

Bet Situation, Too

10) We can gamble that the valiant race to produce more and more food to feed inexorably increasing human numbers can be won by continuing to advance Industrial Agricultural practices, employing massive mechanization, crop and forest monocultures, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, antibiotics and hormones in meat and milk production, and enormous pig, poultry, cattle and fish-farming operations --- or we can begin to support local agriculture, organic farming, and zero population growth programs worldwide, making contraceptive forms of birth control readily available, and educating and empowering women.

11) We can gamble that opposition to family planning programs worldwide is a moral imperative and a good idea --- or we can bet that supporting them is wise, completely compassionate, and quite necessary, eliminating the Global Gag Rule and restoring funding to the United Nations Population Fund.

12) We can gamble that our individual actions are so insignificant that it makes no difference what we do --- or we can bet that dramatic change is possible through the aggregation of caring individual choices, and support positive progressive change.

13) We can gamble that the Stern Father knows best, conforming to the Status Quo and following the doctrines of neoconservatism --- or we can bet that a better balance with Nurturing Mother values would create more valuable public policies.

14) We can continue to gamble that aggressive American militarism is necessary to achieve our economic goals and national security --- or we can bet that it is wiser to recognize the importance of justice and peace in the world, and work to achieve greater humanity and safety through the cultivation of justice and diplomatic conflict resolution.

15) We can gamble that there is a life hereafter, after our personal death, and fail to maximize our authenticity, our happiness, our potentials in this life, and our appreciation of existence, of deeper purposes, and of truer causes --- or we can bet that the Here and Now mandates our recognition that it is this life alone that can be known, and that we must consequently seek to achieve a more noble connectedness to the wholesome and the worthwhile in the Present.

Tiffany Twain submits that the best bet we can make is to support farsighted progressive ideas, ones that will result in a restructuring of human activities in harmony with the long-term viability of our species' survival.

“ the great pride of man in himself ”

--- Walt Whitman

Images of Interconnectedness

“Ecologists understand the processes that support life on earth: the fundamental role of photosynthesis, the concept of sustainable yield, the role of nutrient cycles, the hydrological cycle, the sensitive role of climate, and the intricate relationship between the plant and animal kingdoms. They know that the earth’s ecosystems supply services as well as goods, and that the former are often more valuable than the latter.”

--- EARTH FROM ABOVE, Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Every library in the United States should obtain this beautiful book of photography and philosophy.

Ecologists see intuitively that all life on Earth is interdependent, and that it is an irrationality beyond mistakenness, a kind of psychopathological madness, to continue to give economic policies greater importance than ecological and social principles.

“Whatever happens to the Earth, happens to the children of the Earth ... All things are connected, like the blood that unites one family. Mankind did not weave the web of life; we are but one strand within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.”

--- Chief Seattle, 1844, warning the U.S. Government against the misuse of land, water, air, and animal life.

The Sirens of Homer’s Odyssey were enchantresses whose honeyed and haunting voices bewitched mariners, luring them to destruction on their island. My fellow Americans, and inhabitants of Earth, we must intelligently find a way to resist the alluring temptation and pervasive suasion of the voices and dominating influence of our controlling crony capitalist sirens. They lure us persuasively into accepting their shortsighted, Vested-Interest-oriented, fiscally irresponsible, socially unfair, environmentally destructive, unsustainable, and militaristic policies. They urge us to oppose progressive change, at a time when clearly the most rational long-term understanding supports bold action to transform our societies into more sane and sustainable ones. The “Conservative” elements of our society support doctrine that champions, promotes, rationalizes, and defends the status quo.

The ruinous error of this approach is that it gives misguided economic principles ascendancy, with far less respect for important social principles --- and far too little respect for essential ecological principles.

Inevitably, and necessarily, ecological principles must be given far greater priority, principles that will help us achieve long-term sustainability of our activities and the protection of healthy, balanced ecosystems. Rapid systemic change must be encouraged, in order to facilitate the inclusion of true costs into the prices of products and services. This will allow and assist all economic decision-makers at every level to make more environmentally and socially responsible choices on a day-to-day basis.

