this is not merely some intellectual debate for me, Fred. I have actually re-discovered another way to live as a Human Being; it is a way that has been around for thousands of years, and yet it is also a way that schools & churches & most people (like you) have been taught to reject offhand ... Fair enough. I am not here to twist your arm into giving it a go -- I am simply here to offer the **FACT** that it most definitely works every single time it is employed ...

And I understand why most folks like yourself probably won't ever engage it - - You have been hurt in the past (like I have -- heck, like everyone has), and you don't want to be hurt again. And you have been taught that defending yourself & “being careful” is the best way to go about avoiding such pain in the future ... Of course, **THIS IS A LIE**, and the fundamental psychological & sociological make-up of the human brain supports the fact that it is a lie ... **And** I realize that most folks -- like yourself -- would rather be “better safe than sorry” ... And that is cool. After all, this is *your* life we are talking about, and you are allowed to reject as much Joy & as much Meaning as you wish in the name of comfort & security ... God knows you're not alone in that regard! ... That having all been said, I repeat again that I am here for you if you ever decide to change your mind. If you are ever feeling despair and wish to know a sense of fulfillment, if you are ever feeling angry and wish to be at Peace, if you are ever feeling afraid and wish to know Resolve, know that there is a practical, fully effective way available to you. It is not **my** way, and yet it is **a** way that I have indeed rediscovered ... and it is not **the** way, but it definitely is **a** way that works ... But enough! You get out there and have as great a life as you can, my Friend ... Your method will never know a shortage of conflicts or regular bouts



of sadness (I know because I lived your traditional paradigm for the first 38 years of my life), and yet you **can** still experience moments of great happiness and phases of fine pleasure.

Wishing you Peace,
Scaughdt

Harnessing our real Power
(10/21/2015)

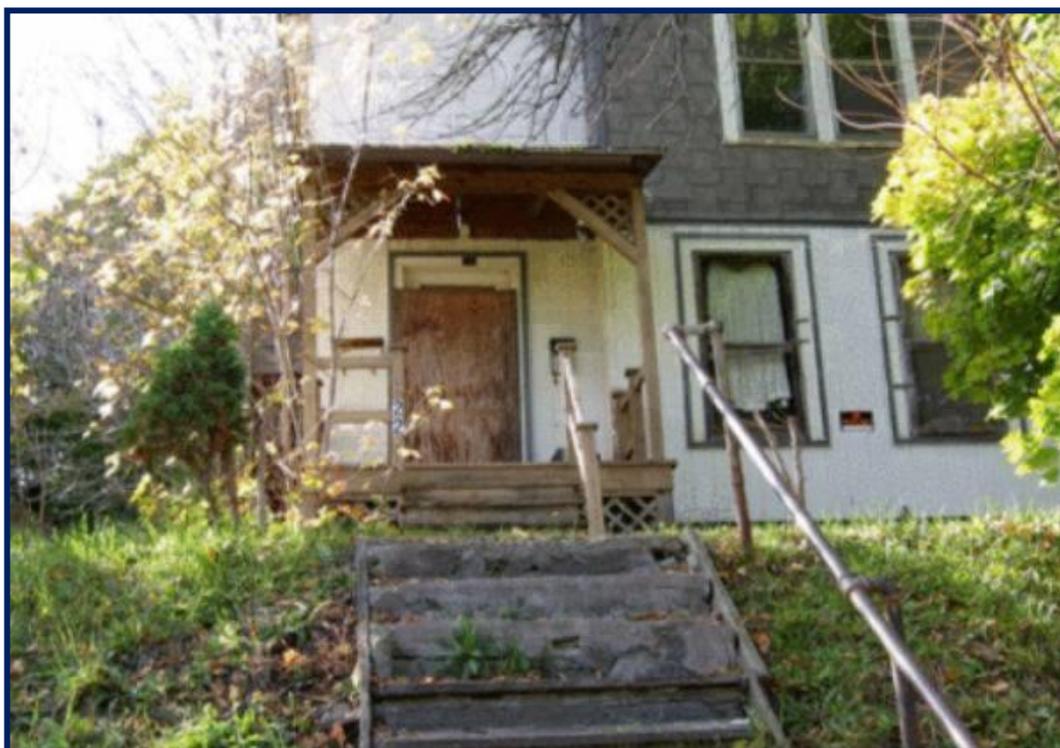
Remember, my Friends, we are never more Power-full than in those moments when we are injured, ill, or immensely fatigued ... As such, to allow your true Power to come to Life, remember to stand for Peace when you are injured, to fight for Justice when you are ill, and to shout for Love when you think you are too tired to go on.



No kidding – at ALL
(10/23/2015)

Oftentimes life will have us throwing up our hands and exclaiming a loud “You have GOT to be kidding me!” -- and it is times such as these when we have all simply GOT to keep on keeping on; keep on keeping on for Justice, keep on keeping on for Compassion, keep on keeping on for Truth, and keep on keeping on for Love ... Consider the following:

* **“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #01**) There are more abandoned houses in the United States than there are homeless people -- **LOTS** more.



There are 18,600,000 vacant homes in
the United States.

That's enough for every homeless
person to have six.

SOLUTION (partial): Reach out to a homeless person today by renting them a hotel room for the night.

* ***“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #02)*** There are currently more Black men in prison in the United States than were enslaved there in 1850.



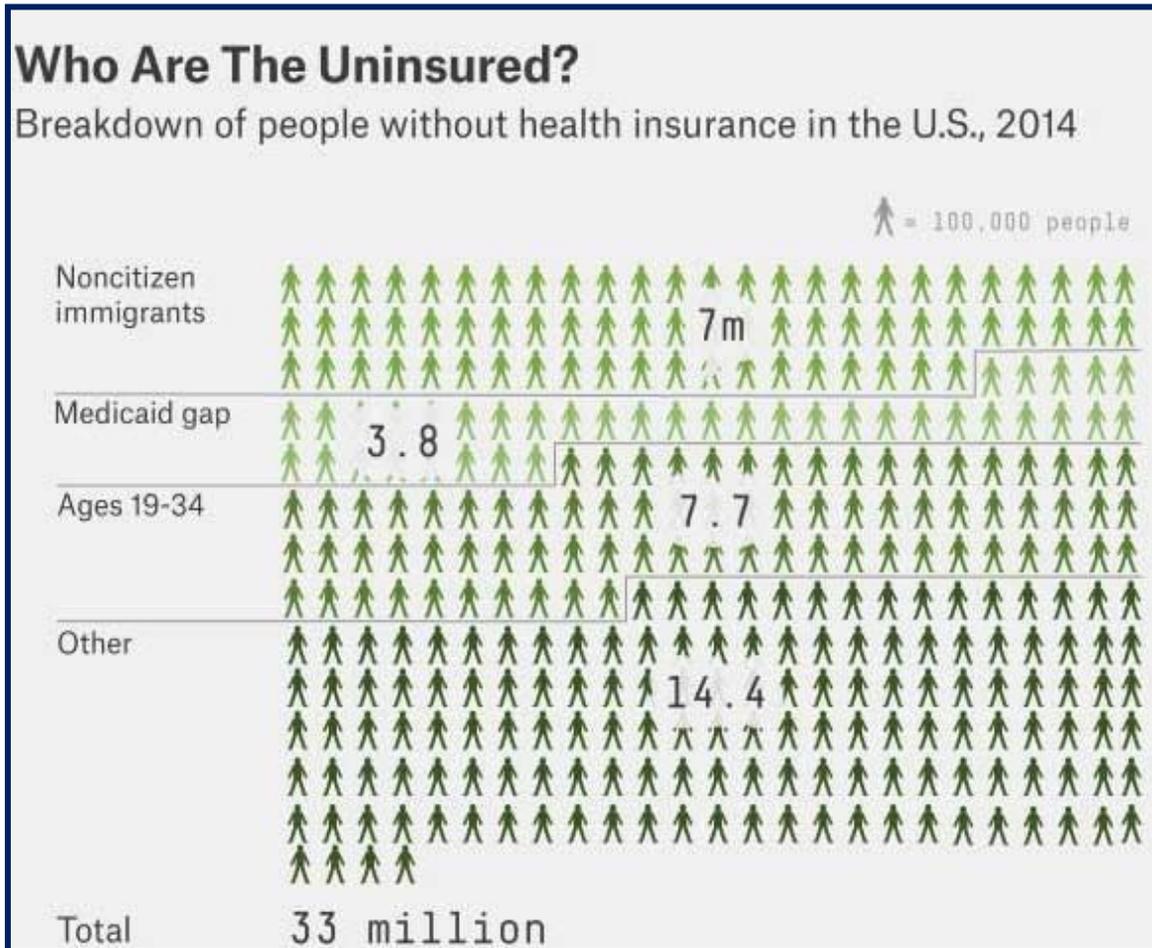
In the 1950s before the Great Society, blacks represented a small fraction of the prison population. Today, blacks represent 40.2% of the prison population, but only 12.9% of the overall population.

SOLUTION (partial): Reach out to the minority citizens in your community &/or visit a local jail or prison and extend Kindness to those incarcerated there.



Note: The incarceration rate of Blacks in the U.S. is almost SEVEN TIMES higher than it is for Whites, even though the percentage of Whites & Blacks who commit jail-able offenses is roughly equal ... Blacks who commit crime in the United States are far more likely to go to jail/prison than Whites who commit crimes there ... And a 2012 University of Michigan study found that jail sentences for Blacks in the U.S. are over 10% longer than White sentences for comparable crimes committed.

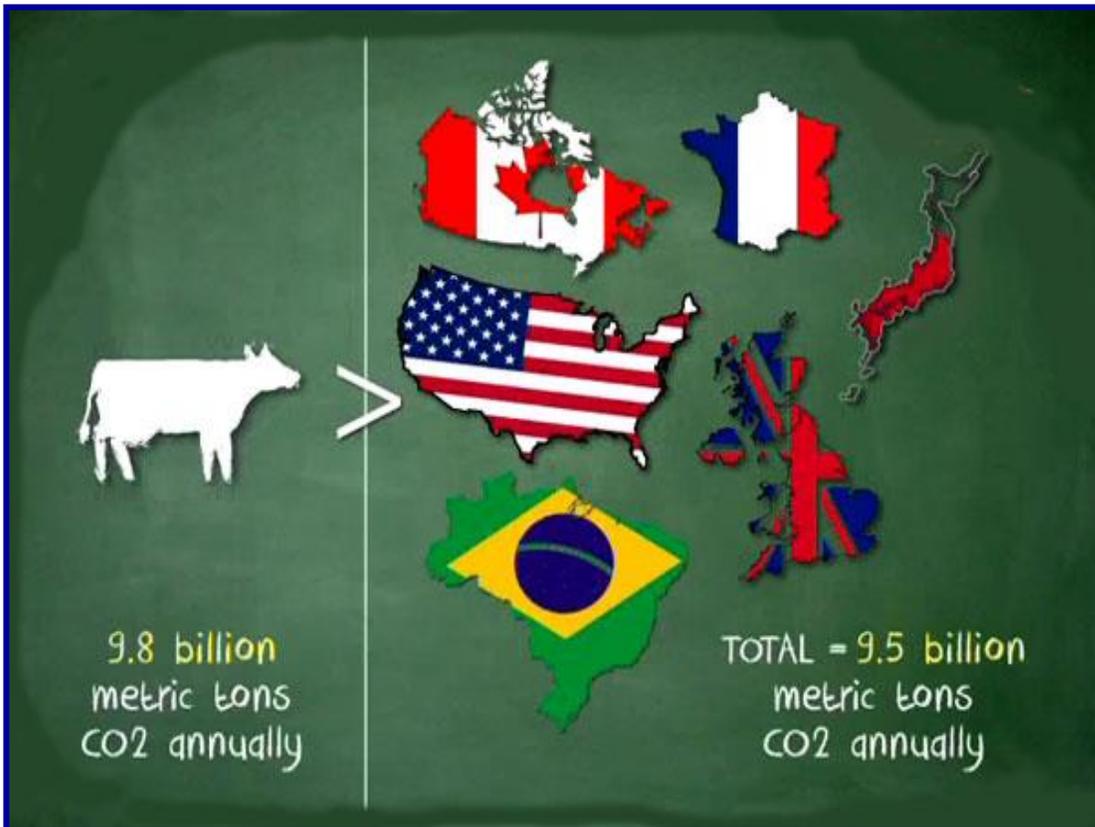
* **“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #03)** Not only do over 30 MILLION United States citizens still have no health care coverage **at all**, those who do have coverage are paying an average of roughly \$100 per month (for individuals, not counting their deductible) or \$400 per month (for families, not counting their deductible) for health insurance.



SOLUTION (partial): Seeing as how the average American citizen literally cannot afford to become ill these days, it is more important than ever for those living in the United States to switch to a 100% plant-based diet as quickly as possible.

Note: On July 3, 2015, the NY Times reported that “Health insurance companies around the country are seeking rate increases of 20% to 40% or more [for 2016], saying that new customers under the Affordable Care Act turned out to be sicker than expected.”

* ***“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #04***) Despite the FACT that climatologists almost unanimously agree that humanity-caused global warming is a very real and a very imminent problem, and despite the FACT that science has also conclusively shown that animal agriculture is the #1 cause of the same, neither Obama's Climate Action Plan nor the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have even faintly mentioned what the United Nations has accepted as FACT since 2010 -- namely, that a rapid, global shift towards a 100% plant-based diet is an *essential* component of any potentially successful campaign to avoid the most catastrophic effects of our impending (and now practically inevitable) global climate crisis.



SOLUTION (partial): Go Vegan ... and in-Courage others to do the same!

Note: Professor Edgar Hertwich, the lead author of a U.N. report on the matter, stated that: “Animal products cause more damage than [producing] construction minerals such as sand or cement, plastics or metals. [In addition], biomass and crops for animals are just as damaging [to our climate] as fossil fuels.”

* ***“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #05***) The current President of the United States, after cataclysmically (& purposefully) destabilizing the Middle East with his patently unjust military engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya & Syria (and thereby de facto creating the terrorist state known today as ISIS -- and thereby de facto creating the immigrant crisis that is currently overwhelming most of Europe), continues to this very day his patently evil policy of regularly drone-bombing the region.



SOLUTION (partial): Reach out to any & all Muslims in your community and openly apologize to them on behalf of America's drastically misguided (and highly immoral) “leader”.

Note: More than 5000 people have been murdered by U.S. drones since 2009, and it has now been established not only that this figure is probably much lower than the actual death-count, but also that the VAST majority of these victims were innocent civilians -- many of them children.

* ***“You have GOT to be kidding me!”*** #06) Despite the FACT that animals have now been proven to be as sentient as humans, and despite the FACT that this means that animals do indeed suffer immensely whenever they are confined &/or mutilated &/or slaughtered, and despite the FACT that human beings do not need to consume ***any*** animal flesh or animal secretions in order to live a long (actually longer) and healthy (actually healthier) lives -- humans still ruthlessly & needlessly murder over ***three thousand*** innocent animals ***EVERY SECOND*** of every day!



