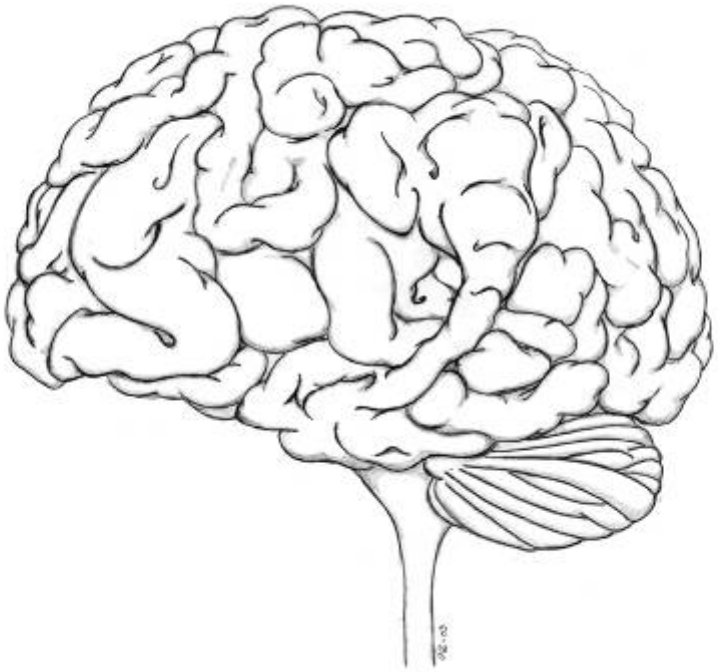
"The time has come to awaken from our slumber and for this the right message has to reach our heart and uplift our spirit."
Foreword by Dr Ervin Laszlo



MIND YOUR ELEPHANT

HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR EGO, CONNECT WITH OTHERS AND SAVE THE WORLD

Tomi Astikainen

www.mindyourelephant.org

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***WHEREAS**, humanity now faces an unprecedented opportunity for dialogue, worldwide understanding and renewal since global crises, accelerating dysfunctional trends and patterns in all aspects of life threaten our sustainability and very existence on this planet;*

***That** these diverse trends and patterns have reached a dangerous tipping point that may precipitate in the coming years a catastrophic collapse and implosion of our economic, political, social, ecological, and cultural structures and institutions;*

***That** the crises catalyzed by these trends and patterns are systemically inter-connected and are the cumulative effect of chronically dysfunctional ways of thinking, outdated values, and obsolete beliefs that have dominated human life for the past several generations;*

***That** humankind's collective wisdom through the ages makes clear that the kind of world we live in is a direct consequence of our mentality and so that to truly change our world we must transform the dominant mentality of the current civilization;*

***That**, accordingly, the diverse crises we now face are at their core a crisis of consciousness, and thus the most powerful and effective way to transform the still dominant civilization is to address and redress the root causes, creating a timely transformation of the mentalities and patterns of consciousness that produced it;*

***That**, further, the creative forces of human wisdom and vision have also been at work in the life of people across the planet and have been the primary engine of important advances in evolving the human condition, in particular of advancing the ethical values, spirituality, and political, social, economic, scientific, artistic, technological, educational and other innovations that serve the betterment of humanity;*

***And that**, in consequence, the creative consciousness-evolving forces throughout our social and cultural development exercise a cumulative effect in countering the destructive mentalities and forms of consciousness that have brought us to the current critical point, and bring humanity to the threshold of a great planetary awakening;*

***That**, finally, in light of the realization that nothing less than the positive transformational forces in our culture can stem the tide of the destructive trends and patterns of the dominant civilization and get to the root causes of the economic, social and ecological crises that now threaten human well-being, prosperity, and survival --*

BE IT RESOLVED...

That we shall henceforth make it our highest priority to do all in our power to activate and ignite the imminent, and rapidly emerging evolved consciousness in the life of the people on a planetary scale, so as to facilitate and accelerate the blossoming of a higher form of civilization that embodies the global wisdom of humankind, in order that generations now living may bring forth a world in which the entire human family may flourish in harmony with all of nature on this precious planet;

That, to this end, we shall concentrate our efforts in building powerful and sustainable networks, co-creative partnerships, seeking to activate and draw together in common cause the vast and growing diversity of initiatives now working around the planet to bring forth a newly awakened peaceful and sustainable civilization;

That the above resolutions are to focus on calling forth a critical mass of awakened global citizens, building a global community of empowered people, tapping the enormous potential of our Youth, of Women, and people of all ages who recognize the unprecedented global crisis and opportunity we now face, and are ready through their awakened and empowered consciousness to take personal responsibility for their own thinking, their own values and mentality, making mindful choices in confronting and transforming the currently threatening unsustainable trends originating from obsolete forms of thinking, values, and consciousness; And, as a highest urgency, to use the mass media, the power of the Internet and the digital multimedia, as well as all appropriate forms of communication to build a global network of solidarity so as to co-create a critical mass of awakened citizens and activate the creative resonant energy of mass consciousness that is essential to overcome the inertia of complacency, fear and paralyzing pessimism and turn the course of humanity toward a new planetary civilization as a concrete, living reality.

Members of the World Wisdom Council, Tokyo, November 11, 2005

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Dedicated to all children
born today.

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Acknowledgements

Although writing is one of my passions, getting a book done can be a long, lonely and burdensome process – unless you apply principles of P2P production to it. Based on the feedback that I got I was convinced that we're onto something great here. When you hear people's moving personal accounts and realize how similar hopes, dreams and worries people have in Colombia, India and The Netherlands you know that we are dealing with universal issues – that, in the end, we are all one. The sub-standard system we were born into is giving way to something extraordinary. It became obvious quite soon in the process that this wasn't my book at any given time – it was born as a book of the commons, for the commons, by the commons.

I'd like to express my gratitude to all those people who helped me engage in the writing process; Moustapha, Kalle, Saija, Pete, Eija, Chris, Gaya, Frano, Ljerka, Paul, Kristo, Liev, Rik, Ivan, Deniss, Ervin, Livia, Levi, Szymon, Urszula, Martin, Katarzyna, Sandra, Darius, Mindaugas, Edgars, Mirko, Janne, Oscar, Arita and all the others whose names I didn't quite catch while hitch-hiking around Europe – I'm grateful that you showed me the goodness in humanity during my journey. It was an inward journey and your selfless willingness to bestow inspired me to tell others what lies ahead of humanity.

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No one has been paid any financial incentives for their priceless effort. These people selflessly contributed to a common good. May the universe reward them and give them good karma for the rest of their lives and beyond.

If you like what you are reading, please join the Community of Fans in Facebook: just search Mind Your Elephant – and you get to engage in dialogue with other readers. Also, be sure to give feedback and spread the word by telling your friends about the book in www.mindyourelephant.org.

Tomi Astikainen
11 November 2009

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Foreword

We live in critical times. They are at the same time exciting times, times for rethinking and renewing—for reinventing our life on this planet. As this book's subtitle suggests, we live in times that give us both the urgent need, and an unparalleled opportunity, to "save the world."

Young people must be in the forefront of reinventing our world. They must wake up from the comfortable (or perhaps uncomfortable but hypnotically compelling) slumber of doing things the way the previous generation has been doing them. There is no better way to get young people to wake up and engage their energies and creativity than to talk to them. Talk to them in their own language. Tomi Astikainen is a master at doing just this. His book is an ultra-modern and ultra-timely clarion call for waking up and doing what needs to be done. It's also a clarion call for how you and I need to be. Because Gandhi was right when he said, "be the change you want to see in the world."

Only keep in mind that Gandhi also said "first" —first be the change you want to see in the world. For being the change is not in itself sufficient to change the world, although it's entirely necessary for it. Being the change needs to be followed by action. Yet action alone is not enough either. Acting as the old "you," you will only direct others to do something that needs to be done but that can only be done from the context of a new mentality. You must incarnate that new mentality. This means that you must adopt a new and better view of who you are, what the world is like, how you relate to the world and how the world relates to you.

I can recommend that all young people – and all people young in heart and in spirit – read this book and take it to heart and to spirit. The time has come to awaken from our slumber and for this the right message has to reach our heart and uplift our spirit. When the right message is clothed in the right language – which is the language of this book – it has the best chance of being received.

So sit down, by yourself or with your friends, and read this book and reflect on it. It can help you to see yourself in a new light and reinvent the world around you. Do it for your sake, and for the sake of all of us, on this small and interdependent, and now critically endangered planet.

Ervin Laszlo
1 November 2009

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INTRODUCTION

"For some people, there is a sudden or gradual break with their past: their work, living situation, relationship – everything undergoes profound change. Some of the change may be initiated by themselves, not through an agonizing decision making process but by a sudden realization or recognition: This is what I have to do. The decision arrives ready-made, so to speak. It comes through awareness, not through thinking. You wake up one morning and you know what to do."[1]

For me it wasn't a morning; it was an evening with two of my very good friends in my favorite bar. They asked me two powerful questions that triggered my awakening. I'll reveal those questions later. What's important here is the intense effect those questions had: I decided to dive into the unknown.

For what felt like eons I had searched for something that would explain the root issues of why it seemed our society was plunging into the deepest abyss. I had found a lot of answers that raised new questions: why do we have such a self-centered, egoistic, greedy society that allows this horrendous inequality to happen, a society where half of the soon-to-be-seven-billion population is lacking access to basic human necessities and opportunity to lead a dignified life? What is it in our economy that pushes forward the profit-motive and demands for continuous growth even though the planet is crying out for help?

We have put our planet at risk. We have become our greatest enemy. But on the other hand, "We are on the threshold of an extraordinary, mind-boggling, new age of our human progress and evolution on planet Earth if we do not stick to obsolete beliefs, values, systems, institutions and laws."[2]. I knew that we could live in a marvelous society, already today, if we just managed to let go of what was holding us back: the old paradigm of "a dog eat dog world" where everything revolves around money. My frustration grew stronger and I started doubting if any of my actions were contributing to a more sustainable society, or if in fact I was part of the problem.

So, there we were with my friends in my favorite bar called Iltakoulu (Evening School; where a lot of learning has happened over the years). Again, I had been ranting about the better world, how it would look like, what it would enable and how great it would be to live there without being a slave to the system. I said I would be playing much more football if I had all that free time. They asked me: "Why don't you do that now?" It really struck me: it cut to my bone. Why am I hoping for things to happen in the future when the only time I can actually live and do something is right now? The second question pushed me into action. I had introduced them to Ubuntu, an African community philosophy: "I am because you are because we are". They asked me: "Can't you think of it the other way around: We are, because you are because I am?" In other words, they meant: this society is what it is, because of the nature of relationships around, and if you wish to see another world, you are the one who has to act.

That made it very clear: I had to take responsibility. I had to be the change I sought. It finally dawned on me what Gandhi meant when he said "Be the change you seek in the world." He said *be.* He never mentioned anything about doing. All this time I had tried to help others and save the world although I should have started by changing myself. And I was not supposed to be doing something differently but being the difference. Soon after that, I decided to let go of my flat. I gave away the rest of my earthly belongings. I stopped worrying about having no money. I had no work. I had no ties. I felt free, although my head was a mess – not really knowing what is the outcome of the journey I had decided to undertake. I packed my bag and headed for a five-week trip around Europe, hitch-hiking and meeting my old buddies that I had not seen for a while.

[1] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth
[2] Robert Muller: http://robertmuller.org/voladnl/v9adnl.htm

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After about a week on the road I found myself walking down the streets of Amsterdam without a plan. Since I had no direction or any motivation to attend to what the city was famous for, I somehow drifted into a bookstore. I had no intention on buying anything because I really didn't have that much money. I decided I will take a look and if there was a book for five euros or less I'd get some light summer reading. To my surprise pretty much everything was five euros. I lazed around the shelves and uninterestingly skimmed the books, ready to leave the store. Then, my eyes locked into a small blue-cover book called "The Power of Now – A guide to spiritual enlightenment" by Eckhart Tolle. Instantly I knew I had to read it. I had no choice but to take it. A guide to spiritual enlightenment… Light summer reading indeed.

I went all the way to Croatia with the book as my travel companion, and then hitch-hiked my way back to Finland. During that journey I learned to differentiate between my life and my life situation – that no matter how bad my life situation looked like externally I could be at peace with my life. I learned to live in the now. I realized I should not seek for happiness from external sources but concentrate on the internal peace, love and joy. Little by little I became more of the change that I sought in the world. I could have never imagined how one book can utterly change your life. When I came back, after touring eleven countries, I tried to capture the learning points from the journey. I went to sit in the park, held my notepad and pen, but couldn't write anything. I realized that the journey had not yet ended. I closed the notepad and continued my nomad life without knowing what I was about to do. Out of that space, this book emerged.

> *"I just write. I have to write. I like to say that I didn't choose writing, writing chose me. This may sound slightly mythical, but I sometimes feel as if my writing is something bigger than I am."*
> ***Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie***

On my Euro-trip some of my buddies had asked if I was ever to publish the previous book that I had written in Sri Lanka: Republic of Eelam Ltd. I pretty much disregarded those comments because it didn't feel important. RoE Ltd is on the website[3] for those who wished to read it. Even people who gave me a ride started saying things like "Are you going to write a book about your journey? Remember to include us in it. It's going to be a bestseller." I had not even told them that I liked writing, or that I was keeping notes. Then the final trigger was back in Finland when my friend had recommended that I should meet someone. Without knowing why I was meeting him, I did it anyways. We had a lengthy conversation and there was one thing that really struck me. He said: "Your soul is crying to write, so go and write!" He didn't even know me, but this comment sent shivers down my spine. Then I knew: this book had to be written. As I was only starting to find my inner purpose – the awakening – these people had pointed me towards my outer purpose. They showed me what was my calling right now.

However, the most important person in this whole process is the reader. In the overflow of information you should put your free will to good use and decide whether you want to commit your time to see what's being offered. This book might be useful for you if you answer yes to any of these questions:

- Do you often feel restless and anxious in your free time; yet have no drive to do anything?
- Is your mind consumed by fear, doubt or disbelief regarding the future?
- Do you often worry about the things you did or didn't do in the past?
- Do you sometimes feel lonely, empty or separated from others?
- Are there people in your life that drive you mad; people who just don't get it?
- Do you feel overwhelmed by the increasing pressure of society?
- Do you think there should be more to life than working your way to retirement?
- Would you like to improve your community (family, work place, city, country…)?
- Would you like to leave another kind of world for the generations to come?

[3] www.tomiastikainen.com

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Unquestionably we are living in a tumultuous time in human history. Then again, although some see only the crisis, a new better world is in the making. For us to create a better society there's no other choice but to start the change process from oneself. That's why this book is structured according to the aforementioned Ubuntu philosophy. Before we can answer the question "how to save the world" we need to answer two other questions: "how to connect to others" and even before that "how to get rid of your ego". This is the core of chapter one. It deals with the "I am" part of the Ubuntu philosophy. It is about finding "the real me" beyond the thinking mind. It is about being the change. It is more about stopping certain behaviors rather than starting new ones. It is about unveiling who you are, by looking beyond your ego. It is about reducing thinking and increasing knowing. If you wish to have a positive change in the world, you've got to be aware of who you really are, or at least of who you are not. You are not your ego, not your thinking mind. This chapter will benefit you by answering questions like "How can I understand my ego", "How can I see if I'm in control", and "Who am I if not my ego".

The second chapter takes Ubuntu forward: "I am because you are". Our thinking minds have created the separation between people. If we wish to change the world, we need to bridge this gap soon. If you're driving and your car stops on the road, it's pointless to get mad at the engine if you've run out of fuel. I need to see you and me as part of the same system, part of the same oneness. Your existence enables me to be. The second chapter deals with awakening to the connectedness of all life on our planet, concentrating but not limited to your closest relationships with other people. It is about relating to one another without the ego in the way. It is about understanding why your success is so vital for mine. By completing this chapter you might find answers to questions such as "Why should I care about others", "How to improve my relationships", "How to go from separation to connectedness", and "How can I learn to forgive".

Chapter three completes the Ubuntu philosophy as we look at the community as a whole: "I am because you are because we are". It is about seeing how the improved relationships comprise an improved system. We will take a look at options available for humankind, and see what is needed to build a new kind of society. We will examine what kind of values and culture are needed if we are to become a species of connected, compassionate individuals sharing the same planet.

Finally, in chapter four, these learning points are gathered together to suggest a very different kind of world view and development path for humanity. We will learn how we can individually engage in "future-aligned communities" and how we are able to make a positive change in our communities. After all, we are just borrowing this planet from our grandchildren. I don't want to be pointed at by tomorrow's adults: You were yesterday's next generation. You were supposed to make it right!

Seeing the world through the lens of Ubuntu philosophy is a good approach if we want to have a more just civilization. Ubuntu emphasizes self-awareness, quality of relationships and the power of community: I am because you are because we are. In short: being yourself without the ego in the way, connected to others in healthy relationships let's you become an agent of positive change in your community. To fully understand this, I urge you to read this book cover to cover. There might be times that you question "what does this have to do with anything?" or you might even question the sanity of the author. You might feel awkward as the text jumps suddenly from very personal stories to grand societal themes. However, it all builds up from individual perspective (I am) to relationships between people (I am because you are) to matters of community at large (I am because you are because we are) so please don't judge before you've reached the end. It's a process, as is the whole awakening.

What awakening? You might find some of the terminology a bit foreign. Here are some definitions:

- ***Ego*** is your mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning; it's who you think you are. ***Egoism*** refers to selfishness; seeing the world through your mental image.
- ***Mind*** is a tool you can use for rational thinking. However, most of the time the mind is idle and then the ego uses it for uncontrolled thinking (brain chatter).

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- ***Consciousness*** is the power of awareness; an ability to be aware of your own thoughts and thinking process.
- ***Awakening*** is the gradual process when you start to let go of identifying with the ego and learn who you really are.

> *"Believe what you wish, but trust your direct experience."*
> ***Dan Millman***

I have started seeing that another world is not only possible; we are already heading towards it. Eckhart Tolle confirms: "We are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness, but they won't be talking about it in the news tonight." As you become acquainted that there is, indeed, a larger shift in consciousness happening globally, you can engage on seeking the truth on your own. For you to get the most out of this book – and life in general – it is vital to understand that there are three levels of truth in existence:

- **The heard truth:** Things you read or hear that you *believe* to be true. The heard truth is highly subjective: someone tells you oranges are healthy and you believe it.
- **The reasoned truth:** Things you put together to form an understanding and *feel* to be true. The reasoned truth is somewhat subjective but based on your own logic: you find out that an orange has 53 milligrams of vitamin C per 100 grams, so you reason they must be healthy.
- **The experienced truth:** Things that you learn by experiencing yourself and *know* to be true. The experienced truth is the most objective: you include oranges in your diet and after a while start feeling better, so you conclude oranges are healthy and pep you up.

I try my best to deliver as much as possible of what I know to be true. However, since I am such a novice in the school of life, I don't claim that everything in this book is experienced truth. In fact, it seems that ideas as such are not unique but somehow part of a collective consciousness: the same thoughts arise around the world in a synchronistic manner. I try to convey important wisdom from many philosophical sources like Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity, Kabbalah, Bahá'í, Gnosticism, and free-thinkers as well as modern day science, design and technology. "The good people who have read a lot and have a lot to say, may teach you many useful things, but they are not the real Gurus whose words invariably come true."[4] Never treat me as a Guru; a messenger at the most.

Since this book is not striving for academic accuracy, I've tried to keep references to a bare minimum. At the end of each chapter, you will find a summary, frequently asked questions and some tips. They are collected at the end of the book. You can choose to read them or leave them unnoticed. Please pay attention to the grand variety of quotes. They are signposts to find out more by yourself; so pick what you like. Finally, throughout the book we follow an imaginary story of Anna Were and her encounter with a mysterious teacher who introduces us to the concept of an elephant.

[4] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

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Chapter one

MIND YOUR ELEPHANT

HOW COMPULSIVE THINKING CREATES PROBLEMS…
AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM WITHOUT THINKING

Although quite social by nature, Anna Were had always felt like a lone wolf – that in the end she was alone in this world. She had taken her destiny in her own hands, graduated with best grades from a respected university and finally… ended up unemployed. She was confused but knew there was something more waiting for her than a job at a multinational company.

One bright day Anna had decided to take a boat ride to clarify her thoughts. There she came across a delicate-figured person in a bright blue robe who preferred to be called a teacher. Right after the introductions, the teacher asked Anna a powerful question: "How did you manage to grow your elephant that big?" This is how their conversation started.

***A:** Say what? What are you talking about?*

- *Your elephant… How did it become that massive?*

***A:** What elephant?*

- *The one you are traveling with.*

***A:** Umm… I don't have an elephant.*

- *Yes you do. It seems you haven't just noticed it before. You have not been aware of its presence.*

***A:** Why would I have an elephant?*

- *You tell me. That is a very good question indeed: why do you keep dragging it with you?*

Anna still couldn't figure out what the teacher was mumbling about. She thought the teacher was just old and foolish. As Anna stood there speechless, the teacher decided to enlighten her.

- *Isn't it so that most of your life has been quite a drama?*

***A:** I guess so. I've gone through a lot of shit.*

- *I would call it elephant dung.*

***A:** What?*

- *We'll come to that later. You've had a lot of worries, people have been unfair towards you and you've had to put up with all kinds of negativity. But now you have finally made it, is that so?*

***A:** Well, I don't know if I've made it but I'm definitely much better off now than before.*

- *You are proud of your achievements, aren't you?*

***A:** Uh-huh…*

- *But you still seem to be confused.*

***A:** I am. I don't know which direction to take.*

- *How about inwards? Are you ready to get to know your elephant?*

It just kept getting weirder. "Is there an elephant inside of me?" Anna thought. Maybe she was thinking out loud because the teacher answered.

- *Yes there is. Some people call it ego; some refer to it as self, and the rest call it the thinking mind. I call it an elephant. It's much more precise expression than any of these more professional but ambiguous terms.*

***A:** I see.*

- *You do?*

***A:** Not really. Tell me more.*

- *From the moment you were born you became under the influence of the prevailing culture. Your cultural conditioning started. And what do you think was the prevailing culture?*

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A: *Western culture?*

- *True, but that's not what I meant. There was a hint in the question: what do you think?*

A: *Culture of me? The culture of being highly independent?*

- *Also true. We are getting there. One more guess. Look at the question: what do you think?*

A: *Think?*

- *Correct.*

A: *What?*

- *You were born in the era of thinking.*

For a while Anna thought she was on to something but now she was just more perplexed. What did this have to do with elephants?

- *So, there you were, an innocent little girl growing up and learning new things every day… getting further and further away from the Source. Then your parents or someone else popped the question: what are you going to do when you grow up?*

A: *Yes.*

- *So, what did you answer?*

A: *I wanted to become what I called a multi-function woman. I didn't have a dream job. I wanted to do a lot of different things.*

- *Ok, so what was the effect of that question?*

A: *The effect? I guess I became more conscious of what the future holds for me; that I should become something.*

- *Exactly. I would say you became a bit less conscious because your cultural conditioning now said that you should start worrying about the future.*

A: *I'm not sure if I follow what you're saying.*

- *How future-oriented are you now?*

A: *Well, I am. I have big ambitions. I set goals and I do my utmost to reach them.*

- *Ok. That's long-term thinking. Most likely someone said it's good for you. And it is, if you are not consumed by the future all the time.*

A: *I am. I feel restless. I even worry about the short-term future a lot. I often feel that today is not enough, I'm already thinking what should happen tomorrow. I guess I see your point. I should be more in the now, more in the present moment.*

- *Very clever. But don't say that you should be something. Just be.*

A: *Ok. Now what does this have to do with the elephant?*

- *Good question. The elephant loves creating problems for it to solve. And once you have tackled one problem, another one arises. You keep incessantly feeding your elephant with worries.*

A: *I see. And it's the same with the past is it?*

- *It is. I take it you are quite an open person. It's easy to get to know you on a personal level. Am I right?*

A: *Definitely.*

- *Well, how do you introduce yourself when you get to know new people that you are supposed to work with, for instance?*

A: *I rip my heart open. I tell my life-story; all the ups and downs. I think this is a good way to show example for others to follow; clear the air and create an atmosphere of openness and trust.*

- *Might be. But at the same time you identify with those ups and downs. You think that's who you are. Without that story you wouldn't be anything, right?*

A: *Of course.*

- *No. That's your elephant in the forefront. You are only here and now. You are not those stories of the past. Nor you are the future you imagine.*

Anna was lost in her thoughts for a while but she had to admit it: The teacher was right. Anna thought for herself: "I got it. I completely got it. All this time I thought I was my mind, my ego… my elephant." She continued:

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A: *Once I was in a situation that you described before, and everyone told their life stories. Afterwards someone said to me that "It was amazing to hear how difficult lives people have had, except you who didn't have it quite as tough."*

- *And? How did this make you feel?*

A: *I was pissed off. I couldn't say anything out loud, but I realized I wanted my life history to be as dramatic as everyone else's or worse…*

- *Can you now see that it was your elephant that was offended?*

A: *Yes, it makes sense. It's insanity to think like that.*

- *It is insane.*

A: *So, are you saying that the elephant wants my life to suck?*

- *Yes, it feeds on your worries and problems that it creates. In your situation this was even magnified by the fact that you're so emotional. Most likely something happened in your history that made you call for sympathy from others.*

A: *True. But let's not go in there.*

- *Ok. Can you now answer my first question: How did you manage to grow your elephant that big?*

A: *Sure. My elephant grew and grew because I kept feeding it unconsciously with worries of past and future. I got disconnected from life – from this moment. Because I wasn't aware of it I wasn't aware of who I really was.*

- *Very good. I'm proud of you.*

The boat came into the shore and the teacher went silent. Anna kept waiting and waiting for him to say something. They walked out of the boat together in complete silence. As they reached the harbor the teacher finally spoke:

- *This identification with mind has surely had an effect on your relationships with others also.*

A: *Oh yes. A lot of drama in there.*

- *Very well. How about fulfilling your life's purpose? Have you been successful in it?*

A: *Not really. I wanted to change things for better, but I was unsuccessful. I blamed it on the others. I blamed it on the society. I even blamed it on the whole world, but I didn't take responsibility of it myself. I guess that was again the elephant…*

- *I'm happy you see that now.*

A: *Me too.*

- *I need to go now.*

Anna was shocked to see that the teacher turned around and started slowly walking away without saying another word. Anna still had so many unanswered questions about her elephant, others' elephants and the whole world of elephants. "What shall I do?" she shouted when the teacher left.

- *Mind your elephant.*

God is a very misunderstood concept – and also misused by ego-driven individuals. Sometimes God and religion have very little to do with each other. "People's perceptions of God are always wrong for God is much greater. Therefore blasphemy is pointing out the ridiculousness of the perceived God and in fact praise of the real God. Usually what is considered blasphemy is not ridiculing God but some pretentiously sacred phenomena. These usually have a lot to laugh about."[5] According to reverend Heinimäki, religion is like pain left by the absence of God.

Here is a true story from my Colombian friend: "Around the world, mainly in Europe, where life is very comfortable, where hunger is just on TV, and the biggest problem is the weather, people are deeply depressed. This is something that the rest of the world cannot understand, when they are starving to death. Since I

[5] Jaakko Heinimäki: Outo Hartauskirja

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was a child I was always looking for something exciting and interesting, new things, new places, and new people. When I got what I wanted I was not satisfied. I started to look for more: to change the world, to impact people, to help. That didn't make my life full either. Every day I saw poor people, abused people, people who live on the streets without options. These terrible things never happened to me, and I was still not satisfied, not feeling happy and fulfilled. When I came to Europe and saw so many lucky people with plentiful lives feeling miserable, it released me. It made me understand it was not only me with the feeling of emptiness – that in fact every human being has an empty spirit until meeting the only one who can fulfill that emptiness: God."

Personally I'm not religious but I know exactly what she is talking about. It doesn't matter what words you use: God, spirit, soul, consciousness, the true me… it's all the same, as long as it is *not just believing in some God out there but knowing the God within*. Before you fill that empty space within, you continue belonging to the obsessive compulsive generation.

The obsessive compulsive generation

"People who go everywhere in a mad rush, running, they are dreaming. It is not necessary for their physical bodies to be resting, snoring in their beds at midnight, in order for them to be dreaming. People dream right here in flesh and bone, just as you see them, running as mad people in the street, as they go around in this constant coming and going, like machines without rhyme or reason, nor any orientation."[6]

In our contemporary world there are certain cultural traits that you should be aware of. These include but are not limited to a few important ones: possessiveness, external pleasure, fear, keeping busy, predictability and thinking. Many of us are no longer consumed by these traits, but still a majority of people are living at least one of these behaviors. See if you can identify yourself, your parents, your siblings or your friends in these traits so common to our age.

