

"We all know that one of the great mysteries of love is that giving and receiving are one and the same"

Rx : Living Healthy and Sane Lives in Crazy Times

By Howard Woodwind Morningstar & Sue Mauer Morningstar

We are encountering so many people who are anxious and fearful about the current world situation. We too are disturbed that instead of moving towards constructive solutions, our civilization seems stuck in the same old destructive patterns. We've been pondering why so many of our fellow citizens make choices that are clearly harmful to their own well being and to the health of our precious planet. And we've been wondering: What's happening here? What can we do that would be most helpful?

Our cultural perspective is being relentlessly distorted by a pervasive propaganda machine that lulls us into complacency while promoting excessive and unsustainable materialism. It's driven by an alliance of amoral corporate greed, intolerant fundamentalism and unrestrained military might that weave a sticky web of fear around us. This unholy trinity seeks to divert our awareness into a single narrow self-centered worldview. If these times feel crazy, it's because our civilization is largely driven by separation, domination and possession consciousness.

Some mornings we wake up, sun rising over the glorious Siskiyou Mountains, turn on the radio and are instantly jarred by yet another horrific news report. One moment, we're just grateful to be alive in this beautiful place. The next, our sensibilities are assaulted by a mind numbing litany of war atrocities, disasters and widespread injustice, all recited against the backdrop of accelerating destruction of the ecosystems upon which all life depends.

In our outrage we demand: Haven't we seen throughout history the immense misery and havoc that jihads and crusades wreak on the innocent, even without the insane curse of weapons of mass destruction? And while mother earth herself is being recklessly poisoned with floods of toxic waste, why should mass extinctions and ever-increasing plagues of previously unknown diseases shock us?

How can we live healthy and sane lives at a time like this?

Health is the state in which our physical, spiritual and emotional energy flows in balance with the greater universal flow. Living a healthy life means more than just eating wholesome organic foods, drinking pure water and breathing fresh air. It goes beyond staying fit with regular aerobic exercise, eliminating toxins, processing stress and enjoying loving relationships at home and at work.

Of course it's important to live in harmony with natural earth rhythms. Of course we need to honor ourselves and all beings as sacred sparks of divine creation. But, since we are all so

intricately connected, our personal and collective health is profoundly influenced by distant events far beyond our control.

For example, as we dump highly carcinogenic PCBs anywhere on earth, these horrific and nearly indestructible poisons enter into the food cycle and spread across the planet. Even the purest organic living country mother will unavoidably concentrate these deadly substances in her breast milk, and innocently pass them on to her nursing babes. And none of us can avoid the increasingly harmful effects of the sun's ultraviolet rays as industrial and motor vehicle emissions continue to destroy the earth's protective ozone layer. It's no wonder that given current trends, more than half of us alive today will personally face cancer.

If foreign terrorists were caught introducing PCBs or any similarly murderous toxins into our food, water or air, we suspect that our military would bomb them into oblivion. Yet we behave as if the millions of us suffering and dying from cancer and other environmental illnesses were experiencing reasonable and normal consequences of modern life.

While it's important to feel and to express our outrage, it's essential that we ask ourselves: How can we translate our righteous indignation into effective action that will bring healing to our beloved planet?

Where do we start such a huge task?

We can only begin with our selves. We begin by recognizing and releasing our fears. Fear is the ultimate weapon of ignorance and tyranny. Fear paralyzes us by poisoning our very essence and dissipating our productive energy. Fear triggers our 'fight or flight' response. This can be lifesaving when you're escaping a hungry tiger. But we cannot effectively fight force with more force. And where on earth can we flee in our 21 st century global village?

When we learn to perceive our fears simply as stories we tell ourselves, we gain the ability to transform fear into hope, the ultimate tool of wisdom and freedom. Hope gives us the courage to act positively even when we are afraid.

We are blessed with so many paths that lead to the inner place of calm, centered grace from which this sacred work flows. These include prayer, meditation, yoga, chanting, ecstatic drumming and dancing, martial and creative arts, communing with the healing power of nature, acts of loving kindness and countless others. For the two of us writing this article and sharing our hopes and dreams with you, our beloved community is profoundly empowering.

