

VICTIM NO MORE!

by Stefan J. Malecek

A New Historical Perspective

When nomadic warriors began migrating across the steppes of Southern Asia toward what is now modern day Europe between five and eight thousand years ago -- in the wake of the retreating glaciers of the last Ice Age -- they brought with them their cruel and vicious male gods who demanded utter obedience to their authority -- with torture and death being the punishment for defying them. They treated others -- friend and foe -- as their gods treated them. They brought about the fall of the Minoan Civilization, the last to embrace the concept of the bountiful, egalitarian Goddess, Gaia, providing completely for the needs of all of humanity without discrimination.

We on Planet Earth have been locked into this same operative paradigm -- based on the isolation of the individual, hostility and competition toward other isolated and separate individuals, and dominance over Nature -- demanding, in the words of Sir Francis Bacon, that we "torture her until she reveals her secrets" in order to get what we want from life and the world. These kinds of attitudes and misunderstandings have led us to the brink of planetary ecocide, living on a planet awash with racism and sexism and plagued by a global economic system that thrives on war and power-brokering among the industrialized nations.

What we have lost in this frenzy of production and consumption is the connection with our own bodies -- and sensitivity to the needs of others and the planet. These attitudes have been fostered and encouraged by modern industrial societies as being "good for business" because the needs and concerns of the individual are supreme -- and the false notion that "he who dies with the most toys wins".

The roots of this thinking lie deeply buried in the mind-body split -- first promulgated in the philosophies of Plato, Pythagoras and Parmenides -- marking the beginning of an era when knowledge was no longer divine and revealed from inner source, but was something which could be quantified and "objectified" -- and thus obtained from external sources. This effectively gave recognition to the split between the "male" intellect and the equally intelligent "female" body, giving precedence to the former. Rene Descartes gave this disjunction a scientific formalism during the Enlightenment Project of the Seventeenth Century and bequeathed to us a continuous process of objectification which has enabled the human race to reach new heights of scientific knowledge and technological advancement. But we have created, and increasingly rely upon, deified experts upon whom we have been led to believe that we must be reliant for all the myriad kinds of knowledge and needs of our increasingly complex lives.

Power and Social Conditioning

Since societies exist before we do, there is always a pre-existing social structure of some sort into which we are born, one with its own set of rules and regulations, visions and priorities, goals and agendas. All of the people in that society, including one's parents, are invested in the operative blueprint of the particular society for survival and the furtherance of their own individual goals.

We are disempowered from the moment of birth, our ostensible caregivers -- and the whole of society through them -- being given an opportunity to have their own deepest power and dependency needs met through the medium of the newborn child, for whose destiny they have already made plans, consciously or otherwise. We directly absorb these earliest examples of power and intimacy from the role modeling of our most intimate and immediate caregivers acting and reacting in certain ways to the needs and demands of the larger society because neonateness -- the plasticized brain learning of infancy and early childhood -- allows us to adapt to anything without discrimination. Because we are totally open and vulnerable, we are imprinted with the emotional tone of these lessons like black ink on the white paper of our consciousness. We have, without any conscious thought on our parts, been introduced to expectations -- certain ways of acting, thinking, being.

Because we are cognitively immature, we are engraved emotionally, absorbing these imprints in the neural networks of the brain. Until examined they have a life long effect on the determination of one's belief system -- basically an acquired "taste" for certain preferences and kinds of knowledge, based on those of our caregivers and their role modeling. Our intellectual predilections are often an extension or rationalization of these early emotional choices or conditioning. For example, one must only look at how frequently the bulk of people act contrary to their stated, conscious, intellectually formulated goals and ideals, choosing instead unconscious, unexamined emotionally based ones.

Having internalized the essence of these earliest lessons without question, (i.e. "Don't cry! Be a Man!"), having learned to squelch our own needs in favor of the prevailing attitudes of society embodied in our caretakers -- we are bound to repeat them in our own lives unless and until we consciously choose to examine them, deciding their "correctness" and "appropriateness" in terms of our own lives in the present. This introjecting of parental mandates is that to which John Bradshaw was referring when he said

"That of which we are unaware drives us".