Possessiveness

> *"The entire world economy rests on the consumer; if he ever stops spending money he doesn't have on things he doesn't need – we're done for."*
>
> ***Bill Bonner***

Whenever I hear someone referring to consumers I have hard time relating to that term. Demands for continuous growth, so typical to our time, have estranged us from being human and made us consumers. As if buying things would define our existence. Sadly for many, it has been the case. You graduate and get a good job in order to finance what seems to be expected from you. You take a mortgage so that you can own a house. Then you buy a car, a television, furniture, clothes, dishes… until you can't figure out what more to buy to make your life worthwhile, and decide to buy a margarita machine to fill the void.

"If owning things is so important", we reason, "then I should possess more and more to be happy". Subconsciously we extend the demand for possessiveness to other areas of our lives. We get married in order to create sense of security. Although few of us admit it, we want to own people also. We feel the need to be in control. If we lose that control, we have a problem.

External pleasure

When I was sitting on a beach in Croatia I made a very profound realization that I wrote in my notebook: "All this time I was looking for external pleasure, whereas I should've been searching for internal joy". Although I was penniless and clueless of what future would hold for me, at that moment I had no problems at all. Of course the sunshine and crystal clear water helped in this realization, but it changed my life forever.

[6] Samael Aun Weor: http://dream-yoga.org/dream-interpretation/useless-dreams

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I've been able to hold on to the internal joy ever since. For years I had known that "enjoying the moment" was one of my core values, but only now I knew where that enjoyment should come from if it was to be genuine joy. "Once you begin to experience the peace, love and happiness which need no outer causes, all your doubts will dissolve."[7]

We have lost ourselves in the world of entertainment. There's nothing bad in – say – movies, but if we need to go to movies every Friday night, we are clinging to an external source to give us joy. Same goes for such elementary things as eating and drinking. In the western world we have developed an unhealthy relationship to food: at the same time there are people with eating disorders and overweight people. We trust the food, snacks and candies to bring us joy. Not to mention alcohol and drug abuse, including excessive use of caffeine and nicotine. It has been an era of addictions, and we're afraid to let it go.

Fear

> *"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature."*
>
> ***Anne Frank***

A dominating force in our society has been fear: fear of illness and death, fear of failure, fear of change and uncertainty. Although in many countries we've managed to double our life expectancy in just one century, we have not rid ourselves of the fear of death and become care-free. On the contrary, we use excessive amounts of medicine to both prevent and treat illnesses. We are damaging our bodies with vaccines and pills. Fear of death has been used in most imaginative ways to justify political and economical aims. The bird flu was supposed to kill millions and millions of people, but only 262 deaths have occurred in seven years (2003-2009). Instead, billions and billions were made with the TamiFlu medicine. It shows that fear is a good driver to make money. Another example is the War on Terrorism. Pretty much the same amount of Americans die of terrorist attacks and nut allergies each year, yet no American politician has proposed a war on nuts.

It is possible to live without fear, but we need to trick ourselves in that. "What one thing would you do if you knew you would succeed?" is a powerful question that removes the fear of failure from the equation. That coupled with fear of change has kept the status quo prevailing in many areas of life. We have been too afraid to change. We have been afraid of uncertainty.

Predictability

I once knew an elderly gentleman who was not only addicted with watching the news several times a day, but also very interested in weather forecasts. He could not live with uncertainty. Instead he needed to know how the weather will be, a phenomenon that is out of our sphere of control.

In science as well as management, we have developed eloquent models to predict the future. Largely these tools fail to predict the future, because it cannot be predicted due to life's un-linear nature. "In the past, science tended to ignore nonlinearity because it was just too hard to deal with. Science was focused on prediction, and nonlinear systems refuse prediction."[8] The future is emergent and tied to our actions and inactions today. Why then keep up the compulsive need for prediction? It all boils down to our lack of focus on present moment. We are so overwhelmed by trying to predict the future that we forget to live today.

[7] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[8] Margaret Wheatley: Leadership and the New Science

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Keeping busy

Work has become a virtue and sometimes it feels that the bureaucratic establishment is trying to create any kind of job to keep people busy. This leads to the question, why are everyone in their nine-to-five jobs looking forward so much to whatever short vacations they have coming up? Although in our contemporary system one needs to have a source of livelihood, one's worth as a human being is not supposed to be measured by how busy we are.

Sometimes keeping busy is one's way to refuse that there could be something more to life, something deeper that caters to our spiritual side. In the 2004 movie Crash, Jean Cabot (played by Sandra Bullock) realizes this first hand when her anger surfaces, after her car gets stolen. She calls her friend to say that every morning she wakes up she acts like this, she's angry every day and doesn't know why. Her friend is too busy to listen. Right after this she slips on the stairs and gets hurt. None of her so called friends answer the phone when she calls for help, except one who is too busy getting a massage that she doesn't come to take her to the hospital.

For a long time we have defined our *raison d'être* by constantly dwelling on tasks undone. This fixation with time creates psychological pain. "Thought is time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge which are inseparable from time and the past. Time is the psychological enemy of man. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past. Thought is ever-limited and so we live in constant conflict and struggle. Pure observation is insight without any shadow of the past, or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind." Krishnamurti[9] points out how we are shifting to a new level of consciousness.

In recent years an increasing number of people realized that it is possible to leave the rat race, to stop being a slave to the psychological time that we create for ourselves by dwelling solely in the past and the future. In Timothy Ferriss' book, "The 4-hour work week", he notes that once you have defined what keeps you busy, eliminated the unimportant chores, and automated the remaining tasks, you might feel a bit anxious about your newly found liberty. You might end up asking: What shall I do with all this free time? "In the absence of psychological time, your sense of self is derived from Being, not from your personal past. Therefore, the psychological need to become anything other than who you are already is no longer there."[10] Thus it can be argued that it's not enough to liberate yourself from chores, but also from your mind. Maybe we could finally do less and be more; think less and let the universe appear before us as it is.

Thinking

"People whose conscious minds remain underdeveloped often suffer from cluttered and unfocused thinking. Needless worries, trivial distractions, inaccurate observations, false beliefs, and negative emotions run rampant through their thoughts, and most of the time they aren't even aware of it. It's like being stuck in a mental fog. When you talk to such people, you can sense they aren't fully there. The lights are on, but no one's home."[11]

"Watch your thoughts; they become your words…
Watch your words; they become your actions…
Watch your actions; they become your habits…
Watch your habits; they become your character…
Watch your character, for it will become your destiny."
Hillel the Elder

[9] Jiddu Krishnamurti: http://www.kinzaza.com/home/tought.html

[10] Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

[11] Steve Pavlina: http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/07/14-reasons-to-become-more-conscious/

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You might be surprised if you checked out the video on YouTube[12] where Krishnamurti and David Bohm discuss the *current economic and ecological crisis*. Of course there would be nothing weird in it if you'd be reading it from your daily newspaper, but the video is filmed in 1983! Nothing has changed, at least for the better. Thus, a word of warning: It is very natural for human beings – even today – to try and solve issues with their mind, by thinking. You might think that you are your body that was born to your parents and will die alone. You might think your life is your duties, your work and errands. You might think your life is painful and you are always frustrated. Mind you, I don't mean whimsical bad mood that for instance might well be due to low blood sugar. Instead, I refer to the gnawing psychological pain that can potentially take you over for a longer period of time. If it was your thinking mind that got you there, you need other kind of remedies to ease the pain.

You might not even be aware of your incessant thinking, because sometimes our thought patterns are subconscious. Neurologist Vilayanur Ramachandran maps functions of the mind to physical structures of the brain by working with those who have very specific mental disabilities caused by brain injury or stroke. In his TED talk[13] he shares an exciting story of "learned paralysis" of a so-called phantom arm – an arm that has been amputated feels as if it was still there. According to him, half of the patients feel that their phantom arm is paralyzed, as it was before amputation. This is because the patient's brain has told the arm to move but it always keeps responding "no" and doesn't move. The mind becomes obsessed with this argument between the brain and the arm: move, no, move, no, move, no… The patient's brain continues to tell the arm to move even if there is no arm anymore. This is how our thinking can keep us paralyzed – literally and metaphorically.

Thinking is limited and – as Krishnamurti puts it – everything that is limited creates conflict. The mind has not taken us too far. Yes we are launching rockets into the space, gulping down antibiotics and consuming genetically modified organisms. But on a psychological level we are representing a civilization in its infancy.

You are not your elephant

Some people call it the mind, others talk about the ego and some combine these and refer to the mind-created ego. Semantics aside, let's call it an elephant. People – especially the educated lot – tend to end up arguing over words and get lost in an endless maze of definitions. Ego is "a mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning."[14]

Because these are just words – not the truth – it doesn't matter really what we call them, as long as we understand the meaning behind the word. I use the elephant as a metaphor for the mind-made self-image (or ego) that we have

Picture 1. You are not your elephant.

[12] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Knu4ujA1rfU

[13] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rl2LwnaUA-k

[14] Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

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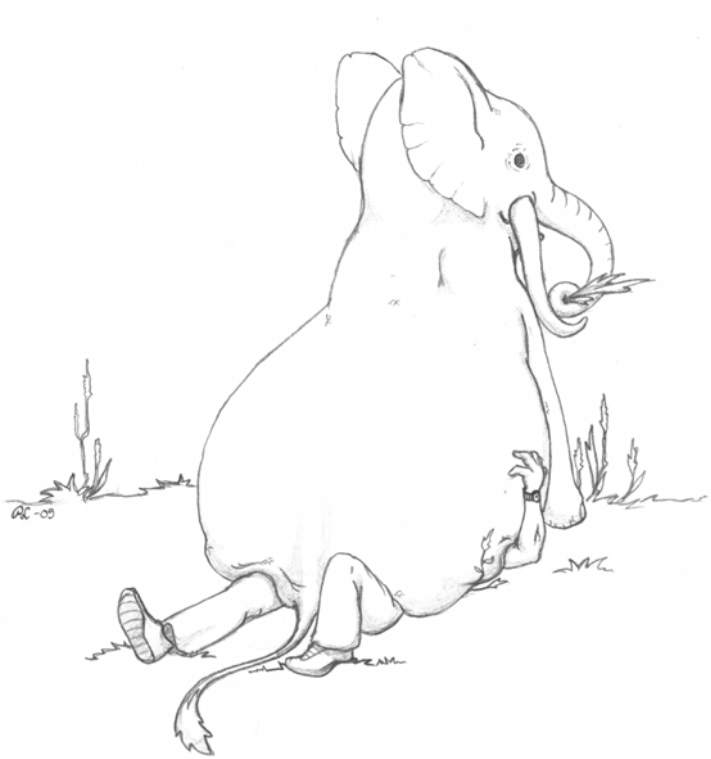
constructed over the years and that most of us identify with. The elephant is that monstrous thing that you see when you look into your inner mirror, and think it's your self-image. You think that you are your elephant. But you are not. Beyond the elephant there is something – or someone – that is the real you. You are the consciousness that doesn't have a name, age, certain kind of body or a profession.

This distinction has helped me a lot – both in my everyday life and on my spiritual journey towards greater understanding. I hope it will help you, too. Giving a name to the root issue is a good start for solving it.

Suffering is elephant food

Have you ever wondered why the cartoons and TV program are at the end of the newspaper? Or have you thought why the evening news shows you first all that suffering and negativity and then finish with a humorous insert at the end? The media is not selling us news but suffering and fear. They cater to our need for drama and hold us in the grip of horror. And then – as if none of that disease, murder, war and scandals mattered – they remind us that "hey, you're just fine on your comfy couch at home".



Picture 2. Suffering is elephant food.

Here's a personal story from Dorothy Figen[15] – a woman who was expected to die: "When I first came to Sri Lanka from America, I had just about given up all hope of living. The doctors in America had provided me with maybe twenty-five different drugs for a very bad heart condition and other ailments. I found the hospital conditions [in Sri Lanka] so deplorable; I felt it would be better to die in bed at home. Consequently, I left the hospital. After much pain and emotional upheaval my husband found a Buddhist lay brother who came to our home and performed a miracle, or to state it better, pointed out to me the 'path' that I shall follow for the rest of my days here on earth. We went through four stages and in time I threw out all drugs, and the life 'here and now' became clear and meaningful… I began to feel that I was on another plane of consciousness. I no longer had a self, sick or otherwise. I was at one with all, all of us in a new world, with all non-beings too. I found that the ego that nearly wrecked my life was now gone."

According to Siddharta Gautama[16], all that exists in the universe is subject to three characteristics:

- **Anicca – the impermanence:** Everything is limited to a certain duration and, consequently, liable to disappear. The way to deal with impermanence is acceptance, or non-attachment.
- **Dukkha – the suffering:** Everything is unsatisfactory. There is nothing that can be relied upon; there is nothing that can bring true happiness. The way to deal with suffering is acceptance, or non-resistance.

[15] Dorothy Figen: http://www.vipassana.com/meditation/beginning_insight_meditation.php

[16] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism

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- **Anatta – the no-self**: Everything is deprived of a self. There is no self-inherent entity, nothing that can be controlled. The way to deal with no-self of everything is acceptance, or non-judgment.

> *"Why are you unhappy? Because 99.9 per cent of everything you think, and of everything you do, is for yourself. And there isn't one."*
> ***Wei wu Wei***

Accepting these three marks of existence makes life easier. Michael Ruppert[17] talks about three stages common to any human individual and culture, before acceptance. First is denial: You don't want to admit the way things are because it's too hard to take. Second step is anger. It's when you realize the facts and you don't like what you see. In third stage everything sinks in and you start bargaining. I.e. you start thinking what you could have done otherwise. This can be a long process but, fortunately, leads to acceptance. Dorothy's acceptance gave her a new life. She rid herself of the ego. She stopped identifying with the sickness that had fed her elephant for so long. She understood the impermanence and accepted she might die. She accepted the suffering as it is.

In practice, accepting the impermanent nature of all things can help a 40-year old football player to accept his career is coming to an end or a former beauty queen to retire. It puts things in perspective.

So does the acceptance of suffering: Nothing – "no thing" – brings true happiness. Thus happiness as such is not even something one should try to attain. Instead of seeking satisfaction from things, one might as well concentrate in connecting with the internal peace, love and joy within.

Having no self can be the hardest part to understand because we have become so disconnected from each other and "the source" of all things. We have disconnected ourselves from ourselves. "If I'm not my elephant – my stream of thoughts – then who am I?" you might be asking. That's a good start. Accept it for now. You will soon realize the beauty of re-connecting with all that is.

> *"I am that by which I know I am"*
> ***Nisargadatta Maharaj***

Even science is finally taking steps towards what philosophers and spiritual teachers have tried to convey since Buddha. Scholars and scientists like Niels Bohr, Ken Wilber and David Bohm have drawn links with consciousness and quantum physics. Integral theory seeks a comprehensive understanding of humans and the universe by combining scientific and spiritual insights. Brain scientists would tell you that this is pure biology of the brain. And in a way, it is.

Jill Bolte Taylor[18] reveals that our brain's left and right hemispheres are like two different minds, that, when functioning normally, work seamlessly together. She explains: "To the right mind, no time exists, other than the present moment. And each moment is vibrant with sensation. Life or death occurs in the present moment. The experience of joy happens in the present moment. Our perception and experience of connection with something that is greater than ourselves occurs in the present moment. To our right mind the moment of now is timeless and abundant… Just opposite to how our right hemisphere thinks and pictures and perceives the big picture of the present moment our left hemisphere thrives on details, details and more details of those details… It is the home of your ego center which provides you with an internal awareness of what your name is, what your credentials are, and where you live. Without these cells performing their job you would forget who you are and lose track of your life and your identity." We definitely need both hemispheres. Without the left brain it would be impossible for us to comprehend the text in this book, or even what is this black stuff on this white background. Yet, it seems we have been dominated by our left hemispheres, and largely ignored the right one.

[17] Michael Ruppert: Collapse (http://www.videoweed.com/file/rv5fh4cfbce75)

[18] Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight

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"It is enough to know what you are not… All you can say is: 'I am not this, I am not that'. You cannot meaningfully say 'this is what I am'. It just makes no sense. What you can point out as 'this' or 'that' cannot be yourself. Surely, you cannot be 'something' else… You observe the heart feeling, the mind thinking, the body acting; the very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive."[19]

What do you do when you are hungry? You go and get something to eat, right? What does your elephant do when you are not feeding it? In other words: what is the reaction of your mind as you start becoming more and more conscious? It is natural for your mind to fight back: to try and create more thoughts and more suffering. Note this and become aware of those thoughts. It's your elephant starving and craving for more food – more suffering.

Homeless in Helsinki

"A fresh start will put you on your way" said a fortune cookie I opened last summer. I developed acceptance to anicca, dukkha and anatta by choosing to let go of the so called normal life in a Nordic welfare state, at least for the time being. Majority of the world's people don't have this choice. It is their everyday reality. Being homeless in Finland has been a humbling experience. When you don't know where you are going to stay for the night and you feel dependent for the rest of the community, you develop an appreciation for life – the present moment.

This appreciation directs to basic needs, the surroundings and human contact. When you choose – or you are forced – to survive with less, you automatically let go off most of luxuries. Your superficial desires and wants vanish and you start paying more attention to the very basic needs. Health and hygiene, shelter and nutrition become a priority. Once those needs are met you find yourself standing in awe of life. You suddenly have time for anything that might call for your attention; be it nature, other people or even search for new information. You don't have to go anywhere but instead you can stay in the now and truly enjoy the moment. Being alone calms your mind. You are alone but not lonely.

However, "Happiness is real only when it's shared"[20]. Human contact brings meaning to our lives. We can be more present with people surrounding us. This applies to our friends who have given us a place to sleep but also to complete strangers. One day I realized everyone is smiling at me for no obvious reason. And this is a big thing in Finland where independence has turned into excruciating separation: smiling to strangers is not only rare but can be misinterpreted. Why are suddenly unfamiliar people smiling at me? Maybe I had started smiling to everyone.

"An elephant's tusks are never too heavy for it."
Zimbabwean proverb

Food became important both for me and my elephant. I learned to be with the feeling of hunger and appreciate it. Sometimes I went to bed hungry and woke up in the morning just to realize the hunger had gone. For a while my elephant was confused: there was nothing for it to eat either. The humbling experience had made the elephant useless. By becoming aware of the elephant I had forced it to make space for the real me. However, the elephant is a cunning creature. Fairly quickly my elephant got accustomed to the new situation and it surfaced again. I noticed that whenever I was talking about elephants to people who did not agree with this childish metaphor, I fed them with more and more evidence so that they would take my point of view. When I realized my need to be correct I saw that it was my starving elephant triumphing again. It was my arrogant elephant wanting to shine.

Choosing to be homeless and survive with very little is by no means an answer to get rid of your elephant. I noticed that on occasion my mind was consumed with thinking: where do I get food, where shall I sleep,

[19] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[20] Alexander Supertramp: http://authspot.com/short-stories/alexander-supertramp/

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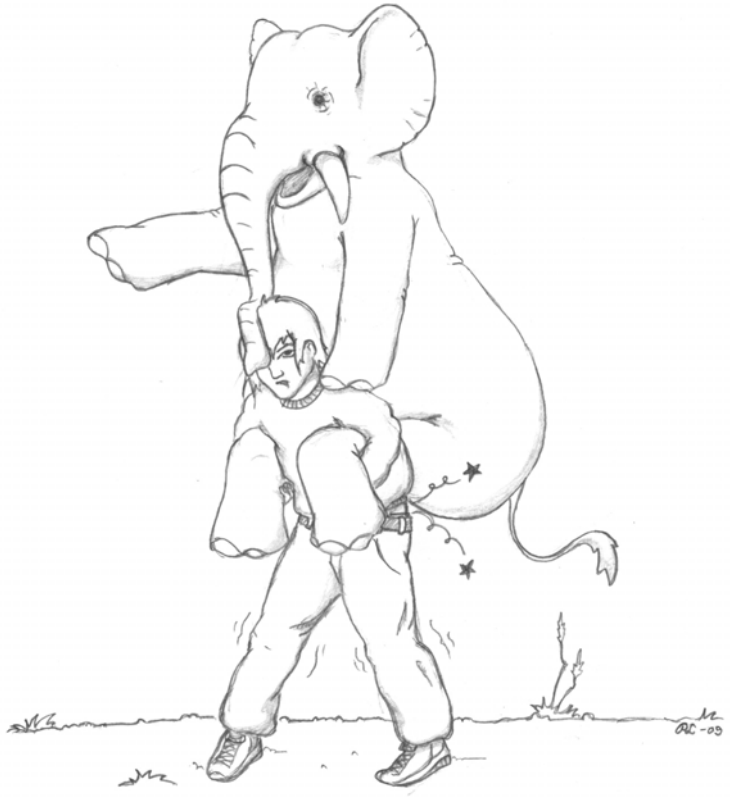
what shall I do next… By diving into the unknown I could create space for the real me, but the elephant is not going anywhere just like that.

The elephant has taken over

So, how does one know if it's really you or just your mind playing tricks on you? It's quite easy. The mind thinks. The elephant thinks. You don't think as such. You can observe the silly little games of the elephant – silently, without condemning – and you can consciously ask your elephant to stop thinking and just be in the present moment. Or can you? Different cravings, needs, wants and desires are coming from the elephant. How often do you notice the following in your mind: "I need", "I want", "I desire" or "I should", "I could", "I would"? You don't need, want or desire. It's your elephant. Watch the language you use and you're one step closer to catch the elephant as it takes over. "Via our left hemisphere language centers our mind speaks to us constantly – a phenomenon I refer to as 'brain chatter'. It is that voice reminding you to pick up bananas on your way home… For some our dialogue of brain chatter runs so fast that we can barely keep up with what we are thinking."[21]



Picture 3. The elephant has taken over.

Conditional forms (should, could, would) are also elephant words. One of my best teachers told me not to use the conditional forms at all: You either do or you don't. The same goes for the past: you say you could've done something or you come up with excuses that you would've done something unless [place an excuse here]. Your elephant gets its energy from suffering that is created in the past or in the future. You are in the present moment. Everything happens in the now. Life is now.

Here comes the bomb: you're not alone! Our whole world – the majority of humankind – is taken over by the elephants. We create problems with the mind and try to solve them with the mind – thinking, thinking and thinking. Education is accumulated thinking. Politics is full of thinking. Science is thinking. Some people think so much they start feeling physically ill or start suffering from insomnia

This loop of thinking goes on and on and we are never going to see a better, more just, world if we try to think our way out of it. Suffering is elephant food. Thinking causes suffering. Thus, the only way is to be one with the suffering, accept its presence and let it go.

[21] Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight

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Remember that we think that we are our elephants. Thus, spotting the elephant in your behavior is very important so that you can start changing your behavior. Inspired by Eckhart Tolle[22] here are 12 models of behavior that can help you become conscious of your elephant.

The first, a longing for recognition can be a signal that tells you the elephant is in action: Demanding recognition for something you did and getting angry or upset if you don't get it. **The second**, playing out the "poor me" means you are trying to get attention by talking about your problems or the story of your illnesses. **The third** trait is attention seeking: if you are known to make a scene to get attention, it's your elephant in action. **The fourth** sign is unnecessary over-talkativeness: Giving your opinion when nobody has asked for it and it makes no difference to the situation. **The sixth**, if you are careful with your words and choosing what to say: it means your elephant might be concerned how you appear to others. **The seventh**, choosing your company according to how they are perceived means you might be using other (famous or important) people for egoic reflection or as ego enhancers. **The eighth**, are you trying to make an impression on others through possessions, knowledge, good looks, status, physical strength, and so on? **The ninth** trait is self-righteous anger: bringing about temporary ego inflation through angry reaction against something or someone. **The tenth** is taking things personally (which I used to be very good at): You are offended when things don't go your way. **The eleventh** trait is the need to win and be right: You are making yourself right and others wrong through futile mental or verbal complaining. Finally, **the twelfth** trait is keeping up appearances: wanting to be seen or to appear important.

These models of behavior might not even sound too bad for you, that is if you are still driven by your ego. As mentioned, the majority of the people in our world act like this; but many are already letting go of the old ego-centric behaviors.

Elephants go shopping

All the stuff that keeps the consumerism going is bought by the elephants. The elephant loves to identify with stuff: *my* car, *my* home, *my* bank card, *my* shoe collection. Who is that "me" who owns all that stuff? Is it really you or is it your elephant? How badly would you be hurt if you lost some of those things? Is it you who is hurt or is it your ego?

If you continuously want more and more, you will never be content. Pleasure is the flip-side of suffering. This craving for pleasure is like a prison you cannot escape. It has created many of the challenges we face today: environmental degradation, growing mountains of waste and diminishing natural resources such as clean water. Of course it wasn't you who conditioned your mind to act that way – to want more and more. The decades of brainwashing has made our elephants think they really need all that stuff. In retrospect, it makes me wonder why I spent eight years in business schools…

Bear in mind that the search for pleasure is not always about material needs, wants or desires. Other forms of sensual desires, for instance the craving for sex, are predominant everywhere in our contemporary society. All these sensual desires are hindrances for our spiritual development.

> *"Sex is the way your body responds to the future."*
> ***Fred Alan Wolf***

Why has sex become that important? According to Krishnamurti in every field, in every activity, you are indulging and emphasizing yourself, your importance, your prestige, your security and that the sexual act is a way of self-forgetfulness: "In that act there is complete fusion; at that moment there is complete cessation of all conflict, you feel supremely happy because you no longer feel the need as a separate entity and you are not consumed with fear." He doesn't see sex as the problem, but rather the issue is thinking of sex. He continues: "Thought sustains pleasure by thinking about

[22] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

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something that has been pleasurable and cultivating that image and picture... Thinking about the sexual act becomes lust, which is entirely different from the act of sex."[23]

This has all to do with the ability to stay present and enjoy the now. "It is inevitable that physical attraction towards another person will sometimes occur. That's no more than part of nature. When you identify with that impulse, it becomes 'you' and turns into wanting. The other person then becomes a means to an end – the end being sex, the attainment of the object of your desire."[24] Note that sex as such is not forbidden or bad. Just the craving for this sensual desire can become a hindrance.

Present is a gift

Wanting, craving and desire is your elephant longing for something in the future or correcting something in the past. For some people it's difficult to acknowledge that the only moment there ever is, is now. You cannot do anything outside the present moment. Is your mind still doubtful?

Maybe it helps if you consider your own life in the continuum of all life. Try to visualize your life with its start and end point on the lifeline of the whole humankind. Take about three million years to the past and to the future and put your own life in the middle. Zoom in and you see that short blip. That's your life. Got it? Good. Now, where were you before you were born? How about after you die; what happens to you?

If you were able to live in the past or in the future, you should be able to answer these questions. That small blip on the timeline is your life – your present moment. There is no past or future to it. "In your fevered state, you project a past and a future and take them to be real. In fact, you know only your present moment. Why not investigate what is now, instead of questioning the imaginary past and future? Just as every drop of the ocean carries the taste of the ocean, so does every moment carry the taste of eternity."[25]

The Peaceful Warrior is a movie based on Dan Millman's own story and the book he wrote[26]. The movie ends in a powerful dialogue that captures this essence:

- **Socrates:** Where are you Dan?
- **Dan:** Here.
- **Socrates:** What time is it?
- **Dan:** Now.
- **Socrates:** What are you?
- **Dan:** This moment.

> *"I'd rather have a moment of wonderful than a lifetime of nothing special."*
> ***Steel Magnolias***

Silence! I kill you!

Interestingly enough even the elephants – the real ones; the animals – think that they are trapped when there's a chain around their leg. Have you seen an elephant being held by a chain? Apparently the chain is put on when they are young, and then the chain obviously holds them in one place. Over the years they are conditioned to think that the chain is still holding them back even when they grow up and they are actually strong enough to break free. The conditioning prevents them from trying to break the chain.

[23] Jiddu Krishnamurti: http://soulcurrymagazine.com/sc/krishnamurti-on-sex.html

[24] Eckhart Tolle: http://eckharttolle.com/dear_eckhart_29

[25] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[26] Dan Millman: Way of the Peaceful Warrior

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You can break free if you want to. When you have learned to spot your elephant in your behavior, it is easier to silence it already before acting from the egoistic standpoint. But what if all these years you've collected experiences and lived your drama thinking that's you? Isn't it a bit difficult to let go of that false image of yourself?

Years of addiction don't die easily, especially when one's elephant has identified with the habit. There was a time when I honestly thought that smoking is part of who I am… as was long hair and black jeans. I always knew that's somehow naïve thinking, but only now I know it was my elephant calling the shots. Apart from the irrefutable physical addiction, smoking is mostly a social and habitual addiction – it's an addiction of the mind. I never liked the idea of quitting because having a cigarette was what my elephant liked – when I wake up, with coffee, with beer, after meals, while studying, when having a walk, before going to bed etc.