“Improvvidence: Provision for the needs of today from the revenues of tomorrow.”

The Devil’s Dictionary, Ambrose Bierce

Letters from the Earth

Lovely to have you human beings around! Life has finally achieved a self-reflective state of consciousness after so many eons, meaning great recognition for yours truly Mother Earth --- for my awesome beauty, and for the extraordinary context of existence in the Universe. As a part of physical Nature, I am naturally utterly indifferent to judging or favoring any particular circumstances or changes, but I must make one thing perfectly clear: My Gaia aspect --- the sum total of all of my living systems --- loves itself. I love my beautifully balanced ecosystems, teeming with life in infinite niches, my topography of magnificent mountains, vibrant valleys and superb seas. Please don't ruin everything by hunting animals to extinction, by poisoning my life-supporting waterways and atmosphere, and by myopically modifying and destroying all of my habitats!

My living systems are fabulous sources of materials for your prosperity and sustenance, like food, fish and timber --- but they are also critically valuable in a healthy state for the services they provide to the human race. Forests help provide clean water, flood management, erosion control, water storage, regeneration of the atmosphere, and buffering against weather extremes. Likewise, wetlands, rain forests, wilderness areas, riparian habitats, coral reefs, symbiotic communities and other healthy ecosystems are vital for your survival, so I recommend that humanity whole-heartedly embraces the ideas expressed by Tiffany Twain, and begins to move boldly towards sustainable and restorative activities.

Listen up, humanity, your home planet speaks! You would be wise to rediscover your native reverence for Planet Earth, the respect and appreciation that used to be so germane to your awareness, your hearts, and your souls. You must, for your own good, begin a dramatic Ecological Revolution, enacting positive economic, environmental, and social changes worldwide. Commit yourselves to a transformation of human activities consistent with both your own long-term well-being and that of the Earth; and also strive to develop more effective international institutions to help ensure peaceful coexistence amongst all of your peoples and nations.

Mother Earth

Enlightened Aspiration

"I am the Poem of the Earth, said the voice of the rain,"
Whispering wistfully to us of our connectedness to the elements,
To the wild animals, to the birds singing, to ourselves, and to each other
Bringing our attention to the wonders of life, and to our joys and laments.

Multitudinous are diversions, which keep us from clearly seeing
Beyond the babble of voices and the maelstrom of daily circumstance
To more profound questions of our human life and existence on Earth
Wherein our identity and true place in nature are clearer, perchance.

Complexity beyond comprehension underlies the subatomic and the macroscopic
With cellular and genetic mechanisms and phenomena being astonishingly inscrutable
And increasing knowledge often seems to provide us with no greater understanding
Of the ultimate mysteries of the Universe --- Yet our seeking is necessarily suitable.

We may properly be confounded by the astonishing things that occur
By the inextricable, the abstruse, and even the subtleties of the commonplace
For clear and definite understanding can be surprisingly subjective and elusive
And knowing this, it is wise to retain some skepticism, while doing so with grace.

Our modern soul's high adventure strives for truer knowledge of outside nature,
While also exploring for wisdom and understanding of our own deep inward mysteries.
We are creating a current of true and fresh ideas, seeking meaning and significance,
Participating in the greatest leap of the human spirit in all of our known histories.

A synthesis of science and spirit seeks to find salient points of wisdom
Encompassing wholesome awareness, beyond conflicts of certitude and illusion
Points residing in the realm of mythic imagination and universal truths
Wherein inner values of existence resonate with vitality, in salubrious fusion.

**Our current juncture in time requires open-mindedness and receptive versatility
As changing conditions favor nimbleness, adaptability and far-sightedness
And the conservative Status Quo proves inadequate to cope with rapid change
Mandating that we explore and embrace new ideas with courage and boldness.**

No longer can we allow authoritarian doctrine or radical neoconservatism to hold sway
And the permanent war economy must be transformed into peaceful prosperity;
Powerful privileged elites must allow greater democracy, fairness, and social justice
And we must create healthy and wholesome societies, acting with resolve and clarity.