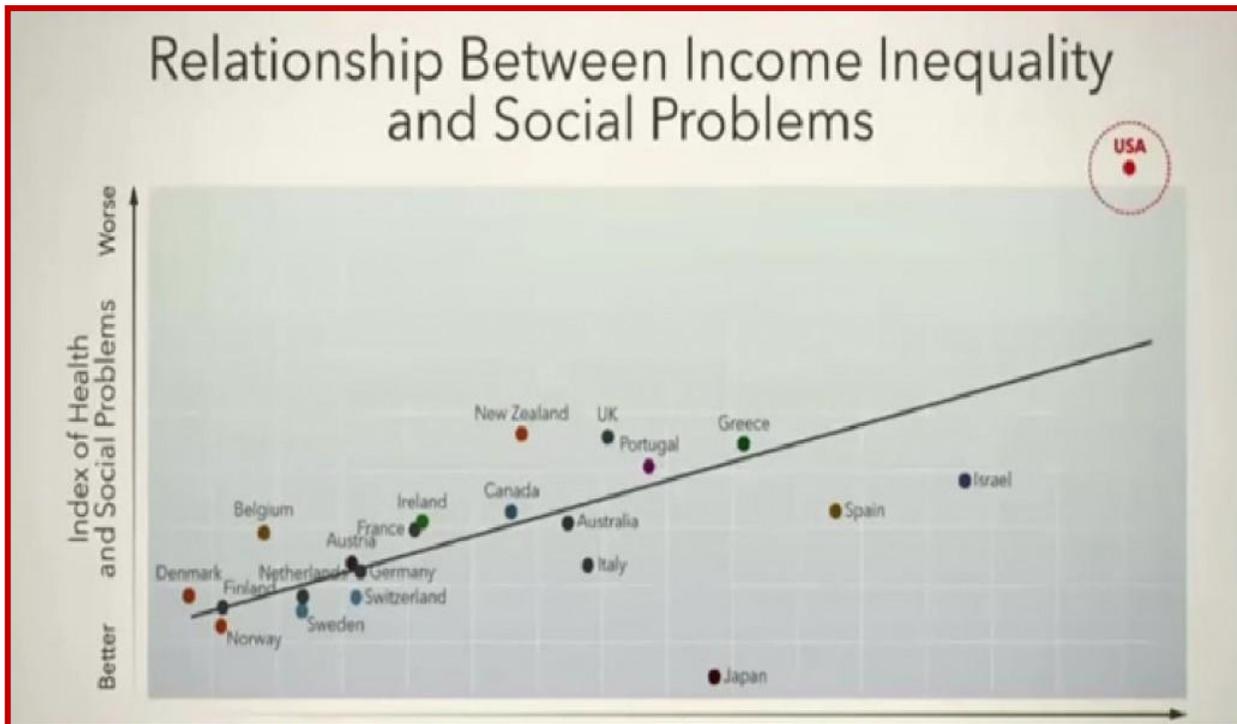
SOLUTION (partial): Go Vegan ... & gently in-Courage others to do the same!

* **“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #07)** Despite the FACT that Jesus made it very clear that we humans (Christians especially) are simply to actively & humbly serve others ([John 13:34-35](#) + [Matthew 18:3-4](#)) -- *especially* those “enemies” who believe differently than we do or those who make us most uncomfortable ([Matthew 7:1-5](#) + [Matthew 5:44-48](#)), the **vast** majority of the world's 300+ million evangelical, fundamentalist Christians (95 million of whom reside in the United States) not only believe that they are the only ones who will be allowed entrance into Heaven after they die (an expression of arrogance), but also that they are **A**) called to openly condemn the sins of all “non-believers” (an expression of hypocrisy) and **B**) commanded to passionately denounce & convert all those who are practicing a faith different from their own (an expression of bigotry).



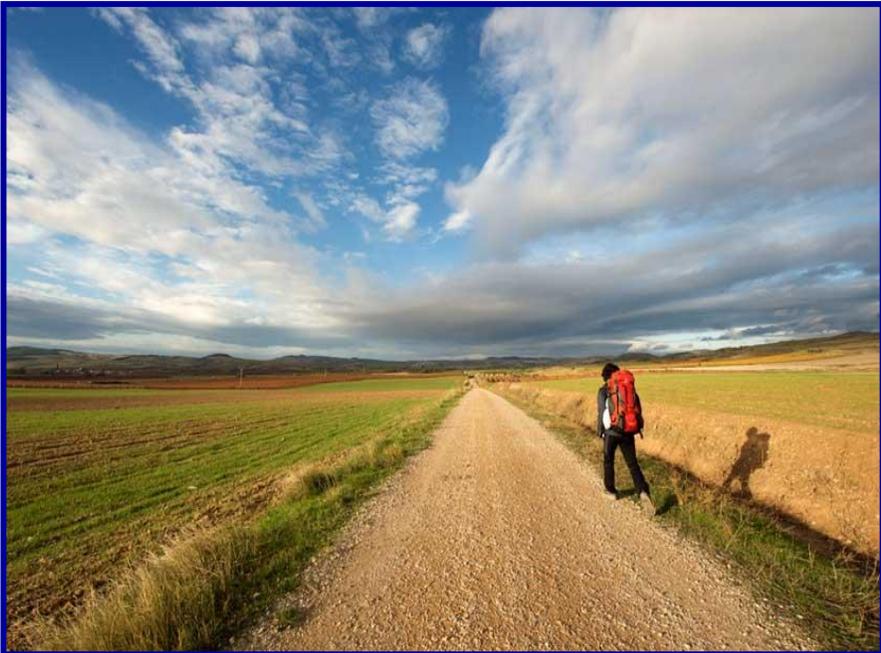
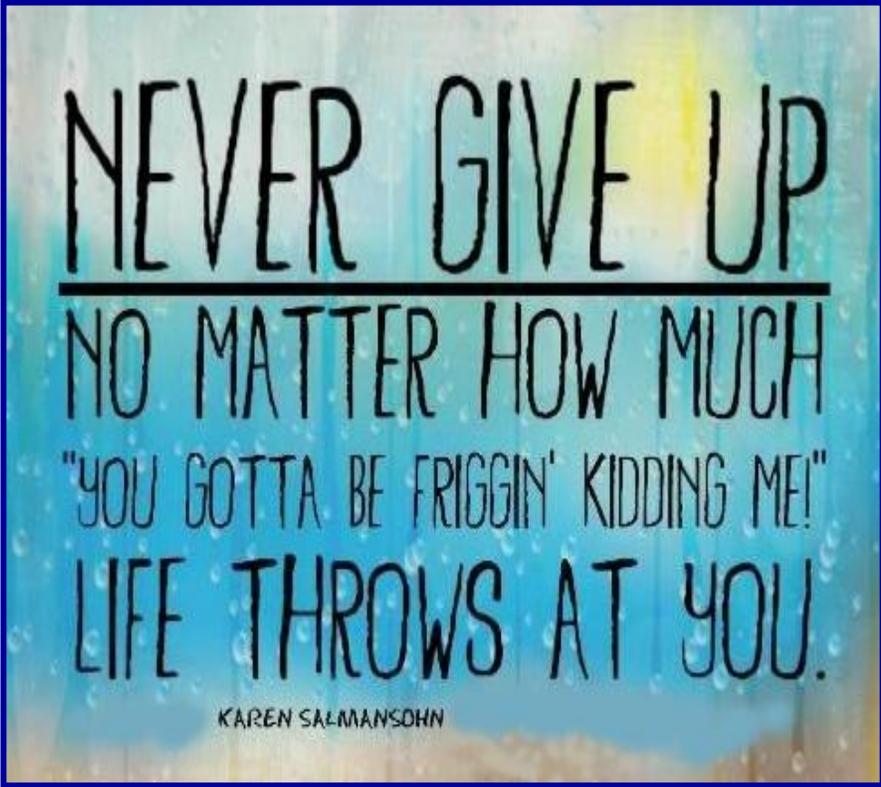
SOLUTION (partial): Remind the evangelicals in your life about the existence of (and the importance of) the Sermon on the Mount (found in the Bible from [Matthew 5:3](#) through [Matthew 7:27](#)). While doing so, remind them that -- for Jesus at least -- Salvation comes from humbly Loving others, and remind them that (again, at least as far as Jesus was concerned) that **LOVE is a verb**.

* **“You have GOT to be kidding me!” #08)** The richest 1% of people in the United States of America own more wealth than the bottom 90% combined!



SOLUTION (partial): Give regularly to others all that you possess -- your money, your things, your time & your energy. Do so publicly, do so past the point of comfort, and do so for the “wealthy” (who are actually threadbare poor) as well as for the “poor” (who are actually rich beyond measure).





The 7 Steeds of smaller Self

(Finding & Transcending the 7 Adversaries of your Soul)

(11/04/2015)

Each one of us contains a True Self within -- what some call the conscience, others the Spirit, and still others the Soul. This is the deepest essence of who we truly are -- this is the part of our awareness that always remembers that we are first and foremost a facet of The One; that we are all members of the same Great Family; and that we are all blessed with the ability to pause in any instant and consciously choose to act accordingly -- for the benefit of others instead of for the betterment of ourselves.

And yet there is another part of our psyches at play in every moment as well -- our “smaller self”; what some call the Id, others the reptile brain, and still others the ego. This is the most shallow area of our existence; the part of our perception that is ruled by our most primitive programming -- It is always first at bat in any encounter (operating 1/4 of a second faster than the neocortex that houses our Higher Self), and it is always analyzing situations & scenarios in light of our probable “best interests” -- Is he or she friend or foe? If “friend”, what's in it for me? If “foe”, should I fight or should I flee? Will this choice help me & my gene pool live longer, be more comfortable &/or know more pleasure?

In every moment of our lives, both selves are always available. If we are feeling selfish &/or are merely “going through the motions”, we will always act in accordance with the desires & lusts of the “smaller self” -- in essence we will always “ride” one of the Seven Steeds of Self-Stagnation (six of which are hidden in the image on the opposing page). And yet if we pause in any moment for just one quarter of one second -- if we choose to pro-act with consciousness instead of react with emotion or habit, *we can choose* to harmonize our choices with the inclinations of our “Soul Self”, and allow our lives and the lives of those around us to bloom into being as a consequence ... Consider the following:

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of Envy* (its yearning & its jealousy & its complaining) and Walk the Way of Gratitude instead ... We can be grateful for our lives.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of Entertainment* (its routines & its boredom & its familiarity) and Walk the Way of Wonderment instead ... We can be amazed at the Beauty that always surrounds us.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of Greed* (its hoarding & its saving & its materialism) and Walk the Way of selfless Giving instead ... We can give past the point of comfort, especially to those “least deserving”.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of **Comfort*** (its complacency & its passiveness & its apathy) and Walk the Way of joyful self-Sacrifice instead ... We can share a kind word and a smile with the strangers we find most startling.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of **Arrogance*** (its separateness & its superiority & its critical judgment) and Walk the Way of humble Gentleness instead ... We can treat **all** sentient life with an appropriate amount of dignity & respect.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of **Security*** (its “healthy boundaries” & its self-defense & its gossip & its hatred) and Walk the Way of Forgiveness instead ... We can engage our enemies with courage **and** compassion.

*We can choose to dismount from *the Steed of **Fear*** (its inaction & its timidity & its conventionality & its anger) and Walk the Way of LOVE (the **verb**) instead ... We can reach out to others in tenderness, especially in those times when we least wish to do so.

My Friends, just as our equine companions from the animal kingdom are not meant to be ridden, our Seven Steeds of Smaller Self are much more beautiful when appreciated from afar.

So consider dismounting from your own such Steeds, my Friends ... Let them be in peace --- and **walk The Way of Love** instead.



Sending Peace to Paris (11/14/2015)

Last night , over one hundred people were killed by dozens of highly confused & disturbingly violent individuals in a series of “terrorist attacks” in Paris. First & foremost, I take this time to **send Solace** to those who are suffering therefrom --- **and** I also take this time to extend heartfelt Compassion to the tainted men & women who perpetrated & co-perpetrated these heinous acts ... For until we choose to respond differently to rage and evil, rage & evil will continue to rule the day.

My Friends, while it is true that there is NO EXCUSE for violence of any kind towards the meek and the innocent, it is also true that as long as the United States and the rest of the western world (including Israel) continues to act like goons in the Middle East and elsewhere (Stop the drone-bombing!!!), these types of attacks will indeed continue ... And seeing as how we are now practically in an American election year, we can expect not only American politicians to disgustingly use this particular tragedy to further their own selfish agendas, but we can also expect such attacks to increase in quantity and severity in the near future.

And why can we do so? Because politicians use fear to keep themselves in power (always have; always will) -- and because rage is nothing more than crystallized fear -- and because politicians thus use such attacks to incite the anger of those beneath them in order to justify responding with similar aggressions -- and because violence, even if “justified” or “reasonable”, **always** begets nothing more than more violence.

Fear is the weapon of the “powerful”, my Friends, and powerful the “powerful” will remain as long as we choose to respond to such atrocities with fear -- or anger -- or hatred -- or violence ... We have already tried responding to evil with “justified warfare”, and have only created far more enraged & dangerous terrorists than ever before ... We have already tried “preemptive detention” (Guantanamo) and public humiliation (anti-Muslim rhetoric), and have done nothing more thereby than create masses of additional fundamentalists (from all faiths) in our midst ... We have already tried “self defense” & “harsh punishment”, and have only served to entrench our current enmities and convict hundreds of the innocent thereby.

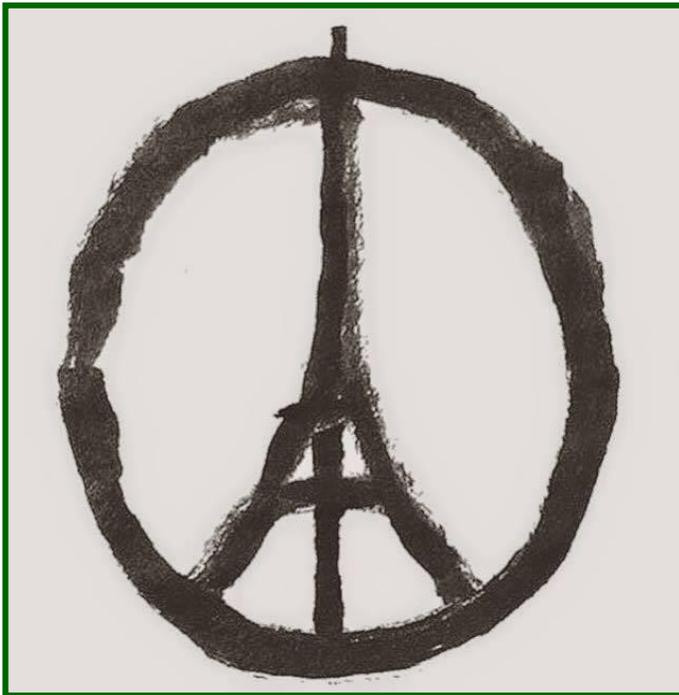
My dear Friends, you too will probably be sorely tempted to respond with hatred and rage of your own when you learn of this atrocity and those atrocities similar that are almost sure to follow. You too will reasonably wish to heed the shouts from the lower brain-stems of your “leaders” as they call for violent retribution and resolute isolationism and “an eye for an eye” ... PLEASE do not cave to those temptations when they arise ... PLEASE have the humility and the wisdom and indeed the Courage to **choose differently** this & next time around.

It is never wise and never effective to pour gasoline (i.e. anger & violence) upon an open fire (i.e. terror & evil) ... for the only solution to fear is the radical application of its opposite -- **Love**; just as the only solution to violence is the radical application of its opposite as well -- **Compassion**.

Yes, Compassion is the only answer to this tragedy -- at least the only answer that will bring Peace back into our lives and Calm back into our hearts. If our leaders were to be as wise (which would first require them to actually give a damn), they would respond with flowers & food instead of bombs and bedlam. Of course, our "leaders" have proven time & time again that they are not wise -- and that they are not just -- and that they are not Kind ... So this response will almost certainly not be forthcoming from them.

And yet **WE CAN** do our part to quell the tide of darkness and despair. **WE CAN** be a shining light of Peace in this time of war ... For each & every one of us can go out into our own communities and openly reach out to those of a different faith with bold words of Love and flagrant deeds of Kindness ... Each & every one of us can loudly & clearly refute the calls to violence that we hear from others ... Each & every one of us can speak calmly & rationally & Peace-fully with those shouting hysterically for evil to be done to evil.

Compassion is our only hope, my Friends, and until we employ it radically and call for it resolutely, the world will continue to suffer ... So please employ it radically today ... Thank you.



The Truth of Terror – Part 01
The Problem: Violence, Hatred & Death
(11/15/2015)



The Truth of Terror – Part 02
The Presumed Cause: Fundamentalism
(11/15/2015)

Now I will admit right away that I haven't finished reading the Koran yet, and yet what I have read so far shows that there *is* a reasonable reading thereof that *does* sanction (if not encourage) terrorist attacks in the name of Allah ...

Of course, it also bears noting that there are over 1.6 **billion** devout Muslims in the world to date, and that the **vast** majority of those Muslims are NOT terrorists ... Indeed, it even bears noting that Islam as a whole is actually behaving *far* more civilly than Christianity did when it was of a similar age (lest we forget Christianity's less than stellar legacy of the Crusades, the Inquisition, the burning of witches, and African slave trading). So even though I personally have not yet found it, there *must* be an alternative, more Peace-full reading of the Koran available.