"We often miss opportunity because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."
Thomas Edison

"We won't do anything that is not comfortable, satisfying and secure – both psychologically and physically."[27] For many people awareness – especially self-awareness – is a frightening notion. Some people just don't want to change. Quitting smoking is not comfortable, satisfying or secure even if it was the right thing to do. However, quitting is not that easy, especially in the beginning: your head is filled with past and future thoughts, it's impossible to stay still and you feel restless all the time.

"An addiction lives inside you as a quasi-entity or sub-personality, an energy field that periodically takes you over completely. It even takes over your mind, the voice in your head, which then becomes the voice of the addiction. It may be saying, 'You've had a rough day. You deserve a treat…' At other times, the addiction may bypass the thinking mind completely and you suddenly find yourself puffing on a cigarette or holding a drink, actions performed in complete unconsciousness."[28]

In this situation Eckhart Tolle suggests to stop and take three conscious breaths when you notice the compulsive need arising in you. Tolle says this generates awareness of feeling, the need to fulfill the addictive behavior. He says that it might not help and you feel the need to indulge or act it out again. He encourages acceptance: "Don't make it into a problem. Make the addiction part of your awareness practice… As awareness grows, addictive patterns will weaken and eventually dissolve. Remember, however, to catch any thoughts that justify the addictive behavior, sometimes with clever arguments, as they arise in your mind. Ask yourself, who is talking here? And you will realize the addiction is talking. As long as you know that, as long as you are present as the observer of your mind, it is less likely to trick you into doing what it wants."

Another question is should you completely get rid of the elephant or just acknowledge it's there. Eckhart Tolle claims he has got rid of his ego but according to him it's enough to be aware of the ego. Gnostics are stricter and work to abolish the ego completely. According to the Kabbalah, the ego is defined as "the will to receive pleasure". It's not that *having* a will to receive pleasure causes clashes among us. It's that the intention for which we use this will is aimed at *pleasing ourselves*. Transforming our intention to *serve others* – or to bestow – is the teaching in the Kabbalah. It is the same as the understanding of Ubuntu: I am because you are. What matters here is that your elephant produces certain methods of behavior and if you work consciously to replace those behaviors with new kinds, you will soon find out that you are no longer basing your behavior on the elephant but the real you. Whether the elephant has been completely eliminated is another question; most likely it's still there, and you cannot just regress back to unawareness.

[27] Jiddu Krishnamurti & David Bohm: The Future of Humanity

[28] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

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The bottom line is that if you are tired of constant worrying and complaining how miserable life is, you might be ready to understand your elephant – and what life could be without it. The first step in this understanding is the notion of fear and love.

Dealing with fear

> *"Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering."*
> ***Yoda***

It's time to greet your elephant and get to know it. All so called negative feelings derive from one source – fear. Likewise the positive emotions are rooted in what we call love. If you wish, for simplicity's sake you can consider fear the opposite of love – for now. This realization can already help you.

Any negative feelings such as lack of trust, suspicion, insecurity, loneliness, insignificance, powerlessness, inhibition, anger, worthlessness are all deriving from fear. If you just dwell in your negativity and give labels to all your negative emotions, life can be harsh indeed. But if you truly understand that it is your elephant which is – for whatever the reason – afraid, two things happen. First, it's not that complicated anymore. Second, you stop blaming others for your negative feelings, start looking inwards and realize it's your frigging elephant that is afraid in the corner. After that it's up to you how you handle the situation.

One idea might be to find out where the fear is coming from: is it your childhood, upbringing, previous traumas, or maybe expectations from others? Tommy Hellsten has written about co-dependency that according to him is an ailment or similar condition that arises when one lives in the presence of a person with strong issues and cannot deal with them in her personality but adapts to their existence. He calls this "hippo in the living room"[29]. This hippopotamus (childhood trauma) is thus a friend to one's elephant – a source of fear. One doesn't like this friend but should be aware of it. Once one has identified the source of the fear – name the hippo – and dealt with it, life might suddenly become much less complicated and less negative.

This realization also helps you put other people's comments on perspective. Even if you had understood that all negative emotions, doubt and disbelief are all spawning from fear – others probably haven't. When I decided to let go of a permanent place to stay, when I gave away most of my earthly belongings and when I stopped worrying about making money, people close to me either thought I'd lost my mind (hmm, maybe I had!) or they were concerned if I would survive. They were merely projecting their own fears in my actions. It was quite easy to just accept their worries and concerns and let them be. They were not problems for me to solve.

"The weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss, or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening… Since there is very little spiritual truth in our contemporary culture, not many people recognize this as an opportunity, and so when it happens to them or to someone close to them, they think there is something dreadfully wrong, something that should not be happening."[30]

> *"I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love."*
> **Mother Theresa**

Fear is a good signpost for noticing your elephant in action "It takes practice to recognize the difference between genuine intuitive guidance and ego-based messages… False guidance is rooted in fear. The underlying assumption is that the world is unsafe and that you are not secure, so the guidance will be aimed at increasing your degree of control. Genuine intuitive guidance comes

[29] This comes from English language idiom "elephant in the room". It was popularized by Marion H. Typpo in a book called "An elephant in the living room: a leader's guide for helping children of alcoholics".

[30] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

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from a place of love and the assumption that you are perfectly safe and secure as you are so instead of trying to gain control, the focus is on expressing your true self."[31]

Switching to love

Ram Dass said "I came here to learn about two things: suffering and love."[32] When he said that, he had been the silent observer of his elephant for decades already. He had accepted that in this world there is a lot of suffering – mostly due to the elephants on a rampage – but he had also figured out the importance of love.

"Between the banks of pain and pleasure the river of life flows. It is only when the mind refuses to flow with life, and gets stuck at the banks, that it becomes a problem. By flowing with life I mean acceptance – letting come what comes and go what goes."[33] This notion of love is much grander than mere romantic love. According to "Romantic love is not an emotion; it's a drive from the craving part of the brain"[34]. Romantic love is more of a verb – for you to be in a love relationship you need to do things for the relationship to go on. As a friend of mine said "It's a decision you make every day". The love that we are dealing with here is deeper and requires only being.

The love that we are talking about is a source of all internal happiness, friendliness, care, empathy, vibrancy, excitement, patience, relaxation, inspiration, self-worth, passion, security, importance, peace, joy, and courage. You can trace all your positive feelings back to love.

Even if you were just taking your first steps understanding yourself and your elephant it is possible for you to concentrate on love – rather than fear. But you will soon realize that there is a place where no fear exists. That place is beyond the elephant. You start accepting everything coming your way as a gift. You start feeling grateful for everything. The division to good and bad dissolves. Love conquers all.

> *"When an elephant becomes as small as a monkey, it ceases to be an elephant."*
>
> ***African proverb***

"Everything in the world is changing – with one exception: our negative mental state! We should develop a mind devoid of egoism – a mind that doesn't fall apart in failure, a mind that finds joy in giving and accepts adversity with love. Such a mind will never experience sorrow."[35]

Change is inevitable but how do we react to it? Let's take the economic crisis for example. Most of the people seem to think that the so called crisis is somehow bad. My point of view is that it's inevitable and needed in order for people to start realizing what is truly important in life – that the monetary system that we've been born into is not only malfunctioning but obsolete. The fractional reserve banking system that we have nearly religiously taken for granted has created money out of thin air. The only way to keep the system up and running is to ensure the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; i.e. get people, organizations and countries into debt slavery. It's time to get into a new paradigm. Of course many people cannot deal with this paradigm shift. As long as you stick to your old views, things like employment, work and money remain important. But if losing it all is a trigger for you to put things in perspective, it can be one of

[31] Steve Pavlina: http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/07/ask-steve-intuition-vs-ego/

[32] Ram Dass: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV9cXKHkX34

[33] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[34] Helen Fisher: http://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_tells_us_why_we_love_cheat.html

[35] Amma: http://www.amma-europe.org/latest-msg.html

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the most profound gifts in your life. Nothing is either good or bad – it just is. This realization of "mere is-ness" is an important step in one's spiritual development. The Buddhist calls this upekkha or equanimity and in Greek philosophy a similar term is Ataraxia – a freedom from worry or any other preoccupation.

One can develop equanimity through various ways of practice. Meditation is of course recommended if you are serious about calming your mind. In meditation you don't need to go anywhere, you don't have to achieve anything, but you grant yourself a moment of absolute stillness. Being in the nature can assist you to appreciate the grandiose beauty of nature and stop the continuous brain chatter. Sports and exercise helps also: when you are engaged in a physical activity you are in fact helping your brain by naturally releasing neurochemicals (Serotonin, Epinephrine, Dopamine, and Endorphin). That's why during and right after exercise you feel good. However, the reason why you don't usually see Buddhist monks – the equanimity professionals – running around could be that this is only a temporary solution.

"A man who is trampled to death by an elephant is a man who is blind and deaf."
Nigerian proverb

Stopping the identification with your elephant and seeing beyond it to the place where only love prevails is already a step towards awakening. "The process of awakening is slow, gradual, natural, without spectacular, sensational, emotional, and barbaric events. When consciousness already has completely awakened it is not something sensational, or spectacular. It is simply a reality, as natural as a tree that grew slowly, unfolded and developed without sudden leaps or sensational events. Nature is nature."[36] Although the process of awakening is slow, it starts on individual level – it starts with you.

For me this awakening process started on 16 July 2009 on that beach in Croatia that I mentioned earlier. This is a direct quote from my travel diary:

"Should I stay or should I go is not a decision to be made as long as I hold on to the precious moment of now – present is a gift. I will be completely free right now as long as:

- I understand *my mind is not "me"*
- I *reject fear*, knowing it's my mind trying to survive
- I *replace fear with love*, consciously *killing my mind*
- I stop worrying, because *there are no problems in the now*
- I let the world into me; *let the universe handle my fate*
- I acknowledge my mind-created "poor me" *drama* and let it go
- I know that my *life* is underneath the *life situation*
- I understand that collectively *the dawn of new era marks the ending of time*
- I will do nothing; *just be*!

This was another breakthrough day. I felt I had it all figured out. I changed. All those years of trying to *save the world*, carrying the pain of the world with me, suddenly it was all meaningless. I had been looking for *salvation* in the wrong place – in the doing, rather than being. I learned that I can still do noble things, but not without the power, direction and meaning stemming from *the Being* within."

Have you had this kind of defining moments in your life? You know it when it happens. That is the start. In the end the transition to a new world is quite easy:

1) Reduce thinking individually and deal with your ego – Be more present. Learn to let go.
2) Improve the relationships – Connect to others. Partner with awakened individuals.

[36] Samael Aun Weor: http://gnosticteachings.org/the-teachings-of-gnosis/the-writings-of-samael-aun-weor/the-awakening-of-consciousness

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3) Connect to humanity – Work together for common good in communities around the world.

Seeing the simplicity of this is easier if one adopts a systemic view: You develop a very different world view if the starting point is the whole universe, then our solar system, then the planet called earth, then all life on earth, then the human race, then maybe Europe, your country, your community, your relationship and only after that yourself – noticing that even you are a system consisting of physical, mental and spiritual sub-systems. The focal point of one's observation is no longer one's silly little life but the whole system consisting of smaller interrelated systems.

In the next chapter we deal with "I am because you are" – strengthening the relationships in your life and connecting to others without the elephant in the way. We go and meet the crocodile dentist.

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Chapter one summary

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Key points of this chapter were:

- If we are to feel complete, bring meaning into our lives and fill the void within, we need to leave the rat race behind and get connected with who we really are.
- The foundation level feelings are fear and love. These are both present and give birth to other so called negative and positive feelings as long as you identify with your elephant. But as you go beyond your elephant, the fear doesn't have a place there. Only love prevails.
- Getting rid of your elephant means that your behavior changes – one is elevated to a new level of being. Acceptance of impermanent nature of all things, suffering and "no self" helps you to be non-resistant, non-judgmental and non-attached. This creates space for being the real me.
- Being yourself without the ego in the way enables you to build healthy relationships, through which you can change the world to the better.

See tips, tricks and tools at the end of the book:

- Powerful movies you should see now
- My kind of meditation

See frequently asked questions at the end of the book:

- Why did you take the elephant as a metaphor? Isn't it the same as Hellsten's hippo?
- Why does the teacher call life drama elephant dung?
- What is the Source the teacher mentions?
- Are you saying thinking is bad?
- I agree with what you say about identifying with your past drama but how about good stories; can't we tell even them?
- Are all needs, wants and desires from the elephant? For example, if I have a desire to escape the rat race, then is that still my elephant or is it the true me saying that?
- God, spirit, soul, consciousness, true me... Are all these synonyms?
- Are you saying we don't need clothes, dishes, and home electronics at all?
- Does leaving the rat race mean that we should all become homeless and do nothing?
- What does it mean to be more conscious?
- Isn't selfish behavior in human nature?
- What do you mean money is created out of thin air?

Chapter two

CROCODILE DENTIST

HOW UNLIKE ORGANISMS CAN COEXIST…
AND LEAD FREE, INTERDEPENDENT LIVES

Anna was lying on the lawn and gazing at the clouds as they slowly slid past the sun. She smiled and breathed easily. A few months had passed since she had met the teacher. She had understood what her elephant was all about: she had found peace of mind. This serene moment was suddenly interrupted. Anna was startled to notice there was someone lying next to her, staring at the sky. It was the teacher.

***A:** Gosh, you scared me. How did you appear without me noticing anything?*

- *I'm not accompanied by my elephant, so I don't disturb others.*

***A:** Of course.*

Anna smiled although she thought the teacher had a very dry sense of humor. She was happy that the teacher was back. The teacher asked another powerful question: "Does a crocodile need to go to a dentist?"

***A:** What? Stop it with your riddles. I was expecting you'd want to hear how I have used the knowledge you gave me. I've thought of my personal history and the effects the elephant has had.*

- *Go on. I'm all ears.*

***A:** Ok. Some years ago I thought everything should go my way. I was over-confident and arrogant. Success seemed to breed more success and my ego – which you later named the elephant – grew and grew.*

- *And how did it affect your behavior?*

***A:** My social behavior was next to unacceptable because of my distorted self-image. In actuality it wasn't a self-image in the first place – it was a reflection of my elephant. But I was blind to it because I liked the way it was. Right?*

- *Sounds you've done your homework. Carry on.*

***A:** Then I faced disappointments. I started failing – which was unheard of for me. As I told you before, I didn't accept responsibility for the failures but blamed others. If I couldn't blame individuals I would blame institutions or even the whole world. It took many disappointments and a very courageous individual who made me see it's my fault – I was the one who needed to change.*

The teacher was enticed about the story.

- *So what happened?*

***A:** I was grateful for this person – still am – and started building the new me with a more humble attitude.*

- *What did you do?*

***A:** I set personal development goals, gathered feedback of my behavior, did personality tests, read a lot of self-help books, clarified my purpose and values and all sorts of things that only a badly beaten elephant could imagine.*

- *You use the elephant metaphor very eloquently.*

***A:** Yeah, I like it. Anyways, so I tried to think my way out of misery. I thought and thought and thought. And finally I thought – again – that I have changed because I was seemingly successful again.*

- *But you were not, were you?*

***A:** Maybe I had learned something, but it was still my elephant in the forefront.*

- *Can you give me an example?*

***A:** For instance, I was obsessed to be right. It was still my way or the highway. I refused to listen to the other person's point of view – let alone try to understand where he was coming from, what was the language he was using or why he would feel that strongly of his standpoint. Gosh, I could be having the same viewpoint but still argue, because I was just using different words to express the same thing.*

- *So you had to win on every occasion, am I right?*

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A: *No. My elephant needed to win.*

Anna turned to pick up something from her backpack. She gave a book called "Celestine Prophecy" to the teacher.

- *Hmm… James Redfield. Sounds familiar. What did you learn from this?*

A: *I haven't finished reading it yet, but I already learned of the concept of "control dramas". I noticed that I've been repeating the poor me drama in myself – something that I had learned early on in my childhood from my parents and my upbringing.*

- *And what does this have to do with what you told me before?*

A: *This poor me drama was the reason why I was acting the way I was – trying to get attention, telling my sad story and blaming the whole world if things didn't go my way. But although I noticed it in myself, I felt helpless… not knowing how to let go of it, until I realized it was not me who was carrying the burden, but my elephant.*

- *Of course. So, noticing that you have an elephant was helpful.*

A: *Yes. Creating the distinction between me and my mind-created ego has helped me a lot.*

The teacher did not look satisfied. Anna was wondering why the teacher was not happy that she had learned so much.

- *You still haven't answered my question.*

A: *What question?*

- *Does a crocodile need to go to the dentist?*

Anna was bewildered: "What does this have to do with anything?" Then she realized she's being tested further and was glad to answer the question.

A: *No. I don't think crocs see a dentist.*

- *And why is that?*

A: *Because their teeth are just fine.*

- *Why?*

A: *I don't know why… maybe they brush often enough.*

- *Correct. But who brushes their teeth? They cannot do it alone, can they?*

Anna knew this had something to do with what she had already learned. She let the teacher wait for an answer. She knew thinking wouldn't help her much, so instead she just gazed at the sky… She let her eyes wander away from the clouds and into the trees… "A bird?" she thought to herself suddenly.

A: *There's the bird. The bird is the dentist!*

- *Excellent. The bird is called an Egyptian Plover. Did you know that?*

A: *Not really.*

- *Why?*

A: *I just knew it's the crocodile bird.*

- *Exactly. Why do people associate the bird with the crocodile?*

A: *Because they hang out together so much.*

- *Yes. Why do you think the crocodile lets the plover to be in its mouth and doesn't eat it?*

A: *Because the bird is useful.*

- *Correct again. And what's in it for the bird? Is it just doing the crocodile a favor?*

A: *No. I guess it's eating the stuff between the crocodile's teeth.*

- *Precisely. So, what do you call this kind of relationship?*

A: *The Croc and plover are in a cooperative relationship? I don't know…*

- *Come on. Think again. What is it when an unlikely species lives in complete peace and harmony and helps each other? What is that relationship?*

A: *Symbiosis?*

- *Yes. It's a mutualistic relationship. In the 19th century symbiosis was defined as "the living together of unlike organisms."*

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Anna was silently congratulating herself for putting two and two together so easily. But she was still baffled.

***A:** What does this have to do with elephants again?*

- *Can you name any unlike organisms that you know?*

***A:** What?*

- *In a symbiotic, mutualistic, coexistence both organisms benefit from each other – in fact they wouldn't survive without each other.*

***A:** Yes, and?*

- *Other than the crocs and plovers, common symbiotic relationships include for instance bees and pollinating flowers, Goby fish and shrimp, Clownfish and Ritteri anemone, human and the horse. Can you name groups of people who have this kind of coexistence?*

***A:** Not really.*

- *Well, let's turn it the other way around. Do you know groups of people who don't get along?*

***A:** Of course. You mean like police and demonstrators?*

- *Yes. Who else?*

***A:** Israelis and Palestinians… Young and old… Men and women… Hutus and Tutsis… This list really is endless.*

- *It is. How do you think we could better connect with others?*

***A:** By letting go of our elephants! By understanding the value of cooperation! By seeing that my life depends on others… I guess.*

- *Yes, yes and yes. I'm proud of your progress.*

Anna's smile was radiant although it had started to rain. The teacher took out his umbrella and left in a typical manner, without even a fair warning.

***A:** Don't do it again! Tell me more! Hey… What's my homework?*

- *Go see a dentist.*

How will we treat each other when push comes to shove? In six billion years the sun is going to die and stop providing life for planet Earth. No one will be able to live on this planet anymore. Does it matter if it's six billion years or six days? How will we treat each other when push comes to shove?

> *"With the monetary system we have now, the careful saving of a lifetime can be wiped out in an eye blink."*
> ***Larry Parks***

The malfunctioning relationships and separation between people causes problems both in our individual lives and society at large. A trend forecaster, Gerald Celente, has predicted for example the crash of Soviet Union, the crash of 1987 and the housing collapse. He has been spot on with his work, up to the point that New York Post cheered "*If Nostradamus were alive today, he'd have a hard time keeping up with Gerald Celente."* Now he is predicting what he calls the Greatest Depression. We are at the verge of a global economic collapse. The old economy is gone and the multitude of government bailouts is only making things worse.

Celente says "When people lose everything and they have nothing left to lose, they lose it."[37] When people can no longer sustain the living standards they are forced to downgrade. If they can no longer settle their bills or pay off their mortgage, it will for sure increase their stress levels. But what happens when they no longer can afford food or clean water? A global famine is not only possible; it's already on its way. 13.7 % of Americans are living below the poverty line. So-called normal people have lost their jobs and they are now living in community shelters or – worse – on the streets.

[37] Gerald Celente: http://www.foxbusiness.com/search-results/m/22054097/diamond-district-bloody-hell-at-g-20.htm

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I repeat: how will we treat each other when push comes to shove? Is our behavior going to be driven by fear – as it has been for so long – or are we able to shift to a paradigm of love and work our way out of global poverty? Now is the time to come back together. No matter how tempting a thought, this is not a time to go alone in the wilderness. "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said. How far have we gone from that simple truth? "We live in a time of chaos, as rich in the potential for disaster as for new possibilities. How will we navigate these times? The answer is, together."[38]

"Under the subjective reality model, the most obvious interpretation of 'Love your neighbor as yourself' is that Jesus is telling us to recognize that all of us egoic human beings are projections of awareness, and your true identity is that awareness. Furthermore, unconditional love for everything is one way to regain that awareness. Unconditional love is essentially unconditional connectedness. So, Jesus is suggesting a shift in your mindset rather than your behavior, which is a whole different sort of challenge."[39]

> *"The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity, and that is love."*
> ***Nisargadatta Maharaj***

Finland is the only Western civilization where you can still be jailed for your opinions. When I was 18 I faced a dilemma; I didn't want to go to jail as a conscientious objector, but I didn't want to support the system either. I didn't want to go to the army against my beliefs nor do a longer "civil service" and postpone the start of my university studies. It all boiled down to a very run-of-the-mill question of whether I could pull a trigger when I was aiming at another human being. It's such a trivial question, but at that time I had to really ponder my answer… and it was always "no".

Human life – no matter what nationality, race or gender – is so precious that taking it away is wrong. I was nearly crying when I thought of that person on the other side of the man-made border: he was also someone's brother, someone's son, someone's beloved, maybe even someone's father. Although at that stage of my life I really didn't have a choice but to go to the army for the shortest possible time period, it was a good exercise in thinking and feeling. It made me respect humanity. And it ensured that I wouldn't take those 6 months of vain servitude too seriously. Handling these kinds of moral dilemmas helped me start my awakening process quite early on.

Awakening to connectedness

"Once you have understood that the world is love in action, you will look at it quite differently. But first your attitude to suffering must change. Suffering is primarily a call for attention, which itself is a movement of love. More than happiness, love wants growth, the widening and deepening of consciousness and being… Whenever love is withheld and suffering allowed to spread war becomes inevitable. Our indifference to our neighbor's sorrow brings suffering to our door."[40]

"It is from 'one' that we have all come, and it is back into that 'one' that we all must merge. This is the supreme goal of all of our lives. However, in our hectic schedules, we have forgotten this." says Amma. She continues: "Only when human beings are able to perceive and acknowledge the Self in each other can there be real peace."[41] When Amma talks about "self" she refers to Ātman – the universal self or the soul. This is the second part of Ubuntu: I am because you are. In other words, your existence is my existence. We are not separate, but one.

[38] Margaret Wheatley: Leadership and the New Science

[39] Steve Pavlina: http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/09/understanding-jesus-buddha-and-other-mystics/

[40] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[41] Amma: http://www.amritapuri.org/4700/onam-09/

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As you adopt the Ubuntu philosophy in your life, you start connecting to others on a deeper level, even strangers. In fact there are no longer strangers, just sisters and brothers you still haven't met. This happened to me on a fairly ordinary day when I was simply walking outside. Until that point I had merely thought of Ubuntu as a nice concept I could relate to on an intellectual level. But suddenly, I experienced the connectedness in a very powerful way: I felt like I was truly one with humanity – that all human beings were me and I was them. It's difficult to describe it in words as there was nothing mystical about it. I saw the colorful autumn nature and people strolling on the streets. That's all. But suddenly there were no strangers anymore: I could feel the oneness and love. It all kicked into my consciousness without one particular reason. "We must see the world with global eyes. Love the world with a global heart. Understand the world with a global mind. Merge with the world and the universe through a global soul."[42]

"All things in existence, from microbes to human beings to galaxies, are not really separate things or entities, but form part of a web of interconnected multidimensional processes. There are two reasons why we don't see this unity, why we see things as separate. One is perception, which reduces reality to what is accessible to us through the small range of our senses: what we can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. But when we perceive without interpreting or mental labeling, which means without adding thought to our perceptions, we can actually still sense the deeper connectedness underneath our perception of seemingly separate things. The other more serious reason for the illusion of separateness is compulsive thinking. It is when we are trapped in incessant streams of compulsive thinking that the universe really disintegrates for us, and we lose the ability to sense the interconnectedness of all that exists. Thinking cuts reality up into lifeless fragments. Extremely unintelligent and destructive action arises out of such a fragmented view of reality."[43]

Jill Bolte Taylor suggests we can feel the connectedness with the right hemisphere of the brain: "Our right mind is spontaneous, care-free and imaginative. It allows our artistic juices to flow free without inhibition or judgment. The present moment is the time when everything and everyone are connected together as one. As a result our right mind perceives each of us as equal members of the human family. It identifies our similarities and recognizes our relationship with this marvelous planet which sustains our life. It perceives the big picture: how everything is related and how we all join together to make up the whole."[44]

If you continue only with your rational thinking mind (the left hemisphere), it is impossible to ever admit that there is more to life than what you can perceive with your limited senses. Even if you would have by now rid yourself of incessant thinking and accepted that there is more to life than meets the eye, we might need to experience the interconnectedness to truly know it's there. You cannot force it. One day it will strike you if you're receptive. But again, if you wish to help the destiny, you can get yourself in situations where you have to depend on others.

Learning to depend

"With high spirits, neither wealth nor knowledge will help. Rather, one person can help another… It follows that each and everyone should pay attention and think how one can help one's friend, and make one's spirit high, for in high spirits, anyone can find a place of lack in one's friend, that one can fulfill."[45]

[42] Robert Muller: http://robertmuller.org/documents/021024/index.htm

[43] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

[44] Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight

[45] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Ashlag

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The only downside of being homeless is that you don't have *a home*. It is difficult to concentrate on one thing – such as writing a book – when you are constantly on the move and you have to relentlessly focus on the bare essentials. Luckily I have good friends who allowed me to stay at their places. One of them offered me a deal. He said: "I wouldn't mind having a chef who has prepared a meal when I come home from work". This simple arrangement ensured that I didn't have to focus on finding a shelter and food, but instead I could do what I was destined to do at that time. I could concentrate on life.

We built a mutualistic relationship, a win-win situation. I was living my dream: writing and cooking were two things that I loved to do. I came to a realization that I would be very lonely without these relationships. I had no need to deny it or fight for my independence: it was okay to be dependent. This acceptance of dependence is something that we have lost as our culture has emphasized a highly individualistic value system.

"Emperor penguins are able to buffer themselves against the intense Antarctic cold by huddling together during the winter months in dense, heat-sharing colonies numbering in the tens of thousands. Experiments have shown that, in so doing, the penguins are able to reduce their individual energy expenditures by 20-50 percent." states Peter Corning[46]. Meanwhile, all major cities in the world are good examples of people's indifference: the rich inhabit their mansions and the poor dwell in slums. This is evidence of our man-made separateness. "Search for the culprit within. The ideas of 'me' and 'mine' are at the root of all conflict. Be free of them and you will be out of conflict."[47] The only way for survival of our species is to work together, to live in a synergistic relationship with each other and other species.

As long as we don't understand the science of relationships, we cannot act like penguins depending on each other. We need to let go of our selfishness. According to Kabbalah we are now moving away from selfishness because our "intention to receive" is changing. Our modus operandi depends on our intention to receive. If we are **"receiving for the sake of receiving"**, most of our actions happen in an unconscious mode where we have no idea that we are constantly trying to maximize our own benefit. This is a very familiar mode for most of us. We take whatever we can because we feel that this makes us successful in life.

We become more developed when our intention to receive shifts to **"giving for the sake of receiving".** The world around us doesn't seem to change much, but we start giving, serving, and helping others. However in this mode of behavior we are still acting unconsciously. We are giving with the true intention to get something back. Our motivation to give is the fact that it makes us feel good. In his book "What is Man?" Mark Twain contemplated that everything we do is because of selfish intentions. He was referring to these first two modes.

If we wish to clear way for emergence of a new human consciousness we have no choice but to start concentrating more on spiritual realm. We can start unifying humanity through switching our intention to receive to the next level. "**Giving for the sake of giving"** is a mode where we rebel against intention to receive and start serving others unconditionally. The intention to give is pure. We don't expect anything back. This can be only achieved internally without the elephant in the way.