"The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

--- Marcel Proust

Incisive Insight

The extraordinarily far-reaching and increasingly extensive impacts that humanity is having on Planet Earth make it critical for us to better understand the moral and pragmatic impulses that drive human beings. All ethical, political and social philosophies and beliefs can be understood in terms of competing family morality worldviews. These are like deeply-seated archetypes that are correlated in a fascinating way with child development theories.

Conservatism is characterized by a moral conception that respects strength, tradition, male authority, orthodox views, self-righteousness, and an impulse to dominate and control. It embraces the Stern Father ethic, which involves beliefs that are ironically held by women as well as men. The Stern Father ethic is one of self-reliance, self-responsibility, self-discipline, and self-denial. It is associated with a whole constellation of values that revolves around strength and puritanism as right and proper. For instance, those who espouse Conservatism champion a very strong military and harsh punishment for wrong-doing; they support the Death Penalty; they advocate laissez-faire doctrines and minimal regulation of business; they demand what is essentially regressive tax reform and tax breaks for the wealthy; they dogmatically espouse a moral rectitude which tries to provide a superior moral justification for authoritarianism; they advocate gun ownership with minimal restrictions; they believe strongly in puritanical sexual views, intolerantly opposing pre-marital sex and homosexuality; fundamentalists among them oppose sex education, contraception, freedom of choice, legalized abortion, and dignity in dying; and they effectively believe in a rigidity of roles for men and women, wherein men have greater prerogative, privileges, power, and control than women.

Progressivism is characterized by a moral conception that respects fairness and empathy. It embraces the Nurturing Mother ethic, which highly values helping others, having compassion, supporting programs for social justice, and advocating freethinking, good communication, and the empowerment and equality of women. It is associated with a whole constellation of values that revolves around basic human rights: those who espouse Progressive ideas strive to protect people and the environment from inequities, from harmful exploitation, and from unscrupulous business activities; they advocate actions consistent with the common good, like fair progressive taxation, peaceful conflict resolution, tightly controlled military spending, cooperative statesmanship, intelligent environmental regulations, a safety net of humanitarian social programs, true justice rather than retribution, the freedom of reproductive choice, increased safety of firearms, a ban on public ownership of assault weapons and devastating ammunition, and equal rights for women and men.

These family morality worldviews cannot be judged definitively “right” or “wrong”, according to linguist George Lakoff. The principal difference is that Conservatism is much more committed to achieving and perpetuating its own ends, regardless of whether the means are fair --- and is therefore much more willing to have people suffer harm in order to be in control and to have their way.

Having already generalized my blouse off, and recognizing that goodness exists in souls of every persuasion --- and acknowledging that the Stern Father and Nurturing Mother co-exist in each and every one of us --- I will not speculate about effective average greater mean-spiritedness of one camp or the other.

“Resolute --- Obstinate in a course that we approve.”

The Devil’s Dictionary, Ambrose Bierce

Insight Implications

Too much discipline in child-rearing --- a problem associated with the Stern Father approach to parenting --- is seen by parents and child psychologists to be at least as dysfunctional as too much permissiveness --- a problem associated with the Nurturing Mother approach. The Stern Father ethic at its extreme is abusive, traumatizing the child and making the child prone to violence, or to being a social misfit. The Nurturing Mother ethic at its extreme spoils the child, which can contribute to an unhealthy self-centeredness. **It seems clear that a consistent, healthy balance is best for well-being in the upbringing of children.**

Likewise, balance is best for the whole of society, a balance between reasonable, caring discipline and structured freedom, within a context of empathy and respect. Both extremes of Conservatism and Liberalism are very poor public policy, and moderate, farsighted policies are clearly seen to be in the best interests of the people. The year 2000 Presidential election was one of the closest in history, an argument in itself for prudent moderation. Right-wing Stern Father Neoconservatism has unfortunately asserted its control and run with it, with vigor, righteousness, and messianic fervor --- and with great detriment to American society, to the environment, and to other nations of the world. We must soon reverse this lurch to the political Right. Peace, true justice, and environmental sanity demand it, as do humanitarian values, empathetic understanding, and the health and well-being of Planet Earth's ecosystems and of all its denizens.