And still, the fact remains that -- just like its cousin the Bible -- there *are* dozens of verses in the Koran that can indeed be used by the confused and the deluded as inspiration for acts of terrible violence. And because fundamentalists have little inclination to listen to the pleadings and the wisdoms from "infidels", this is a problem that must be dealt with primarily by Muslims themselves ...

It must be dealt with actively, it must be dealt with courageously, and it must be dealt with NOW.

Quran (9:29) - "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book [Jews], until they pay the Jizya [blood money] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

The Truth of Terror – Part 03
The Actual Cause: Imperialism
(11/15/2015)

“President Obama took a very short break from bombing Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Palestine, Pakistan, Somalia to express his grief over the attacks in France. This is an attack not just on Paris...this is an attack on all of humanity” ~ Ward Reilly

Let's just put it this way: Imagine that you are a U.S. citizen trying to go about building a life of peace and success and happiness for you & yours. Now imagine that Syria (or Iran, or Pakistan, or Afghanistan, or Yemen, or Somalia etc) has surrounded your country with hundreds of military bases and thousands of bombs and soldiers. Now imagine that Syria, who in this hypothetical is by far the most powerful military force on the planet, has decide to constantly patrol the skies over your home with military drones. Now imagine that Syria has decided that they are justified in murdering anyone in your neighborhood who they have determined poses a *potential* threat to their world dominance in the future. And now imagine that your neighbor &/or a close friend &/or your own son or daughter or mother or father is killed in one of these “justified” and “reasonable” drone strikes.



How would you respond? What would you want to do as you stood over the mangled body of your dearest loved one(s) whose life had just been terminated by Syrian hellfire from above?



Violence is never justified, my Friends, **and yet** for any of you to claim that ISIS fighters are “evil” when almost all of them have personally experienced this very same scenario is ignorance that borders on the absurd.

Don't be fooled by the propaganda of the “powers that be”, my Friends ... See through their lies and place the blame for terrorism exactly where it belongs – directly on the shoulders of the terrorists themselves, yes, **AND** directly on the shoulders of those who have purposefully driven them to become terrorists in the first place.

Violence only begets more violence & war only begets more war. This has always been the case, and this will always be the case ... Until we have the courage to stand up to the ignorance and the immorality of our “leaders” who are perpetrating these heinous crimes of unjust vengeance and counterproductive chaos, we will **all** continue to suffer mightily.

Clear as mud

ARE you confused by what is going on in the Middle East? Let me explain.

We support the Iraqi government in the fight against Islamic State. We don't like IS, but IS is supported by Saudi Arabia, whom we do like.

We don't like President Assad in Syria. We support the fight against him, but not IS, which is also fighting against him.

We don't like Iran, but Iran supports the Iraqi government against IS. So, some of our friends support our enemies and some of our enemies are our friends, and some of our enemies are fighting against our other enemies, whom we want to lose, but we don't want our enemies who are fighting our enemies to win.

If the people we want to defeat are defeated, they might be replaced by people we like even less. And all this was started by us invading a country to drive out terrorists who weren't actually there until we went in to drive them out. Do you understand now?

AUBREY BAILEY

P.S. Obama's Drone War -- the facts:

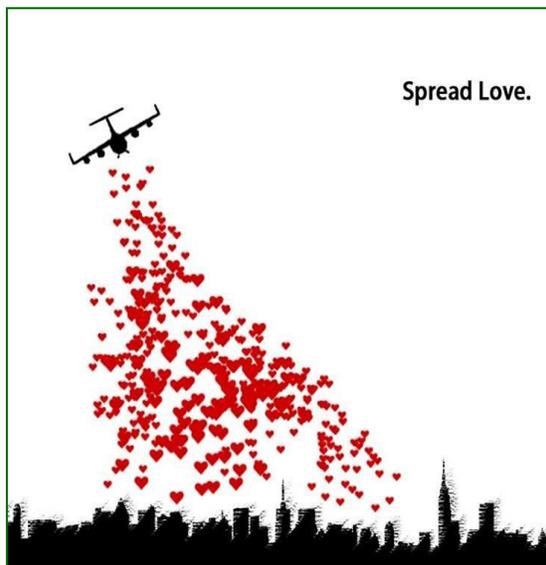
- Drone Strikes to date: well over **420**
- Total people murdered: well over **4000**
- Civilians murdered: at least **1000**
(probably much higher)
- Children murdered: at least **300**
(probably many more)
- Civilians injured: at least **2000**
(probably many more)
- Terrorists eliminated: possibly **3000**
(probably far fewer)
- Terrorists created: at least **10,000**
(probably far more)

The Truth of Terror – Part 04
The Solution ... YOU
(11/15/2015)

First & foremost we humans are herd animals, my Friends, and as such we are pre-programmed to constantly be on the lookout for enemies and attack the same once we find them ... Of course, it is just as true that, as highly evolved herd animals, we are pre-programmed to instinctively sacrifice with acts of generosity and kindness for those we have accepted into “our own herd” composed of friends and compatriots ... These two primal psychological Truths underlie every single sociological human interaction. They are at play when you encounter a stranger on the street, they are at play when you see a long-lost friend, and they are at play when nations go to war.

The problem is that for the last ten thousand years+ we humans have been employing the former dynamic of aggression with rabid zeal and ignoring the latter Truth of humble peace-making with entrenched ignorance. And unless we have the courage to very soon choose to engage & employ & enliven the latter instead of the former, we are truly and surely doomed.

The solution to ISIS is a very simple one, my Friends, and that solution is this: **Be the Bigger Nation.** When they attack with bombs & bullets, we should respond with flowers and food. When they attack with vitriol & vileness, we should answer with Caring & Compassion ... Yes, the more radical extremists among them would probably not be swayed by such acts of empathic enlightenment, this is true. **And yet** every other person who witnessed these deeds of Kindness *would* indeed be swayed -- every neighbor and every friend and every family member of every terrorist would have no choice but to admire & embrace such amazingly humble & innately moral gestures -- and every one of them would



be radically reminded that we are not two different, competing “herds”, but rather one single, potentially Loving Family instead ... And we would continue to drop sustenance & solace on these people -- no matter how many times the few among them would answer with violence, the food & flowers & the forgiveness would continue to rain down upon them and their loved ones. And inevitably, they too would stop “biting the hand that feeds”; they too would realize that in killing us, they are killing themselves ... and then Peace would indeed reign on Earth.

Now, the lone problem with implementing this scenario is that it isn't profitable to the "Gods of War" who are currently running the show. Obama & his wicked cronies (both those in Congress, as well as those in other governments) know damn well that bombing the Middle East actually creates far more terrorists than it could ever hope to eliminate ... And as far as they are concerned this is all well and good -- primarily because **they don't want peace** in the Middle East. Peace isn't profitable ... They want war, because war is where the money is -- and war means re-election ... and so war they will have, come Hell or high water.

That means, of course, that PEACE IS UP TO US ... **WE** have to be the ones who demand it, **WE** have to be the ones who protest for it, and **WE** have to be the ones who actively create it in our own communities. We have to be the ones to stand up to our "leaders" and demand that the drone-attacks stop, and we have to be the ones who reach out to the Muslims in our communities (and the fundamentalist Christians as well, whose open & bigoted condemnation of Islam is also a significant part of the problem) who are the key to making Islam the far more mellow faith that it one day could very well become.

In closing, peace will not come from above, my Friends ... **WE** must be the ones who shine forth the change we so desperately need to see ... And we simply must start doing so TODAY.

Amen ... Let it be so.

"Tonight, hold your loved ones, and pray and wish for peace; not only from guns and bombs, but also from hatred and fear. If it is our freedom and joy that they seek to destroy, then let us not give them that victory. Against the forces of darkness and terror, the light of Love & Compassion must always prevail."

~ inspired by George Takei



The World is Hurting (11/16/2015)

The world is hurting today, my friends -- and yet not only in Paris, where over 120 people died and over 300 were injured by terrorist attacks last Friday night. The world is hurting everywhere ...

*The world is hurting **in Baghdad**, where a terrorist attack earlier that same day killed 19 and wounded 41 ...

*And the world is hurting **in Beirut**, where a terrorist attack just the night before killed 43 and wounded over 240 ...

* And the world is hurting **in Nigeria**, where just last month, a terrorist attack killed over 30 Muslims and wounded many more while they were praying at a Mosque in Mulai ...

* And the world is hurting **in Palestine**, where the Israeli government (to whom the United States gives 3 billion dollars in military aid every year) killed hundreds of innocent Arab children this past October alone ...

* And the world is hurting **in Africa**, where Christian terrorist groups -- among them the Lord's Resistance Army in the Sudan, the National Liberation Front in India, and Antibalaka in the Central African Republic -- are committing astounding atrocities against the Muslims in their midst ...

* And the world is hurting **in St. Louis**, where racists burned 6 predominantly black churches last October, and the world is hurting indeed all over the United States, where acts of police brutality against both whites & minorities (though disproportionately against the latter) occur on an almost daily basis, with over 1035 American civilians murdered by American police officers so far this year alone ...

* And **the world itself** is hurting -- where over 400 football fields of forestland are destroyed EVERY HOUR to make room for animal agriculture abuses, and where every hour 500,000 thousand of her children -- that's 8500 innocent, caring, sentient animals are ruthlessly murdered EVERY MINUTE -- in slaughterhouses all over the world, simply because humans like the way their corpses taste when ground up & grilled or seasoned & sautéed.

Yes, my Friends, the world *is* hurting -- she is hurting badly from crimes of callousness being committed almost everywhere we look ... AND YET all is not lost. Even though it might seem hopeless on the surface, WE CAN do something to ease her pain. Of course, to "do something", we are going to have to actually DO SOMETHING ...

*We are going to have to reach out to the Muslims in our communities and with Kindness in-Courage them to stand up to the extremists in their religion ...

*We are going to have to reach out to the conservative Christians in our communities and with Kindness remind them of the words of Jesus Christ, their Lord & Savior (specifically the words of [Matthew 5:40-48](#) & those of [Matthew 18:3-4](#) & those of [John 13:34-35](#)) -- and we are going to have to in-Courage them to start acting accordingly ...

*We are going to have to start openly & Peace-fully protesting the wars being perpetrated by our governments and the brutal injustices being perpetrated by our police officers ...

*And we are going to have to start respecting our world and respecting our children and respecting ourselves by treating **ALL** sentient animals as individuals and not as commodities -- by treating them **ALL** with justice instead of cruelty, by treating them **ALL** with compassion instead of greed, and by treating them **ALL** with Love instead of callousness.

The world is truly burning, my Friends, and it is up to **US** to quench the flames ... Please help me do so today ... **Thank you.**

"later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?

it answered
*everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.*"

— Warsan Shire



The Ultimate WHY of it all (11/17/2015)

Contrary to popular belief, the *real* reason behind all of this seemingly senseless terrorist violence is **not** that Islamic State fighters actually believe that they will one day take over the world (as the Qur'an indeed seems to ultimately encourage) ... True, a few of the more deluded of those fighters *might* believe this to be the goal, and yet the vast majority of them know what all other sensible people around the world know: namely, that Islamic extremists have absolutely NO CHANCE of ever taking over the world -- NONE whatsoever.

Of course, the *true* reason behind these attacks is actually far more sinister, far more dangerous, and far more real. And that reason -- quite simply, and quite logically -- is that those in power want more power; power over not only the world's money (which they essentially already have), but power over the world's people.

And the way they plan to get this power is to con all of you into responding to violence with violence, into responding to ignorance with ignorance, into responding to hatred with hatred. This response, and this response alone, will ultimately lead to enough global unrest for our "leaders" to call for martial law -- a call that their then aggressive &/or terrified populations will timidly & gladly accept.

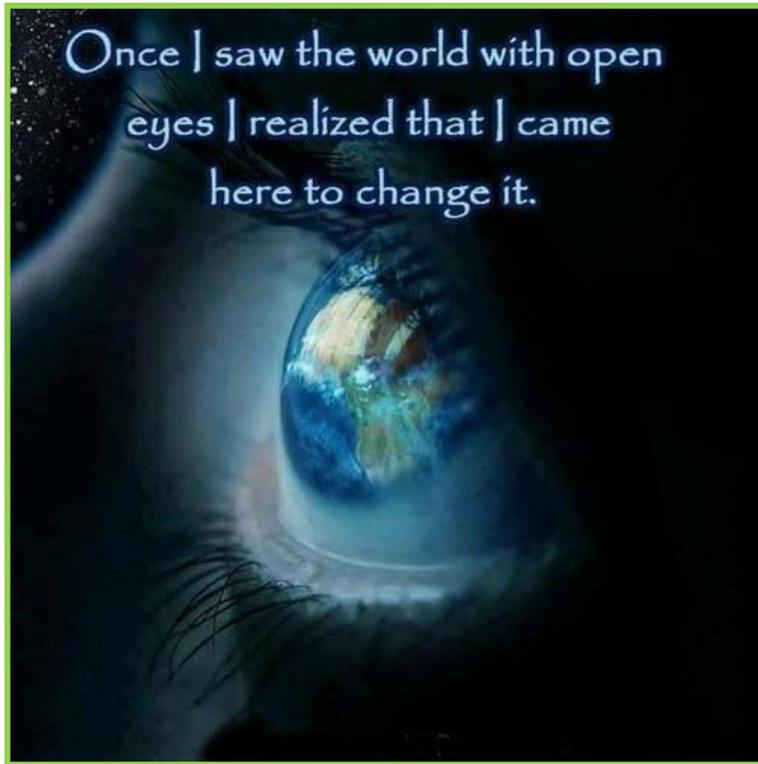
DON'T BUY THE LIE, my Friends ... You do not have to succumb to this insidious plot. Indeed, you can resist it and in-deed, you can defeat it. And yet the only way you can do so it is to respond to these attacks in precisely the way that their perpetrators do not want you to -- namely, with resolve to **stand together** instead of tear each other apart; ... with an open expression of unity of cultures & a harmony of creeds instead of a sinking chasm of enmity between them; ... with courageously active, Peace-full protests instead of meek invisibility; ... with open statements of forgiveness for those who do harm instead of hateful condemnations of the same; ... and with open exchanges of compassion for the wicked "leaders" who have perpetrated this great evil upon us, instead of reasonably rising in violence against them.

We are truly capable of so much more, my Friends ... **YOU** are capable of so much more. Yes, our forefathers & foremothers have never done so in our long and sordid and barbaric past -- always responding as they did with violence against violence, with war against the warring, and with evil against evil. AND YET THIS IS A NEW DAY, and we as a species are ready to finally answer the Great Call that was given us from birth -- namely, to have the courage to be agents of Peace & Freedom, instead of cowardly becoming the next generation of feeble pawns in a cold world of war & imprisonment.

Amen ... Let it be so.

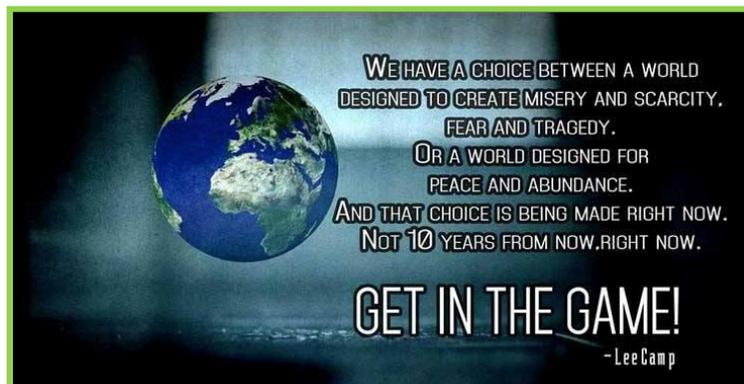
“[This is] a criminal undertaking at a global level ... And there is an ongoing war -- the global war on terrorism, which is fake. It is based on fake premises. It tells us that somehow America and the Western world are going after a fictitious enemy, the Islamic State, when in fact the Islamic State is fully supported and financed by the Western military alliance ... They say Muslims are terrorists, but it just so happens that terrorists are actually made in America. . . . The global war on terrorism is a fabrication, a big lie and a crime against humanity.”

~ Michel Chossudovsky (University of Ottawa Professor Emeritus of Economics)



“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

~ Buckminster Fuller



Who to Listen to (11/17/2015)

Frankly, who **NOT** to listen to is a lot easier to identify than who **TO** listen to, so let's start there, shall we?