The final mode of operation is where one receives thinking how it will please the giver. In this fully spiritual degree of **"receiving for the sake of bestowing"** it is ok to receive but not from a selfish point of view. We are free to enjoy the abundance provided to us by our community of peers. Selfishness is long gone, when we are able to

> *"I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle."*
>
> ***Jane Austen***

[46] Peter A. Corning: http://www.complexsystems.org/publications/synhypo.html

[47] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

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please others by living life to the fullest.

This all might sound a bit confusing now, but we will come back to this concept of "intention to receive" in next chapter. For now, try to spot your own mode of behavior and see if you could improve your relationships by switching to a new mode.

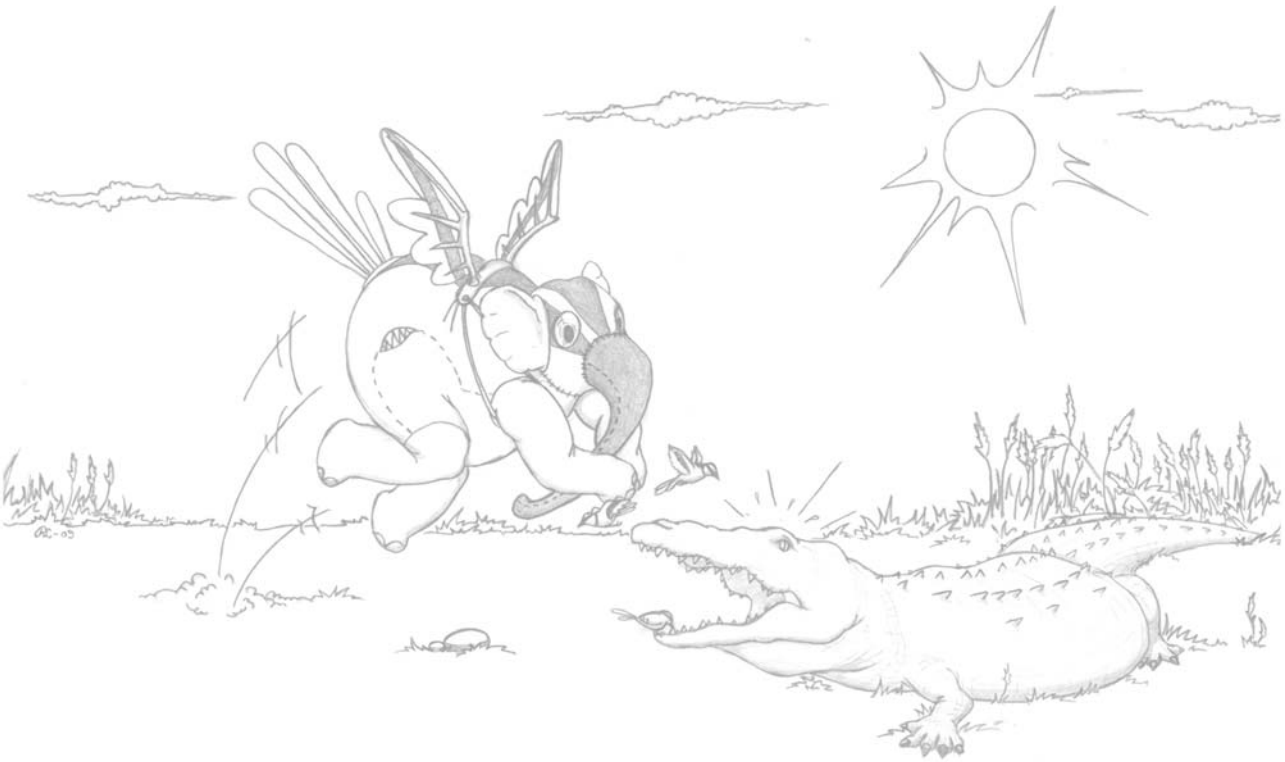
"Better the cold blast of winter than the hot breath of a pursuing elephant."
Chinese proverb

The elephant in the crocodile's mouth

Synergy is not that easily achieved because it takes two to tango. Even if you were ready, the other one might not be. But you cannot go and try to shape the other person to be like you want. The only person you can affect is yourself. Be mindful in your relationships and see if it's really a plover in the croc's mouth, or if it is an elephant disguised as a bird. Needless to say the latter can be too much to take.

There are four main styles of communications: Aggressive, Passive, Passive-Aggressive and Assertive. "Only assertive communication models healthy, productive communication. The other three styles are full of tricks, devious behaviors, and manipulative gimmicks. Unfortunately, they usually comprise the vast majority of people's communication with each other."[48] This is all true, and by now you should know why; as long as you are driven by your ego you are prone to use the other styles in order to get what you want, need and desire.

"The reality of human interaction is that we all move in and out of these patterns continuously throughout our life... We always have a choice of which communication style we will use in every given situation. The style we choose generally depends on what our past experiences have taught us will work best to get our



Picture 4. Elephant in disguise.

[48] Connie Podesta & Vicki Sanderson: Life Would Be Easy If It Weren't for Other People

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needs met in each specific situation."[49] That choice becomes much easier when you've moved your focus beyond your elephant. Why should you even get your own needs met if it means the other person is left with nothing? It is important to know these communication styles and observe your own communication because the elephant can come in disguise.

Aggressive Communication is the bulldozer way: it means that you honor your own rights so much so that others feel humiliated, defensive, resentful, and hurt around you due to your direct and forceful communication. You choose and make decisions for others and you are brutally honest without taking into account others feelings. You are self-enhancing and derogatory: you make yourself the centre of attention and may insult people with what you think is humor. You'll participate in a win-lose situation only if you'll win: You demand it's either your way or the highway. You feel righteous, superior, controlling and only later possibly feeling guilt. Others view you in the exchange as angry, vengeful, distrustful and fearful. The outcome is usually that your goal is achieved at the expense of others. Your rights are upheld but others are violated. Your underlying belief system is that you have to put others down to protect yourself.

Passive Communication is shying away: it means you don't defend your own rights in communication situations and make others feel guilty or superior and frustrated with you. You allow others to choose and make decisions for you and keep your feelings to yourself, thus being emotionally dishonest. You are inhibited, indirect and self denying: If you get your own way, it is by chance. Others view you in the exchange as a pushover and that you don't know what you want or how you stand on an issue: The outcome is that others achieve their goals at your expense. Your rights are violated. You feel anxious, ignored, helpless, manipulated, and angry at yourself or others. Your underlying belief is that you should never make someone uncomfortable or displeased except yourself.

Passive-Aggressive Communication is the witty style: you manipulate others to choose your way and if you don't get your way you'll make nasty comments or mope and play the victim. You appear honest but underlying comments confuse. You tend towards indirectness with the air of being direct. In win-lose situations you will make the opponent look bad or manipulate it so you win. You are self-enhancing but not straightforward about it. Others feel confused, frustrated, not sure who you are or what you stand for or what to expect next: The outcome is that the goal is avoided or ignored as it causes such confusion or the outcome is the same as with the aggressive or passive style. You feel confused, unclear on how to feel, you're angry but not sure why. Later you possibly feel guilty. Others view you as someone they need to protect themselves from and fear of being manipulated and controlled. Your underlying belief is that you need to fight to be heard and respected. If that means you need to manipulate, be passive or aggressive, so be it.

> *"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."*
>
> ***Ernest Hemingway***

Assertive Communication is the way of the crocodile and the bird: it is often confused with aggressive communication because you do stand up for your own rights, but you also take others into consideration and make them feel respected. You are direct and make decisions for you. You are sensitive and caring with your honesty. You are self-respecting, self expressive and straightforward. This makes others feel valued and respected. You convert win-lose situations to win-win ones. You are willing to compromise and negotiate: The outcome is determined by genuine negotiation. You feel confident, self-respecting, goal-oriented, and valued: Later you may feel a sense of accomplishment. Others view you with respect, trust and understand where you stand. Your underlying belief is that you have a responsibility to protect your own rights. You respect others but not necessarily their behavior.

[49] Connie Podesta & Vicki Sanderson: Life Would Be Easy If It Weren't for Other People

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It should be noted that this has nothing to do with the grand variety of personality type tests available (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Belbin's Team Roles, Enneagram etc). Those can be helpful for you to find out what is your learned type of behavior in relationship to other people, but they are not who you are. "When the mind is quiet, we come to know ourselves as the pure witness. We withdraw from the experience and its experiencer and stand apart in pure awareness, which is between and beyond the two. The personality, based on self-identification, on imagining oneself to be something: 'I am this, I am that', continues, but only as a part of the objective world. Its identification with the witness snaps."[50] I always thought that part of my personality was to look at the general, the big picture, and that I wasn't good with details. When I went to work in Sri Lanka and my boss told me the same thing about himself, I was forced to pay attention to details, and in time I became much more detail-oriented person. Here we are interested in our way of communication, in order to see if the elephant is surfacing again. We're not interested in finding out what your perceived personality might be.

So, don't assume what you are, and don't make assumptions of others. It's easier said than done. Although I've consciously tried to stop making assumptions, I caught myself of assuming once again. I went to see Yann Arthus-Bertrand's art work "Six Billion Others"[51] which portrays people around the world. From the mosaic of 5,000 faces I randomly chose a woman – who turned out to be a guy called Seemi. Next I wanted to see something really exotic and chose a half-painted black guy called Gaira. I thought I'm going to hear some weird tribal language and he spoke perfect Australian English. At this point I realized I was fooled by my assumptions again. However, I felt like I was forgiven, for Gaira recited this beautiful poem named "I am" (by Stephen Clayton):

"I am born of the land, my soul is the sun
Nature is my mother, I am, mother nature's own son
The wind is my spirit, running wild, running free
The water is my mirror, reflecting visions of me
I am like a great river that slowly runs dry
Polluted and abused I am the river, slowly - I die
I am a child of the earth, created from dust
I live for the land, taking only what I must
I am a hunter of animals, imitating their stance
I am a painter of walls, I am an artist of dreams
Depicting mythological creatures, and spirits in my scenes
I am from the never never, a long time gone by
The Dreaming is my creation, I am at home when I die
I own no land, for the land owns me
That's the way it has been, how it always will be
For I am what I am - I am – Aborigine"

Picture 5. Gaira, Australia.

"The stronger the ego is, the stronger the sense of separateness between people. The only actions that do not cause opposing reactions are those that are aimed at the good of all. They are inclusive, not exclusive. They join; they don't separate."[52]

David J. Pollay calls this The Law of the Garbage Truck: "Many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles

[50] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[51] http://www.6milliardsdautres.org

[52] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

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up, they need a place to dump it. If you let them, they'll dump it on you. When someone wants to dump on you, don't take it personally. You just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. You'll be happy you did."[53]

In Taoism this is known as Wu Wei: "A selfless act can only be performed by someone in an egoless state. Every act performed by someone in the usual way of things has some kind of reward attached whether it is financial, power, love, status or just feeling good about oneself. All these things are ego reinforcing. To perform a selfless act one must let go of one's ego and pass into an altered state of consciousness. This is called wu wei – the state of doing without doing. Here every act is selfless for the ego has ceased to exist. There is no I making decisions and the outcome is always perfect."[54]

"All thru' the day I me mine, I me mine, I me mine. All thru' the night I me mine, I me mine, I me mine. Now they're frightened of leaving it, Everyone's weaving it, Coming on strong all the time, All thru' the day I me mine."

Beatles

Appreciative inquiry

As noted before, to start creating mutualistic relationships it is not enough for us to understand these things on our own. We need the other person to tag along. Once we understand the first two parts of Ubuntu, that I am not my elephant and that there is no self without others – that there is a deep connectedness – we start appreciating other people in a new way because both the ego and the otherness dilute. From that egoless oneness the communication with others becomes more easy and natural. Still one has to understand that in a communication situation the other person might not be as awakened as you are. In that case we need more tools to be successful in our communication.

Unfortunately the human mind is still limited and most of us are unable to communicate with each other telepathically. Our way of communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through a medium of communication. It involves the sender, the medium and the receiver. All three of these are parts where conflict can arise even if the intentions for communication were pure. Let's imagine an example communication situation where you (the sender) need to deliver a message while speaking (medium one) on the phone (medium two) to your significant other (the receiver). Let's say that the message is that you need to cancel Friday night dinner with your significant other because you need to go and meet your friend who is going through a rough patch in her relationship.

Possible pitfalls for communication in this situation include for instance:

- **The receiver:** She has been waiting to see you the whole week and has built up expectations, she is a bit of jealous for your friend who happens to be your ex-girlfriend thus letting personal history have an effect on the communication situation, or she might have made time on Friday and told her parents not to come for a visit prioritizing you over them.
- **The medium:** When you call her the phone beeps to notice you that the battery is running out forcing you to deliver the message quickly, or there is a bad connection and she cannot hear all the words. Even the lack of face-to-face contact can distort the message because she cannot see your facial expressions and body language.
- **The sender:** You feel that you need to let your girlfriend know as soon as possible of the change in plans (out of respect for her) but you are rushing to a meeting and it's not really the best time to call, you might think it's not such a big deal to postpone your dinner plans, or you might just be using words that she interprets differently.

[53] http://www.bewareofgarbagetrucks.com

[54] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wu_wei

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This simple example shows how interpersonal communication is not always that straightforward. If you had been aware of these possible pitfalls you might have chosen another method of communication, for instance quickly meet up with your girlfriend to ensure face-to-face communication. Even if this was not possible you could have been more aware of the receiver and set yourself in her position (use of empathy), acknowledge that you are using a poor medium and for example use someone else's phone that has battery (ensure your message distorts as little as possible), and most importantly you could have been more self aware. This kind of awareness is the basis of communication based on appreciative inquiry (AI).

The cornerstones of good communication are appreciation and inquiry. Appreciation means that you concentrate on what is best in people and situations and honor them as they are. Inquiry on the other hand emphasizes that you value exploration, discovery and asking questions instead of just bluntly delivering your message. Moreover, in appreciative inquiry you take a systemic view to life. "AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential."[55]

In the aforementioned example a person being an appreciative inquirer would have thought of the relationship as a system that consists of two of them as individuals and other systems (such as personal lives) having an effect on the system. This awareness would have made him act differently in the situation; to appreciate the receiver of the message and to use inquiry in his communication. In practice this is how the phone call could have gone:

- Hi darling! I'm calling from Joe's phone because mine was running out of battery and I wanted to ensure nothing interrupts. Is this a good time to talk for you?
- Sure, I'm just dressing up for our dinner. What's up?
- That's what I needed to talk about. I need your help. How would you react if one of your best friends called now and said she desperately needs your help? Would you postpone our dinner for tomorrow?
- I guess so. What are you getting at?
- Do you have any plans for tomorrow?
- Well, I was hoping to be with you.
- Me too. I'm dying to see you. How would you feel if we'd have the dinner tomorrow?
- Hmm… Why not… But we are not meeting today then, are we?
- I know this comes late and we have been waiting for tonight for the whole week. My friend is going through a crisis and she really needs my support, but I wouldn't like to let you down.
- It's ok. I'd do the same if I was you.
- Really? Shall I reschedule with the restaurant then?
- I can do it. Go meet your friend.
- Thanks. I love you so much!
- I love you too. See you tomorrow.

Most of the appreciative inquiry guides are made for pulling through organizational change processes successfully. But AI can be used to improve any relationship – even with yourself. The process of appreciative inquiry goes in a loop: Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver. First you discover what works, then you dream what might be, then you design the solution and finally do it. Generally, if you need change in any relationship it's better to ask "how" questions that lead to action rather than find scapegoats and pass blame with "why" questions.

Instead of dwelling in problems, you can appreciate and value of what is best (e.g. "What works in our relationship?"). That could be followed with "How might we..." questions that are powerful tools to unleash

[55] http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition.cfm

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your creativity and produce a large number of options. When choosing the best option you can change the question to "What should be?"

We will use appreciative inquiry as one of the general guidelines, especially in chapter three when we look at how we can improve communities and society at large. However, maybe a more in depth look is necessary already at this point. Joe Hall and Sue Hammond formed the eight assumptions of appreciative inquiry:

1. In every society, organization or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is important to value differences.
8. The language we use creates our reality.

According to Hall and Hammond "when you do more of what works, the stuff that doesn't work goes away"[56]. Understanding these assumptions is of utmost importance if we wish to successfully transition from our present state to communities and organizations that create a better future. Instead of blaming, complaining and finding scapegoats we should concentrate on what works. We can become successful only by capitalizing on what is already good rather than merely trying to fix mistakes. "What we focus on becomes our reality" is true on all levels. From the individual's perspective this is captured in Buddha's words: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought." In human relationships we are better of appreciating what's good in another person rather than trying to fix their shortcomings. And in organizations, we should live our values every day.

As was seen in the phone call example, the reality for me differs from your reality. Acknowledging this makes interpersonal communication successful: reality is created in the now. In an organization or a community, questions can shape the reality and influence people to find their own answers. Rather than using the hierarchic "command and control", questions unlock the creativity in egalitarian community. Change becomes next to impossible if the suggested future – no matter how enticing it might be – is utterly unfamiliar. People need to be able to build on what is, and these "parts of the past" should be the best that we have.

"Don't enter a defecating competition against an elephant."

African proverb

Valuing differences doesn't mean that we only accept that people are different. Tolerance is not enough. We need to truly value the different ways people see the reality, the way they process information and their preferred working styles. Using this diversity can bring together the best in both analytical and expressive, the introverts and extroverts. Finally, "the language we use creates our reality" refers to what was mentioned already in chapter one. "I need", "I want", "I desire" or "I should", "I could", "I would" are all words that keep you away from the present and fill your mind with worry. When we use positive language we become more positive. This is what AJ Jacobs noted in his TED Talk of "My year of living biblically"[57]. He said his behavior changed his thoughts: He pretended to be a better person and he became a better person. Let's now look how we can use appreciation to create synergy in relationships.

[56] Joe Hall & Sue Hammond: What is Appreciative Inquiry?

[57] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5MkpzMAOZM

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Egoless synergy in human relationships

In order to have successful relationships the rule of thumb is to learn empathy. Remember that sympathy is an emotion, whereas empathy is a skill. Empathy means that "you walk a mile in another person's shoes". Remember that before this, you have to remove your own shoes.

Although functioning from "true me" standpoint without the elephant in the way makes all relationships easier and more natural, still different types of relationships call for slightly different approaches. Let's look at normal issues in today's relationships and how egoless synergy can make being a partner, a parent, a child, and a leader more fulfilling experience for everyone.

Being a partner

In at least Western societies the amount of single households has significantly increased. Many people find it hard to find a suitable loving relationship and either choose or end up being alone. Those who are in a relationship, often struggle. Being a partner is no easy role. The issues in relationships vary but many of them fall in one of these categories:

- **Mental, emotional and physical distance:** Often the needs for emotional and physical proximity also differ; one needs distance and time alone whereas the other one is more prone to cling and seeks attachment. Sometimes people are so different that they find it hard to connect even on a mental level and then needed deep friendship doesn't develop.
- **Communication:** People have differing needs already for the amount communication: not being able to have meaningful conversations is a typical source of frustration. As for the communication skills especially active listening seems to be problematic for many. Unsolved grudges can become insurmountable if they are not dealt with in time.
- **Honesty and trust:** Past experiences and individual styles of communication shape the way how we much we trust other people. Deceptive behavior and even white lies can lead to a dead-end.
- **Unfulfilled needs:** One person can hardly ever fulfill all of your needs. Even if you would be 95% match the 5% of your needs remain unfulfilled. If one is not getting this fulfillment from other relationships (e.g. from friends) then issues arise.
- **Time usage:** Sometimes people spend too much time together, sometimes not enough. This can easily cause friction.
- **Lack of variety:** Relationships can become monotonous routine without enough adventure. When the new relationship energy is gone it's not enough to have mere friendship. Most couples face this issue at one point.
- **Jealousy and other fears:** Jealousy means different things for different people but usually it's a feeling derived from one's own fears. If these fears remain suppressed and they are not dealt with, jealousy can ruin the relationship.
- **Differing expectations and plans:** Usually people end up in relationships without too much expectation setting in the beginning. For whatever reason it's more common to make agreements in a business partnership to avoid conflict in the future. Also later on in the relationship the parties might have differing future expectations.
- **Feeling trapped:** Possessiveness and growing demands from one's partner can cause feelings of being imprisoned in the relationship. If people don't have a life outside the relationship or cannot spend time on their own, problems will arise.
- **Daily disputes:** Still the majority of conflict arises from the very run-of-the-mill topics and small disagreements can escalate to huge arguments. This is especially true if people live together.

One of the most dangerous caveats in relationships based on love arises if the other person uses the partner to become whole. You cannot expect someone else to be your yin or yang if you are out of balance with yourself. When a person is complete he is more ready to love and to be loved because he doesn't count on receiving the joy, peace and happiness from the other person but it's arising from within.

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In my opinion the notion of everlasting romantic love belongs to fairy-tales. A relationship has its time and place: sometimes it does last a life time but that should not be an assumption. When two adults decide to enter a relationship it should be in order to enrich the lives of both individuals. At best the partners can become each others' companions in spiritual development as well and continue awakening together.

"Romance has been elegantly defined as the offspring of fiction and love."
Benjamin Disraeli

In the beginning of the relationship, expectations should be made very clear through genuine dialogue. A love based relationship takes conscious, consistent effort to maintain and to flourish. "[Romantic] love is not a feeling. It's a decision to be made every day." said a friend of mine. People should choose to love, honor, and respect – to help empower each other, not to own nor possess. They should commit to a truthful and reliable discourse, and to make their arising needs and expectations known to each other without expecting that the other one is a mind-reader. Likewise, people should not be possessive or jealous of each other's time, but recognize that the fulfillment and joy they receive away from each other benefits both of them.

When the relationship is based on mutual respect people can count on each other to always seek a win-win situation without intentionally demeaning or putting down the other person. When the elephant is out of the way, you don't need to take things personally and even complicated issues can be resolved respectfully. There is a common understanding that when frustrations and bad feelings of anger, sadness, fear, and pain are expressed they are not treated as attacks towards the partner. If it seems that the relationship is coming to an end, people should be able to part from each other peacefully, respectfully, and as whole and free persons if this was made clear in the beginning. Thus the friendship and love can prevail even if people would grow apart and go their different ways.

Picture 6. Elephant out of the way.

Being a parent

Many of us have thought that when we have children of our own we will be better parents than what we had. How can this be? Most sane parents want to be as good to their children as possible and yet we want to be better. Parenting is not that simple. It's full of possible pitfalls, especially if it involves one or more elephants. Children need love and compassion, but they also need to know what the limits are. Parents play a pivotal role in creating the first impressions of moral understanding: what is allowed and what is not. Of course giving love and compassion becomes impossible if you're not present; first and foremost the kids need an adult to be there for them.

Parenting can be very stressful, especially for first-timers. If you are an egocentric parent you easily get disgruntled because of your kid's behavior. The psychological stress accumulated at work and at home can become overwhelming if you are still driven by your elephant. Moreover, sometimes parents live their own childhood again through their children; if I couldn't become a pianist (or a hockey player, or a ballet dancer) my kid has to have that chance. There's nothing wrong in creating opportunities for the child but they can easily become an obsession for the parents.

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> *"When elephants fight, it is the grass who suffers."*
> ***Acholi proverb***

Since I'm not a parent I cannot pretend to be an expert here. So, I Googled! (Folks, if you're reading this; "Googling" doesn't refer to baby talk). I found a list of 16 basic social skills parents should teach their kids[58]: following instructions, accepting criticism, accepting "no" for an answer, staying calm, disagreeing with others, asking for help, asking permission, getting along with others, apologizing, having a conversation, giving compliments, accepting compliments, listening to others, being honest, showing sensitivity to others and introducing yourself. Are you thinking what I'm thinking? At first I thought these are guidelines for parents to learn. If you look at the list there are several skills that are difficult to learn if your big parent ego is on the way: e.g. accepting criticism from your child, staying calm when the teenager is bad-mouthing you, or merely asking for help.

Parents should not think it's their duty to take care of parenting. It's not a task, it's a gift. Worst examples are the cases where parents stick together in an unfulfilling relationship, sacrificing for their child's sake. "We should not fight in front of our kids" is a ridiculous but quite usual comment. Don't you think the child will sense if things are not well at home? The extreme version of this is "We should be together until the kids leave the house".

Parent-child relationship is reciprocal and at best a mutualistic growth experience for all. Here's one of the greatest parenting stories I've heard[59]:

"My name is Vince and I am a divorced father of two little girls. I have split custody of my daughters and have a pleasant relationship with their mother, which is developing back into a friendship. When we divorced in 2005, we agreed that our daughters come first and that we needed to keep that in the forefront of our minds. We developed a 50/50 split physical custody. We are always there for each other when the other needs flexibility. We are more considerate of each other as a divorced team than as a married team.

My style of parenting has revolved around two rules: 'everything belongs to everyone' and 'rules for children apply to adults', so it is no big surprise to have my oldest reminding me to make my bed or brush my teeth. Just the other day, she came downstairs to turn my music down. She is only seven. She politely requested that I turn my music down because she couldn't hear the movie she was watching. When I didn't immediately respond, she went over to the CD player, turned it down and said 'keep it at 66 or lower'. Then she went back upstairs. Those were my words that she used against me and I had to accept it.

My house revolves around transitioning them from childhood to adulthood and is constantly evolving as they evolve. We have a basement for them to interact and play with each other (and their pets); they each have their own rooms to express their own individuality; I am redoing the library to accommodate their new passion for art and writing; my room is where they can bear witness to my own evolution (which is changing fast, if not faster than them); and the 'run-around' room is the free-range room where anything goes. It is where we as a family imagine and discover. We run and play; jump and bounce; and sit and think. It also doubles as my place for meditation. With blank walls and lack of stuff, it is easy for me to cleanse and clear my mind."

I cannot put it better than Vince. It's good to treat children as people, too. Most important thing one can give to a child is presence. Being with the child doesn't require much; gifts, common activities and doing things together are just an added bonus.

[58] http://www.parenting.org/behavior/socialskills/

[59] http://tinyurl.com/storyofvince

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Being a child

I'm hoping that some kids would also read this book. There can be a lot of insights that save them from a lot of trouble during their teenage and early adulthood years. Moreover, these people are the movers and shakers in human evolution. And if you think these kinds of things are too heavy for children to read, you might want to check your preconceived notions again. I was watching Eckhart Tolle and Oprah in the New Earth Web Class and a 13 year-old girl called them to clarify one thing that was unclear for her in the book (A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose). She said the book made a lot of sense for her. Kids today are smarter than we ever were at that age.

A child-parent relationship can be very tricky, especially if neither the kid nor the parents know about the elephants that influence their life. Many parents – unlike Vince – are not awakened enough to treat their kids right and tell them about their true identity. Thus the kids can get away with amazing amount of ego-driven behavior without ever being corrected. Very early on in their life kids learn how to manipulate their parents and how to get what they want.

Looking back, at least I have been sometimes such a monster – especially during my teenage years. On occasion, I used to behave very arrogantly towards my parents. Whenever I gave a hard time to my parents my train of thought was that "I never asked to be born in this world, so you bear the consequences". Having gone through my parents' divorce at the age of ten, I was sure to use it against them whenever possible. Later, I started appreciating the good sides of the divorce and learned that this helped me to become independent and survive on my own. Alas, it took me more than a decade to forgive.

> *"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us."*
>
> ***Martin Luther King, Jr.***

"Guilt, regret, resentment, grievances, sadness, bitterness, and all forms of non-forgiveness are caused by too much past and not enough presence… Forgiveness is to relinquish your grievance and so to let go of grief. It happens naturally once you realize that your grievance serves no purpose except to strengthen a false sense of self… It seems that most people need to experience a great deal of suffering before they will relinquish resistance and accept - before they will forgive."[60] The parents are erroneous at times. A child doesn't only need to forgive the parents, but also forgive himself.

I was never a fan of Ten Commandments so "honor your father and mother" didn't belong to my life philosophy. Not adhering to this rule led me to seek equality with my parents. I refused to be oppressed and let my ego dictate my behavior. There was a time that I even started feeling superior to them: "Oh, grow up!" was my answer when they tried to share their pain and sorrow with me. I failed to see that all of us had some growing up to do. Now I feel at peace and I respect my parents – not only as mom and dad, but as human beings.

Sometimes kids and their parents grow apart especially as the teenager is developing to an ever more independent person. Suddenly relating to each other becomes difficult – if not impossible. As if the parents were from a different planet. Sometimes it takes a tragedy to reconnect. Dr Leora Kuttner writes beautifully of what happens when a family is faced with cancer: "When someone you love is under threat, deep inner resources are called forth and our hearts open. We become acutely attuned to the other, sensing, observing closely in an effort to understand and determine how best to help. Through this open hearted compas-

[60] Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

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sion, the powerful energy of love creates a synergy – combined energies of both parent and child connecting one with the other – to create a life-sustaining, loving support."[61]

In everyday life this life-sustaining loving support cannot emerge unless both the parents and the child cooperate. But if the elephants are not in the way, this can become a wonderful relationship. If a child functions from an egoless standpoint, parents can become much more than a source of weekly allowance or hosts at home. Mom or dad can become one's mentor, coach, trainer or even a guru – but this relationship can work also the other way round. If the parents are ready to listen a child born into another kind of world can educate them in practicalities such as using the social media but also more philosophical discussions may emerge.