Moderate elements of all institutions and creeds, you must take back your parties and gain the control of reason! Virtue is in sensible intelligence, tempered with understanding, not merely in Nietzschean strength (MIGHT does not make right!) --- or in Jesus' morality of turn-the-other-cheek love and kindness. Extreme views and doctrines must be reigned in and emasculated, in order to make the world more safe, secure and sustainable. This seems most true of the fundamentalist extremes of Islam, the Catholic Church, the Mormon Church, and born-again Christians, as well as in greed-driven politics, and in the profit- and power-obsessed influence of large corporations. We must marginalize extremism, NOT allow it to gain the control of governments and institutions!!

The principal problem with Fundamentalism in the world today is that it is characterized by believers in Absolute Truth, who rationalize any means to achieve the ascendancy of their fundamentalist ends. They are compelled by the righteous zealousness of their convictions to try to impose their beliefs on others, to proselytize, to convert others to their way of seeing things, and to achieve dominance no matter what the cost. This is not right --- it is extremism! And extremism begets opposing extremism in reaction.. New ideas and approaches are required to be able to allow sensible activities and fair policies to gain sway. Let us try to find and empower better judgment!

Myths reveal what faith contains: stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, and for significance, together with principles common to the human spirit. But faith must be liberated from narrow, excluding, ethnocentric self-righteousness, for these attitudes engender divisiveness, disdain, conflict, aggression, and violence. Faith must be freed into the light of broader understanding, respect, and ecumenical acceptance. To the extent that organized religion acts as "hate masquerading as love", it must be prevented from forcing its doctrines upon human societies. Allow religious freedom everywhere, but enforce a strict separation of Church and State!!

On Tolerance

Tolerance is characterized by an attitude of acceptance towards those who look, behave, or believe differently than oneself. All worldviews are skewed by the circumstances, preferences, and prejudices of family and societal conditionings. Each and every person has a subjective way in which we perceive our lives, our society, and the natural world. We are all narrow-minded to one degree or another.

The only Objective Absolute in the Universe is the physical existence that we describe as Reality, and every living being has its own subjective personal perception of Reality, and its own interpretation of its senses and experience. Uncertainties in our human world are pervasive and complex enough that a very wide spectrum of worldviews is plausible.

But it seems only reasonable that we should adopt a spirit of “Live, and Let Live” with regard to judging other people and their beliefs --- a sort of Golden Rule of Tolerance.

Our social and political institutions should create a society that establishes fairness and true social justice, and we should design our societies to mitigate the harshness of Stern Father attitudes towards those who have feeble voices and little power in America today --- the poor, the underprivileged, disadvantaged women and children, and future generations that have little influence in our politics. And victimless crimes should not be prosecuted with unreasonably punitive vigor.

The United States of America was founded upon principles of respect for Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” We are fortunate to be entitled by our Constitution and Bill of Rights to expect a maximum of individual rights and freedoms within a framework of respect for the rights and freedoms of others.

Our politicians, religious and secular institutions, the Media, and our Courts struggle continuously with a wide array of social issues, the most contentious today being abortion and gay rights. Neoconservatives are passionately committed to tipping the balance of our laws towards greater intolerance in their Stern Father attitudes and convictions. “Tough love”, they say --- when they are being more honest than when they are claiming to be Compassionate Conservatives.

Such public rhetoric that includes pronounced hostility, negative personal attacks, and calling the opposition “girlie men” are not characteristics of open-mindedness, tolerance, and inclusiveness.

Progressives must strive to offset the righteousness, rancor and meanness of the Tough Love crowd, and seek to establish the golden rule of Tolerance in our executive, congressional and judicial systems. Help pressure politicians to enact farsighted positive change!

Speak Truth to Power!

**“In order to accomplish important goals,
we need an appreciation of the sense of urgency.”**

--- The Dalai Lama

Women of the World, Unite!

Tiffany Twain asserts that men have dominated civilization throughout most of recorded history, and that they have done so with distinct discrimination towards women; and with an unhealthy inequality of control, of opportunity, and of personal respect.