*Do **not** listen to anyone whose political residence is located within the boundaries of Washington D.C. ... *Do **not** listen to anyone linked either to the armies of those politicians or the military manufacturers who supply those armies with weapons of death & destruction ... *Do **not** listen to anyone who relays "news" through your television ... *Do **not** listen to anyone who preaches callousness or hatred or intolerance or any other form of divisiveness from *any* pulpit ... *And do **not** listen to anyone who tells you that we just need to sit back and wait for the shit to just blow over.

In marked contrast, **DO** listen to those who are calling for unity ... ***DO** listen to those who are calling for Peace via Peace-full means ... ***DO** listen to those who are calling for Compassion & Forgiveness ... ***DO** listen to those who are calling for you to open your arms to the downtrodden and open your Hearts to those deemed "different" or even "dangerous" ... ***DO** listen to those who are reminding you that *you* and the people in your community ultimately have the power to change things for the better ... *And **DO** listen to those who are telling you to get off your ass, get out into your neighborhood, and **become the Change** that we all desperately need to see.

So, my Friends ... are you Listening?

Peace to ALL -- today & evermore ... *S*

"Some guy once said 'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.' He's got a point. What scares me most, even more than the thought of terrorists coming to my beloved Bremerton, is the crazy things we humans think and do -- and allow -- when we're all riled up with fear and insecurity. That scares me ... a lot. But some other guy once said, 'Fear not.' And he's got a point, too. I suppose a lot depends on which guys I listen to."

~ Rick Seelhoff





To Honor the Victims (11/18/2015)

My Friends, we have all been shaken to the core by recent events -- at the very least the events that took place in Paris last Friday night. And because we have been shaken to the core, we all have an innate desire to do something -- to do something to bring solace to the victims ... to do something to stop the pain ... to do something to quell the terror ... to do something to see that such suffering is never felt again.

And yet even though we all feel these desires innately & purely, many of us are acting on those feelings in highly counterproductive ways -- ways that make the suffering *worse*, and ways that are actually encouraging ISIS to grow stronger and inflict even **more** harm in the future. Albeit understandably, many of us are angrily calling for justice ... many of us are aggressively calling for retribution ... many of us are violently calling for revenge ... many of us are loudly calling for war.

And what will be the inevitable result of such choices? Indeed, what has always been the inevitable result whenever violent responses have been chosen in response to violence? That's right ...

More violence ...
More hatred ...
More discord ...
More pain ...
& more suffering ...
... ALWAYS.

And yet **there is another alternative** available to us; an alternative **that actually works** ... Granted, it is an alternative that requires great Courage -- *far* more courage than any act of violence or aggression, and yet it is an alternative, if persistently applied -- due to the very nature of the human psyche, that is actually guaranteed to succeed ...

And this alternative is open acts of Compassion ...
This alternative is open expressions of Kindness ...
This alternative is open statements of Forgiveness ...
This alternative is open effusions of LOVE & open showings of Unity.

My Friends, with *very* few exceptions, we humans are hard-wired first & foremost to respond to Kindness with Kindness -- to Care for "the hand that feeds" -- to protect and cherish those who are acting as members of "our herd". This isn't some "foofy", impractical philosophical principle ... Rather, this is a simple, fundamental, sociological **FACT**.

We desperately need Peace these days, my Friends -- this much is clear. And yet Peace will never come until *we* choose to be “the bigger man” (or the “nobler woman”) and start treating our enemies Peace-fully ... We will never convince ISIS fighters (or any other enemies) with our words, and we certainly will **never** win using violence ... And yet WE CAN remind those enemies what they all once knew as small children -- namely, that we are *all* essentially members of the same Family; that when they kill us to avenge their own murdered loved ones, they are not avenging those crimes at all -- but are rather perpetrating new ones; that the only way for them to know Peace is to be Peace-full ...

We can remind them of these things, my Friends -- but only if we have the courage to **SHOW THEM** the same.

Amen ... Let it be so.



Christians: Be true to Christ (11/19/2015)

“In the course of the last few days I’ve witnessed in my own social media feeds comments made toward Muslims that would be considered hate speech and threats if such comments were directed at us -- constant fear-baiting by Christian pastors -- calling Islam ‘evil’, saying ‘Muslims are the enemy of God’ and all sorts of other anti-Muslim comments. If this trend does not change, the outcome is bleak. If we’re told over and over again that we are enemies there becomes a distrust and hostility that results in self-fulfilling prophesies – enemies are born, wars arise, and great suffering results. Continue down that line far enough and our children won’t even know why they are enemies to begin with – they’ll just know to hate and mistrust Muslims, and they will learn the same of us.

Sadly, I’m not seeing religious leaders on the Christian side put forth a Christian narrative for how we are to walk this road in our current culture. In fact, what I too often see Christian leaders doing is pushing a narrative that only serves to inflame and divide us even further ... What our culture needs more than ever is people who are modeling their lives after Jesus of Nazareth (peace be upon him) instead of operating under the current narrative of hostility that too many Christian leaders are inviting us into. If the world is going to change, it will only be because you and I choose to act --- now.” ~ Benjamin L. Corey

My dear Friends, may we all have the Courage to become small-yet-significant solutions to the problem of violence, instead of inadvertent agents in support thereof ... How can we do so? Here are a few ideas from Benjamin to help us all get started:

*We can learn how to greet Muslims in Arabic, and when we pass them on the street smile and say hello with the proper greeting (which actually means “peace be upon you”) ... There are plenty of Youtube videos to teach you how to do this.

*We can find Muslim families in our neighborhoods and introduce ourselves to them. We can ask if we can do something nice for them, just as neighbors -- with no strings attached. We can help them with a project on their home, we can help them with yard work, or we can invite them to share a coffee or go out for a vegan dinner.

*We can find a Muslim and sit and learn from them. We can discover what they truly believe ... Indeed, you might be surprised at all the areas of commonality between Christianity and Islam; two members of the same Abrahamic faith.

*Is there a Muslim community center in your area? If there is, you can go by for a visit and ask if there are any areas where you could volunteer and serve the Muslim community there.

Peace to ALL -- today evermore ... *S*



The Weapons of LOVE (11/19/2015)

We are being told that we must strike back with massive force ... We are being told that “justice must be served” – brutally enforced with a rain of missiles and a hailstorm of bullets ... We are being told that it is our “moral duty” to destroy the enemy of terrorism ... We are being told that Love is futile and that Peace has failed.

Well I say – This is **NOT SO!**

For to strike back with massive force -- and to seek vengeance upon our perpetrators -- and to thereby serve them with their “appropriate punishments” is to assure the victory of the very forces that have harmed us so deeply.

You see, they want us to be angry ... They want us to weep & wail and call for death & destruction ... They want us to hate them ... They want another war.

Well, not on my watch -- and certainly not with my permission.

Indeed, there are only a small assortment of “weapons” that work against violence and terror and evil ... and they are the shields of Happiness, they are the swords of Forgiveness, and they are the daggers of LOVE.

“You took the life of someone exceptional, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but I will not hate you.”

ANTHONY LEHRIS

Amen ... Let us remember these Weapons today,
... and let us go forth and use them accordingly.

Peace to ALL -- today & evermore ... *S*



Why we get pissed at terrorists (11/19/2015)

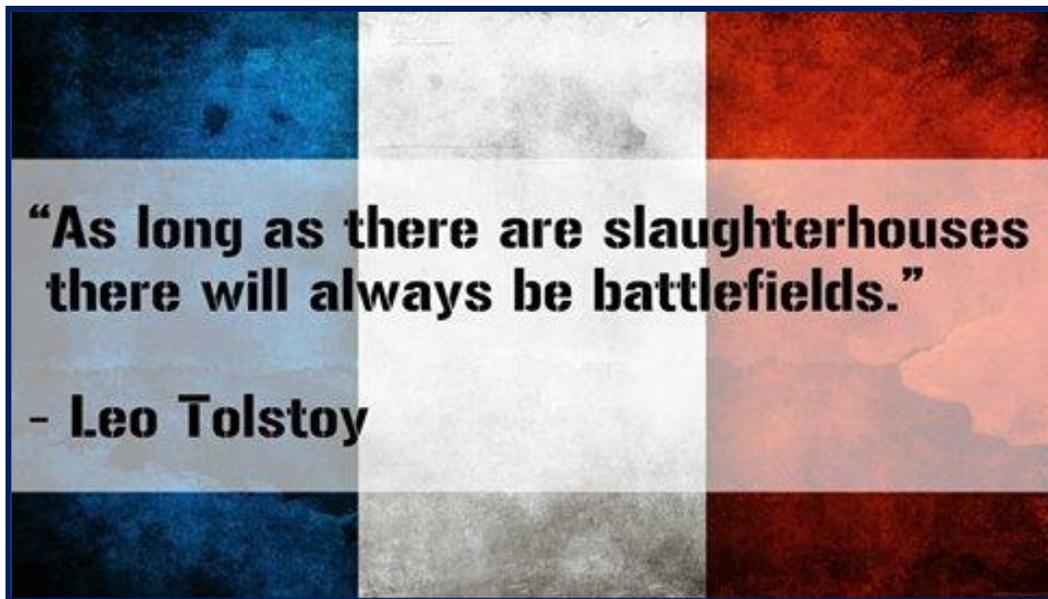
Here is some food for thought: All of our negative emotional responses -- especially anger; more especially rage -- actually come from fear ... And those reactions are only felt intensely when we ourselves are perpetrating the same "crime" that has us so afraid, and/or that we ourselves have perpetrated at some time in our past, and/or that we ourselves are somehow desiring to perpetrate in the near future.

My dear Friends, until we free our lives of the brutal pain & suffering that *we* are causing others, we will never be free of pain & suffering ourselves ...

And here's the Good News: You can stop causing others pain & suffering whenever you wish; a choice that starts -- and ultimately ends -- with going vegan.

Peace to ALL -- today & evermore ... *S*

"We often ask if we can make a difference in the world, and yet if we pose this question, we are asking the wrong one. For it is not whether we CAN make a difference; it is whether we DO make a difference that is the real query ... Every single action we take has a direct impact on many other sentient lives. So we actually don't get to choose whether we CAN make difference or not. We only get to choose whether the difference we DO make is a negative or a positive one. Indeed, in every single moment of our lives, those are our only two options ... There are no neutral choices." ~ inspired by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau



Letting Freedom RING (01/23/2016)

Persecution anywhere is persecution everywhere, and injustice tolerated is injustice defended ... It is true indeed that those who stand silently by and do nothing against acts of oppression have in truth actively taken the side of the oppressors; that those who stand by and do nothing while innocent men & women & animals are confined & abused & ridiculed & murdered are the most important allies of the evil ones who are actively perpetrating that confining & inflicting that abusing & doing that ridiculing & perpetrating that murder.

My dear friends, in essence it is simply the case that either you stand up loud & proud against unjust oppression, or you become the oppressor ... period.

If you do not **stand up** against ISIS, you are supporting the evils of ISIS in the Middle East ... If you do not **stand up** against Israel, you are supporting the evils of Israel in Gaza ... If you do not **stand up** against Obama, you are supporting the evils of America's repulsive Drone War ... If you do not **stand up** against Donald Trump, you are supporting his ignorance & his racist xenophobia ... If you do not **stand up** against Hillary Clinton, you are supporting her lies & her greed & her corruption.

Freedom is crumbling all around us, my Friends, and it is no longer enough for us to merely refuse to participate in the wickedness that is causing it to crumble. No, the time has come for us to **DO SOMETHING for Freedom**. The time has come for us to stand *together* -- and the time has come for us to shout *together* -- and the time has come for us to resist *together* -- and the time has come for us to dance *together*.

The time has come for Peace, and the time has come for Courage -- and without the latter, the former will not survive.

Freedom for ALL ... S





Home of the Unbrave (01/27/2016)

The religion of Islam has its share of fundamentalist zealots, that much it true (though far fewer of them than Christianity had when it was of the same age), and the Koran is indeed a most problematic tome that seems to do anything but promote peace (I'm only half-way through it at the moment, but it's not looking to peaceful so far) ... AND YET, despite these truths, America will only once again become the "Home of the Brave" when its citizens start acting accordingly ...

*The United States will truly be "the Home of the Brave" when Americans have the courage to openly extend the same Respect to, & champion the same Rights for, those who hold different beliefs than they -- the same Respect that they regularly request & receive; the same Rights that they loudly demand & deserve.

* The United States will truly be "the Home of the Brave" when Americans have the courage to openly enliven the founding principles of Generosity & Freedom & Unity for *all* – the same principles that are embedded in their Constitution and the same ones that form the very heart of their Declaration of Independence.

*The United States will truly be "the Home of the Brave" when Americans have the courage to do the only thing that has any chance of bringing them the security & the peace that they ostensibly crave -- namely, stop attacking their enemies with words of denigration & acts of violence (which only makes those enemies stronger), and reach out to those same enemies with persistent acts of Compassion & Kindness instead.

Until that day comes, America will remain nothing more than a country (mostly) of cowards -- ruled by harbringers of hatred; justified by ignorance (or worse, indifference); and fueled by both fanaticism & fear.

Let it not be so any longer, my Friends. Please do your part today to stop this primitive & highly damaging madness ...

Please do your part by being Brave.



Did I DO today?
(01/31/2016)

Did I offer peace today, and did I do so with my actions more than my words? ... Did I bring a smile to a stranger's face today? ... Did I say words of healing to a Friend? ... Did I set aside my fear of those who are different today? ... Did I reach out to them and Care? ... Did I let go of my anger and resentment for my trespassers today, and forgive them with subtle acts of Kindness? ... Did I Love my life today, and feel overwhelmed with gratitude that I am -- at least for today -- still alive in it?

These are the real questions, my Friends. Especially in these dark days of violence and injustice and bigotry, *these* are the questions that must be posed -- and these are the questions that we must repeatedly answer, with deeds more than with words, and always with a resounding **YES!**

The little bit of courageous LOVE we shine upon life's difficult times (and especially towards life's difficult people) will always ultimately bear the beautiful fruits of Peace and Justice and Harmony; both here in this world and in whatever life may come hereafter.

So shine brightly, my beautiful Friends ...

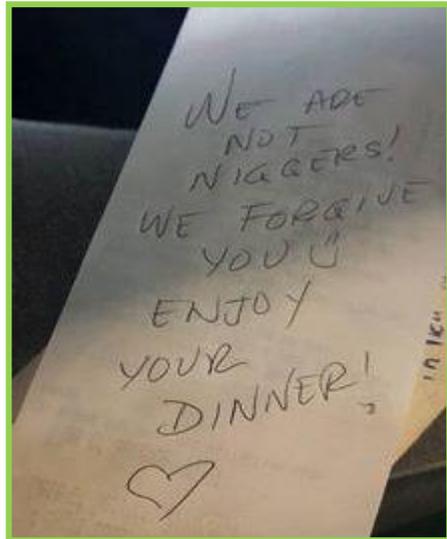
Go forth and let your Self SHINE!