"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today."
Stacia Tauscher

Being a leader

A life is full of situations where leadership is called for. It's not a position, but a skill set. Although a bulk of leadership literature has been published (because it sells!) the basic understanding of leadership is very simple. There is no rule of thumb for good leadership, but there is a rule of hand[62]. If you look at your own hand, the basis for good leadership is there:

- **Thumb stands for modeling the way.** First person to lead is oneself. A congruent leader should be an authentic living example of both personal and commonly agreed-on values. A role-model leader is committed to progress and creates small victories along the way. The thumb is a mark of affirmation. Great leaders get "two thumbs up".
- **Index finger stands for inspiring a shared dream.** A leader should work with the team to create an inspiring and meaningful future direction and make sure people's own passions, strengths and dreams are aligned with it. A leader communicates the strategy constantly and ensures the team is on the right path. The index finger is used to show direction.
- **Middle finger stands for challenging the process.** It's leader's responsibility to create an environment where experimentation, questioning, risk-taking and learning from personal and mistakes of others are cherished. This leads to both incremental improvements and breakthrough innovations. When the process or system is flawed it should be shown a certain finger.
- **Ring finger stands for enabling others to act.** A leader should foster collaboration and trust. This happens by serving others, ensuring availability of information and resources, involving everyone, sharing the credit and otherwise laying a foundation for the team to be successful. When you put a ring on this finger it's a mark of a collaborative union of equal partners.
- **Little finger stands for encouraging the heart.** This means that a leader finds creative ways to celebrate success and reward for good progress, keep the morale up being a cheerleader, and encourage people through dialogue. When walking a child across a busy street the only encouragement needed is extending your little finger to hold onto.

For the leader to build synergy into the team, she should know the people, their personality and their working styles. One easy way to quickly define your personal working style is to ask yourself two questions: "Am I more people or task oriented?" and "Do I rather ask or tell?" See if you can spot your preferred style in table 1 below.

[61] http://www.icccpo.org/articles/general/kuttner_love_and_relationship_bond_2005.html

[62] Adapted from Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner: The Leadership Challenge

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	EXPRESSIVE	DRIVER	AMIABLE	ANALYTICAL
Orientation:	People / Tell	Task / Tell	People / Ask	Task / Ask
How to Recognize:	They get excited. They are loud and enjoy being the centre of attention.	They like their own way; decisive & strong viewpoints.	They like positive attention, to be helpful & to be regarded warmly.	They seek a lot of data, ask many questions, behave methodically & systematically.
Tends to Ask:	Who? (the personal dominant question)	What? (the results oriented question)	Why? (the personal non-goal question)	How? (the technical analytical question)
What They Dislike:	Boring explanations/wasting time with too many facts.	Someone wasting their time trying to decide for them.	Rejection, treated impersonally, uncaring and unfeeling attitudes.	Making an error, being unprepared, spontaneity.
Reacts to Pressure and Tension By:	Selling their ideas or becoming argumentative.	Taking charge, taking more control.	Becoming silent, withdrawing, introspection.	Seeking more data and information.
Best way to Deal With:	Get excited with them. Show emotion and feelings.	Let them be in charge.	Be supportive; show you care.	Explain, provide lots of data and information.
Likes To Be Measured By:	Applause, feedback, recognition.	Results, goal-fulfillment.	Friends, close relationships.	Activity & busyness that leads to results.
Must Be Allowed To:	Get ahead quickly. Likes challenges.	Get into a competitive situation. Likes to win.	Relax, feel, care, know you care, observe the situation.	Make decisions at own pace, not cornered or pressured.
Will Improve With:	Recognition & some structure with which to reach the goal.	A position that requires cooperation with others.	A structure of goals & methods for achieving each goal.	Interpersonal and communication skills.
Likes to Save:	Effort. They rely heavily on hunches, intuition, feelings.	Time. They like to be efficient, get things done now.	Relationships. Friendship means a lot to them.	Face. They hate to make an error, be wrong or get caught without enough info.
For Best Results:	Inspire them to bigger and better accomplishments.	Allow them freedom to do things their own way.	Care & provide detail, specific plans & activities to be accomplished.	Structure a framework or "track" to follow.

Table 1. Personal working styles[63]

[63] Adapted from http://www.drbackman.com/communication-styles.htm

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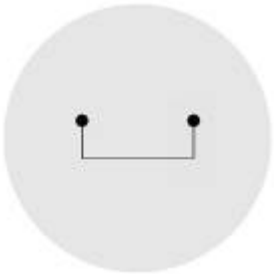
To reap the rewards of synergy in a team, it is important to engage different personality types into the decision-making process and utilize this diversity effectively. Expressive people like to rely heavily on hunches, intuition, and feelings. Use them in the beginning to generate ideas. Then pass the buck to drivers to filter out the worst ideas and then let the analytical people back-up the best ideas with facts. You can count on them: they hate to make errors, be wrong or get caught without enough information. Use amiable people to moderate discussions and facilitate group work. They are good with people: relationships and friendship means more to them than progress. Use the drivers to ensure overall progress and ask expressive people to communicate the drivers' strategy to the team.

A leader should know people on both a professional and personal level: one person can be a wonderful bundle of potential. The accumulated skills and knowledge can be put to full use when the person feels motivated towards the task. However, one person is only capable of so much. When two or more people work together, synergistic relationships add to the capability of the whole team.

For visual people it's good to illustrate how the cliché "1+1 = 3 or more" functions: what matters in picture 7 is the coverage of the black area. In the top picture one person's "weight of capability" is the area of the pin portraying that person. As soon as you add another person into the equation, the weight adds up. The addition is not only the individual capability but the combined capability of these two people together – the synergistic weight of the relationship (in the middle). Finally, in the picture in the bottom there are six people with strong relationships with each other. You can see how the "weight of capability" adds up due to the synergistic relationships between people. Great care should be taken by the leader when new people come along: it is of utmost importance that they are able to build a relationship with everyone else in the team. The stronger the relationships, the stronger the team is.[64]

Picture 7. Accumulating weight of capability.

One person's "weight of capability".



Two people and their relationship.

Six people and their relationship network.

Now a hasty conclusion would be: if relationships are this important – and their importance grows exponentially – we should grow the number of people infinitely and nurture their relationships. This is true to a certain extent, and definitely many good causes and grassroots movements wither away because not enough emphasis is paid to the importance of interpersonal relationships. However, there is a limit to the number of people in this equation.

This limit is approximately 150 and is called "Dunbar's number" according to anthropologist Robin Dunbar who found out that in order to function effectively, we should not organize in groups of more than 150. This limit is posed to us by the size of our neocortex. This part of the brain is involved in higher functions such as sensory perception, generation of motor commands, spatial reasoning, conscious thought and language. According to Dunbar 150 is the maximum amount of people that we can have a real social relationship with – knowing who the other people are and how they relate to us. Although this is now scientifically proven, this wisdom of 150 seems to date back much earlier. Here some examples:

- **Edney[65]:** "the upper limit for a simple, self-contained, sustaining, well-functioning commons may be as low as 150 people".

[64] This is loosely connected to Metcalfe's Law (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalfe%27s_law)

[65] J.J. Edney (1981). Paradoxes on the commons: Scarcity and the problem of equality.

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- **Hutterites:** Hundreds of years, through trial and error, this religious group have known that the maximum size for a colony should be 150 people. Every time a colony approaches this number, the colony is divided into two separate colonies.
- **The Bible[66]:** "So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties".

Nowadays, for example web-based social networks, Swedish tax authority, Gore Associates (Gore-Tex) and massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) are utilizing this wisdom. Since relationships are what form communities, their strengthening is needed to bridge the gap from mere self-awareness to creating communities that work. This is something often forgotten in the rhetoric of politicians when they call for more communality in our highly individualistic society. This is the middle part of Ubuntu: I am *because you are* because we are. Now that we know the importance of good relationships and know how to organize these relationships, let's take a look at how the new egoless and cooperative paradigm is what we are going towards.

From old doing to new being

In Table 2 I've tried to capture the essence of our "old doing" – the way we have led our lives thus far. For too long we have emphasized the importance of doing things: killing tasks, correcting mistakes, sorting out our problems and so forth. If we don't have anything to do we get bored or feel restless. Most people are pained by their elephants – without even realizing that they are. "What I call ordinary unconsciousness means being identified with your thought processes and emotions, your reactions, desires, and aversions. It is most people's normal state. In that state, you are run by the egoist mind, and you are unaware of being. It is a state not of acute pain or unhappiness but of an almost continuous low level of unease, discontent, boredom, or nervousness – a kind of background static**.**"[67]

We have been largely driven by fear. We have been afraid that we are not going to make it, that we lose or fail. We have mirrored our own fears towards others through feelings like jealousy. Plus, we have been influenced by the fear mongering in society: terrorism, pandemics, climate change and the like have kept us alarmed. Fear has made us to compete with each other; already the elementary school grading systems are based on competition, comparing us to others at a very young age. You need others to fail in order to win; and for you to have meaning in your life, you have to be better than others. We feel alone; separate from everyone else, and we fight for the limited resources around us.

We have tried to solve our problems through reason. We have tried to think our way through. We have tried to make the best decisions by removing uncertainty. Thinking has led to just more problems. "Although many of us may think of ourselves as thinking creatures that feel, biologically we are feeling creatures that think."[68] Also, our future needs, wants and desires have increased our mental burden. So has the worries and drama of the past. Even the present moment we treat as our enemy. By denying the now, we say no to life.

Luckily, Table 2 also has the second column that captures the essence of what lies ahead. The new way of life is based on being rather than doing. The inaction no longer leads us to feel bored but entices us in its excitement. We feel energized by everything that surrounds us when we concentrate on what is rather than thinking what could be. Eckhart Tolle suggested a very simple method for this: a method of non-labeling. Try it out when you go out the next time: look around you consciously and don't label what you see. This can breathe new life even into environments that you have considered ugly or uninspiring. I've

[66] Mark 6:40

[67] Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

[68] Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight

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been very successful with this method. Once I was sitting with a friend of mine in the middle of a concrete jungle. As I looked around I saw wonderful shapes and colors that I didn't label as buildings. These shapes and colors intertwined with the beautiful shades of blue and white (the sky) forming a picturesque portrait full of life.

	OLD DOING	NEW BEING
STATE OF INACTION	Boredom, restlessness	Bliss, concentration
DRIVER	Fear, scarcity	Love, abundance
OTHER PEOPLE	Competitors, separated	On the same side, interconnected
DECISION MAKING	Reason: minimizing doubt	Intuition: maximizing trust
APPROACH	Thinking	Feeling
ATTITUDE	Clinging	Letting go
OUTCOME	More problems	More solutions
FUTURE	Needs, wants, desires	Emergent, uncertain
PAST	Worries, drama	Perspective
PRESENT MOMENT	Thinking what should be	Acceptance of what is

Table 2. From old doing to new being

In the new being love replaces fear. When you get fear out of your system you automatically reduce thinking. This releases so much space for being. But you cannot just take fear out and leave a void. You can fill it with love for everything and everyone around you. Good things start coming your way, when love is your new focus and driver. You deny scarcity and awaken to a life of abundance. You don't see people anymore as obstacles for your success but you realize there is no us and them. We are all at the same side. Once you feel that unity with others you can never be lonely again, you have no more enemies and people start smiling at you – literally and metaphorically.

New partnerships are formed as people see how interconnected they are and how important relationships are. People can trust each other and their intuition. Decisions can be made faster and corrections can be made on the fly. This feeling-based approach makes us more agile; we let the future emerge and unfold and treat the past only as a teacher. We savor the present moment. Our being produces more solutions instead of more problems.

"The problem with the future is that it keeps becoming the present."
Calvin

Once we are done with the era of the elephant, we can move on to meet the basic needs for everyone on the planet. But the transition is not going to be easy –humankind will have to adopt to a whole new frame of reference. We have had enough trouble because of egoistic craving, attachment and delusion. There is no need to own, but to share. There is no need to fight, but to connect. There is no "need to need" but to be content of what is. And there is no need to wait.

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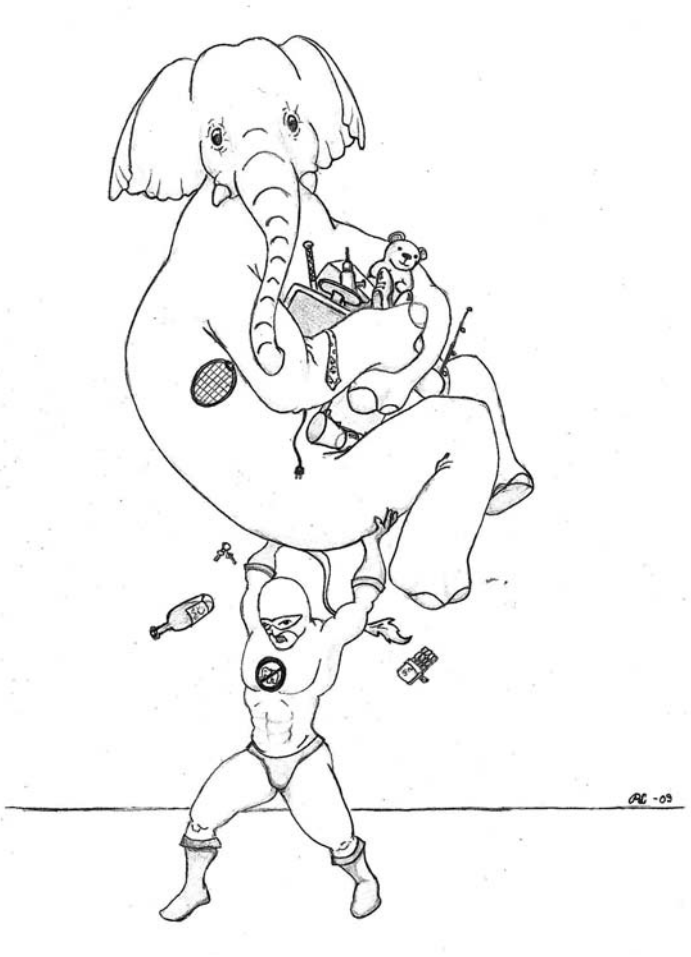
"All you get by waiting is more waiting. Absolute perfection is here and now, not in some future, near or far. The secret is in action – here and now. It is your behavior that blinds you to yourself. Disregard whatever you think yourself to be and act as if you were absolutely perfect – whatever your idea of perfection may be. All you need is courage… All you need you have. Use it. Behave as best you know, do what you think you should. Don't be afraid of mistakes; you can always correct them, only intentions matter. The shape things take is not within your power; the motives of your actions are."[69] In order to start this transition from old doing to new being, our culture has to change – one person at a time. Before introducing a new culture, we need to learn to let go of the past.

Culture of letting go

"Enlightenment, that is acknowledging the facts, calls for letting go of familiar and safe and seeing the reality." says reverend Jaakko Heinimäki. "Simultaneous awareness of the life of being, and the lesser importance of the personality to which we have become attached, is a second enlightenment that comes to all humans who grow up beyond the stage of adolescence. But it feels like dying. To avoid the trauma of it, the great majority of us remain adolescents until the end of our lives. This is not a minor philosophical point. This is the heart of the matter. Most of us would rather kill ourselves than be, particularly if who we think we are keeps dying."[70]



Picture 8. Letting go of your elephant.

To help us in letting go of our ego – the very essence of who we thought we were, we can practice by letting go of less important things. You can start by making a list of all the things you have, and put them in order of priority. Then let them go – give them away or sell them – one by one, starting from the least meaningful. You will soon realize that your elephant has identified itself with those material things. You can be conscious of this process of letting go and every time you get rid of something, rate how bad it feels on a scale from one to ten. In that moment you know how identified you were with that thing in your life. Letting go of my car meant that I lost the freedom to travel where-ever and whenever I wanted. But it also reduced a lot of worry from my life: no more costly maintenance, annual check-ups, insurance fees or scraping the ice off the windows in the winter. Although I had thought it would take away my freedom, it instead increased it.

Recently I had the opportunity to be a part of a series of workshops that looked at the Finnish society from a future perspective. In this formidable gathering was one participant who said that if we are to survive we need to learn how to downgrade our lives, we need to create a culture of letting go. What this means that on a psychological level as we are letting go of what we already have, we also start letting go of what we

[69] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

[70] Brad Planton: Radical Honesty

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don't have yet. In other words, we become conscious of what we don't need, of our vain wants and desires. Of course this is destructive for the current economy if it starts up on a large scale, but what is there to destroy anymore? We cannot spend our way out of the financial crisis, because the system was flawed in the first place (see Chapter one FAQ to learn more about fractional reserve banking system).

Through understanding the importance of letting go, we have started making space for a new culture to emerge. Once we have personally found who we really are – or at least who we are not – and strengthened our relationships, we have covered the "I am because you are" part of Ubuntu. It is time to move from mere being to also doing and see how we can organize our action to save the world.

> *"One thing to realize about our fractional reserve banking system is that, like a child's game of musical chairs, as long as the music is playing, there are no losers."*
>
> ***Andrew Gause***

One of my greatest life experiences was my time in AIESEC. It is the world's largest youth driven organization in more than one hundred countries offering teamwork, leadership and work abroad opportunities. This international platform enables young people to explore and develop their leadership potential for them to have a positive impact on society. AIESEC conferences gave me taste of what it is to truly feel as one with people who just a moment ago were completely strangers, only unified by a strong cultural bond. In the conferences you could connect with other AIESECers from around the world, and feel as part of something grander than you. It is a community that is based on strong interpersonal relationships. It is like a community of ants, where each part contributes to the whole.

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Chapter two summary

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Key points of this chapter were:

- My worth is dictated by your existence: Without you I wouldn’t be.
- Functioning as true me, helps relating to others because the elephant is no longer in the way.
- When dealing with people who are less awakened, you need to pay extra attention to your communication. Appreciative inquiry helps.
- Communities are only as strong as the relationships in them.
- You should pay extra attention to your behavior in so called ordinary relationships or roles that we have; being a partner, a parent and a child.
- The cultural transition starts with letting go of the past. For you it can also mean letting go of suffering: forgive and stop being selfish.

See tips, tricks and tools at the end of the book:

- Learn more about your personality
- Change the world one couch at a time
- Go hitchhiking
- A letting go ritual for forgiveness

See frequently asked questions at the end of the book:

- Are you saying traditional personal-development literature doesn't work?
- What are the control dramas?
- What do you mean human and a horse are in a symbiotic relationship?
- How come people go to jail for their opinions in Finland?
- Can you give a few more examples of appreciative inquiry questions?
- What do you mean with scarcity and abundance as drivers?
- What is maximizing trust in decision making?
- With letting go, do you mean we should also let go of our technological advancement?

Chapter three

COMMUNITY OF ANTS

HOW A EUSOCIAL SPECIES CAN GET ITS ACT TOGETHER…
AND DEVELOP INTO A SUPERORGANISM

Anna woke up on a gloomy Sunday morning. She thought she heard the doorbell ring, but she didn't want to get out of bed. She had a slight headache from last night's ad hoc decision to get drunk. The doorbell rang again. "Who can it be at this hour?" she thought and forced herself out of the bed to open the door. She was surprised to see the teacher at the door.

- *Hello Anna. I hope I have awakened you. May I come in?*

A: *What? Sure. Sorry for the mess.*

Anna put the kettle on and washed her face. She didn't even bother asking how the teacher knew where she lived. Soon they sat down on the couch with warm cups of tea. The moment of silence was broken by the teacher: "Do the ants have a leader?"

A: *Oh gosh, here we go again. Please don't introduce any more animals in my life. The dentist visit didn't go that well.*

- *They are insects.*

A: *What? Sure, insects, whatever… I have bad news for you.*

- *Tell me.*

A: *I guess I failed in the homework. Right after we met the last time, my boyfriend dropped a bomb. He said that although he is very much in love with me, he would like to see other people too.*

- *And how did you react?*

A: *Of course I got mad. I ran out of his place and broke in tears. I know what you're saying next: that I should have controlled my elephant. But this was too much to take.*

- *No, that's wonderful. You got a real-life challenge to test your first two lessons. I see you cannot discuss this now. I come back in a week. Remember who you really are and how you can connect to others. Whatever happens: take it as a gift.*

*****

The teacher left only to return in a week's time, as promised. Now Anna was more prepared.

A: *Welcome. I'm sorry I couldn't handle any more lessons last week.*

- *That's ok. Now tell me what has happened.*

A: *I spent a couple of days alone going through my feelings. I realized it wasn't me but my elephant that was hurt. I took it as a gift.*

- *Excellent. Did you re-connect with your boyfriend?*

A: *Yes. I realized he never said or even thought of leaving me. He was very honest. He had not cheated on me. He wanted to stay with me and love me, but he couldn't be fully satisfied with me only. He explained that I fulfill his needs 90% but that 10% is missing.*

- *Really? And what did you decide?*

A: *There might be someone else coming to our relationship… a common friend of ours. It sounds weird but all three of us are fine with it. She's like a sister to me and seems to be genuinely in love with my boyfriend. If it was anyone else I would doubt it, but she's cool. I don't know what's going to happen but at least we know each other's real feelings. Actually, I feel like his affection and love for me has only grown after I let him be what he is. By setting him free I set myself free… to be more honest.*

- *Good. I won't pry on any more details regarding your personal things. Can we move on?*

A: *Yes.*

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Anna had prepared even pen and paper. She was eager for her next lesson in life. In fact she felt a bit like cheating: she had been devouring information about ants the whole of Saturday.

***A:** So, what was the new question about ants?*

- *Do the ants have a leader?*

***A:** There's the queen. But according to Deborah Gordon the queen is only laying the eggs.*

- *Very good. It seems you've done your homework again. Who's Deborah Gordon?*

***A:** She and her associates in Stanford have used more than two decades in researching ants.*

- *Ok. Well then you most likely know more than I do.*

***A:** I do. I never knew how fascinating the world of ants could be. They don't really need a leader.*

- *Why is that?*

***A:** The ant colonies are sometimes referred to as superorganisms because the ants appear to operate as a unified entity, collectively working together to support the colony. It's a system in which the parts use only local information and the whole thing directs itself. There's no need for hierarchy.*

- *Wow. I'm impressed. That was exactly my point. Isn't it a wonderful idea: acting collectively for a common good?*

***A:** Yes. That's what made me so excited! Although it was a bit disappointing that we humans have noticed the potential and started researching the implications for such useful areas as military and management.*

Anna realized what she had just said. She was lost in her thoughts for a while.

***A:** Wait a minute. Was your point that we are capable of learning from the ants but as of now we have used that wisdom in wrong purposes?*

- *Well, that's what you said. You're on to something magnificent here. Can you tell me more of how the ants go about doing what they do?*

***A:** Sure. As said, no ant directs the behavior of others. Thus the coordinated behavior of colonies arises from the ways that workers use local information.*

- *What do you mean?*

***A:** Well, look at the start of seed foraging every day: a small number of patrollers returning to the nest communicates to foragers both the safety and direction of the route. And if these foragers return successfully with food it encourages more ants to take on the role of the forager and leave the nest. There's no need for assessments or giving directions. It's a decentralized system.*

- *Ok. Now you are truly educating me.*

Anna was proud of how well she had prepared. She got carried away and wanted to tell more.

***A:** Apart from foragers and patrollers, other tasks the ant can take on are nest maintenance and midden work. As the environmental conditions change the ants can quickly assume a new role.*

- *How does this happen?*

***A:** As ants are leaving the nest they communicate with returning ants and decide what kind of work is needed right now. Thus, if more food becomes available, more ants assume the role of a forager. Or if the nest needs cleaning up a forager might turn into a caretaker in an instant.*

- *Ok. Give me an example how this works in practice?*

***A:** Sure. Some years ago on a vacation in Spain I left a sweet stain on the table overnight and in the morning I witnessed an ant super-highway. I observed for a while how structured they were. Then I played a prank on them and disturbed the order by spilling water on the "highway".*

- *What happened?*

***A:** A sudden chaos emerged and most of the ants went wildly running around. The fact that in less than a minute they had created a detour is a clear message that they didn't panic but temporarily switched to patroller role and communicated to others the new route.*

- *Impressive. Do you think human organizations could work like this?*

***A:** Not in a million years.*

- *Really? Are you saying the ants are more intelligent than us?*

***A:** Well… yes.*

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Anna blushed a bit when she realized how absurd it was. "Human beings as the pinnacle of evolution… yeah, right." she was thinking. There was one more thing Anna wanted to discuss.

***A:** There's something that I don't quite understand.*

- *What's that?*

***A:** One of the most striking revelations of Gordon's studies is that half of the ants are just relaxing and resting in the nest, doing nothing.*

- *Is that so?*

***A:** Yep. They are not that hard-working after all!*

- *What do you think is their role?*

***A:** They don't have a role. Maybe they are reserves if something happens.*

- *Could it be that even the ants that are seemingly doing nothing, serve a purpose? Why else would half of them be engaged in this tedious task of doing nothing?*

***A:** That's exactly my question.*

- *Well, do you have an answer?*

***A:** Yes, I thought of one thing but it's silly.*

- *What's that?*

***A:** Could it be that they are – in a very ant kind of way – meditating and thus contributing to the success of the whole superorganism? Could this be a secret for the fact that they've been around 110 to 130 million years and are now covering almost all corners of the Earth?*

- *Might be. Have you read Mark Twain's "What is Man"?*

***A:** No. Why?*

- *There's a quote in there: "As a thinker and planner, the ant is the equal of any savage race of men; as a self-educated specialist in several arts, she is the superior of any savage race of men; and in one or two high mental qualities she is above the reach of any man, savage or civilized!"*

If we take a systems perspective to look at our planet we see the interconnectedness of everything. We see the whole planet as a system. Zooming in, it's easy to see that one sub-system in particular is malfunctioning: the human race. The interplay of chaos and order in our planetary system will either remove the malfunctioning part or correct it to contribute to the balance of the system. Since the malfunctioning subsystem is linked to the larger system of life on the planet, the decision making is not removed to "faith" or "destiny" only but the sub-system can have an effect on the system's decision of whether it should be removed or corrected. This ability to influence the larger system is the "free will" of the sub-system components, us, individuals. Let's say, hypothetically, that most of us would rather choose the corrective measures than total destruction as species, we have a basis to assume that we want to get our act together. Consequently, the malfunctioning sub-system, the human race, realizes eventually that it has no choice but to understand the interconnectedness again in order to survive as part of the larger system; and to become a superorganism, much like the community of ants.

Therefore, whether the human race should become a globally connected species is no longer a question to be asked. We are already connected. But the way how we want to utilize this connectedness is in our hands. In order to get our act together, it is essential to have a right set of common values that shape the common culture. If we wish to create a more sustainable and just society we cannot expect the contemporary culture to work in the new system. The values that worked in the 20th century, will not take us to our desired future. Then, how do we know what values should we embrace in the new culture? If we want to learn from the ants, we could try and see how humankind could function like eusocial species. Eusociality is a term used for the highest level of social organization in a hierarchical classification. Could we be defined through the relationships in the system, not only as individuals? Could we function through our communities as one global entity, all contributing to common good?

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Brandon Keim cites sociobiologist E.O. Wilson in Wired: "While only 2% of known insect species are eusocial, these species comprise most of the insect biomass." Kleim goes on to write: "While one has to be careful in drawing early conclusions and then applying them to people, it's clear that in some ways this cooperative system, so much more subtle than the classically self-centered Darwinian ideal, is extraordinarily successful."[71]

In the previous chapter we touched the topic of appreciative inquiry. We have seen that rather than getting buried in the endless swamp of fixing mistakes, it is easier to build on what works already. We can look at our society and see what exemplary collaborative communities there are already and what works in them. We can take these learning points and start drafting outlines for a new culture accordingly.

We can design the global system to work for us. There are options. Each of these options has a different degree of Ubuntu in them: each has some individual freedom, some altruism and some communality. We need to look at these options and choose which one we want to take as our blueprint. None of them is a perfect society and none of them can be 100% actualized: chaos will always kick-in and re-shape the new order. However, we can make a choice on the general direction we want to take.

But first, let's see what the ants can teach us.

What is the ant nature that makes them so successful?

