

FROM RAGE TO LOVE The Only Way to Heal Our World

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rejected by NYT OpEd 1 April '16, Huffington Post, etc.

In 1986, fifteen years before 9/11, I wrote an article "The End of Nuclear War". It predicted "terrorism", events such as 9/11, and what we needed to do to prevent them. It was rejected by Foreign Affairs and others as "too hypothetical", and became hidden in the dust.

But 9/11 did happen, and every time there is a terrorist attack, beheading, mass murder, I feel guilt that I've never found a way to convey what came through in that article. It's even more relevant today. It still spotlights the profound shifts occurring in our world that are ignored by leaders everywhere, and ways we will totally fail or succeed in our responses to them. (Google: The End of Nuclear War Tom Bender, and my earlier 1982: True Security Tom Bender)

So, in a nutshell:

We're at a pivot-point for the future of our world. Fear, anger, and underlying rage are everywhere and escalating.

This is a contagious cultural catastrophe in process. Every drone bomb and suicide bomb generates more rage and more destructive response. We're not seeing what has really happened.

Destructive power has been democratized, miniaturized, and simplified. It is now available to any individual on the planet virtually without cost – death in a hundred different forms. Military power is now obsolete. As our societies have become more complex and our support systems global, their vulnerability to crippling disruption has skyrocketed. Why bother attacking sophisticated military forces, when the underlying civilian economies are far more vulnerable?

Peace and equity can no longer be avoided, as their alternatives are clearly no longer affordable by anyone. In essence, terrorism is the result of our existing power structure's refusal to admit the capability of a new power group to get their needs dealt with.

Today, the REAL security of others is our ONLY true security. Such security requires very different attitudes and actions than our present ones. Financial and political equity, more resilient systems, less dependence on others, better means of resolving conflicts, having open hearts, and sharing available resources for improving the lives of all are essential.

The voice of the smallest must now be heard and valued equally to the biggest, for the individual's power for destruction is now capable of destroying any society – indeed any life – on earth.

The needs of all must be equitably met, for all have the power to demand it, and none the power to refuse.

This new balance of power means the end of democracy as we have known it AND the beginning of a truer and greater democracy. This new democracy balances freedoms with responsibilities for the survival and well being of our planet, surroundings, and those with whom we share this beautiful world.

The root of today's problems lies in the unquestioned core values of our culture. Changing those values is absolutely essential, and can quickly transform and enrich life across our planet.

Most people would strongly affirm that love is vital to a fulfilling life. But economics, core to our culture, asserts that love is *worth-less*. When we ignore love, the result is . . . a world of rage.

Alternatives to just this one core value can reveal how to heal our culture. E. F. Schumacher speaks in "*Buddhist Economics*" of the different meaning of "work" in Buddhist culture and ours. In ours, work is something to be *minimized* for both the worker and the employer. In the Buddhist world, work is an *essential tool*. It gives us a chance to utilize and develop our faculties; to overcome our ego-centeredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence.

In Burkina Faso, the Dagara seek "*fullness*", not wealth. They spend time cooperatively, and let the joy and fullness of such time bring forth the needs of existence. The consequences that flow from such awareness of the value and nature of work are endless.

Malidoma Somé, speaking of the initiatory education "system" in Burkina Faso, says that their education is of *the soul*, not the mind; of learning to step easily from one energy realm to another and back, which brings them into integral consciousness and direct experience of the sacred. I haven't experienced that education, but I definitely *have had* direct and powerful experience of its effects.

So there is vital wisdom awaiting us in the ancient traditions of other cultures. **Direct experience of the sacred melts us into that oneness, transforming our cultural rage into deep love and compassion for all.** It is the essential food for our souls - what our "economics" ignores.

Nothing can be sustained without that compassion. It is the absolute core of what we need to heal our world.

Every culture has stumbled upon different paths to attain that - some easy, some hard. Meditation (a *really* hard one for us head-bound fools), Sufi-dancing, sacred tantric sex, Bushman trance-dancing, drugs, alcohol - all shut down those loud computer-peripherals of our heads and open us to the direct experience that melds us into one.

My work with sustainability over the last 40 years has shown that transformation can come from simple positive actions that can be initiated by us - personally, in our communities, and all levels of government. And one of the most wonderful properties of an "Information Age" is that its benefits can be shared at incredible speed and low cost once developed.

I've gone into details elsewhere many times, so won't repeat here, but here's a short-list:

*A "loan forgiveness jubilee" can free countries from immoral IMF "loans", students from unpayable student loans, homeowners from overmarket home loans. *Proper taxing of wealthy individuals and corporations can erase national debt and establish equity. *Free online higher education, and Dagara initiatory education can transform learning processes worldwide. *Requiring "free" elections, like other nations, can bring our political institutions to serve us, not the 1%. *Accessory dwelling units can provide *free* housing. *Deep energy efficiency retrofits of homes and businesses (80% reduction in energy use), higher efficiency transportation, and shifts to renewable energy can have extremely rapid global impacts. *Single-payer health insurance can cut costs by a third. *Living wages give security, and reduce government expenditures.

*Stabilizing population growth can release 33% to 40% of our work and resources.
*Equitizing wealth at our median wage can free 47% of our resources. *Eliminating our debt system can save another 20%. * These three changes along can achieve 75% reduction in our needs, making resources available for the rest of the world. *Wiser food, transportation, work, and living approaches can save 90% of remaining energy and work required.

Again: The needs of all must be equitably met, for all have the power to demand it, and none the power to refuse. It is the only viable alternative to the mushrooming violence surrounding us. We can heal our hearts, act with compassion, help all to *have* a real sense of self-worth, and create a world filled with love, joy, and laughter.

With these steps we leave both the Nuclear Age and the Age of Terrorism behind, and move into a new, awesome, and unprecedented era in the history of our planet.