Patriarchal societies are generally too aggressive, too repressive, too ethnocentric, and often too misogynistic. It is valuable to become conscious of the powerful influences of our patriarchal society and culture on our attitudes and behavior. Authoritarian father gods have ruled over human civilization for over 5,000 years, after early civilizations that worshipped goddesses and Mother Earth were conquered by male warrior cultures. Early belief systems celebrated the Great Mother Goddess with her feminine life force that honored its deep connection to nature and fertility --- but these were supplanted by patriarchal belief systems that favor male gods, "traditional" male authority, male power and supremacy, discipline, conformity, obedience, punishment for rebelliousness, sacrifice, suppression of the emotions, and dominion over nature.

This age-old struggle between males, jealous of their prerogatives, and females seeking equal rights and respect, is characterized by inequities, unfairness, sex discrimination, disfunctionality, resentment, abuse, hostility, and violence.

Feminism has achieved an impressive range of influences in the past 40 years, despite the powerful resistance of the patriarchal Status Quo, which defends male prerogative and sex discrimination. The Women's Liberation movement began in the 1960's as a liberal reform program skewed towards the interests of educated middle-class women. It grew substantially, to embrace issues of race, poverty, child abuse, war, religion, sexual preference, endangered cultures, endangered species, and environmental protections. Women's roles, and men's roles in response, changed significantly.

Still, political progress is powerfully impeded, and no feminist of the Sixties would have been able to imagine that a Conservative movement of reaction against women's successes would come to grip American society as it has in the last 20 years. Who would have visualized that our country's democracy would be so corrupted as to dramatically increase the disparity between the rich and the poor, disproportionately disadvantaging women and children? Who foresaw the astonishing success of the backlash against environmental protections in favor of rapid and wasteful resource consumption, development and urban sprawl and Big Business power and prerogative? Who expected so much violence in every aspect of our societies?

A reinvigorated ecological feminist movement must gain influence, uniting people to affirm true values and fairness in public and business policy. We must reshape economic, political and social institutions to be more fair, peaceful, healthy, and sustainable.

Guys, good ole boys, and religious fundamentalists --- Give us a break!

Each of us can become better empowered when we gain better self-knowledge. Greater awareness helps us to accept ourselves, opening us to clearer perspective, a more open perceptivity, and better communication and understanding. It allows us to make positive, more balanced choices, which can lead to wholeness, self-actualization, and healthier societies.

Nicholaus Copernicus

✓ There's gonna be a Revolution, yeah, you know ✓

-- The Beatles

Imagine yourself there: it is the year 1543, and the Church has dominated “thought” for many, many centuries in Europe. They are, in fact, in the process of burning five million women at the stake over a 300-year period, for non-conformity, dissenting beliefs, and suspicious “pagan” activities. They regard these as the terribly threatening crime of “heresy”.

A Polish astronomer by the name of Mikolaj Kopernik --- Nicholaus Copernicus to us --- in the last year of his life at the age of 70, published a theory that the dictionary calls “the principle of heliocentric planetary motion.” He had noticed that the earth revolved around the sun, rather than that the heavens and the sun make a daily transit around the Earth, which the Bible implies was created for humanity by a God’s in whose image we were created. It was not only nearly incomprehensible, on our then flat, center-of-the-Universe Earth, to entertain such ideas, but it was also wildly dangerous to contradict the Church’s dogmatic Absolute Truths. (It was then, and for far too many fundamentalist believers, it is now!)

Seventy years later, in 1609, Galileo Galilei, an Italian scientist and philosopher, modified and improved the newly invented telescope, and almost immediately discovered four of Jupiter’s moons. He clearly saw that the heavens had bodies with motions independent of the Earth, a possibility contradictory to orthodox belief.

Now the action picked up considerable, I reckon. The Pope interceded to prohibit Galileo from daring to support Copernicus’ theories. It wasn’t for another 15 years that the obviousness of sun-centered planetary motion emboldened Galileo to publish a clever treatise strongly intimating that the Church’s dogma was contrary to the true facts of the matter. The angered Church forced Galileo in 1633 to recant his ideas and his scientific conclusions. He lived the final nine years of his life under house arrest. It was not until 1984, a lapse of 350 years, that Pope John Paul II made an effort to reconcile science and faith by finally admitting that Galileo was right!