It's often claimed that there have been wars as long as there have been people, and that there will always be sick people who murder others just like that. Are the ants somehow inherently better than human beings? Opposite to the popular belief: ruthless self-interest at the cost of others, continuous greed for more and dishonest behavior patterns are not in the human nature. "Our customs, behaviors, and values are by-products of our culture. If the environment is unaltered, similar problems and behaviors will reoccur."[72]

The 1 billion malnourished people on this planet are not part of a natural phenomenon, but result of a system which is based on the rich getting richer whilst the poor grow poorer. "A society reaps what it sows. If your society's foundation inherently supports self-interest, elitism, greed and dishonesty then no one should ever be surprised when certain members of society continuously fall into extremity of murder, financial corruption or indifferent selfish game."[73]

"There is no such thing as human nature in the conventional sense of being a set of predetermined, preprogrammed behaviors and values to which all human beings are predisposed. What we are concerned with is human behavior and values, which can certainly be changed… Take, for example, the situation witnessed after W.W. II: even the most respectable families could be seen fighting over scraps of food. When people's basic needs are not met, they resort to whatever behavior is necessary to ensure the necessities of life for themselves and their families. By making the necessities of life available to all in this participatory democracy and through a meaningful and productive education, we can dramatically reduce counterproductive behavior."[74] In our current crisis we are forced to question our assumptions: a homeless person can well be a highly educated mother of three children.

[71] http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2008/01/is-homosexualit/

[72] http://tinyurl.com/venusprojectfaq

[73] http://www.vimeo.com/6346955

[74] http://tinyurl.com/venusprojectfaq

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Competition and hierarchy are not in human nature either, but emerged only after the agricultural (Neolithic) revolution some 10,000 years ago. Equality, altruism and sharing were typical for hunter-gatherers before that. Not relying on hundreds of food sources anymore people started stockpiling their agricultural products in an uneven way. The mindset shifted from taking what is needed for the community (and being thankful for it) to hoarding for the rainy day. Little by little this has led to increased levels of inequality; some people have access to nutrition, riches and resources while others are lacking everything.

Yet a change for better has started. There are a lot of things that work. Let's look at today in an appreciative manner and see what is good in some of the communities today.

Appreciative examples of individuals, relationships and communities

In the margins of our society lie the weak signals – tomorrow's megatrends or obsolete fads. There are three particularly interesting phenomena that cover all parts of Ubuntu that have gained popularity over the recent years:

- **Individuals changing the world:** Social entrepreneurship is producing innovations to do good and do well.
- **Responsible relationships:** Polyamory is unrestricted love and adherence to value-led relationships.
- **Creative communities:** In open-source communities collaboration happens largely without money.

Although these examples are picked to represent individual, relationships and communities they all portray the importance of the focal point of this chapter: "I am because you are because we are". Let's dedicate some time to examine each of these.

Social entrepreneurship

Social business ideas are based on solving a social or environmental issue; combining profits, people and the planet. They are radically innovative solutions, i.e. they revolutionize the existing systems. Thus they have an impact on the society at large. Usually social entrepreneurs aim to maximize the impact by scaling the solution to other target groups or geographical areas. Finally, what makes a social innovation stand out from mere social work carried out by the public sector and the NGOs is that they are financially sustainable entrepreneurial solutions. That is to say, they are innovations independent of external funding.

Indeed, there is a lot to improve in this world. Social entrepreneurs cover a wide range of issues, depending on the individuals' passion who started the social enterprises. They answer questions like;

- How might we ensure availability of clean water and nutrition?
- How might we provide sanitation and healthcare in slums?
- How might we make young people's voices heard and enable their future through education?
- How might we provide sustainable energy for future generations?
- How might we enable a smooth integration of work-based immigrants?
- How might we get people out of poverty while creating local innovators for the public?
- How might we prevent disease and improve maternal health?
- How might we use entrepreneurship to keep released prisoners from going back to prison?
- How might we activate elderly people to lead full and exciting lives?
- The list goes on…

There are two kinds of social entrepreneurs: those who made their fortunes in traditional business and only then decided to participate in saving the world, and those who started with nothing and built solutions that revolutionized their local community. Example of the former is Jeff Skoll. He created Skoll Foundation and Participant Media with the money generated from eBay. The latter group is a stea-

> *"With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world."*
>
> ***Dalai Lama***

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dily growing bunch of people who saw a failure in their community, and with their passion to make things right, created organizations that would correct the failures in sustainable manner. Examples include for instance Rodrigo Baggio, the founder of CDI (Committee for Democracy in Information Technology). With recycled computers and free training space CDI offers an affordable computer skill training program that has opened doors to brighter future for more than 700,000 poor people in Brazil.

Social entrepreneurship is by no means a new phenomenon. Ashoka is a pioneer in supporting social entrepreneurs worldwide. On their website[75] they list historical examples of social entrepreneurs – people who changed communities well before the term "social entrepreneurship" was even coined:

- **Susan B. Anthony (U.S.):** Fought for Women's Rights in the United States, including the right to control property and helped spearhead the adoption of the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution.
- **Vinoba Bhave (India):** Founder and leader of the Land Gift Movement, he caused the redistribution of more than 7,000,000 acres of land to aid India's untouchables and landless.
- **Dr. Maria Montessori (Italy):** Developed the Montessori approach to early childhood education.
- F**lorence Nightingale (U.K.):** Founder of modern nursing, she established the first school for nurses and fought to improve hospital conditions.
- **Margaret Sanger (U.S.):** Founder of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, she led the movement for family planning efforts around the world.
- **John Muir (U.S.):** Naturalist and conservationist, he established the National Park System and helped found the Sierra Club.
- **Jean Monnet (France):** Responsible for the reconstruction of the French economy following World War II, including the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC and the European Common Market were direct precursors of the European Union.

Critiques of social entrepreneurship say that it is yet another form of capitalism and that the social entrepreneurs actually benefit financially from the misery of other people. It's a valid point of argument and skepticism is natural after witnessing the "green wash" of larger organizations. Another critique is that sometimes even entrepreneurs with good intentions are largely just curing symptoms, not addressing the root issues. "What is the social work you want me to do? Patchwork is not for me. My stand is clear: produce to distribute, feed before you eat, give before you take, and think of others before you think of yourself. Only a selfless society based on sharing can be stable and happy. This is the only practical solution… Society is built on motives. Put goodwill into the foundations and you will not need specialized social workers."[76] Indeed, the most successful social entrepreneurs dig into the root problems instead of patchwork and change their communities for good.

Regardless of the critique there are various elements we can learn from the community of social entrepreneurs. These are namely:

- **Passion and meaningfulness:** Social entrepreneurs are driven by their passion to do good. More and more people, especially the younger generation, are looking for more meaning in their work.
- **Opportunity recognition:** Social entrepreneurs see opportunities where others see problems. This is a mindset that more people will adopt in the future when an egocentric worldview is replaced with that of common good.
- **Piloting the solutions:** No matter how ambitious, social entrepreneurs are quite cautious in implementing their great ideas. Solutions are generally tried out in smaller scale, then perfected and copied to have a larger scale impact. This is a good way to avoid huge blunders and learn from mistakes along the way.

[75] http://www.ashoka.org/social_entrepreneur

[76] Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That

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- **Sharing the wisdom:** Social entrepreneurs don't generally mind sharing their secret sauce in order to maximize the positive impact of their ideas. When information hoarding is replaced with open sharing, good practices can spread more easily throughout the world.
- **Borderless partnerships:** Social entrepreneurs are savvy in tying partnerships with previously unlikely allies from all sectors of society. This increases connectedness and shows us a way of working together to save the world.
- **Abundance of resources:** Social entrepreneurs see money merely as a tool. For now it has been just slowing the progress. What matters is the social impact. Social entrepreneurs are savvy in collecting the missing resources: people and knowledge being the key. They don't see a scarcity of resources but abundance. "Impossible takes a little bit longer" is a motto for many social entrepreneurs.

Polyamory

Helen Fisher has studied the brain of people who are madly in love. She explains: "The three systems in the brain - lust, romantic love and attachment - aren't always connected together. You can feel deep attachment to a long-term partner, while you feel intense romantic love for somebody else, while you feel sex drive for people unrelated to these other partners. In short, we are capable of loving more than one person at a time."[77] Indeed, in the mainstream, serial monogamy has replaced the norm of everlasting love. Young people change partners like socks, still thinking that every single one of them is the one and only. Then at some point your life gets more stable, you settle down: internal attachment to the person and certain external factors – like mortgage, marriage and the offspring – support you in your decision to stay in the relationship. But coming from a country where about 52% of marriages end up in divorce I can't resist thinking that the monogamy in our society means that every relationship has an expiry date.

The society that we live in dictates much of how we think – and how we are expected to think. A Belgian friend of mine said that if one would drink 3-4 beers a day in his home country he would be labeled as an alcoholic, but in Czech Republic – where he lives now – it's just normal. This analogy can be used in the matters of love also. Monogamy is the norm in most of the Western world at least and there's nothing wrong with it per se. However, some people are very possessive and don't even want to hear of other kind of arrangements when it comes to love. Could it be that our society – where owning and having possessions is so important – has spread this thinking to our relationships also? Is it possible to love to the fullest in a non-possessive way?

Polyamory is a lifestyle of having more than one loving, intimate relationship at a time with the full knowledge and consent of everyone involved. Since the term polyamory was coined only as late as in the 1990s it is worthwhile to define not only what it is but also what it is not:

- Polygamy is a man's right to have several wives, often tied to religious beliefs.
- Swinging is only sexual; polyamory is physical, mental, emotional and spiritual sharing of love.
- Cheating is infidelity, lying and deception.

Although new as a term, polyamorous behavior is by no means a new phenomenon. Read for example "Three in Love: Menages a Trois from Ancient to Modern Times" (Foster, 2000) if you are interested. Nowadays for example Alan Moore – a British writer (e.g. Marvel comics) and Warren Buffet – second richest man in the world – are polyamorists.

There is no one way to lead a polyamorous lifestyle: Polyamorous relationships vary on a wide spectrum depending of the people involved and the agreements they have made. However there are certain values that all of these relationships are based on, and that differentiate polyamory from less defined "open relationships":

[77] http://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_tells_us_why_we_love_cheat.html

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- **Fidelity and loyalty:** one remains faithful to the promises and agreements made.
- **Respect and support:** one is non-possessive and accepts his partner's partners.
- **Honest communication:** one discusses feelings openly and deals with them immediately.
- **Compersion**: one gets satisfaction of his partner's enjoyment, even if the source is someone else.

What is wonderful of a polyamorous community is that although poly-people are only loosely connected to each other and can be of very different life orientations otherwise, there is a sense of mutual respect in their meetings. It doesn't matter if your sexual orientation is straight, gay, bi or even asexual – you are always welcome to share your thoughts. It doesn't matter if you are an engineer, business person, a hippie, or a live action role-player – no one is defining you by your profession or lack thereof. People are open to discuss with any gender: men, women, transgendered or androgen. Even what you do in your bedroom – whether it's kinky BDSM or plain vanilla – doesn't make you unequal in the eyes of other polyamorous people. Also, people in a polyamorous community tend to be quite self-aware, because they have had to do their introspection before deciding to choose a non-standard way of life.

My own experience with polyamory is limited but I can say that such a relationship is a wonderful avenue to find out who you really are, and to deal with your past fears that now show up as feelings of jealousy. I've realized that little by little it's possible to rid yourself of jealousy because it's nothing more than one of the toys your elephant likes to play around with. Through polyamory I've learned to deal with the New Relationship Energy (NRE) and push it aside without clinging to the fanciful false image of the other person. I've learned what unconditional non-possessive love is and how you can feel genuinely happy for the other person's happiness. For me polyamory has been a gateway to understanding true humanity.

Having said that, polyamory is by no means smooth-sailing. The issues in polyamorous relationships vary as in monogamous relationships, and most of them are highly practical: how to manage my time with several people and how to find partner(s) in the first place. The paradox of non-standard relationships is that although in theory you would aim to open more doors, in practice more of them remain shut. Consider for example a situation where a person is bisexual and polyamorous. At first glance this sounds like an endless sea of opportunities, doesn't it? However, in practice the potential partners have to be fine with both bisexuality and polyamory, and thus the person's chances to find partner(s) are diminished, not increased.

Whether or not we agree or identify with the lifestyle, we can learn a lot from the polyamorous community. In the future society the mutual respect for humanity and equal standing plays a major role. Values such as loyalty, trust, honesty, dignity, support, communication, negotiation and non-possessiveness are definitely worth considering. Maybe the most important learning point is the notion of honesty. "The mind is a jail built out of bullshit… Withholding from other people, not telling them about what we feel or think, keeps us locked in the jail. The longer we remain in that jail, the quicker we decline. We either escape, or we go dead. The way out is to get good at telling the truth."[78] Polyamorous lifestyle can also help one to let go of needs for attachment and clinging, traits developed already in early childhood and scientifically proven to be part of an addiction called romantic love. Quite surprisingly, choosing not to restrict love to any one person, I have learned how to live alone without feeling lonely.

Learning points from polyamorous lifestyle include:

- **Agreed understanding:** Poly-relationships are based on values such as trust, dignity, non-possessiveness and compersion. When a new relationship is started or more people come into the equation, people ensure with common agreement that everyone knows what the "rules of engagement" are.

[78] Brad Planton: Radical Honesty

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- **Compersion:** Love and compassion are taken one step further with this fairly new term that describes how non-egoistic people can get satisfaction from the wellbeing of their partners, even if the source of their pleasure would be someone else.
- **Facing your fears:** Compersion doesn't take away the possibility that feelings of jealousy might arise. However, honest and loving polyamorous relationship helps you to discuss these feelings with your partner(s) and you might find out that they are just fears that you have towards yourself: "am I good enough?", "will she leave me?", and "is the other guy better than me?" are all thoughts in your own head.
- **Dialogue:** It is quite common that polyamorous couples (and triads and whatnot) spend much more time discussing their feelings than what monogamous people are used to. It is overwhelming how close you get to other people sharing your doubts and joys.
- **Valuing difference:** A polyamorous community consists of a wide variety of people from all walks of life, backgrounds, age, gender, professions and differing sexual orientations. There is no room for prejudice but a lot of room for differences of opinion.
- **Acceptance of impermanence:** Although some poly-people are together from kindergarten to the grave, it is widely understood that all relationships change shape and might become obsolete. Nonetheless, this doesn't mean that you should cut all the ties with the person you love, as is the case in many monogamous break-ups.

Open-source communities

Imagine for a while you are living in the late 1990s. You are about to start a local youth club with your friends. You have been appointed to purchase all IT and knowledge related infrastructure the club needs. You have got a few brand new computers and some start-up money as a donation, but you need to calculate if it's enough or whether you should get sponsors. After careful mapping of needs your purchase list looks like this: operating system and basic software for three computers, virtual collaboration tools (shared calendar, forum and email at least), website for marketing purposes, eLearning tools, and Encyclopedia Britannica on CD to let your members in on information they need in their volunteer work. How much would all these cost?

> *"A consumer doesn't take anything away: he doesn't actually consume anything. Giving the same thing to a thousand consumers is not really any more expensive than giving it to just one."*
>
> ***Linus Torvalds***

Now think about the same assignment today. You get Linux Ubuntu as the operating system and Open Office as the software. You get your free email addresses and virtual collaboration tools from Google and set up your phpBB forum with ease. But you have hard time deciding whether to use Joomla, Drupal or Wordpress to build your site. You choose the latter because it's so easy. Finally you make Wikipedia the start page in your free Opera browser and open up your Moodle eLearning community. Cost of all this is zero Euros. How can this be? In just over a decade everything has become free thanks to people who've put in long hours to develop software in global open-source communities just for the love of it. Mind you, the development in open-source world is so rapid that by the time this book comes out, Google Wave has most likely made most of what I just said sound like remnants of the past.

In Internet-enabled collaboration it's not only the end results that are free; also participation is free. It's becoming more and more commonplace that people have their most exciting collaborative communities online – although it doesn't even feel like work. It is no wonder that this free and open participation was enabled by the Internet – a platform made accessible to everyone without restrictive rights by Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of HTTP and HTTML protocols. If he and his employer – CERN – would have been selfish and greedy, we might not be a globally interlinked species yet.

Linux Ubuntu community Code of Conduct starts by saying: "Ubuntu is an African concept of 'humanity towards others'. It is 'the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity'. The same ideas

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are central to the way the Ubuntu community collaborates. Members of the Ubuntu community need to work together effectively. The code of conduct lays down the 'ground rules' for our cooperation: be considerate; be respectful; be collaborative; when you disagree, consult others; when you are unsure ask for help; and step down considerately (if you decide to leave, do it so that it minimizes disruption to the project)."[79] These ground rules are so ingenious that any parent could apply them directly in upbringing, any teacher in a classroom or any leader at a workplace.

More and more software developers have learned an agile mindset. "We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others to do it. Through this work we have come to value individuals and interactions over processes and tools, working software over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation, and responding to change over following a plan."[80] Agile software development is based on iterative development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing cross-functional teams. This is largely the approach also in most successful open-source projects.

Organizational benefits from the use of Open Source Software include reliability, stability, auditability, cost-benefits, flexibility, freedom, support and accountability. Even the British government is a strong proponent of open-source. They've chosen this path in order to get best value for money, to avoid getting locked in to a particular product and to re-use what it has already bought. Their Chief Information Officer's council declares: "Open Source has been one of the most significant cultural developments in IT and beyond over the last two decades: it has shown that individuals, working together over the Internet, can create products that rival and sometimes beat those of giant corporations; it has shown how giant corporations themselves, and Governments, can become more innovative, more agile and more cost-effective by building on the fruits of community work; and from its IT base the Open Source movement has given leadership to new thinking about intellectual property rights and the availability of information for re–use by others."[81]

What can we learn from open-source communities?

- **Ubuntu in co-creation:** "I am because you are because we are" gives a sense of unity for the open-source community. Everyone is pitching in their time, and helping each other out in order to create something together on a global scale. This is selfless co-creation.
- **Richness of opportunity:** Anyone can join the projects based on their motivation and talent. This enables people to work on several projects simultaneously and give their best contribution without getting bored. My friend's LinkedIn profile tells everything of today's young adults' attitude: "I've done and seen a lot thanks to partly my strong curiosity about things, my drive to see and experience as well as the fact that I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up. Thus, one has to keep exploring. There are way too many cool things to do in this life!"
- **Need-based solutions:** Typical for open-source projects is that they are answering to real needs, instead of just developing "nice to have" solutions.
- **Quality matters:** Commercial products characteristically have a lot of visible functions and features that give marketing advantage, whereas importance in open-source products is placed on harder-to measure qualities such as stability, security and similar less glamorous attributes. Also the life-span of open-source technology is longer, due to the lack of profit-motive and available free updates and new versions.
- **Interaction of individuals:** Open-source communities put great emphasis on communication and dialogue. People help each other to overcome issues and share information openly.

[79] http://www.ubuntu.com/community/conduct

[80] http://agilemanifesto.org/

[81] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/government_it/open_source.aspx

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- **Accepting change:** Acknowledging that change is inevitable has made especially the agile developers successful. Although they have an overall vision for the project, they develop the solution in sprints – step by step – and make corrections along the way. This way the end result is always timely and useful, not thoroughly preplanned but unusable piece of software.

Getting our act together through new values and culture

"The new theory is that on any planet having life in the cosmos one species sooner or later evolves to a point of gaining a total knowledge of the planet it lives on. It will then be in its power either to continue evolution or to bring it to an end. The first course will require that the former values of that species, values not respectful of the new phase of evolution, must be replaced by new ones which cater to evolution. These new values are a major new evolutionary imperative."[82]

The matter of a shared value system is of the highest importance when designing communities of action that take us towards stronger communities and a new society. This should not be confused with personal values; anyone can still have and respect their own values but we should be able to agree on a common value set that we adhere to. From the examples above we can collect a list of good practices from an individual's perspective as well as on the levels of relationship and community (see Table 3).

VALUE	INDIVIDUAL	RELATIONSHIP	COMMUNITY
Meaningfulness	Passion and meaningfulness	Agreed understanding	Need-based solutions
Awareness	Opportunity recognition	Facing your fears	Quality matters
Agile development	Piloting the solutions	Acceptance of impermanence	Accepting change
Dialogue	Sharing the wisdom	Dialogue	Interaction of individuals
Co-creation	Borderless partnerships	Valuing differences	Ubuntu in co-creation
Abundance	Abundance of resources	Compersion	Richness of opportunity

Table 3. Good practices from social entrepreneurship, polyamory and open-source communities.

There is a certain similarity in the individual, relationship and community perspectives. These good practices portray six important values: meaningfulness, awareness, agile development, dialogue, co-creation and abundance. But how can we know if these six values are a good foundation for a community to function well? Let's for a while assume that you are about to create an organization or a project from the ground up. How would you use these six values?

Meaningfulness: You would ensure that what you are doing is absolutely significant for the people who are coming along. You would guarantee that what you do is aligned with people's passions and that everyone understands what you are engaging on together; what is the impact of your work. Finally, you would make sure that you are addressing a real need and developing solutions to that.

Awareness: You would make information available and remove all obstacles from people to obtain the information that they need to continuously tap into opportunities in the external environment. You would coach people to increase their self-awareness and remove whatever fears, doubts and disbelief they might have. You would ensure that people are aware of what quality means in what you are about to do; and see to a full commitment to deliver exactly that.

Agile development: You would quickly get down to business and start implementing the plans through pilot experiments. You would make adjustments along the way and accept the fact that what worked yesterday might not be relevant tomorrow. Your acceptance of impermanence would also mean that your organization would change shape all the time; some people would leave and new ones might join.

[82] http://www.paradiseearth.us/

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Dialogue: You would remove all the obstacles from sharing individuals' wisdom, and reserve a lot of time for transparent dialogue. You would develop tools and practices to enable interaction regardless of perceived geographical, cultural, linguistic or other hurdles.

Co-creation: You would develop win-win partnerships also outside of your organization, and bring in needed in competence. You would celebrate differences and ensure there is enough diversity that enables a variety of points-of-view in decision-making and development. You would constantly communicate the importance of relationships and community to the individuals, in your organization and outside of it.

Abundance: You would not settle for the limited resources that you have, but instead you would reach out to ensure people have what they need to get the work done. You would open people's eyes to compersion: success of one is success of everyone. You would let people to tap into opportunities that they need, knowing that this richness of opportunity contributes to their well-being and thus your organization thrives.

Meaningfulness	Awareness	Agile development	Dialogue	Co-creation	Abundance	Authenticity	Generosity
aspiration	acceptance	betterment	consideration	altruism	beauty	wholeness	attentiveness
commitment	aliveness	completion	courtesy	citizenship	courage	dignity	benevolence
confidence	clarity	development	discernment	cooperation	creativity	equanimity	caring
dedication	contemplation	excellence	gentleness	diligence	curiosity	integrity	compassion
determination	contentment	flexibility	understanding	fairness	hopefulness	justice	empathy
enthusiasm	critique	industry	humor	friendliness	liberty	loyalty	faithfulness
fulfillment	education	patience	integration	helpfulness	optimism	mercy	forgiveness
idealism	insight	perfection	joy	ingenuity	richness	morality	generosity
meaning	knowledge	pragmatism	magnanimity	reliability	wonder	respect	gratitude
passion	reality	resilience	nurturance			righteousness	humility
purposefulness	reflectiveness	risk taking	objectivity			self-confidence	kindness
steadfastness	self-awareness	simplicity	openness			self-discipline	love
will	truth	uniqueness	peace			serenity	selflessness
			tact			trustworthiness	service
						honesty	thankfulness

Table 4. Values of wisdom organized in categories.

What would be the outcome of running an organization in this manner? People would be passionately engaged in co-creation of common good on a sustainable basis. Not bad. However, is this convincing enough? Have we forgotten something? If we take a look at the list of values that various people have associated with wisdom[83] we can categorize synonymous and inter-related values from that list with what we already have (Table 4). We then see that these six categories were not enough, but we should include the "authenticity" – or "the real me" – that we discussed in chapter one and "generosity" that was introduced before when we discussed giving for the sake of giving.

A culture is defined as a "set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group"[84]. What kind of a culture would we build based on the aforementioned values? Here is one suggestion that captures it all:

- **Culture of meaningful co-creation and agile development:** People contribute to meaningful projects that give them fulfillment. People create solutions together where they are needed. Strict structures and hierarchy give way to developing everything with an agile mindset.
- **Culture of generosity and abundance:** People help each other and share resources for everyone's benefit. There's no more artificial scarcity, but best practices are transferred freely around the world.

[83] http://www.wisdompage.com

[84] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture

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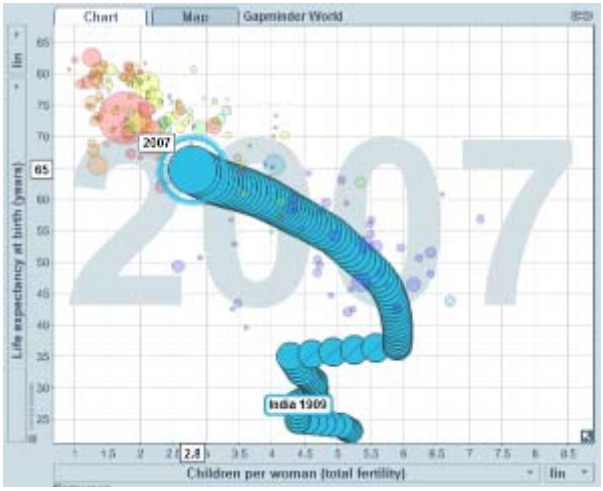
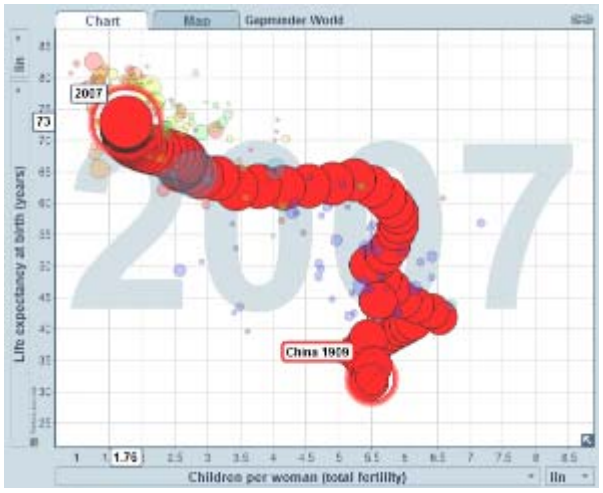
- **Culture of authenticity, awareness and dialogue:** Egoless people stay up-to-date on common issues. Dialogue is based on honesty and trust. One doesn't need to be afraid of being deceived because there's no longer a motive for dishonest behavior.

Equal opportunity is the key

In Western countries we often forget the inescapable fact that what we see as an economy is only a fraction of reality. First time in human history nearly all countries are part of the same global monetary system but unfortunately there is no equal access to its fruits. Alleged informal economy – all unregistered economic activities which contribute to the officially calculated (or observed) Gross National Product – adds up to 41% in developing countries, 38% in transition countries and 18% in OECD countries[85]. Note that this is measured with money, not by people belonging to it. If we look at the jobs in informal economy, i.e. people trying to survive outside the official system, the figures are even more overwhelming. In India a stunning 93% of jobs are in the informal economy, which in practice means for instance that of the 12 million people in Mumbai, 2 million sleep on the pavements and 6 million live in slums because the people's focus is on how to live another day. This question of survival is what captures the essence of informal economy in most parts of the world.



Picture 9. Life expectancy in India 1909-2007.



Picture 10. Life expectancy in China 1909-2007.

In less than 40 years the African continent went from being a net exporter of basic food staples to relying on imports and food aid. The Green Revolution in India was largely a failure, leaving Indian farmers in debt and committing suicide more than ever before, and poisoning the environment. Now the same is rolled over in Africa by AGRA, an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. It is questionable if the latest technology (genetically modified seeds, pesticides, and herbicides) coupled with loan money made available will help the small-scale farmers, but this cooperative effort of The Rockefeller Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will unquestionably open a new market for the multinational corporations providing the technology. As long as we are driven by the old values and the profit motive, even the well-meaning intentions perpetuate the system of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. It's time for us to understand that due to our connectedness it's in everyone's benefit to provide equal access and equal opportunity to everybody everywhere.