(~ inspired by Henri Nouwen)



Because they need it most
(03/03/2016)

“I stopped to get dinner for my son and the guy behind us in the drive-thru yells to my son, 'Hurry up, ya fuckin' nigger!' When I got to the window I asked to pay for his order. I wrote this on the back of his receipt and asked the cashier to hand it to him with his food. My son asked me why I paid for his food if he was so mean, and I explained that being kind to nice people is easy; that we need to be kind to the mean people, because it's the hardest thing to do -- and because they need it the most.” ~ an anonymous Hero

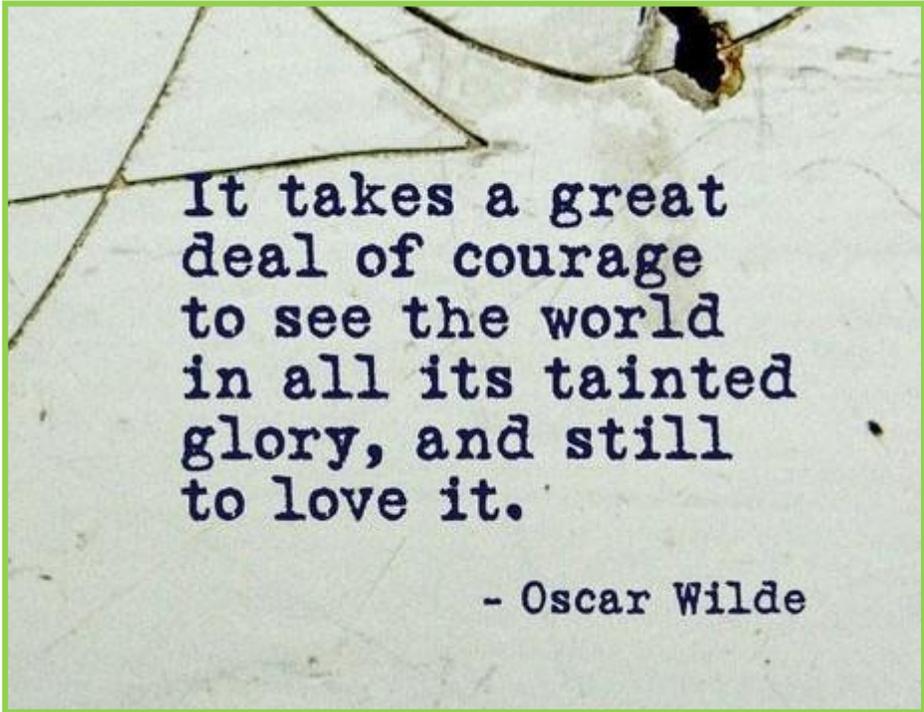


No matter who wins the upcoming U.S. Presidential election, the damage done by Donald Trump's campaign will -- at least for the time being -- remain ... Where the ignorant & the hateful used to keep mostly to themselves and stew privately in their bigoted delusions, Donald Trump has made it acceptable -- praiseworthy, even -- for them to bring their lack of knowledge & their lack of compassion out of the closet; to broadcast their ignorance loud & proud and to let their intolerance lash out upon all unlike them in their midst ... They are angry and they are scared and they are confused and they are uneducated -- a most dangerous mix that always erupts in ways that cause others great pain & great suffering.

We will not be able to stop them from continuing to harm the innocent, and we will not be able to stop them from pushing each other into more & more flagrant acts of violence -- those physical as well as those verbal ... Ignorance is bred over generations and it is locked down tight with years of fear-bred hatred. As such, it will take generations of patient Kindness to erase its vile falsehoods and soothe its despicable traditions.

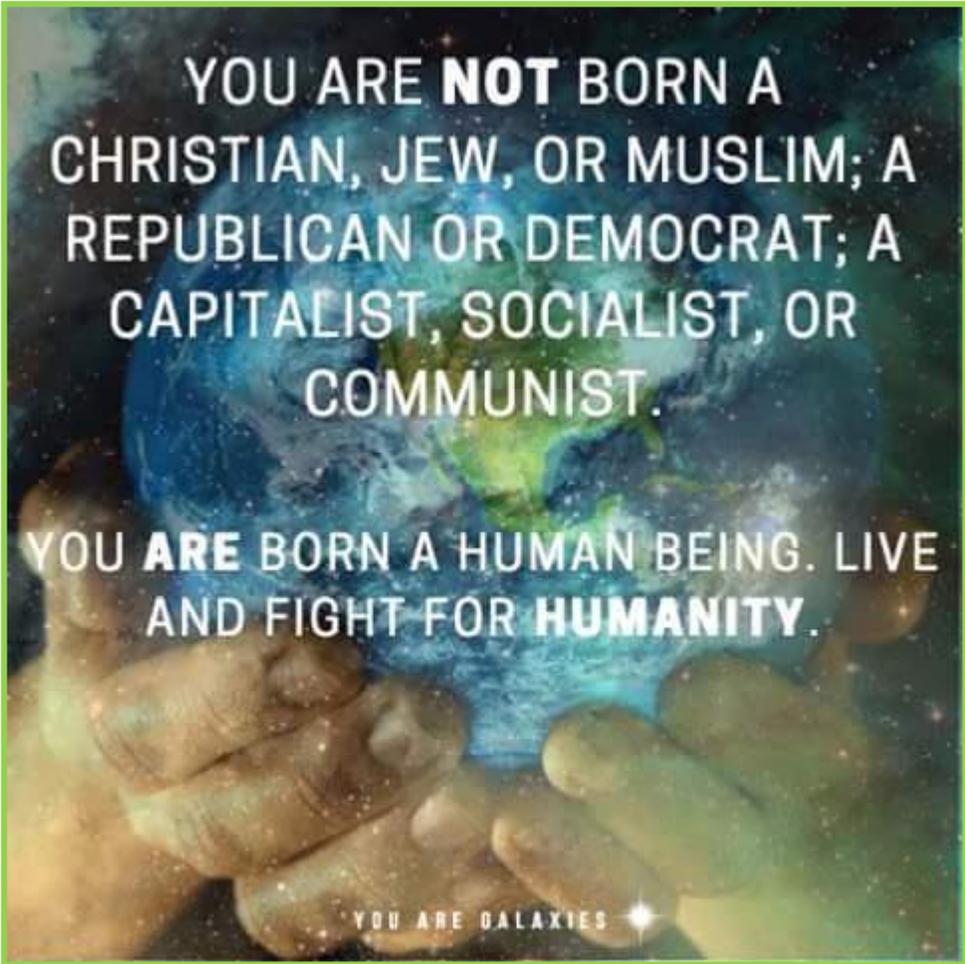
That having been said, it is VERY IMPORTANT how we Caring Folks deal with the public spews of bigotry that will indeed be escalating in our communities over the next several months (if not the next several years) ... It can be confusing to know what to do when faced with such barbarity -- and yet it is hopefully clear to all of you that DO SOMETHING we must ... The question is “What” ... Fortunately, this Noble Soul was brave enough to show us how it needs to be done when it becomes our turn to act ... God bless them! And may we all have the courage to respond similarly when confronted by situations similar.

Amen ... Let it be so!



It takes a great
deal of courage
to see the world
in all its tainted
glory, and still
to love it.

- Oscar Wilde



YOU ARE **NOT** BORN A
CHRISTIAN, JEW, OR MUSLIM; A
REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT; A
CAPITALIST, SOCIALIST, OR
COMMUNIST.

YOU **ARE** BORN A HUMAN BEING. LIVE
AND FIGHT FOR **HUMANITY**.

YOU ARE GALAXIES

Whatever you can; wherever you Are
(02/05/2016)

*“We are all guaranteed only one day -- today -- to make our lives count for something. As such, we are all Called -- each & every moment of each & every day, **not** to ‘save the world’ or ‘become great’ or ‘be a hero’, but rather to simply go forth and **DO SOMETHING** -- whatever we already can, wherever we already are, with whatever we already have -- to try to make a positive difference in the lives of others.”* (~ inspired by Jimmy Carter)



On the other Heart (03/12/2016)

On one hand, the mass media is telling us that the days of Kindness & Integrity are over; that a new era of intolerance & fear & hatred has begun ... AND YET the Truth of the matter is *much* different. The Truth of the matter is that a vast portion of humanity is actually waking up to what it means to be truly Human(e) ... The Truth of the matter is that people everywhere are turning off their televisions and turning on their Hearts ... The Truth of the matter is that people everywhere are facing their fears and choosing Love over anxiety, Respect over rudeness, and Decency over demagoguery.

Don't get me wrong, things do still look pretty grim -- there are still millions of folks whose minds have been soaked in the rank stew of bigotry and cowardice. And as such, there is still a more-than-decent chance that our species will not survive the next 100 years – maybe not even the next 50 ...

AND YET there is still hope, and we all -- each & every one of us -- *can* still make a significant difference ... This means YOU ... YOU can do your part **today** to see that your community shines brighter in solidarity instead of descending further into the shadows of cultural phobias. YOU can extend Kindness to those least like you ... YOU can be generous with those who have less or need more ... YOU can call for Peace while loudly denouncing all those who spout ignorance & hatred & violence.

YOU can make a difference ...
YOU can help save humanity.
Won't you help us do so?



A fan of Humanity (03/10/2016)

While I am NOT a big fan of the Koran (I'm almost finished reading the whole thing, and it is indeed quite the disturbing read -- championing a disturbingly similar level of exclusivist immorality & dysfunctional manipulation as that found in the Bible's Old Testament and its concluding book of Revelation), I **AM** a fan of humanity -- specifically those humans (many of them Muslims) who have chosen to sacrifice their own comfort & their own wealth & indeed even their own freedom to better the lives & ease the suffering of others ... I may not be a big fan of Islam, and yet I **AM** a HUGE fan of all those humans (Christian & Muslim & Buddhist & atheist alike) who are out there serving humankind ... And the sooner we each wake up and realize that we are *all* one Family -- the sooner we can start saving our species by acting accordingly.

So please choose to become part of the solution to the world's current scourge of war & violence ... Please do whatever you can to speak up against all forms of bigotry today ... For it is the fear that fuels the hatred, my Friends, and it is ignorance that strengthens discrimination ...

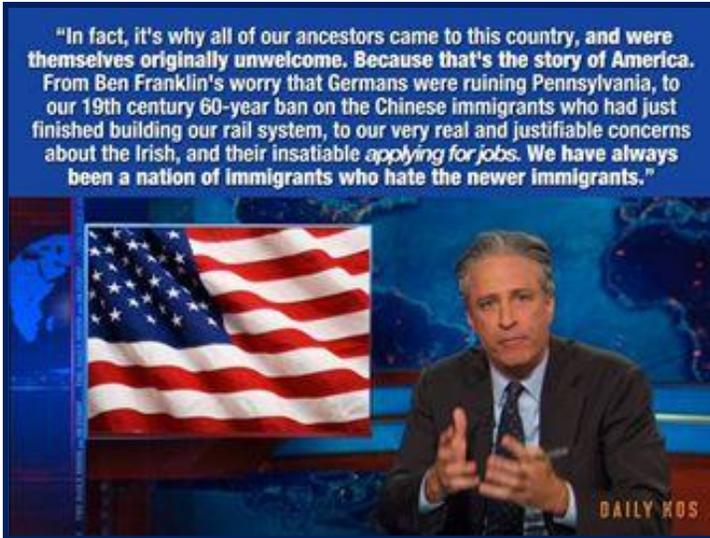
LOVE destroys both ... Be a source of LOVE.

Thank you.

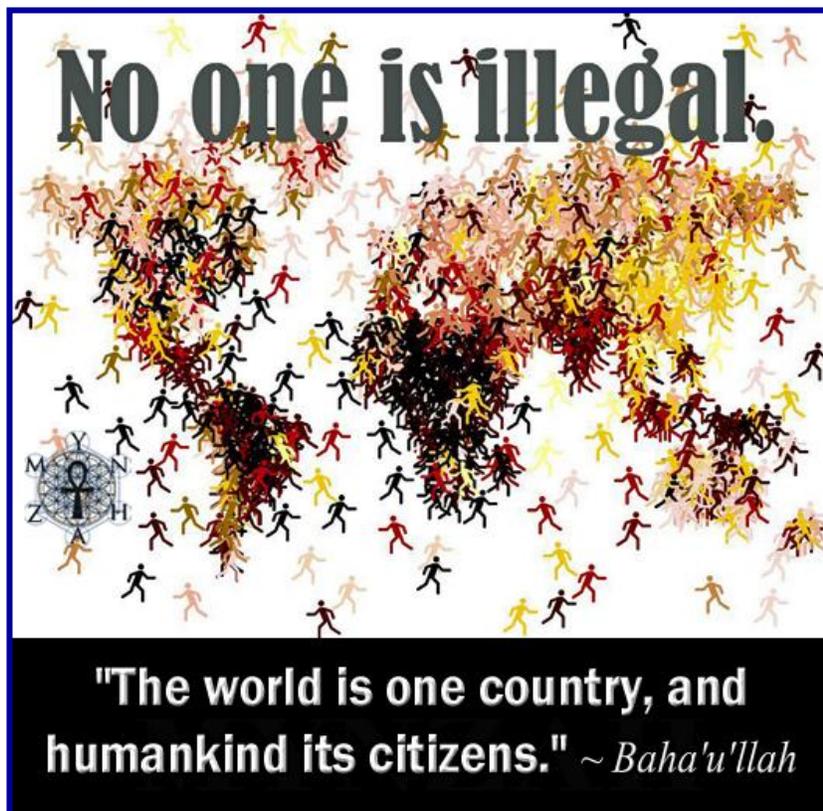


Those dadgum Divisions (03/11/2016)

If it weren't so hypocritical -- and if it weren't so dadgum saddening, I would get a real kick out of all these conservative pundits and right-wing politicians complaining about all the illegal immigrants from Mexico & all the "dangerous refugees" fleeing the war-torn Middle East ... But it *is* hypocritical -- and it *is* deeply saddening ... and so I really don't get much of a kick out of it at all.



"We would all do well to remember that all of us -- you and I everyone we know -- are all descended from immigrants and revolutionists ... The truth is, immigrants tend to exhibit more American values than people who were born here"
~ inspired by Franklin D. Roosevelt & Chuck Palahniuk



To forgive a Trump
(03/14/2016)

Dear Donald Trump,

Let there be no mistake, these are dark days for America. And let there be no mistake, YOU are one of the reasons they are indeed so dark ... You have riled up the more fear-filled half of the American populace and have frenzied them to the point where they are now teetering over a very real precipice of self-destruction -- precariously poised to mold America into the Fourth Reich -- more than ready to splinter the once United States into a land of authoritarian confinement and a home of violent cowardice -- more than happy to make those still United States even more impoverished at home and even more hated abroad.

AND YET I humbly admit that hating you for this movement towards madness is **not** the solution ... Attacking you as a man is **not** going to inspire you to be more dignified or have more integrity ... Blasting you for your dangerous demagoguery is **not** going to cause you to become the Kind & Noble leader that America so desperately needs ... Insulting your lack of decency is **not** going to force you to strive to instill the value of Fairness in our workplaces, or the value of Justice in our courtrooms, or the value of Compassion in our neighborhoods.

Yes, even though you are a man whose mere tone of strident arrogance & rabid aggression calls forth massive effusions of hatred & violence, you too are a human being ... You too are worthy of the strong Love we wish you would champion ... You too are worthy of the pure Forgiveness for which we all yearn.

And so I take this time this morning to forgive you, Donald ...

*I forgive you for denigrating women -- for implying that they are in any way "less than"; that they should in any way feel shame for their gender; that they should in any way be subservient to men ... AND -- even as I forgive you, know that I will spend the rest of my life loudly championing the rights of all women to live lives graced with equality and dignity and respect; know that I will spend the rest of my days boldly standing between sexism and its intended victims -- our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, and our friends.

*And I forgive you for your racist comments about Mexican immigrants -- for implying that they are criminals and rapists; that they should feel shame for trying to better the lives of themselves & their families by risking everything to sneak over the border and work very hard for very little pay ... AND -- even as I forgive you, know that I will spend the rest of my life proudly supporting their inalienable right to be treated with decency -- with open arms instead of closed borders; with generosity & goodwill instead of a cold, jagged wall and the callous threats of dismissal & deportation.

*And know as well that I forgive you for spawning the fear, and indeed the hatred, of Muslims -- for blatantly spewing the lie that most Muslims hate America; that most Muslims are violent people; that most Muslims are dangerous and want to destroy the lives of non-Muslims. I forgive you for openly calling for the use of torture against those Muslims who are merely suspected of being terrorists, and I forgive you for openly calling for the cold-blooded murder of innocent Muslim men, women & children who happen to be family members of actual radicals -- ironically (and sadly) claiming to do so in the name of “freedom” & “democracy” ... AND -- even as I forgive you for these atrocious acts of ignorance (and yes, wanton evil), know that I will spend the rest of my life staunchly defending *all* those who are similarly persecuted, and that I will spend the rest of my days uplifting *all* those -- Muslim & Christian & Hindu & Buddhist & atheist alike -- who are being unjustly thrown down by the cruel hands of ignorant bigotry and callous aggression.

So my dear Donald, while I unabashedly loathe everything you currently stand for (and deeply mourn the loss of everything you do not), I set aside my anger over the many you are harming & my frustration over the many who are helping you to do so. I set those feelings aside to write to you today and send you my most unconditional Forgiveness and my purest Compassion ...

God knows you need them these days more than most.



Just be Kind (03/17/2016)

Despite what you might think, being mean -- or angry -- or aggressive -- will never, ever accomplish what you desire or hope for. You may superficially feel better about yourself for acting that way, of course, and yet in reality making those choices has the exact OPPOSITE effect on others. What it actually does is bring more anger, more hatred, more violence and more separation into your life.