Mankind’s religions are, of course, reflections of man himself. Like Marshall McLuhan’s understanding that “we shape our media, and then our media shape us,” mankind shapes his religion, and then his religions shape him. Power and money distort and pervert religious influences and tend to reinforce the tendency for societies to resist change. Prior to Copernicus’ discovery, and Galileo’s confirmation of it, the human race was comfortable with its geocentric and anthropocentric certitudes. Ever since then, there has been a fitful evolution of a truer understanding of the Universe and man’s place within it.

It is my conviction that we would be wisest to be open to better understandings, rather than investing heavily in resisting them. Let our Revolution begin here!



Socrates taught the ancient world to question everything --- and 2,400 years later, Einstein proved that everything is questionable (“relative”). HA!

Instantaneous Lucidification

“There are moments in history when the fabric of everyday life unravels, and there is this unstable dynamism that allows for incredible social change in short periods of time. People and the world they’re living in can be utterly transformed, either for the good or the bad, or some mixture of the two.”

--- The Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner

The terrible terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred 3 years ago. The Earth Manifesto commemorates this Anniversary. Its essential thesis is that humanity must re-evaluate its purposes and its actions, achieving deeper perspective, greater clarity, and wiser behavior. Far too many urgent influences divert our attention and distort our understanding from what is true, and from what is truly important. Monumental social, economic, and environmental challenges face the human race. This crisis is the wake-up call that tells us all is interconnected, and that we must do much better in prioritizing our concerns so that we live our lives in greater harmony with each other and with the prospects of future generations.

The Chinese ideogram roughly representing the word CRISIS, is made up of two characters, one that means DANGER , and the other OPPORTUNITY 

A crisis calls upon us to search our souls, to stop stubbornly clinging to the way things are, to overcome our fears and our denial, and to transcend stagnant, dysfunctional, or insidiously deteriorating ways. Crises present us with defining moments that galvanize us into a profound reconsideration of who we are, and what we are doing. It urges us to embrace change and growth, and not to regress.

The flying of fully loaded passenger jets into skyscrapers had a shocking and awful effect on America. We became profoundly insecure, easy prey for manipulative elements of our society who see every conflict as one between the good guys with the white hats and God on our side --- US --- and the bad guys with the black hats and the heretical God --- THEM. Anger, indignity, fear, self-righteousness, and vindictiveness became obsessive for a while. Hawkish orthodox capitalist supremacists happened to be waiting in the wings of the government. They used this opportunity to jam the rudder of public opinion and political action to the right. Their friends --- the war profiteers, laissez-faire capitalists, public land exploiters, polluters, neoconservative macho dudes, and religious fundamentalists --- seized the auspicious opening to brazenly advance their interests, almost invariably at the expense of the public good.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 revealed basic vulnerabilities and deep problems that require very serious attention, understanding, and action. They presented us with a unique opportunity to unite Americans and the world. We could have used the opportunity to dedicate ourselves to a global set of shared values in freedom, democracy, security, diversity, religious tolerance, and the opposition to fundamentalist extremism. They gave us the opportunity to use the sympathy of tragedy to bring nations together to fight terrorism and hate, to reduce the influence of al Qaeda, to assert a new resolve in addressing the Palestinian problem, to address our security vulnerabilities, to strengthen nations threatened by radicalism, and to cultivate a unified global consensus to address the great social, environmental, and economic problems that encourage desperate acts.

But we are squandering the opportunity. Our government used the attacks as a divisive, arrogant pretext to attack oil-rich Iraq, which was not involved in the 9/11 attacks. In the war in Iraq, we mimic the terrorists who seek to impose their ideological extremism through violence. The prosperity and survival of the human race requires Bigger Picture understandings. I passionately urge the reader to peruse the Soliloquies in this website, and to dispassionately consider the provocative ideas it contains --- and to help to do something to help effect positive change in improving our legacy on Earth.