[85] Friedrich Schneider: Size And Measurement of the Informal Economy In 110 Countries Around The World

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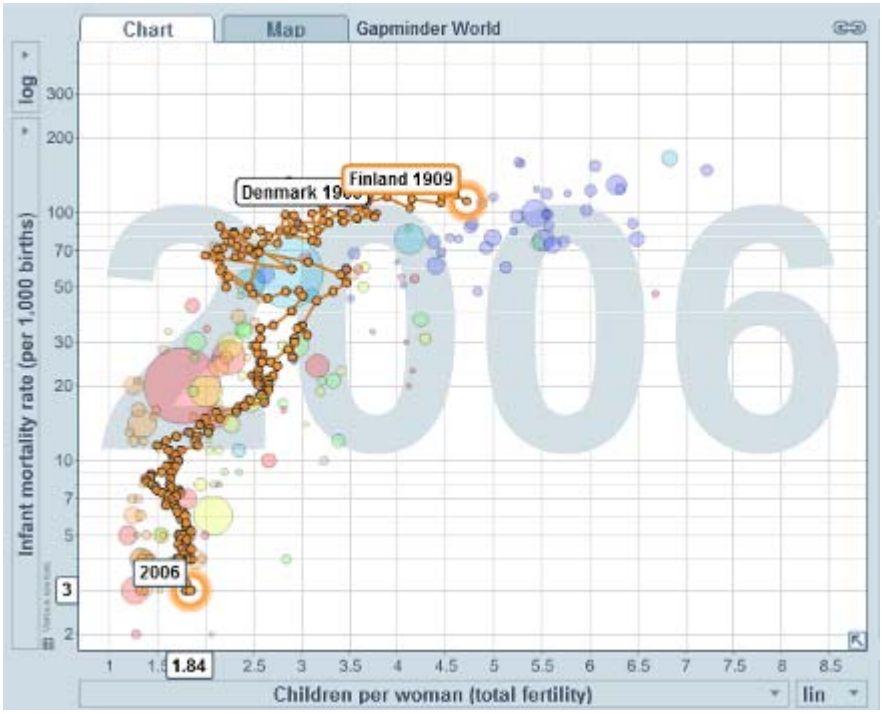
Whitehall Study has dispelled the myth that the gradient of health in industrialized societies is simply a matter of poor health for the disadvantaged and good health for everyone else. According to the studies (where both poor and rich had access to universal healthcare), the more inequality there is in society, the more health problems there are. A key factor in health of people is psychological stress. In hierarchic societies there is a lot of inequality and this poses a lot of stress on the majority of people. Therefore, it can be concluded that egalitarianism is a healthier choice for a society than hierarchy.[86]



Picture 9. Development of Finland and Denmark 1909-2006 (gapminder.org).

So, what if we would move to a system where even that 1,000,000,000 people that go hungry today would have enough to eat? What if 24,000 people wouldn't die every day of easily curable diseases and hunger? Wouldn't it mean that they would soon have increasing needs regarding their housing, transportation and entertainment also? This is a fear expressed most often: what would happen to our planet if everyone was leading a luxurious life like people in the Western societies do? If we commit to changing the system this worry is of no avail because if our system was not based on maximizing profit (i.e. continuing scarcity, ineffectiveness, piling waste and debt slavery) it would be based on something more reasonable: a sustainable life for people and the planet. It would be based on harnessing the technology available and ensuring abundance for all.

There is clear evidence of correlation between increased life expectancy and smaller family size (see pictures 9 and 10). When people become healthier there is less reason for having a lot of babies in order for some of them to survive. In other words, the more prosperous the nation is, the smaller the family size.

This can be illustrated also otherwise. Let's take two Nordic societies, Denmark and Finland, and see their development for the last 100 years. Only now, let's change the Y axis to be infant mortality rate (picture 11). We can see that both countries have had very similar development. In just a century the Finnish infant mortality rate has dropped from 11.1% to 0.3% while the family size has decreased from 4.7 to 1.8 kids per woman. Danish figures are from 9.9% to 0.4% in infant mortality and 3.8 to 1.8 in family size. We are now so well off that sometimes we forget; we were developing countries just 100 years ago. More children were needed both because of child mortality and due to the agricultural nature of work.

In conclusion, ensuring equal opportunity and equal access to abundance is the most important tool to slow down the population growth and make the system sustainable.

[86] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitehall_Study

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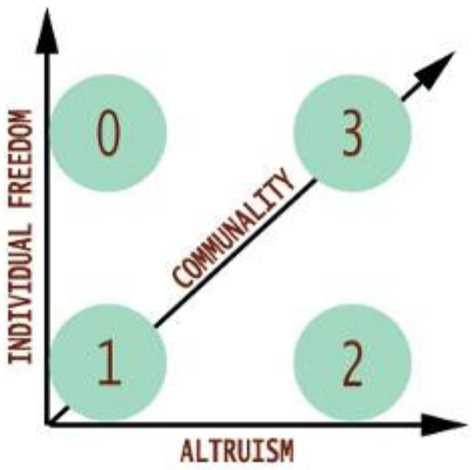
Possible scenarios for future society

We cannot predict what the future will hold, but we should acknowledge the fact that we can play an active role in creating a society that we want to see. Of course there will be surprises and things don't always go as planned. However, it doesn't harm anyone to envision what could lie ahead. Three scenarios are proposed (see picture 12):

1. **Business as unusual**: a society built upon today's political and economical trends.
2. **Free-market socialism:** a society with markets creating common good globally.
3. **Scientific-spiritual society**: a free and altruistic society without obsolete inventions of human mind.

Business as unusual

This is a model that is likely to happen without intervention from the civil sector. In this elite-driven global model the governments are likely to continue "harmonization" in geographical areas (NAFTA, CAFTA, EU, African Union etc) and between them. It is probable that global organizations like UN, WTO, IMF, World Bank and WHO are given more power to manage the global system. One example would be an introduction of global peace-keeping forces that keep nation states in line and resolve armed conflicts around the world. Independence of these organizations is questionable as long as the money-elite rules the world and unelected decision making bodies such as G20 and the Bilderberg Group convene behind closed doors. The trend is clearly that ultra-large multinational corporations continue extending their grip to all areas of life from food production to health care. Smaller nation states are losing sovereignty to the corporatocracy of large governments, banks and corporations. In this model the system would continue to be driven by the need for perpetual growth, artificial scarcity, the profit-motive, distorted values and fiscal manipulation of fiat money – only now on a truly global scale.



Picture 12. Possible scenarios for a future society (0 = Current Western Society).

Soon for instance agriculture is governed completely by companies like Monsanto who deliver the seeds and pesticides to farmers and collect the profits at the other end of the supply chain, and whose power is reinforced by policies like Codex Alimentarius. Small-scale production, manufacturing and services are helpless in the face of ever-increasing competition and centralizing of power. Global financial arrangements can eventually lead to adoption of a global currency that first goes hand-in-hand with existing currencies and then replace them completely. This could potentially balance the economy but would not decrease the inequality: the rich would still get richer and the poor grow poorer. It would not have an effect on resource depletion either. In essence, everything would depend on the individual: self-interest, greed, profit-orientation and competition would continue to flourish. However, individual freedom would decrease as the harmonization and unification calls for increased control: policies are already being introduced to decrease individual freedom and to prevent collective uprising of the citizens. Business as unusual would continue on the same egoistic paradigm of receiving for the sake of receiving. It would be a society of survival, status quo and stagnation; not of development. But, needless to say, it would be wonderful for the richest 1-5% of world population.

Free-market socialism

Free-market socialism is a hybrid of capitalism and socialism. It would mark the end of capitalism as we know it, but it would preserve the notion of free-markets in order to develop solutions for common good, thus in-

> *"When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living together in society, they create for themselves in the course of time a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it."*
>
> ***Frederic Bastiat***

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troducing the good sides of a socialistic system. In free-market socialism, people would act as they see fit but for shared benefit: work according to the ability and receive according to the need. In essence, everyone would be a social entrepreneur (running a company that does good) or social intrapreneur (working in a company that does good). The raw materials, means of production and the fruits of the earth's harvest would be seen as our common inheritance, and used for our shared good where needed. In other words, the oil found in Norway would belong no less to the people in Mozambique than to the Norwegians. Every country would have equal standards of living, governed globally like one state.

This model would never work without a non-negotiable global unity, strict adherence to the rules and control mechanisms. This oneness of mankind would be ensured by universal peace upheld by a world government, a world religion, universal compulsory education, a universal auxiliary language and a global world currency. The ethical behavior for common good would be ensured not only with education, but also with strict control of moral adherence and rewards for exemplary behavior of working class heroes: the greater benefit one contributes to society, the higher honor one shall receive. Refraining from working diligently to benefit society would induce punishment according to the laws of society. Also, the community and public opinion would ensure that egoistic people get back in line to serve common good.

People would be seen as one multicultural race, but they would be only relatively equal, not in absolute terms. People with high intellects would be in the positions of power; the averagely adequate would be the middle class; and the stupid the lower class – quite similar to George Orwell's 1984. Everyone would have their basic necessities provided for them by the system. In essence there would be no real sense of community due to the lack of individual freedom, but the semi-altruistic relationship would make the world a bit better place. This would still be an egoistic society where the paradigm is giving for the sake of receiving.

Scientific-spiritual society

> *"To whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he was entering his own home."*
> ***Bahá'u'lláh***

Only by promoting high individual freedom to evolve spiritually as human beings can we improve our relationships and bring in true altruism that will eventually lead to a true sense of global community. In the scientific-spiritual society both science and spiritual wisdom would be used to enhance the common good. The world would be seen as a single system where both the whole and its parts matter: People could follow their own traditions and cherish their culture but no-one would harm others because the concept of "otherness" would dilute. It would be insanity to hurt another person because by harming someone in the system where common success leads to individual success, you would be just harming yourself. In this strongly value-driven society the wisdom of community would be formed based on uniquely healthy relationships of awakened individuals. This would make most of the obsolete inventions of egoistic human mind – laws, money, artificial scarcity and control – uninvited.

The world would be energized with only renewable sources like geothermal, wind, tidal, wave and solar energy. The production of basic necessities would be automated and rudimentary decision-making in repetitive tasks (regarding cleaning, constructing, recycling, repairing etc) would be outsourced to computers. Development projects would be carried out by local communities linked globally. Therefore time would be released to work that matters. More free time would be available for scientific exploration, education, spiritual endeavors and mere being and enjoying life in the now. "Just as the twentieth-century farming revolution has made it possible for a small number of farmers to feed hundreds of millions of people, so another revolution - currently in progress - will surely make it possible to meet the world's demand for most mass-produced consumer goods (even homes) on the same basis. Many service functions, too, will be transformed by technologies such as voice recognition and automatic response, making it possible to shrink hugely the numbers employed in call centers and similar routine tasks. In education, interactive technologies will replace many of today's teachers... Health services will be partly automated, allowing self-diagnosis and remote medical care... It could even be true that by 2100 the world's basic economic problem will be

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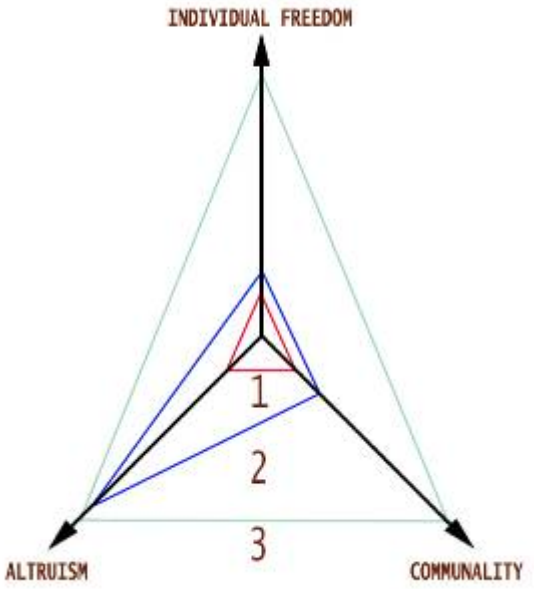
solved, as Keynes forecast in 1930, and people will at last be free to cultivate their minds and their sensibilities."[87]

> *"It is a degradation to human beings to chain them to an oar and use them as a source of power, but it is almost an equal degradation to assign them to purely repetitive tasks in a factory which demands less than a millionth of their brain power."*
> ***Dr. Norbert Wiener***

In a scientific-spiritual society priorities would be freeing humanity from tedious work; clean air, land and water; biodiversity; nutritious and healthy food; abundance and usability of needed material objects; fast, clean, and efficient transportation; relevant individual-driven education; efficient universal health care; personal liberty and freedom; aesthetics, user-driven design and arts; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth; and a stress-free environment providing equal access to fulfill all physiological, mental, social and spiritual needs. Scientific-spiritual society would generally be more organized, balanced, humane, sustainable and productive. It would be built on a spiritual paradigm of giving for the sake of giving and further enable the ultimate paradigm of generosity: receiving for the sake of bestowing. If nothing else, at least the robot-made healthy and nutritious Big Macs would taste delicious… and they would cost nothing.

Choosing the blueprint

In the previous chapter we looked briefly what it means to move from old doing to new being. One of the areas that were in comparison in Table 2 was decision-making. In the old doing we emphasized the value of minimizing doubt through reasoning. In the new being decision making through feeling becomes more important. We cannot possibly gather all the data of what might happen in the future and analyze every last detail of it to arrive at a decision. We need to trust our gut-feeling; what general direction might be best to take? It's important to understand that none of the aforementioned scenarios will happen as such, but they are merely examples of general direction we can take. Let's look at picture 12 again and see it from another angle (Picture 13) with all three axes equally visible, portraying the degree of Ubuntu in 1) Business as Unusual, 2) Free-market socialism and 3) Scientific-spiritual society.



Picture 13. Future societies in new perspective.

Note that this comparison is made from a global angle: the same system worldwide. Thus the area each system cover, could be considered to be equality that was addressed before. The issue with "Business as unusual" is that there power is very centralized to those who have money. Equality is not built into the system. Quite on the contrary: the system cannot function unless there is an ever widening gap between the "haves" and "have not's". Those in power control and make decisions for the rest of us. I would not personally support this kind of structure unless I was part of the elite that calls the shots. "Free-market socialism" is a slightly better choice, because no one would have to go hungry or die because of curable diseases. Giving for the sake of receiving would be the new norm and thus everyone would be taken care of because helping others would give people personal satisfaction. There would be no poverty in traditional sense. However, this system would have to be strictly controlled on a global scale and would thus tamper individual freedom. Relationships would be based on peer-pressure and free-riders would generally be frowned upon and ultimate-

[87] Peter Geoffrey Hall & Ullrich Pfeiffer: Urban future 21.

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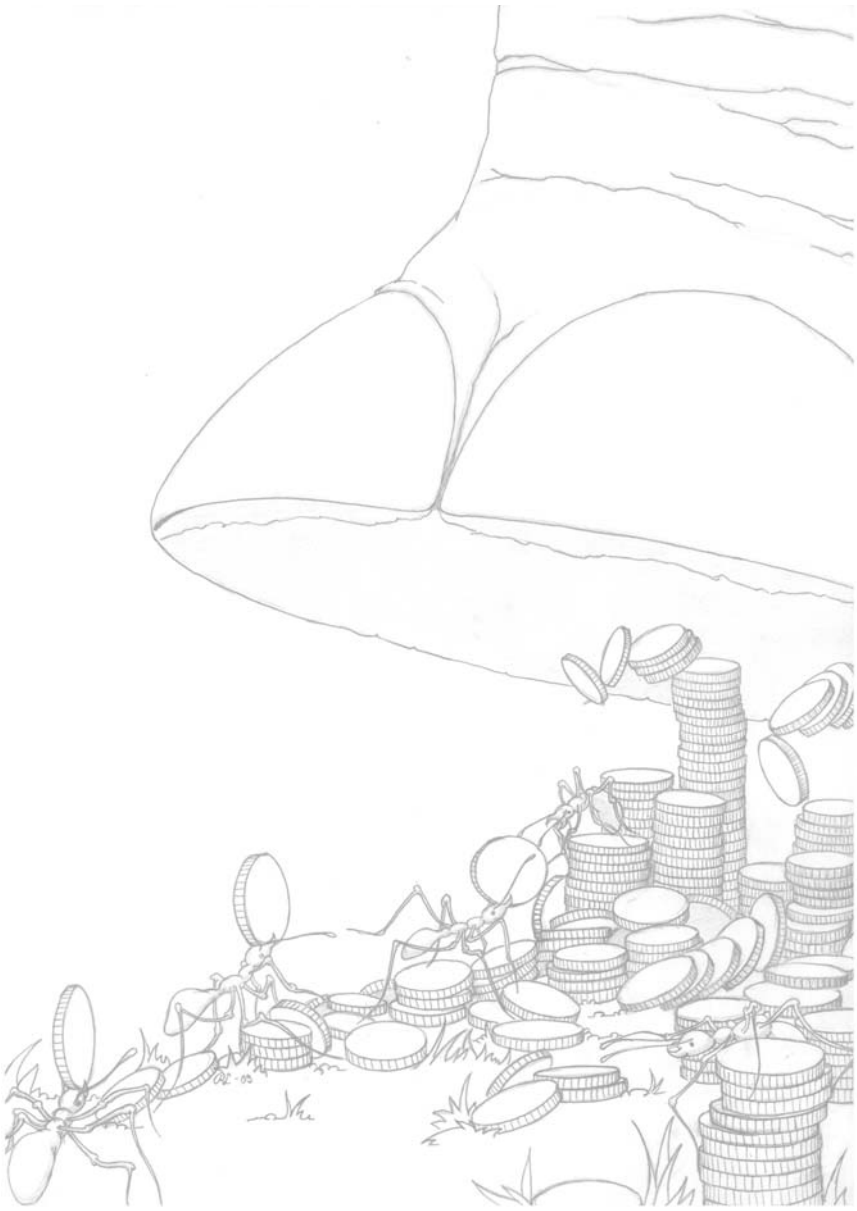
ly punished. Without free individuals and healthy altruistic relationships there is no room for genuine communality.

"The next evolution of humanity will depend on a new convergence between science and spirituality. A complex system does not evolve step-by-step. It reaches a chaos point where it either breaks down or breaks through. The question is whether we can master the change or we will become the victims of it… We can create a viable civilization because of the rise of a new spirituality. If a critical mass of people achieves this new level of consciousness, the changes will occur through civil society."[88]

In all honesty, choice number one would be the easiest. We would not have to change a thing in our personal lives and we would drift towards that system eventually. We are already well on the way. Choice number two would be much more difficult to implement: In order to harmonize practices around the world we would have to put together the geographical unions to create a world government. Religions would have to merge and a global currency would have to be introduced. All these are major changes nearly unfathomable for a common man. Then again, the choice number three is even more radical: a whole new culture and value-system should be adopted, billions of elephants should be tamed and a mass awakening to spirituality would be called for. Quite frankly, I'm quite skeptical that we simple creatures are ready for that (ants might be). Good news is that we have the scientific and spiritual wisdom ready. Bad news is that we are facing an obstacle that perpetuates self-interest, greed and corruption. The largest religion of our time – monetarism – would not suit even the ants.



Picture 10. Even ants wouldn't survive monetarism.

A systemic crisis

In the media we hear about world crises as if they were isolated incidents. Wars are started, waged and prolonged not only to sell the war machinery and to get massive re-building contracts for large companies but also for gaining access to valuable resources such as oil in Iraq or for logistics purposes like the gas pipeline through Afghanistan. The more

[88] http://www.goipeace.or.jp/english/activities/lectures/lectures14.html

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sick people there are the more Big Pharma profits. And if there is no proof of a pandemic, WHO is more than willing to change the definition of pandemic in order to get the vaccinations moving. In the end it's the Big Pharma who supports them financially. It's a win-win situation, isn't it? Similarly, cap and trade schemes are created not to save the environment but to benefit the corporatocracy. And, of course, financial crisis is not only financial: the excruciating debt expands the crisis to all areas of our young civilization and the magnitude of human suffering is unfathomable. We are dealing with a systemic crisis where all issues are interlinked. In the end most of our problems boil down to the flawed monetary system.

Who creates money?

Although everyone seems to be worrying about money all the time it is amazing how little people know of the way it's created and controlled. Do you know where money comes from? Do you know who creates it? What is money? If your answer is that government controls the process of money creation or that money is created in the mint, your answer is only partly correct. Indeed, financial jargon can be difficult to understand for an ordinary person – as if it was made that way.

Nonetheless, the current system based on fractional reserve banking is fairly simple. Money is debt. It is created by private banks. This is how it happens: when you take a loan or use your credit card new money is created by private banks. Then you are supposed to pay back both the principal that was created into the money supply and interest that no one creates. Thus there is never enough money in circulation to re-pay both the principal and the interest, and some people, companies and countries are deemed to fail. In other words, they are slaves to the debtors as long as they are unable to pay back the loans and since some of them never can, they will cease to exist. Some people have to face foreclosures, some companies have to go bust and even countries like Iceland can go bankrupt.

In fact, 24,000 people are dying every day due to this system and many more are forced to exile. In addition, the demands for continuous growth, in-built into the system, have done and are still doing serious damage to the environment. Products need to break down and people have to buy more. The poorer people get, the worse quality they are offered; all they can afford is trash commodities and junk food. This is what the law of supply and demand really means.

Only 1-3% of the money supply is actual bank notes and coins. The rest is ones and zeroes in cyberspace. Of that a large part is different kinds of short and long term financial instruments, not money that you could carry in your wallet or purse. The money that has been created doesn't really exist: it's mere data in information systems. Some people still think that money they borrow from the bank is in their vault and belongs to someone who has deposited it there. That's not the case. In Eurozone the bank only need to have minimum reserves of 2% (this is where the name comes: fractional reserve banking). In other words, if all people would decide to go and cash out their money, the money would not be there. Similarly, if we would somehow miraculously manage to re-pay all the debts there would be no money any more. It would cease to exist.

The root of all evil

If I create money out of thin air, I commit a forgery and go to jail. If a banker does it, he's being rewarded with a lofty paycheck. This system has benefited those who have money – namely bankers, large corporations and certain governments. The system ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It's a very good system for a small percentage of population. For the rest, it is inherently flawed. The root of all evil is not money itself but the monetary system based on usury.

Elisabet Sahtouris is one of many who have noticed the separateness of our economy: "Imagine that your body's economy was run the way we run the economy of the world today. We will call the heart-lung system north of the diaphragm the Industrial Organs and give them the power to exploit the resources of the

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rest of the body, including bone marrow where raw material blood cells are made. They will bring this raw material up to the heart-lung system, add oxygen, purify the blood, and now you have a useful product. The heart distribution announces what the body price for blood is today and you ship it to the organs that can afford it. Not all of them can… We need a world that works for everyone. I say it is our evolutionary mandate to create sustainable global economics and truly become a global family."[89]

Already at the time of World War II Alice Bailey[90] said that the domination between people and nations must disappear, as well as the control of capital. Bailey's proposal for a new order recognized that the produce of the world, the natural resources of the planet and its riches, belong not to any one nation but should be shared by all.

"Economic hit men (EHMs) are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign 'aid' organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet's natural resources. Their tools include fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalization. I should know; I was an EHM."[91] wrote John Perkins already back in 1982. His role as an economic hit man was to get developing countries to take on a huge debt (the larger the better) and then use that money to buy services from American, nowadays multinational, corporations. The point was that while the profits were reaped by the contractors the nation would never be able to repay the debt and would thus be forever in servitude for American government. The saddest part is that, unknowingly, we have been part of this machinery. Without the active participation of Main Street there would be no success for Wall Street.

"Money is a new form of slavery, and distinguishable from the old simply by the fact that it is impersonal, that there is no human relation between master and slave."

Leo Tolstoi

Robert Muller explains the consequences of our collective behavior: "During my fifty-three years of global service with the United Nations… the rich countries and the rich in all countries became richer and the poor countries and the poor in all countries became poorer for the following reasons: The rich people thanks to savings, inheritance and business can invest their money in banks, stock-markets, mutual funds, retirement plans or in business ventures; many people do not have to work anymore to get richer; The poor cannot save much or anything to put in banks, stock markets, mutual funds, retirement plans or to engage in business, and as a result remain poor. The rich countries have the monopoly of inventions and patents, huge capitals accumulated over the years, sell highly elaborated, sophisticated goods at high prices to the poor countries from which they buy primary products at low prices. Investments, marketing techniques and advertisement are also extended to the latter countries to make huge profits and gain new consumer markets for the rich countries. Moreover poor countries and poor people have the highest number of children. Poverty elimination must therefore become a major factor in stemming the population explosion and vice versa."[92]

What has to change is that 2% of the world's population control 50% of wealth and 20% consume 80% of the world's resources; most of the poor live in resource-rich countries, but our system keeps them in subhuman conditions. The largest cities of today don't grow because of increasing prosperity but because

[89] http://www.goipeace.or.jp/english/activities/lectures/lectures14-4.html

[90] Alice Bailey: The Externalization of Hierarchy

[91] John Perkins: Confessions of an Economic Hit Man

[92] http://www.goodmorningworld.org/earthgov/

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people are literally dying to survive: they are forced to move from rural areas to cities in order to live. This has just increased the feeling of separation between people: Every time "the economy hits the fan" people try to find scapegoats, and it's easy to blame those who look different. Lately in Europe nationalistic feelings have gained popularity and immigrants are the easy culprits for draining the economy. People don't realize that most of the immigration happens within national borders. Hell, my brother was forced to find a job 500 kilometers away from his wife and kids. He had no other choice.

Meanwhile the over-consumption of things we don't need has led to resource-depletion. Robert Muller imagines what Mother Earth could be saying to humankind: "I have another major complaint, namely while there is a population explosion in the poor countries you have also triggered off wild inventions, production, business, marketing, advertising and an overconsumption explosion in the rich countries. In these countries an individual consumes 30 times more of my resources than in the poor countries. From my point of view, namely the damages you do to my body, your population statistics are wrong: while the less developed countries count 4.7 billion people, the more developed countries' 1.2 billion should be multiplied by 30, i.e. they represent in my eyes 36 billion people!"[93] We are nearly running out of fresh water. The food that we eat – the one that says "moo" – is eating food that people could eat. Our system is so deceptive that people in the West who think they are "doing a green deed" when topping up their tanks with biofuels, are unaware of the fact that they are part of the machinery that caters to massive deforestation in Latin America and Asia. Our ecosystem knows no borders. If we continue like this, we all suffer. Prosperity is an empty word, if it's not shared by everyone, in balance with the nature. We are because you are because I am.

Stuck in the grip of scarcity

"When you are at work you have three things in mind: when is the next pay day, when are you going to get the next raise in salary and when the next vacation is. I have never been in a job that was fun. If work was fun it would no longer be work, it would be a hobby. In a new job you first have a good time when you still have so many things to learn but quickly it turns to boring routine. Machines could do my job but it wouldn't be financially wise to make that kind of a machine. It would have to be in operation for several years before it would pay itself back. But before I assemble the materials and parts already a hundred machines have been used to manufacture them." These are the exact words of a 28-year-old friend of mine.

This kind of stories raises a myriad of valid considerations. How come we use the best years of our lives in servitude? Doesn't this sound like modern day slavery? What happened to free choice? If we were genuinely free to choose wouldn't we learn more, be more excited and be more productive? Would it be possible to do what you like to do and what you are good at instead of carrying out tedious repetitive tasks day after another? Why can't we outsource the repetitive routines to machines? Couldn't we change the question "Do we have money for it?" to "Do we have resources and technical understanding for making it happen?" Why do we continue allow the suffering of people and environment?

Scarcity and inefficiency prevails because it is profitable. Controlling food production, dumping excess food, using fields to make biodiesel and ensuring scarcity are all means to keep the food price up. Manufacturing electronics that breaks down right after the warranty period leads to a new purchase. In fact, people have been made to believe that a warranty is a good thing – it's been used as a marketing gimmick! At least in Finnish law the manufacturer is always liable to replace a malfunctioning or broken product. With a warranty they can limit their liability to a certain time period. No wonder most of us have never heard of this: unaware people are needed to keep the system going.

[93] http://www.paradiseearth.us/

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If there are no needs, the marketers will create needs, wants and desires. The more problems there are the more business it means. This is not a rational system, but it is a profitable system to some. "The monetary system can be considered structurally obsolete, serving only as a paralyzing hindrance."[94]

The system perpetuates itself

If this is really all true, we must be kind of stupid that we haven't switched to a new system already, right? Why we haven't done that already? The answer is two-fold: we have been culturally conditioned that we can't afford things from very early on in childhood, and those who are wealthy keep telling us that the system is great or at least don't propose changing the system.

Everything is connected to monetarism. The political system nowadays is corrupt due to the intertwined nature of private and public sector. Moreover in countries like the United States, there are revolving doors between the jobs in government (the White House) and the private sector (Wall Street). Even on the municipal level, across the globe it is customary that companies that supported the elected candidates are sliding their own agenda into local decision-making. Noam Chomsky reminds us that it's not that the people in these institutions are bad, but the institutions themselves are[95]. Once you go into an inherently flawed institution you either play by its rules or you get out. Many choose to stay because it's good for them and it's good for the institution. Unfortunately this kind of short-term gain driven behavior perpetuates the institutions that, in turn, keep the flawed system going. And what's the outcome? People feel that they are no longer in power and especially the younger generation has lost their interest to participate in the so-called democracy: in the past EU parliament election the voter turnout was only 43%. In other words: the majority is uninterested or disapproves of the system. But the politicians don't seem to get the hint. Their solution: obligatory voting. They don't understand the root of the problem. Or they don't want to understand.