Just as the individual contains and reflects society in embryo, so does society contain and reflect the collective vibrations of all individuals. Thus, even by default, we live in exactly the world we want! We may try to deny this, but it does not matter what good intentions we might have -- collectively we generate what we call "reality". We are the co-creators of all we see. With either conscious will and intention or unconscious will by default, we manifest what we carry most deeply within ourselves and create "the world".

If one can look without prejudice at this so called "external world" and its changes as mirror images of our collective inner world, we may begin to reflect on these changes, using them as guides to inner knowing and spiritual progress. The environment in which one lives -- which we almost universally perceive to be external to our individual selves -- is really nothing more than a direct projection of our thoughts, ideas and desires and well within our ability to change.

The institutions that govern our lives in this post-industrial world represent a system of social control with their hierarchical structure, system of rewards and punishment and male dominance. They also represent a process of continually deepening conditioning in which we are encouraged/coerced to give up our inner authority -- to our parents and family, then to teachers and doctors and clergy, to the policeman, the fireman and hundreds of others in almost every aspect of our daily lives. We are rarely, if ever, encouraged to live our lives in tune with our own internal signals -- indeed we are often encouraged to ignore the body completely in favor of completing other, "more important" mental tasks.

Driven by these internalized mandates, we often unthinkingly repeat the lifestyle choices and dictates of these earliest, most essential people in our lives. I believe that the current state of the global environment -- economy, politics, religions and the biosphere -- reflects this lack of self-examination on a massive scale. Because we are encouraged to maintain a sense of self defined by the status quo society, because we have been conditioned to believe that this is who we really are, and, because we believe that our very well-being is intricately linked to it, we are afraid to change -- much as expulsion from the tribe was considered to be the most extreme punishment possible, tantamount to death, in ancient societies.

Choice, Intention and a New Attitude

It is this inner search itself which holds the key to the "war on drugs", violence in the streets, the continued degradation of our cities and way of life, the increasing sense of alienation from our jobs and relationships, the proliferating addictions and diseases that plague modern life and the planetary ecological crisis. It is only when each individual chooses to take on the burdens and questions of their own lives, chooses to examine and define who he or she is in their own right without reference to the needs and demands of society, takes the dangerous and potentially most healing step possible and examines the internalized dictates and memories of their own life, that we, each of us, can become truly responsible (develop the ability to respond) first of all for our own lives and decisions and ultimately for those which affect the planet itself (acting in concert with others who have trod this most difficult and fulfilling road).

What is required is a new attitude -- based on rigorous honesty and self-examination -- that posits that we, as planetary people, can change any situation, no matter how impossible it might seem, from losing weight to becoming protectors and stewards of the planet -- but which requires, first and foremost, that we ourselves change in such a way that we are able to align ourselves with the desired change and become it. This will require a new way of seeing one's own life and world, a Quantum Psychology, if you will, that is based -- not as the old, on separatist, isolating categories of hostile, opposing elements (which reflects the dominant worldview of the times), but on an entirely new system -- on the cooperation and harmony of holism, a new octave of change, a quantum jump in thinking.

Healing emotionally is the true key to this spiritual growth and change. It is only by living the "reality" of a vision of harmony and beauty that we can make it real, incorporating it into the practices of our daily lives in such an intrinsic way that with every breath we take, we are, in effect, changing the world through the revolutionary action of simply being alive. But becoming authentic most often involves unravelling the often subtly interwoven tyrannies of everyday life. There are several areas which need to be addressed in this respect -- on the road to functional wholeness and spiritual growth of any individual.

Transformational Tools for Healing

1. Recovery. The internalization of the victim stance is most intense amongst child abuse survivors -- although almost everyone is abused and/or neglected in our exploitive, competition-based, "might makes right" society. This abuse engenders internalized oppression. Because we have been socialized to please others, to meet their needs, we have been betrayed in our earliest, most vulnerable periods and hence carry memories of pain and fear associated with being emotionally open and available. One must recover all one's memories, latent abilities and the power lost to emotional neglect and restore them to full consciousness -- thus effectively re-empowering one's self. This work may include Twelve Step Programs,

psychotherapy, regression work, Rebirthing, Voice Dialogue, Inner Child Work, Co-Counseling or any type of personal growth program to which one feels drawn. It is ultimately the desire and intention to change that will lead one to the goal of re-empowerment. I have found all of the above methods helpful in clearing my own traumatic history.