So if you want to make the world better for **all** beings, then simply be kind ... And if you want to stop the suffering in this world, then simply show the beings in your world kindness each and every day.

In essence, if you want to see change in the world, then you've simply got to BE THAT CHANGE! ... Let *your* words and *your* actions be in alignment with *your* best thoughts and *your* most compassionate feelings. Rise above any internal struggles of fear or anger or prejudice that you might have and be the better person. Be kind ... Be loving ... Be caring ... Be a compassionate soldier for this world; not a violent warrior against others who are also living in it.

Together we can help make this world a better, kinder, gentler place for **all** beings ... Let's get started today.

(~ inspired by Donald Wisch)



A Call to PEACE (03/23/2016)

Let me be clear from the beginning -- terrorism is awful, and I denounce every act thereof wholeheartedly ... That having been said, it is just as important to state that most of the more common responses to terrorism actually make the suffering it causes worse and actually make future terrorist attacks far more likely ... As such, those responses (however understandable they might be) -- aggression, anger, revenge, violence, bigotry, persecution -- are just as awful as the attacks themselves.

So, with these Truths in mind, and in the wake of the latest ISIS-inspired tragedy in Brussels yesterday, let's take a moment to take a deep breath and review **the Moral Reality** of the brutal awfulness of the matter, shall we?

*First off, it is awful that innocent people are maimed & murdered for a radical minority's misguided political &/or religious agenda ... AND,

*It is awful that the Koran (which yes, I have read) is indeed an exclusivist book that directly encourages discrimination & division, and that indirectly hopes for world domination ... AND,

*It is awful that the Bible is essentially *just as immoral*; just as exclusivist, just as rife with division & discrimination against all deemed "other"; just as supportive of violence, and just as hopeful for ultimate world domination ... AND,

*It is awful that the majority of the world's Muslims are being labeled as terrorists despite the fact that the vast majority of them (despite their Koran) are peaceful, kind, loving people who would never do anyone any harm ... AND,

*It is awful that so many of the world's Christians & Jews are arrogantly looking down upon Muslims because of recent terrorist attacks, while conveniently ignoring the fact that **A**) their religions were even more immorally violent in their "younger days", and **B**) the governments of their home countries (primarily the United States with its drone strikes, and Israel with its apartheidization of Gaza) are actually *causing* the radicalization of Islam with their standard & constant policies of violence against & persecution of Muslims ... AND,

*It is awful that the U.S. and its allies were behind the creation of the group that claimed responsibility for the latest attacks, just as it is awful that those same "world leaders" continue to directly fund & support similar terrorist groups ... AND,

*It is awful that the average American refuses to think for his or her innately moral self; preferring instead to be willingly spoon-fed the American media's disgusting brand of anti-Muslim vitriol & anti-Islam fear-mongering -- leading to open prejudice against innocent Muslims (who are now frequently being called "Muzzies" by the ignorant & the fearful, and who are frequently being threatened with -- or actually inflicted with -- acts of physical violence) ... AND,

*It is awful that, except for Germany (who is indeed doing her fair share), the governments primarily responsible for the massive international Muslim refugee crisis have fully abandoned the world's Muslim refugees -- the vast majority of whom being innocent people brutally forced from their homes by attacks inflicted or instigated by the United States &/or her allies ... AND,

*It is awful that the most common response to terrorist attacks are precisely the responses that the terrorists want – namely **A**) violent reprisals that inevitably kill more innocent Muslims, and that then inspire surviving family members to become “terrorists” themselves ... **B**) a crackdown on the liberties of those lands afflicted (e.g. The Patriot Act in the U.S., the current pseudo-martial-law in France & NSA spy programs throughout the world) ... **C**) an almost rabid fear of all Muslims that is crushing any chances for real understanding & thus, eventual peace ... **D**) and an overt aggression towards (and often violence against) all Muslims that is pushing more & more of those people towards radical terror groups ...

ALL of this is simply awful, my Friends -- ALL OF IT ... and a great majority of it cannot be stopped by you alone ... And yet **you can do your part** to stop it. You can do your part to turn the tide away from ignorance & aggression and back towards decency & peace ...

*You can do your part by refusing to give in to your primal fears ... You can start by being bold in your Love, despite what the mass media & your politicians are telling you ... You can start by refusing to submit to the barbarism of Islamophobia yourself ... AND,

*You can also do your part by standing up boldly against those who would spread that same fear and further that same ignorance ... You can openly (and respectfully) rebuke the racists in your midst, and you can loudly (and not-so-respectfully) rail against fear-mongering leaders who rain down their inanities from on high ... You can be a voice of peace in this time of conflict, my Friends; you can be a beacon of Light in this time of grim darkness.

*AND most importantly of all, you can do your part by actively reaching out to CARE for the Muslims in your community ... You can worship with them, you can feed them, you can speak with them, you can smile at them, you can hug them, you can revel with them, and you can mourn with them.

Rest assured my Friends, until Islam has the fortitude to reform itself from within, it will continue to be a false-flag puppet in the wicked wars of the rich & the potent ... Until the vast majority of peaceful Muslims have the courage & the wherewithal to stand up to their more radical brothers & sisters and convince them to stand down, those violent few will continue to be used by the world's “leaders” to inflict further acts of senseless, fear-provoking, and suffering-producing carnage.

And yet this is NOT a hopeless situation ... **WE CAN** put an end to this madness. And please understand that it will not be via voting booth or sidewalk debate that peace ultimately comes ... No, my Friends, true Peace will only come when we each have the bravery to **STAND** with our Muslim brothers & sisters as Brothers & Sisters -- when we each enliven the courage to support them in their quest to reform their religion -- when we each have the moral fortitude to resist our instinctive calls to react with ignorance & aggression & fear, and replace the same with Compassion & Forgiveness & Love.

Amen ... Let it be so.



We ALL matter
(04/02/2016)

My dear Friends, each & every one of us has a unique road to walk during this wild & crazy ride called Life -- each one of us has a trail that only we can tread, and each one of us encounters trials & tragedies along that path that only we can ever truly know or comprehend ... That having been said, there ARE a few things all our individual paths do indeed share -- there ARE a few traits that all our roads do indeed have in common. And one of those commonalities is an inevitable **Expansion of Empathy** ...

Yes, it does seem true that some of us wait much longer than others to have our Hearts blossom -- and it does seem true that a few folks even wait until the very end of their lives to begin to deeply Care for those around them, *and yet* that Day of Caring; that day when we no longer see strangers as strange and we no longer see our enemies as evil -- that day will indeed come to us all. It will come to us all, it will come with great power & great intensity, and it will come with an almost overwhelming purity. It will come to every single one of us, and when it does the only thing we will want to do is get up and go do something -- *anything* -- to make the world a better, more Joy-full &/or more Peace-full place.

I personally know I have a long way to go on my own Journey of Awakening, *and* I also feel my Heart waking up more & more each day ... I feel myself feeling deep Kindness towards random strangers and a deep-seated Compassion for my enemies ... I realize with ever-increasing clarity that I too only have a few years (or maybe only a few months, or maybe even only a few days) left in my lifetime to make things better, and that's pretty much all I want to do anymore ...

And I think that is why I LOVE the images on the opposing page so much ... I LOVE them because they are raw proof that I am not alone -- that others' Hearts are waking UP with mine ... And I LOVE them because they make me want to get up and get out there and hug the scariest person I can find (or at least smile at them and offer a warm Hello) ... And I LOVE them because they inspire me to be Kind to the people in my life who are not being very Kind to me, and to reach out with warmth & softness to those around me who are not being very Kind to others ... I guess I LOVE them because they give me hope for Humanity. In a time when we are all facing so much corruption and so much violence and so much hatred and so much danger -- so many of us are still having the courage to act from a place of LOVE.

I don't really know if our species is going to make it, and yet I do know that we still have a chance ... And I don't know if enough of us are going to join me in my fight to get us to evolve to a different Way of Being with one another, and yet I do know that I do make a difference (we ALL do) -- and I do know that I am going to keep going out there each day to do my small-but-significant part to maybe get us to the place of Kindness & Empathy where we definitely need to go.

Amen ... Let it be so for you as well!



FREEDOM or Bust

(05/07/2016)

Unlike “Bernie or Bust”, a political movement determined to get the established system to somehow change itself from within, “Freedom or Bust” is a ***SOCIAL MOVEMENT*** whose supporters have finally come to realize a patent Truth; namely, the Truth that there are no longer political solutions to America's major social problems -- problems that were for the most part caused by American politics in the first place, and problems that (for the most part) are actually embraced by almost all of Americas current politicians ... Whereas “Bernie or Bust” would have us try futilely to strong-arm the system into giving up what it loves the most, “Freedom or Bust” would have us recognize that the system is completely broken, and have us quietly exit that system entirely.

To fully understand “Freedom or Bust”, Americans must first understand the intentionally designed constraints forced upon them by the two-party system (Republicans vs. Democrats), and how this system ultimately serves the Oligarchy and the Oligarchy alone ... And they also have to understand that they most certainly do, in fact, live in an Oligarchy and most certainly **NOT** in a democracy ... And they must come to accept the fact that this happened because up until now, most of them have unwittingly complied with their now-fully-corrupted two-party system; handing over their democratic power to the elites by almost always voting for the “lesser of two evils” – instead of living for the Greater Good.

And why has this been able to take place? Simply put -- LAZINESS; laziness and fear -- nothing more, and nothing less. And this laziness and this fear have allowed America to fall into the hands of large corporations run by small gaggles of uber-wealthies; allowed Americans to be ruled by people who don't give a damn about anything other than making their own small lives ever more comfortable by making their own bank accounts grow ever larger.

My Friends, “Freedom or Bust” is about WAKING UP to the Truth -- the Truth that it is ***people***, not corporations or their politician puppets, who truly care about the very grave problems facing America (and indeed, the rest of humanity) ... “Freedom or Bust” is simply about having the courage & the integrity to step away from a pattern of apathy; a pattern that has Americans waiting for years for politicians to fix what they themselves could even now so readily repair.

“Freedom or Bust” is about reaching out into your own communities, my Friends ... It is about going door-to-door and finding 5-12 like-minded neighbors ... It is about pooling your resources with theirs ... It is about dividing up communal tasks that will bring you all self-sustainability and a long-overdue taste of real Freedom ... And it is about Joy-fully getting started with those most Meaning-full tasks.

I realize that this is an uncomfortable proposition ... My ego too would rather cast my vote once every four years and then sit on my sofa and wait for my elected “leaders” to make my community viable again ... But that is simply NOT GOING TO HAPPEN ... In America at least, “Freedom or Bust” is the only viable solution that remains ...

We have to come together in our neighborhoods and steadily remove ourselves from the clutches of the Oligarchy. We have to grow our own food (and share it with those who are hungry) ... We have to collect & purify our own water (and share it with those who thirst) ... We have to educate our children about creativity & compassion; about interdependence & integrity ... We have to reach out to the poor & the downtrodden in our midst and bring them gently into our fold ... In essence, we simply have to start doing for each other what our Oligarchy-corrupted “leaders” should have been doing for us long ago.

And make no mistake, “Freedom or Bust” WILL succeed ... For once we choose to stand together -- and WORK together FOR one another, we humans have proven time & again that we truly can accomplish anything & everything.

There is important work to do, my Friends ... There is Freedom to be reclaimed and a new Great Society to be rebuilt -- one community at a time ...

Let's go get started.

(inspired by Mike Klingler)



A Way to Peace & Freedom (05/19/2016)

There are some very basic ways any oligarchy maintains power over its people -- one of those is fear (xenophobic propaganda; virus scares; the “threat of terrorism” etc); another is a sense of helplessness (poverty + corrupted politics + control over its citizens' food & water supply) ... Since these are the ways the American oligarchy is also currently maintaining its choke-hold on the American populace, it would be very wise indeed for *all* United States citizens to make *immediate* efforts to neutralize these two forms of oppression -- the former by turning off all mass-media devices and ignoring all politicians (and their hollow &/or too-little-too-late promises), and the latter by collecting & purifying rainwater + developing personal &/or community gardens.

It doesn't take that much effort to hit the “off” switch on your television, my Friends, and it doesn't take that much effort or that much land (especially if working & sharing with others) to grow & procure most of your own food and water. THIS is the only way to dismantle fear, and THIS is the only way you will ever be truly free again.

I humbly & lovingly recommend that you get together with your neighbors and get started TODAY ... **Peace.**





Worrying about Courage (05/26/2016)

Courage is not the absence of fear, or even its replacement or dismissal ...
No, my Friends; real Courage is being terrified of Love,
... and yet going forth to **Love anyway**.

I Worried

Mary Oliver

I worried a lot. Will the garden grow, will the rivers
flow in the right direction, will the earth turn
as it was taught, and if not, how shall
I correct it?

Was I right, was I wrong, will I be forgiven,
can I do better?

Will I ever be able to sing, even the sparrows
can do it and I am, well,
hopeless.

Is my eyesight fading or am I just imagining it,
am I going to get rheumatism,
lockjaw, dementia?

Finally I saw that worrying had come to nothing.
And gave it up. And took my old body
and went out into the morning,
and sang.



Memorializing Memorial Day (05/30/2016)

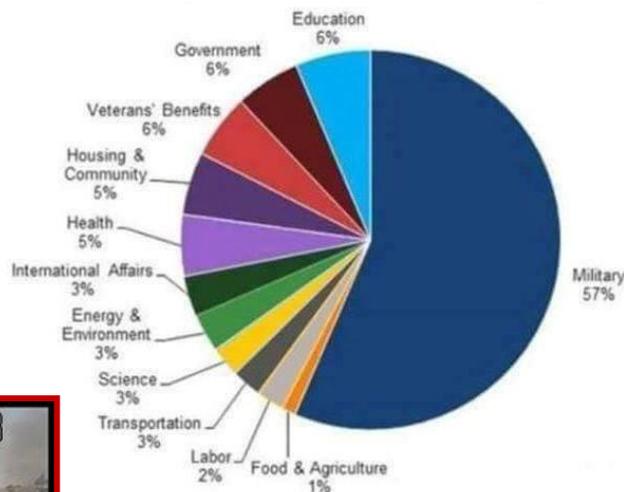
Here's to all the brave men & women in the U.S. armed forces who nobly sacrificed their lives for a most despicable lie ... May they who have already passed on rest in peace, and may those that remain behind finally awaken to the Truth: the Truth that violence never brings Peace – the Truth that violence only begets more violence – the Truth that they are definitely not fighting for freedom – the Truth that they are fighting to expand an empire – and the Truth that they most certainly are NOT making life safer for their loved ones, but are actually making it far more pain-fully dangerous.

Indeed, my American Friends, the only way for you to truly support your troops is to demand that your government bring them **ALL** home ... And the only way American soldiers can truly “fight for Freedom” is to have the guts to refuse to fight at all.

Amen ... Let it soon be so.

**IF YOU REALLY
SUPPORT THE
TROOPS THEN
STOP VOTING FOR
PEOPLE WHO SEND
THEM TO FIGHT
WARS FOR OIL
COMPANIES**

Look closely at this chart of federal spending.



15 YEARS OF PERPETUAL WAR

NEARLY 50,000 **22 VETS A DAY**

HOMELESS VETERANS **COMMITTING SUICIDE**

BUT I HAVE 900 BASES IN 130 COUNTRIES

GOING FOR ME, SO THAT'S NICE



Onward to HERE
... or “*Letting go of Loss*”
(06/18/2016)

Often when we lose a dear Friend, we tend to get lost in the not-Now -- pining for what was, or longing for the pain to pass and for things to one day “get better” ... And yet, though these are both fully normal and even quite natural responses to such suffering, it might be a fine thing indeed to remember another way in those moments – namely, to re-member our Way back to Here ... You see, pining for what was and longing for what could be are both innately rejections of what *IS*, and it is the rejecting of what *is* that which creates almost all of our own suffering -- AND that which prevents us from mitigating the suffering of others.

Now this Truth doesn't mean that we are to avoid remembering what was -- as long as we choose to do so to learn from those times without longing to return there ... And this Truth doesn't mean that we don't have visions or dreams or even loosely defined goals for the future -- as long as we embrace those visions as mere guideposts for our Here&Now; as long as we let them shape our current choices without feeling any yearning to arrive at their mythical destinations.