To awaken your unique strengths, visualize yourself in your full confidence and power throughout the day and in your dreams. Be who you dream yourself to be. Trust that your actions and experiences will guide you to manifest your fullest potential.

Some will say that the task is too great and we are too small to make a difference. But we know

that when you lift a finger for healing, the universe extends you a hand. Others will feel too overwhelmed to be of service. But we know that one of the great mysteries of love is that giving and receiving are one and the same.

The entire universe is made of divine energy. Galaxies, stars, planets, clouds, music, roses...all beings everywhere form a loving pattern of praise. Notice how one warm kiss invites another, how one sweet voice harmonizes with many, how one beautiful flower casts a multitude of seeds to the wind. These are luscious cycles, positive feedback loops that effortlessly fill the living world around us with delight and joy. It's our natural state to be in this universal flow of infinitely abundant love. When we act with love the entire universe conspires ('breathes as one') to heal us.

So, if you feel too exhausted to give, start giving! Start with the tiniest little acts of service, even if they seem too insignificant to matter. Those sips of bliss add up to a flood before you know it.

We are so blessed to be living in this beautiful and abundant land. Thank goodness, most of us aren't struggling to keep our children from starving or living in mind numbing filth and poverty like so many of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our privilege carries with it the responsibility to act with the big picture in our hearts and minds, with loving kindness and hope.

Sanity is far more than the ability to keep it together well enough to get dressed in the morning and hold down a job. It certainly doesn't mean thinking and acting like everyone else. And, just as health is more than simply the lack of disease, sanity is more than the absence of insanity (though it does help).

The word 'sanity' derives both from 'senté', meaning aware, and 'santé', meaning sacred. We become sane by connecting to the vine, to the nurturing source of all life. In essence, living sanely means living in awareness of the divine spark in all beings

As Jerry Garcia sang so sweetly, when you "wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world", you discover that "you are the song that the morning brings"**. As we radiate our beauty and grace, we inspire luscious cycles of delight in all we touch. Our passion to make a difference is contagious.

When we share common healing visions, we empower each other to push the envelope of what is possible. Walls and barriers crumble. Doors that appeared locked magically open. Our collective actions flow outward across the entire planet, inspiring sanity in all they touch.

We too feel disappointed in the direction our country has chosen. But, to put the recent presidential election in perspective, we felt like we were choosing between Coke *TM and Pepsi *TM, while really wishing for some fresh organic carrot juice.

In truth, we are one people living on one planet sharing one destiny. Even looking ahead seven

generations isn't far enough in the nuclear age. Sanity demands that we expand our awareness to the longest and most inclusive view possible.

We are the midwives of a new consciousness. Birth is painful, risky, messy and even bloody. It is also awesome, breath taking and miraculous...and like the truth it cannot be stopped. We don't know what trials lie ahead in this transition. There is always resistance as the newborn passes through the tight birth canal.

We are evolving powers beyond our imagination. What does the sprouting acorn know of the future mighty oak within?

As the way unfolds, we will know when to push, when to breathe and when to rest and regain our strength between contractions. Birth is inevitable and there's no turning back. Time is on our side. The baby will slide out, a sudden and breathtaking transformation. We pray to deliver her whole and well without any needless suffering into the welcoming arms of our global village.

Now is the time to take a stand for what is right using all the tools of wisdom that we know. And if the tools are not yet known, we will imagine and create whatever is needed as we go. We are designed for these times. We have the courage to be onstage with wide open eyes at the cusp of the paradigm shift. We are the ones we've been waiting for.

We are the earth's shining joy- each unique and yet connected, all sacred and all one. Let's gratefully open our hearts to each other here and now. Let's play and sing and dance with our beloveds. Beyond believing in God's love, let's be God's love.

We are divine flowers, and our love is the fruit.

So may it be.

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** from "Eyes of the World", by Robert Hunter & Jerry Garcia