2. Body Work. Body work therapy allows one to get in better touch (pun intended) with oneself. Since pain is stored in the body, it too must be taught new and more functional ways of being -- releasing the painful burdens of the past in favor of energy, joy and ecstasy. As Michael Rossman says in *Notes on the Tao of the Body Politic* "... living in touch with our vitality in reawakened bodies is integral to the pursuit of the revolution we dream is necessary".

Exercise generates endorphins, the body's own anti-depressant. It elevates the heart and metabolic rates and is a general toner for the entire body. Hatha Yoga techniques, Structural Intergration or any technique to which one feels drawn can be useful. If one listens carefully, one's body will tell one what it wants and needs.

3. Group Work. Developing a new family of affiliation (which can include members of one's biological family of origin) comes about from pursuing activities and interests that resonate for one -- and finding others who have similar interests, such as recycling, protection of the rainforests, gourmet vegetarian cooking or creating conscious communities. As one recovers from one's own personal ravages, one will discover others of like mind, willing to bravely experiment with a new vulnerability now healed from the burdens of the past and tempered by discrimination. One's recovery can be enhanced tremendously in this way because a social context is created and reinforced for a new way upon which one may comfortably and joyously enter. Joining in group activities or meditation, one will find the exponential power of developing group consciousness wherein truly, the sum is greater than the parts.

4. Meditation. When one has become sufficiently clear emotionally and mentally, it becomes a matter of steering the ship of self, as it were, where one wants it to go. This is done through intending what one wants -- not mere empty hoping, but a clarified intention to imprint the Universal Whole with one's needs and intentions. This creates a powerful beacon of purpose which -- even if not fulfilled precisely -- draws to one the highest good and cuts a path through the fog to one's goals.

This will allow one to channel one's own previously misdirected energies (outward) to be turned inward for self-guidance -- and to live in true free-will expression and become, in effect, one's own parents! Choosing consciously to limit the extent of the practice of exploitation in every area of one's life -- thereby making oneself more receptive to the benevolent energies of The Whole -- allows one the opportunity to become a living embodiment of change, garnering truth and insight, learning and growing from everyone's efforts -- such that one's every breath becomes a revolutionary act.

Once one becomes conscious of the nature of self-created reality, one can see the mechanism of creation itself and take responsibility for it -- creating anew the patterns of one's life, putting a conscious and aware ego into the driver's seat of the vehicle of consciousness. The possibility develops, then, of diving deeply, ever more deeply, into one's own Self in the silence of meditation -- and discovering the real depths of both one's own individuality and one's connectedness to others. One must throw off the oppressive burden of victimization to stand as champion to one's very own most precious self and say "I WILL BE A VICTIM NO MORE!"

Victim No More is an excerpt from "Quantum Psychology" (*Unravelling the Tyranny of Everyday Life*) by Stefan Malecek of Manzanita, a privately published book available at Rainyday Books in Tillamook, The Crystal Cavern in Salem and from the author at 368-7591 \$15 postage paid.

If we have learned anything in the last quarter century, it is that we cannot federalize virtue.

George Bush, 1991

TAX TALK

Check this Tax Break

When you sell your home, the difference between the adjusted sales price and your cost basis is treated as a capital gain and is subject to tax. You may be able to defer the tax for a time, but it usually becomes due eventually.

However, once you reach age 55, you may exclude from tax up to \$125,000 of gain on a home sale. You must have owned and lived in the house at least three of the five years before the sale.

You may use the election only once. If a married couple sells their home and uses the exclusion, neither one can take advantage of it again. Keep that in mind if you sell your home because of a marriage or divorce. Choose the right time to use this big tax break.

NOTE: The general information in this column should not be acted upon without professional guidance.

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