In short, my Friends, whenever we are going through a time of loss -- be it intense mourning, agitated healing, or mellow remembering, if we are sitting on a bench, we should remember that it is wise to sit fully & gratefully on that bench ... Just as when we see someone nearby in need, we should remember that it is our primary privilege of being still alive that we are allowed to rise from our bench and extend them a Loving Hand & an Open Heart.

This is how we honor those who have passed before us ...

This is how we cherish the life that still remains.

Amen ... Let it be so.



Freeing up Freedom (06/28/2016)

We cannot be free while getting our “news” from today's corrupted mass media, just as we cannot be free while getting our “leadership” from today's corrupted politicians ... For the only Truth that is relevant in these days of crisis & fear is the Truth we can witness right in front of us every day, and the only leadership we need in these times of rising darkness & pending disaster is the moral guidance *within us* that is always telling us to reach out and simply DO the Good we can do each & every day.

My dear Friends, *we* are the only people who can make real change anymore, and *we* are the ones who must wake up ... *We* must rise from our sloth & apathy, and once again don our innate cloaks of righteous generosity. *We* must get up from our televisions & our sofas, *we* must get out into our communities, and *we* must start solving what needs to be solved, fixing what needs to be fixed, and caring for those who need caring ...

For this and only this will bring the change we seek to see ...
This and only this will make us truly free again.

Amen ... Please let it be so.



“It is actually far more difficult to free people who desire to remain enslaved than it is to enslave people who want to remain free.”
~ inspired by Machiavelli

Solving Despair (06/29/2016)

It was ultimately a rough one for me today ... The sheer meaninglessness of my job coupled with the outright nastiness and overbearing ignorance of the world around me got to me again and left me in somewhat of a foul mood ... I mean, when you truly LOVE humanity and want soooooo much for EVERYONE to be clothed and to be fed and to live in peace, there really is only so much BS you can take listening to folks rationalize their support for overtly corrupt, war-hungry politicians ... And when you truly LOVE animals and want soooooo much for them all to be treated with the basic decency & fundamental respect they deserve, there really is only so much BS you can take listening to folks make quiver-weak excuses as to why they “just can't give up cheese” or “don't eat that much meat”

Well, whenever days like this hit you, my Friends (and if you truly CARE, then hit you they most certainly will) -- whenever the despair & the frustration seep so deeply into your gut that you feel literally ill at the thought of all the injustice and all the suffering and all the poverty and all the pain, then there really is only one solution guaranteed to work every time.

And that solution is this one:

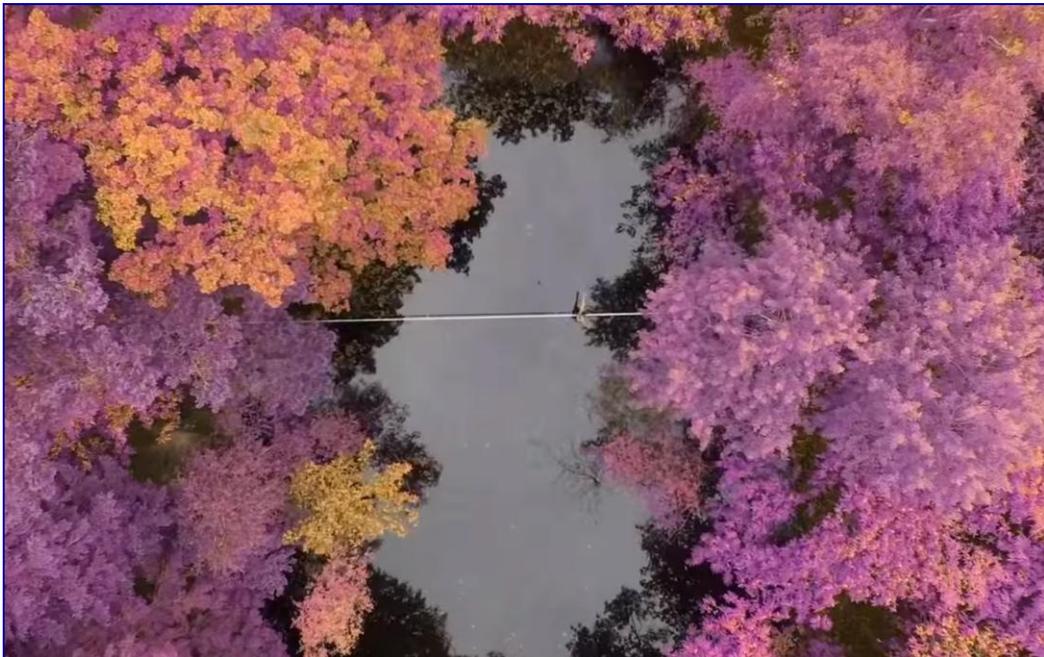
Get up, go outside, and projectile vomit a Soul-full of fully unadulterated, purely unconditional, and completely irrational LOVE all over your neighborhood and everyone in it ...



To Rise Again
(07/02/2016)



America is falling, my Friends -- and she, like so many nations before her, is falling hard; hard & fast into the chilling darkness of poverty & hunger & homelessness -- hard & fast into the steaming haze of bigotry & divisiveness & anger -- hard & fast into the slobbering maw of wars falsely justified by a desire for “national security” & racist violence falsely justified by “the need for law & order” -- hard & fast into the delusion of political change, and hard & fast into the illusion of religious charity.



And yet even though America is falling, there is one thing that most “experts” seem to consistently forget: namely, that America is made up of Americans -- and that Americans are human beings -- and that human beings are, when it gets right down to it, as courageously good-hearted as we are remarkably resilient ... So yes, we are collectively soaking in a time of ignorance and desolation -- and yes, we are indeed falling faster & faster towards an almost unavoidable catastrophe of both nation & state ...



AND YET we are humans, after all, which means that many of us will survive this Fall, and that many of those who survive it will inevitably transcend the days of bleakness that are sure to follow ... We will survive them -- and then we will awaken -- and then we will remember who we truly are -- and then we will come together and then **We Will Rise Again.**



We will take the pain that we have been given -- nay, accept the suffering that we have so clearly (and so masochistically) chosen to embrace, and we will transcend it anyway ... We will rise from the ashes of our bigotry and instead choose to Care for strangers & be Kind to our enemies ... We will rise from the ashes of our cruelty towards “inferior cultures” & “lesser animals” and choose instead to cherish *all* beings as brothers & sisters ... We will rise from the ashes of a society steeped in sloth & apathy & a feeble reliance upon “leaders” both impotent & corrupt and choose instead to be our own Leaders; to let our governments crumble and literally become ourselves the change we so need to see.



The devastation of our current Fall might indeed be our incontrovertible Fate, my dear Friends, and yet our Rise subsequent is just as much our inevitable Destiny ... So please go forth today and do your part to help us both Fall with grace -- and then **Rise with power** thereafter.



Choosing the Road to Peace (07/05/2016)

Last year I got quite a bit of flack for sacrilegiously publishing my all-too-accurate portrayal of the real history of the United States on its “day of independence”, so this year I thought I would give everyone a break on July 4th and not post anything at all -- kind of let Americans sit back and take a day to stick their heads in the sand and just have a bit of fun with friends & family without worrying about all the rampant social plagues that are ravaging their country (and indeed threatening the very well-being of everyone they love & everything they cherish) ... Yesterday was a day of pleasure & comfort -- an oasis of enabled apathy.

There was no need for you to be worrying about Obama's next drone strike killing all those innocent folks' children, ... or Hillary's next war that will destroy thousands of lives after she is coronated this coming November, ... or the TPP which will either directly or indirectly eliminate your job (or at the very least the job of at least one person you know), ... or the institutional racism that continues to keep minority populations in America either mired in poverty or residing in privatized prisons (performing slave labor for the wealthy & the “well connected”), ... or the still-poignant homophobic persecution of the LGBT community, ... or the rise of Donald Trump-inspired xenophobic violence throughout the nation, ... or the still-rising debt, and unemployment, and poverty levels, ... or the annihilation of the middle class, ... or the BILLIONS of sentient animals who humans enslave & torture & murder every single day for their own superficial enjoyments, ... or the coming climate crisis (primarily caused by said animal abuse) which will soon bring us to the culmination of the next Mass Extinction Event -- a global “cleansing” will indeed wipe out (via starvation &/or disease &/or war &/or drought &/or displacement due to rising sea levels) a vast portion of the human population.

Nah ... There's no need to worry about any of that stuff, I thought -- not on a day of hotdogs & beer & fireworks. So I just kept it all to myself and let you all have your celebrations ... After all, life is short, and you too have the right to “enjoy yourselves” while still alive.

That having been said, today is July 5th, which means that reminding you all that **IT IS NOT TOO LATE** is once again fair game ... And it truly isn't too late for us to **DO SOMETHING POSITIVE** for those in need:

*It isn't too late for you to abandon politics altogether and start working with those nearby to build intimate, Giving-based, self-sustainable Community in your neighborhoods ...

*It isn't too late for you stop contributing to the current climate crisis (and to stop endorsing the current animal Holocaust) by *going vegan* -- and in-Couraging your friends & family to do the same ...

*It isn't too late for you to openly reach out to those who have harmed you and offer them your Forgiveness -- and it isn't too late for you to bring real Peace to your community by treating strangers & enemies alike as members of your own family.

My dear Friends, your freedom & your comfort & your “good life” don't mean squat when they are surrounded by the suffering of others, much less when they are directly contributing to that suffering.

And yet today is July 5th -- a new day -- a day of great potential -- a day which *could* very well be the beginning of humanity's ultimate redemption. And yet it will not be such a day unless **YOU** do your part to make it so -- we will **not** know anything new or different unless we each have the courage to wake up each day and choose to walk a very different road -- the Road of Compassion instead of the road of apathy; the Road of Kindness instead of the road of isolationism; the Road of Acceptance instead of the road of bigotry; the Road of Forgiveness instead of the road of anger; the Road of Love instead of the road of fear.

Thank you for listening ...
... and thank you for helping.

Thank you for going forth today to take **the Road of Peace** -- to simply do your part as purely and as powerfully as you can to bring Harmony to places of conflict, to bring Joy to times of sadness, and to bring Love to moments of terror.

Amen ... Let it be so.



To become Human(e) (07/10/2016)

Sheesh -- things have gotten so “manly” these days ... In response to the chaos and anger of the times, I see so many people acting out in ways that are so aggressive -- ways that are understandable, yes, and yet also ways which have been proven time & time & time again not to work. All this aggression and machismo and revenge and toughness; all this fighting for “self-defense” and all this fighting to “defend our country” and this fighting to “destroy terrorism” -- cops killing peaceful black men because they have been taught to fear dying themselves (and because everyone & his uncle in the U.S. is indeed often armed -- and thus is indeed per se dangerous); black men killing well-intended & often peaceful white cops to avenge the same -- anger for anger; fear for fear; violence for violence; death for death ... It makes no sense and it clearly only makes things far worse, and yet we continue on as though we have heard of nothing else -- as if aggression and force and vengeance are the only weapons we have against terror and ignorance and hatred.

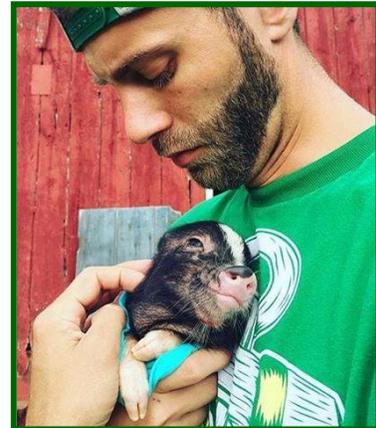
But I understand it all, I guess. We men (and indeed you women as well) have been taught over & over & over again that violence is a noble response to danger: that war will somehow bring peace -- that punishment will somehow bring “rehabilitation” -- that physical assault is the way to safety -- that vicious gossip &/or overt bullying are ways to gain self-esteem -- even that yelling at others is a way to be heard ... And we have even been taught the most destructive lie of all -- that killing & eating others is necessary for us to live.

How sad that the exact opposite is true in every single case -- that “defending” self & country by overtly attacking terrorists actually makes those enemies both more numerous and more motivated to do us harm in the future ... that physical violence shown to others is actually a sign of weakness, never of strength ... that harshly punishing “criminals” only encourages them to commit future crimes ... that speaking loudly & negatively towards those we do not like actually brings forth deep-seated feelings of regret & shame; never Love or self-worth ... that raising our voices in anger only ensures that the other closes his or her ears to what we have to say ... and that eating animals to live is the surest way to a painful death of the body & a premature death of the Soul.

And yet we HAVE already been given an alternative, my Friends ... It is an alternative that takes real Courage to engage, I will admit, and yet it is an alternative that works as well as violence does not ... This alternative is the most powerful sociological force and the most potent psychological “weapon” in existence ... It functions perfectly (always in direct proportion to how humbly & how courageously it is used) and it functions every single time it is employed ... It is an alternative that always bears the Fruits of Joy & Peace & Harmony -- ultimately the results that each & every one of us desire above all others.

This alternative, my dear Friends, **is Kindness** -- especially the Kindness given when we have little else to give; especially the Kindness given when we least wish to give it; and especially the Kindness given to those “least deserving” of the same ... Indeed, giving others radical acts of irrational Kindness is the only way we will ever truly “defeat” any of our enemies in life ... It is the only way we ourselves will ever know Peace, and it is the only way our species as a whole (your children and your children's children) will ultimately survive.

Each & every one of us lives a life literally filled with “enemies” -- loved ones who betray us; family members who judge us; friends who neglect us; strangers who frighten us; religious zealots who condemn us; political opponents who ridicule us ... And yet the solution to these conflicts is not to attack them or berate them or gossip about them or ignore them ... The only solution -- the only response that will ever bring Peace & Joy back into our world so often riddled with conflict and sadness -- is to loudly & ludicrously **LOVE them**.



Amen ... Let it be so.



“One of the most acute problems with our world is that men & women both are taught to destroy and not to protect. The best use of our strength is caring for and protecting the vulnerable; caring for and protecting those least like ourselves; and especially caring for and protecting those who are seemingly bent on doing us harm ... For there is no way to Peace, unless Peace becomes the way.”

~ inspired by Moby & M. Gandhi



Dear Black Man
(07/26/2016)

Not only do I openly & unabashedly recognize my own White Privilege (which is oddly *far* less pronounced over here in Germany than it is back in the “land of the free”), but I take this moment to also loudly & proudly tell all my non-White brothers & sisters around the world (and especially in the United States) that I fully honor their call to Justice and that I fully support their call for Equality. I will be humbly-yet-boldly wearing my own Black Lives Matter shirt with regularity when I return to the States, and until then will be in-Couraging all of my Caucasian brothers & sisters to do what they can to bring the principles of Dignity & Decency back to a culture that was at least partially founded on the same.

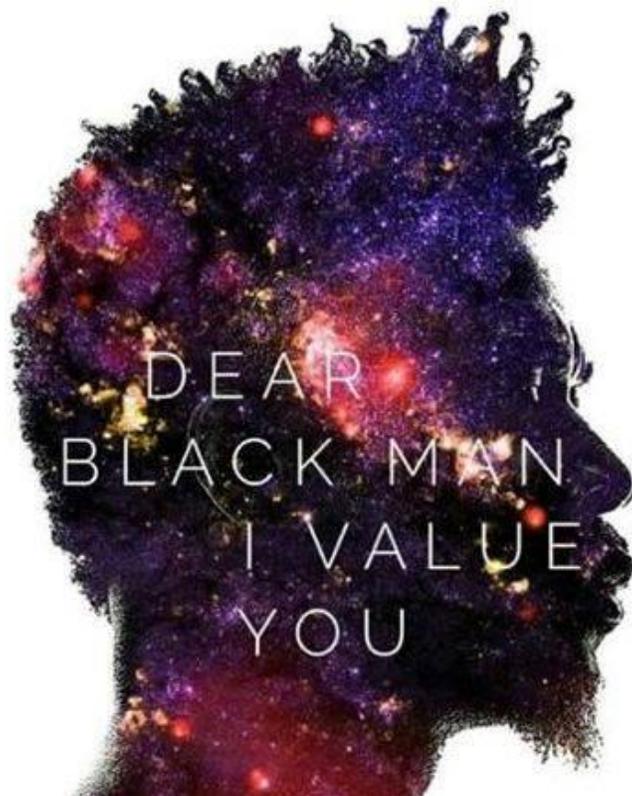
*GET EDUCATED about the horrific systemic racism that still infests most if not all of the United States ...

*REACH OUT with acts of Kindness to those living in the primarily minority neighborhoods (&/or simply the minorities who live nearby) in your own towns & cities ...

*BECOME ACTIVE in your own community on raising awareness and demanding change related to the racial disparities that still plague your nation.

America *could* indeed “become great again”, my Friends, but if she is indeed to do so, it must be *YOU* (not your politicians) who do that making.

Amen ... Let it be so.



To make a better Place (07/27/2016)

The news headlines are really getting to be a bummer these days -- downright depressing, actually ... Drone strikes in the Middle East inspiring terrorist strikes closer to home; corrupt politicians buying elections in a now-defunct democracies; thousands of innocent animals needlessly tortured & murdered every day by otherwise Good People who callously look away from the Truth of their food choices; systemic racism & deep-seated bigotries filling our society with violence & anger & sadness ... It's enough to get Good-Hearted people to give up; to throw their hands up in the air while they sit idly on their sofas; to feel helpless as they wish they could do something to stop this juggernaut of injustice from causing so much pain.

Well, my Friends, there *is* something(s) each & every you can do to make the world a better place -- and the more courage it takes to do that unique Goodness, the more change for the better it will bring. Maybe it's cleaning up &/or beautifying your neighborhood ... Maybe it's being radically Kind to strangers (especially those you tend to fear) ... Maybe it's openly & unconditionally forgiving someone who has wronged you ... And maybe it's joining a social cause to fight for justice in your community.



My Friends, whatever it is that you do to make the world a better place, **YOU CAN** make the world a better place ... Maybe we can't fix everything, and maybe our juggernaut of injustice will indeed roll along its less-than-merry way, and yet **WE CAN** do our part to see that at least a few of its passengers know some Peace along the way.

And who knows, maybe -- just maybe -- if enough of us get out there and **DO** what we can **DO**, maybe that ship will one day alter its course ... and finally sail into the calm harbor of a society Peace-full and Kind.

Amen ... Let it be so.

on Loving the Enemy
(07/31/2016)

What with all the conflict & all the strife & all the anger & all the sadness the world is seeing these days, I think what we *all* need now more than ever is a heavy dose of “[Love your Neighbor](#)” -- remembering, of course, that Jesus defined “[neighbor](#)” only one place in the entire Bible, and that he did so by equating our “[neighbor](#)” with our **ENEMY*** ...

As such, feel free today to go forth and do a Kind Deed for an enemy: hug a Republican if you are a Democrat; ... hug a homeless person if you are a Republican; ... hug a wealthy preacher if you are homeless person; ... hug a Muslim if you are a wealthy preacher; ... hug a Republican if you are a Muslim; ... hug a Black Lives Matter protestor if you are Republican; ... hug a Hillary supporter if you are BLM protestor; ... hug a Bernie supporter if you are a Hillary supporter; ... hug a lobbyist if you are a Bernie supporter ... (You get the picture.)



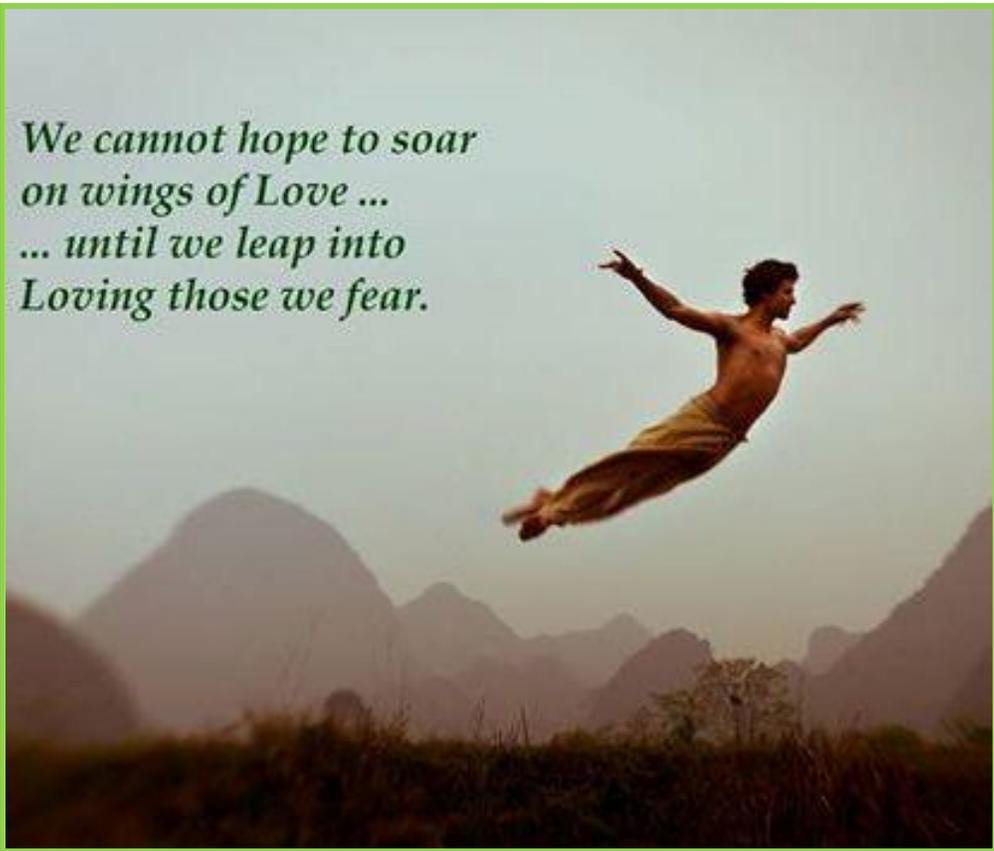
Heck, just get out there and hug someone ... Do it long and do it deeply and do it for no reason whatsoever.

Our society is heading to Hell in a hand basket these days, folks, and our politicians (ALL of them) are far too interested in preserving their own status & their own wealth to do anything about it. As such, **WE** have got to be the change we need to see, and we have got to start being that change TODAY!!!

Amen ... Let it be so.

[*Jesus did this in the Parable of the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:29-37](#)), where he defined “[neighbor](#)” with the Samaritan in the story -- the cultural enemy of the Jews at the time, as well as stating that one who fulfills his meaning of “[neighbor](#)” is the one who “[shows mercy](#)” -- something we can only do to one who has wronged us ... Think about it.]

*We cannot hope to soar
on wings of Love ...
... until we leap into
Loving those we fear.*



I know you are tired
(08/05/2016)

I know you are tired, my dear ... I know you are tired of fighting for justice when your Brothers are still being gunned down in the streets, and I know you are tired when your Sisters are still having their throats slit because they cannot produce enough milk for profit ... I know you are so tired while you rant & rail to seemingly no effect in response to the crimes against humanity still encased within Israel's Great Wall, and I know you are so tired of remaining unheard whenever you shout out against the travesties still perpetrated by every Obamian drone.

I know you are oh so tired my dear, now that you have given so much to save our dying planet -- given so much to seemingly improve so little ... I know you are tired, my dear ... I know that you would many times rather curl up into a ball and not have to see the bloodshed or hear the screams or witness the suffering any more.

Yes, I know that you are tired, my dear ... AND YET this is not the time to quit. No no, not at all ... For this is the time of our potential transcendence --- this is the time when **Great Change** is ready to born again.

You see, you are not alone, my dear. Indeed, many are rising with you this very day -- many who Care just like you do. You may not see them, and yet they are rising with you nonetheless ... They are rising against the injustices of bigotry; against racism & sexism & Islamophobia & homophobia -- They are rising against the crimes of Israeli apartheid and they are rising against the wickedness of drone warfare -- They are rising against the disgusting inequalities of homelessness & child poverty -- They are rising against the corruptions of both politicians & preachers -- And they are rising against the abhorrent cruelties lashed upon every innocent animal being used for “food” or “fashion” or “fun”.

Yes, my dear Friend, I know that you are tired ... And yet now is not the time to rest. For today we are – each & every one of us -- poised on the cusp of a grand New Beginning.

There is still hope left, and as long as there is hope – even the faintest glimmer thereof, then we must ever rise to meet it.

I know that you are tired, my dear ... And yet come; *rise up* –
...and walk just a bit further with me.



NO -- MORE -- WAR!!!
(08/07/2016)

War is flat out a very bad thing – it is never justified and it never brings anything but more bloodshed ... And the answer to this social epidemic -- the answer that will finally bring Peace & Justice & Harmony to our world -- is right there in front of us. And yet even though it is right here, staring us boldly in the face, we continue to turn away from its simple solution. We continue to support corrupt war-hungry politicians -- and we continue to support social policies that imprison the non-violent & the oppressed & the innocent – and we continue to champion nationalism over nuance, corporatism over compassion, and punishment over peace.

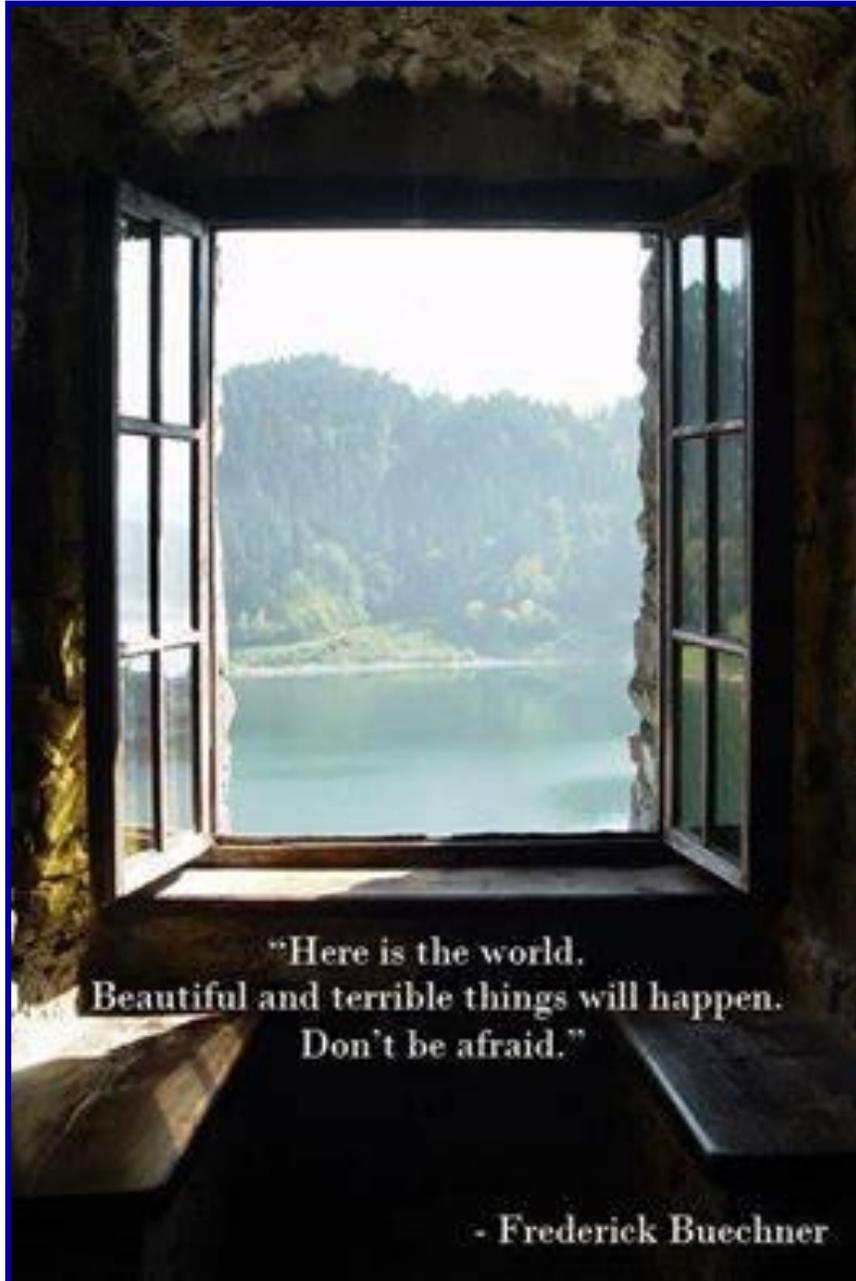
My dear Friends, how much longer are we going to look away from the simple solution to this brutal travesty before we **WAKE UP** and change?

How much longer? ... I wonder.



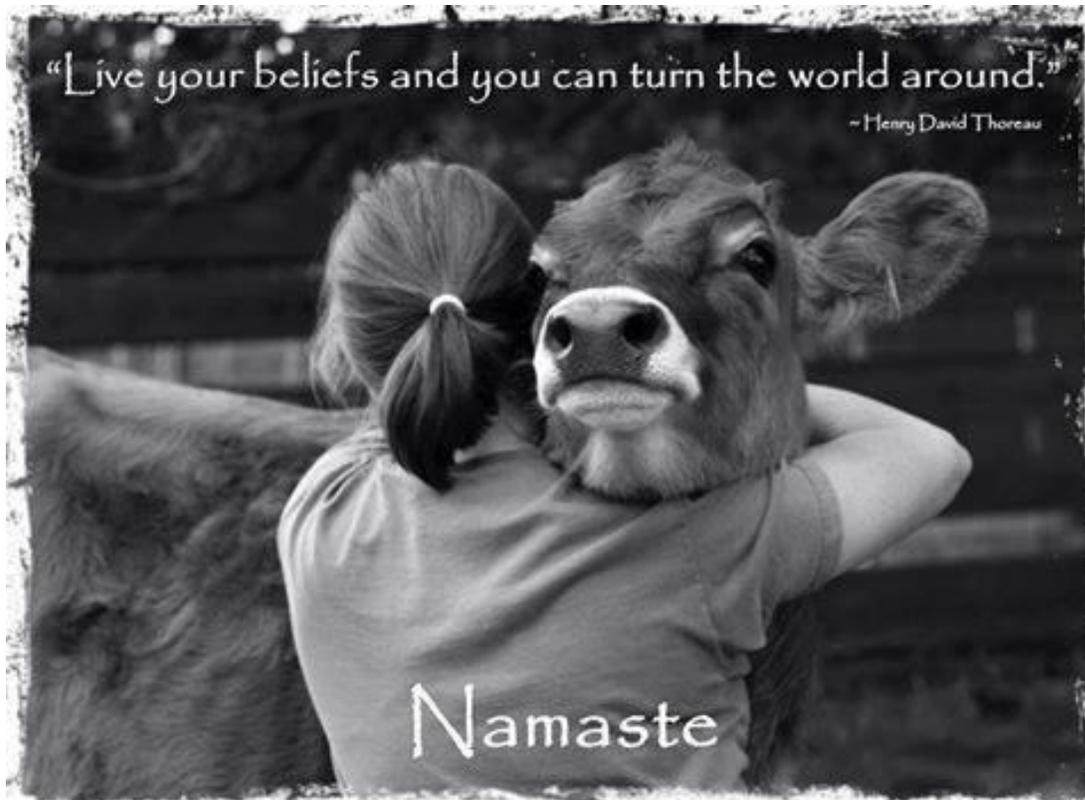
The next New Beginning
(08/10/2016)

This is but the beginning, my Friends ... Times of great pain & chaos are indeed approaching us all. And yet **FEAR NOT** ... Band together in Love & Respect, and engage in regular acts of Kindness & Charity ... For it is these that ultimately prevail, and this, no matter how strong the Storm ... **Peace**.



Turning the world around
(08/28/2016)

“Be not daunted by the enormity of the world's grief & sorrow. Today is the only day you have been fully given, so stand for Justice for the persecuted NOW -- show great Mercy for the lost & the mean-spirited NOW -- walk in humble Love for the downtrodden NOW ... My dear Friends, none of us are obligated to complete the work set before us, and yet neither are we free to simply shrug our shoulders and abandon the same.” ~ inspired by The Talmud



“Peace between nations must rest upon a solid foundation of sincere love between individual humans ... And peace between individual humans can only be sustained by a solid foundation of respect between those humans and all other beings, great and small.”
(~ inspired by M. Gandhi)



*“And I will take one from a thousand
and two from ten thousand,
and they shall Become a single One.”
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)*