One of the most ridiculous ways to waste resources and inflict human tragedy is war. Why do we wage war in a society where no one wants war? The answer is: it's profitable! But it is absolute waste. In *Fifth Discipline* Peter Senge points out how arms race between US and Soviet Union was mainly due to the fact that both sides saw the other one increasing their armaments. It could work the other way also. Raw materials that previously went to the manufacture of bombs, tanks and guns could now be used more wisely. Even if we wouldn't touch the system at all, we could end poverty by ending war. If the countries of the world would agree to stop military expenditures altogether, it would mean the end of poverty today. There are 6.79 billion of us. About half is estimated to live on less than 2 dollars a day; that is 3.4 billion people. The annual world military expenditure is 1.47 trillion dollars. Donating this to world's poorest half of the population would give each of them 433 dollars a year extra and lift them out of poverty.

All it would take would be one agreement. If Obama the Nobel peace laureate would really want to deliver on his campaign promises he would take a lead in these kinds of decisions. Obama's all-time-high 664 billion military budget accounts for 45% of what the whole world is spending – and it doesn't even include special operations in Iraq and Afghanistan that have separate budgets. Ending the world poverty with one decision… That would be a real change we can believe in. But unfortunately, it's not profitable. It goes against the rules of the system. This change will never happen, unless we act on it.

If we manage to rid ourselves from egoism and engage in productive dialogue this can lead to a non-violent human society: realizing the unity of humankind paves the way to disarmament, demilitarization, denuclearization and global security of the planet. Ending this immense waste of resources releases our focus on cooperative efforts to solve our most pressing issues: we can finally restore to balanced living with the na-

[94] http://www.vimeo.com/6346955

[95] http://www.pdxjustice.org/node/84

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ture and ensure equal opportunity for all. Costa Rica serves as an example for others to follow. In 1948 the country abolished its army. The budget previously spent on the military is now dedicated to security, education and culture. Distinct from its neighbors, Costa Rica has not endured a civil war since 1948. A recent curiosity is that Costa Rica ranks highest in the Happy Planet Index[96] measuring happiness around the world.

Going beyond monetarism

> *"Be thine enemy an ant, see in him an elephant."*
> ***Turkish proverb***

In their latest book futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler talk about the beginnings of a new kind of economy that may come to replace the monetary system. The authors go as far as toying with the idea of a world without money, proposing a system that is neither one-on-one service exchange (barter) nor monetary exchange. They suggest that the newer non-monetary economy would first coexist with the monetary sector.

If you are not familiar with the earlier works of Toffler (e.g. Future Shock, Powershift and Third Wave) you might be thinking this is mumbling of semi-senile futurists. Nevertheless, the new generation backs up this thinking. In Zeitgeist Movement one of the big ideas is future without money, and that grassroots movement already has hundreds of thousands supporters. To be exact, there were 346 735 registered users at www.thezeitgeistmovement.com in October 2009. In addition there are plenty of people who explore the site without bothering to register. At any given time about 7.0 – 7.4% of people on the site are registered members (there's all the time nearly 3000 people on the site, most of them guests).

	(registered members only)			(members and guests)	
	Basis	**After a year**		**Basis**	**After a year**
1	346 735	693 470	**1**	4 815 764	9 631 528
2	693 470	1 386 940	**2**	9 631 528	19 263 056
3	1 386 940	2 773 880	**3**	19 263 056	38 526 111
4	2 773 880	5 547 760	**4**	38 526 111	77 052 222
5	5 547 760	11 095 520	**5**	77 052 222	154 104 444
6	11 095 520	22 191 040	**6**	154 104 444	308 208 889
7	22 191 040	44 382 080	**7**	308 208 889	616 417 778
8	44 382 080	88 764 160	**8**	616 417 778	1 232 835 556
9	88 764 160	177 528 320	**9**	1 232 835 556	**2 465 671 111**
10	177 528 320	355 056 640	**10**	2 465 671 111	4 931 342 222
11	355 056 640	710 113 280	**11**	4 931 342 222	9 862 684 444
12	710 113 280	1 420 226 560	**12**	9 862 684 444	19 725 368 889
13	1 420 226 560	**2 840 453 120**	**13**	19 725 368 889	39 450 737 778
14	2 840 453 120	5 680 906 240	**14**	39 450 737 778	78 901 475 556
15	5 680 906 240	11 361 812 480	**15**	78 901 475 556	157 802 951 111

Table 5. 6% monthly growth of members and guests on the website.

Let's imagine that every month 6% of people visiting the site tell about it to their friends. This means 6% monthly growth i.e. doubling time of circa one year. In Table 5 above is a playful estimation of how long it would take to reach awareness of more than two billion people. The answer is 9-13 years (depending on do you count only members or also guests). Of course this is a purely theoretical calculation; as of now only

[96] http://www.happyplanetindex.org

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25% of the world's population is using the Internet (approximately 1.7 billion people). However, this portrays the power of grassroots movements in spreading awareness and changing the world. These people are volunteers who convey an important message put through the Zeitgeist documentaries. "Google reportedly has stopped counting after the number of downloads hit 50 million and it is believed that over 100 million people around the world have watched the films."[97]

On an individual level there are exciting examples of people who have managed to live for long without money. Satish Kumar – a nuclear disarmament advocate – walked from India to Moscow to France, UK and finally to USA without money. He got this advice from Vinoba Bhave, one of Gandhi's followers: "The reason I want you not to take any money is because if you have money you will arrive in a village or a town after walking all day, 20, 30 miles, and you will be exhausted, and you will look for a restaurant to eat in, you will look for a bed and breakfast to sleep in, and you will move on, and you won't meet anybody. But if you have no money, you will be forced to find a hospitable, kind person somewhere who can offer you a bed for the night." Very soon he learned that "If you have money that is a buttress for fear, because you don't trust people. You think that you can buy anything you like. But when you have no money, then you cannot say, 'I like this person and I don't like that person, I'll stay with this person, I won't stay with that person'. You accept everybody without any judgment, without any questioning, without any criticism, without any suspicion or mistrust. You trust everybody. You are in the lap of people, and in the lap of God. You have to have total trust and faith."[98]

Personally I can completely second these words. Although I've been using approximately three Euros per day lately (due to my overwhelming and unfathomable nicotine addiction) I have witnessed how amazingly gracious and helpful people are. Admittedly, some people are still asking "what's in it for me" but it's understandable in our society. Some, however, seem to have this amazing trust that they help me merely because they know I fulfill my place in society in one way or another. They have helped me knowing I am not going to give them anything back. Agreed, some of them still have helped to feel good about it. Yet, there are few who were giving for the sake of giving. Ants can't afford being selfish.

Another more recent example is Heidemarie Schwermer who has lived 12 years without money. She "worked for many years as a psychotherapist and teacher in Dortmund, Germany. Like most people around her, she spent most of her time working and earning money in order to buy the things she needed - and things she didn't really need. As a psychotherapist she met many who were depressed and frustrated, overworked and with very little spare time. Among the unemployed and poor she found that they often considered themselves worthless… She cancelled her flat, donated all her things to friends and started a new life based on exchanging favors – without the use of money. Her goal was to create a greater awareness of the relationship to money and consumption."[99]

Some people have gone back to foraging in order to re-connect with nature. Foraging food in the wild was one of our basic skills in the past. Freegans are an urban version of foragers; collecting what others have left behind. "When I lived with money, I was always lacking." writes Daniel Suelo – an educated anthropologist – who lives in a cave in

> *"The Globalization of humanity is a natural, biological, evolutionary process. Yet we face an enormous crisis because the most central and important aspect of globalization – its economy – is currently being organized in a manner that so gravely violates the fundamental principles by which healthy living systems are organized that it threatens the demise of our whole civilization."*
>
> ***Elisabet Sahtouris***

[97] http://artivism.us/26

[98] http://www.context.org/ICLIB/IC17/Kumar.htm

[99] http://www.livingwithoutmoney.tv

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Moab, Utah. "Money represents lack. Money represents things in the past (debt) and things in the future (credit), but money never represents what is present." he says in his blog[100]. Daniel has been without money for nine years. When asked if he thinks money is evil his response is no. "Money is illusion. Illusion is neither good nor evil. Attachment to illusion is evil… The more I live this way, the more absurd it seems to go back to living in the prison of money. I was unhappy under money and I'm happy free of it."[101]

Economics graduate Mark Boyle, has lately got media coverage since he lived a year without money. He's also a founder of a Freeconomy movement that is becoming more and more popular by the day. Boyle says he is sick of living in a "fundamentally flawed and ecologically destructive capitalist system"[102] and wants to prove there is another way to exist. TV shows and books have been written on the topic. Kath Kelly's "How I lived a year on just a pound a day" is just one example. Reading these stories one gets goose bumps: sympathetic fear of financial instability, fear of change, fear of looking inward arise. Then again, maybe they are the pioneers whose example paves the way to a drastically different world. I'm starting to be convinced that a) we cannot continue business as usual, b) I would not like to be tied to the strict control of free-market socialism and c) scientific-spiritual society is what we deserve in the long run, no matter how demanding the shift would be.

Transitioning from old doing to new being

Although the monetary system is inherently flawed, one cannot think that merely taking money out of the equation would solve all the issues. If nothing else changes, removing money out of the current system would most likely make the situation only worse. Imagine an electromagnetic pulse swept across every nation and broke all the electronic systems and that only the 1-3% of money supply that is actual notes and coins would remain. In effect, all debt and all money would be wiped out overnight. What would be the reaction of people?

People wouldn't go to work. Instead they would do whatever they damn well please: watch movies, read books, go for long walks in nature, sleep long, play golf, go fishing and whatnot. Soon they would realize there's no one working in the shops either. Hungry people would loot grocery stores and hoard as much as they can carry. It would end up in total chaos. Finally order would be brought in by bringing in the old system or equivalent and the outcome of this whole exercise would certainly not be development.

This is not sustainable and doesn't take us forward. Instead, the transition needs to happen in a controlled manner, gradually. We can wait for the politicians to arrive at this conclusion or we can start creating small-scale changes already today. If you take a look at what's happening on a community level you can see that we might be already in transition to a world without money. There are a multitude of communities around the world that are taking steps to function without money – to replace competition with collaboration. These are referred to as local exchange systems, mutual credit systems or time banking.

The dilemma with an exchange economy is that if you have what I need (e.g. a barber shop) but I'm a fence painter and you don't have a fence we cannot barter together. Local exchange trade systems have overcome this dilemma with "local money" or "community credit" – an agreement between the members to trade services without a legal tender. Now I can go and paint the milk man's fence, he brings you milk and you cut my hair. With a few clicks on the website we stay up to date how much credit or liabilities we have. These local community-based mutual aid networks in which people exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another are functioning without money. As these local exchange trade systems (LETS) become

[100] http://zerocurrency.blogspot.com

[101] http://sites.google.com/site/livingwithoutmoney/

[102] http://tinyurl.com/freeconomist

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more common – and nothing stops you from starting one – people don't have to live in caves to lead a life without money.

> *"All revolutions are spiritual at the source. All my activities have the sole purpose of achieving a union of hearts."*
> ***Vinoba Bhave***

Local exchange trade systems are good tools for the transition, but eventually, even they have to go. We should be wise enough to stop moving ones and zeroes around and instead concentrate on what needs to get done. We can create abundance for everyone. If we are to evolve towards the scientific-spiritual society, the need to value an individual's contribution and compare it to others no longer fits the frame. Freeconomists are people who are giving out their services to the community without expecting anything back (much like in the Zeitgeist movement). This is a real revolution, away from a system that didn't work. And the important thing is that the revolution is led by ordinary people in communities around the world. Let's take a look at what kind of alternatives for the current monetary system have already been proposed.

Proposed alternatives to current monetary system

Alternatives are available, that can have significant benefits:

- increased equality and social justice
- no more usury and exploitation
- stability of the system and less chaos from frustration and conflict of interest
- greater transparency and increased trust towards the institutions and between people
- increased empathy, co-operation and dialogue in communities
- shift of focus towards development rather than mere preservation of the system
- investment of resources and time to what really matters
- freeing people to concentrate on what they are good at and what they enjoy doing
- less identification on title or job: allowing multiple simultaneous careers
- increased environmental sustainability and resource conservation

A number of people and organizations have realized that our current system is not sustainable for people or the environment and alternatives have been proposed to redesign our financial system. Reforms have been suggested in the most malfunctioning component of the system – the money-creation. Some go even further and suggest a paradigm shift of how we understand property ownership and costs altogether.

Some of these suggestions have been implemented already, yet some are still mere theories.
(Green = functioning, Orange = developing, Red = theoretical proposal)

Money-creation

- Seigniorage reform (New Economics Foundation): criminalize money-creation from everyone else but the central banks, channel it to governments and let them circulate it through spending.
- State-created money (e.g. Bank of North Dakota): allow only (local) government, states or countries, to create money and circulate it without interest for public good.
- Gold-based currency: tie the value of money and its amount in circulation back to gold, thus making the economy more stable.
- Local currency (e.g. LETS, Time banking, Mutual credit systems, Metacurrency): allow anyone to create a new currency for a community's use and encourage people to give credit to each other based on trust and without interest.

Cost and property ownership reform

- Shared ownership (e.g. Creative commons, P2P economy, ParEcon, Open-Source Economy): encourage cooperation, co-creation and sharing. Results of work shared with everyone. Supplementary to prevailing system.

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- Gift economy (e.g Freecycling, Couch Surfing, Book Crossing, Community Gardens): experience together, give away what you don't need, ask for what you need. Supplementary to prevailing system.
- Capitalism 3.0 (Peter Barnes): put a cost on commons (air, water etc) and create commonly owned market of commons on a one person one share basis.
- Common heritage (The Venus Project , Freeconomy): abolish the concept of money and property. Make everything open and free. Share everything and participate. Use technology for common good. Do what you enjoy doing and what you are good at.

Transition from the current system into any of the proposed new systems would most likely be supported by the vast majority of global population – except the elite that is now in power and to whom the system works better than ever before. The problem with the redesign is that the integrity of the new system could be dangerously compromised by those who have most of the money in the current system.

Of the money-creation proposals state-created money system and seigniorage reform would not necessarily function as intended because they still leave an option open for corruption; merely shifting power from certain institutions to others doesn't necessarily solve the issue of greed, self-interest, elitism and dishonesty. Seigniorage reform could work in case every citizen, organization and country at the face of the Earth would start with a clean slate; if we can zero all money and debt at a certain date, sure, let's have seigniorage reform. Impossible? No, but highly unlikely.

Gold-based system would be inefficient because it would merely limit the economic exchange and perpetuate scarcity. Even gold doesn't have value unless it's used in production. In essence it would be better to have a carrot-based currency, because you cannot really eat gold.

In comparison, economy based on local money-creation is actually fairly simple to implement and facilitates exchange between people. It works best when people know each other and hold each other accountable to the community. Simple web-based tracking system can be used to follow the value of exchange between individuals. Peer pressure and shame of letting others down function as good sticks while increased trust and community support are a needed carrot. This is by no means a flawless system but can work wonders before a more advanced system takes place.

Capitalism 3.0 is based on sound principles and good intentions. Unfortunately it is also vulnerable to the money elite and leads to a scary thought: what if the rich would have a legal right to control even the environment and essentials to all life on this planet (namely: sun, water, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and soil)?

Common heritage systems are easiest to deny because they are nothing like we have ever seen in practice, although shared ownership and gift economy systems are already in place and they are signals that shift towards a completely new kind of system has started already. This requires a drastic change of values: from competition to cooperation, from greed to sharing, and from scarcity to abundance.

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Chapter three summary

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Key points of this chapter were:

- Awakening to connectedness of individuals leads to improved relationships which in turn create stronger communities and ultimately a better society.
- The monetary system that we have is obsolete. It is based on distorted values and increases inequality. It perpetuates the status quo and thus globally, regionally, nationally and locally we are lacking a way forward. If we wish to move on and change the system, we need a blueprint.
- The choice that we make should maximize Ubuntu: individual freedom, altruistic relationship and powerful community. What we choose as our blueprint will never happen in its entirety but serves only as positive general direction.
- Very little of our behavior is dictated by the so called human nature. The prevailing culture has an impact on what kind of values we learn and pass to generations after us.
- In order to move towards a new society, the humanity needs a new set of common values that serve as a basis for a globally shared culture. To arrive at a set of new values we can see what already works.
- Suggested scientific-spiritual society could be based on the values of meaningfulness, awareness, agile development, dialogue, co-creation, abundance, authenticity and generosity.
- Scientific-spiritual society is the most ambitious option of the suggested blueprints. It is far away from our current reality, but doable. Several examples of well functioning communities based on mere bestowal are already a good sign that it is possible to function without money.

See tips, tricks and tools at the end of the book:

- Web-solutions to encourage sharing
- Being up to date of development

See frequently asked questions at the end of the book:

- It feels you haven't shown all possibilities for future society. Isn't there something missing from picture 13?
- How about local exchange trade systems? Aren't they also using sort of money?
- Can you give an example of the local exchange trade system?
- You mentioned hunter-gatherers. Couldn't we go back into that lifestyle?
- If everyone on the planet would benefit of the technologies that have helped the western countries to prosper, wouldn’t that lead to population explosion and utter devastation of our planet?

Chapter four

HUMAN, AT LAST

WHAT DO WE NEED TO CHANGE…
AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

Anna was impatiently waiting for teacher to return. She needed to find an answer to what was holding back the humanity of taking the next step in evolution and treating each other with respect. She wanted to find out why tiny creatures like ants seemed to be more sophisticated than her own species. As her frustration to wait for teacher's return grew stronger, the prophet she needed was closer than she had expected. One evening her boyfriend stopped her for discussion. He explained her that he was confused by a couple of documentaries he had seen. These documentaries explained how the monetary system works.

Soon Anna's laptop was flooding with free films he had found online: The Money Fix, Where are we now, Where are we going, The Money Masters, Zeitgeist Addendum, Money as Debt, The Secrets of Oz… She devoured every bit of information, checked and double-checked. She refused to believe it was ok for banks to create money out of thin air and get away with it. She was furious at the corporatocracy: banks, corporations and wealthy governments that had over time taken the whole world in their grip. She didn't want to believe that most people were in virtual debt slavery.

Anna's night table was filled with books: Capitalism 3.0, The Web of Debt, Creating New Money, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man, Prosperity Without Growth, Free, Worldshift 2012, The Great Transition, The Best That Money Can't Buy, Rich and the Super Rich, Secret History of the American Empire, The End of Work, From Freedom to Slavery, Principles of Economics, The Ascent of Humanity… She wanted to get more understanding and find out what the alternatives were. She kept thinking what she had done wrong to miss out on this information. She kept asking herself if she could have done something differently. She blamed herself of being so fixated with the idea of finding a good job for all of her life. Now she understood that there were not enough good jobs: that she would have to be mean, selfish and highly competitive to avoid the trap of lifelong boredom in tedious and repetitive work.

Little by little she learned to accept how things are and her fury turned to something more productive. She invited some of her best friends for a dinner: a lawyer, a copywriter, a cashier, a student, a nurse, a clerk, a financial advisor, a bank teller, an economist, an unemployed stock broker and a game tester. They were having a nice three-course dinner that served as a nice excuse to have a conversation. Anna wanted to hear what people thought about their life situation. She found out that many of them were not doing what they had dreamt of but they were forced to hold on to their jobs due to mortgages and credit card debts. Since many said they had already spent their next month's salary, she thought this would be a good point to subtly lead the conversation to issues regarding the monetary system that were now her real interest. It wasn't a coincidence that she had invited also friends who were working in financial sector and would surely educate her more. She was startled to learn that only the game tester and the student were aware of what she was talking about. Everyone else was largely oblivious to facts the three of them told about fiat money, fractional reserve banking and compound interest. The majority laughed them off and refused to believe their silly stories. Topic was quickly changed to less profound matters, and the evening continued with people complaining about their parents, jobs, bosses, wages and weather.

That night Anna slept restlessly. She rolled over from one side of the bed to another and kept waking up constantly. When she finally managed to close her eyelids a peculiar dream occurred. Anna found herself in burning hot sun in what she figured was an African Savannah. Somewhere in the distant horizon a large cloud of dust was approaching her. She noticed that ground under her feet was trembling. The cloud of dust kept coming closer and she felt a heavy lump in her throat. She felt nauseated and afraid. Finally she could

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make sense of what was making the ground to shake and stirred the dust: a cadre of wild elephants was charging towards her. The thought of escaping came a moment too late and suddenly she found herself amidst a raging rampage of elephants. The sound of these berserk humongous animals running past her was overwhelming. She bent down and sought refuge by covering her head with her hands. She was knocked over by the herd. She felt like choking and thought she would die.

The rampage was over and dust started to settle. Anna noticed a plover flying in circles above her. It brought her a sense of serenity. She hoped it would come closer, and it did. Soon the plover was standing on her shoulder and chirping happily. Anna felt that it wanted her to follow it. The bird flew off and Anna followed. It took her past some pastures of grass and into the jungle. The path was paved with suffering: kids were starving and crumbling in the ground, agonizing moaning filled the air, and there was blood everywhere. Somewhere in the bushes Anna could see people stuck under large rocks, hopelessly trying to get out. She wanted to help but couldn't stop running. For some reason she needed to follow the plover.

The plover led Anna to a beautiful oasis and landed on top of a fat greenish gray crocodile. For a moment Anna's anxiety was relieved, as she saw how friendly the crocodile and the bird were to each other. Anna was not intimidated by this large animal with teeth like diamonds sparkling in the sun. Anna approached the crocodile but something else caught her attention. A mirror was attached to a coconut tree next to the pond. A mirror? Why is there a mirror? Anna was curious to find out. As she looked into the mirror she was taken aback. It was a ghastly reflection: she had deformed into a creature with a stub of a trunk and snake-like skin. She noticed that her hands, legs and whole body had changed. She touched her head and felt that antennae were pushing through her hair. She felt like crying. What had happened? What had she turned into? Alarmed sobbing changed to an utter dumbfounded surprise. She had gone through a metamorphosis and turned into an ant.

Anna found herself in complete darkness. She wasn't sure but quickly figured out she was inside of a nest. She wanted to get out. She kept pushing towards a dim light that she thought to be an exit. She felt how one by one her fellow ants crawled over her as they were returning to the nest. They touched her antennae as they went by and everyone seemed to be communicating the same thing: I'm aware, I'm aware, I'm aware, I'm aware. She pushed out of the nest into the sunlight and thought to herself: I'm aware. She was human, at last.

It was morning. Anna opened her eyes, sweating and breathing heavily. There was only one thought in her head: I'm aware. In that moment everything made perfect sense. It was all so clear. Images of the dream kept coming back: deformed humanity, rampant elephants, suffering of young people, the friendly plover, and the aware ants.

In that moment Anna decided: she would commit herself to spread this awareness. She would do her utmost to help young people figure out their passions and interests in life and to understand the system they had been born into. She didn't want to see yet another generation fall into the same trap and turn into unconscious creatures with no resemblance to human life-form. She accepted the fact that she couldn't change the whole world, but she could do her part.

A week later her phone rang, but it wasn't the teacher. She was being offered a job.

You don't necessarily agree with everything that you have read so far, but if you made it all the way here most likely something inside of you is saying that change is inevitable.

If we now decide to continue with the scientific-spiritual society as a blueprint for future society, we need to get an idea how to start creating communities that are "future-friendly". To fully understand the system

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it's not enough we look at the whole; we need to look at parts of the system also. We will take a look at how we can reach true democracy, what leadership means in the 21st century and how decision-making could be re-structured based on the values and culture we have proposed in previous chapter.

We will look at the new economics and see how prosperity and well-being could be created for everyone. We'll take a look at some of the core areas of work to help us in the transition: education, communications and science. We'll address briefly what kind of spiritual renaissance is needed and how technology can be used to facilitate the shift. This will hopefully give you an idea of what you can do today to find your place and participate in a community that will be relevant also tomorrow.

Technology is often misunderstood with technical machines, hardware and utensils. Technology in brief means a species' usage and knowledge of tools and crafts, and how it affects a species' ability to control and adapt to its environment. Freely translated from its Greek origins, technology means "the study of craft". In other words, now that we know what kind of society is in the making and what will be important in it, we would also benefit of knowing the "how to guide" – the needed technology. Let's momentarily turn our attention to what all will change; what are the parts of the system we are changing.

Robert Muller has a proposal for things to renew in 21st century. Here is an adapted list based on his suggestion[103]:

- **A new democracy, leadership and decision-making:** including a new political system, global leadership, a non-violent human society; the disarmament, demilitarization, denuclearization and global security of the planet; and a new science and art of planetary management.
- **A new economics, prosperity and well-being:** including a well preserved planet; a decent well-being for all humans; a stabilization of the world population; right human settlements on the planet; and a new world ethics and justice.
- **A new education system:** including primary, secondary and higher education, and an art and culture renaissance.
- **A new media and communications**: creating awareness worldwide and engaging people around the common dreams.
- **A spiritual renaissance and inter-religious cooperation:** old wisdom in new use.
- **A new science and technology:** including a new anthropology, sociology and new ways of life; a new human biology; a new philosophy, cosmology, a new world psychology and long-term view of evolution.

Let's take a look at these areas in the light of suggested new culture in the scientific-spiritual society.

New democracy, leadership and decision-making

As said before, the political system is corrupt and dysfunctional. People don't have trust in it anymore. What would be the alternative then? Would it be possible to shift the power back to people? "The problem is not with science but the gap between words and action… The consumer model of western society has outlived itself, and there is no adequate vision on behalf of politicians… Without a positive push from civil society, politics won't change. So we need to raise up civil society." says Mikhail Gorbachev[104]. After World War II we had an opportunity to come together as species, but at that time there was no technology to make this change happen. Now there is. Rudimentary decision-making can be handled by computers in a scientific-spiritual society and people's focus can be in development: of themselves, their relationships and society at large.

[103] http://www.paradiseearth.us/

[104] http://www.goipeace.or.jp/english/activities/lectures/lectures14.html

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Getting organized for development

Power can be decentralized back to local communities that are, for the first time in history, interlinked globally. People can be offered meaningful participation opportunities, and anyone is free to use their skills in the areas of their interest. If a decision at hand belongs to the area of your interest, you are free to participate in researching it further and developing a proposal together with others. Every decision and every step in the process is made available for everyone to see and comment on. This ultimate transparency is needed to ensure quality decision-making and true democracy. But how to function effectively if anyone can participate in everything?

Previously we talked about the Dunbar's number. Gore Associates utilizes this "law of 150" so that its unit size remains small: There are 150 parking spaces in the parking lot and if someone parks on the lawn it's time to divide the unit in two. Gore doesn't have bosses or employees, but associates. Everyone can take a lead and people vote with their feet: if someone calls a meeting and no one shows up it was probably a bad idea. This applies to the CEO as well.

Likewise, future society could be organized in democratic entities of 150 that would be coordinating the development and sharing best practices. This would ensure on one hand diversity and freedom, on the other hand coordination and flow of information. Just for an example's sake, let's assume the global population to be 6.8 billion people. In that case, we would be organized accordingly:

- **community level development:** 45,333,333 communities of 150 people each
- **city level development:** 302,222 cities of 150 communities each
- **regional development:** 2,014 regions of 150 cities each
- **alliance development:** 13 alliances of 150 regions each
- **global development:** 1 global plenary of 13 alliances

Each of the communities could have a rotating representative that would attend in city level development meetings when necessary. This person would not be an authority figure but merely a liaison between the city and the community. In each meeting a different person would attend. Their role would be to take community's wisdom to the meeting and share with representatives from other communities. In this manner best case practices could be shared and synergies created between communities.

In similar vein each city would have a rotating representative in regional development meetings, each region in alliance development meetings and each alliance in global plenary. This would ensure that whenever people convene to agree on development activities they would be in an optimal community of maximum 150 people. Note that these 5 layers are not exactly hierarchy because the people in the meetings would be rotating and their role would be accountable to their alliance, region, city or community. This would leave no room for egoistic behavior, it would enable connecting with all participants in the meeting and group dynamics would function effectively. Nothing would be done behind closed doors but instead the meeting could utilize people who are following the meeting virtually.

Intelligent automation

In 1860 60% of Americans worked in agriculture (including mining and fishing). Today's figure is less than 1%. In 1950 33% worked in factory-based manufacturing of tangible goods. As of now less than 8% work in manufacturing. Today 82% of Americans work in the service sector. This move from agriculture to manufacturing to services applies to other developed Western economies also: In Finland only 2.9% of economy is primary production, 31.4% industrial and 65.7% services. Technological development leads to automating jobs previously done by people, which in turn leads to greater productivity but also technological unemployment. The only reason why our politicians want to "put people back to work" is that in our current system there is no other choice: people need money to consume, pay their credit card bills, get new loans and

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keep the economy going. In other words, politicians are struggling to keep people employed so that they would have purchasing power to take care of themselves, their families and the community.

But is unemployment necessarily a bad thing in future society? Instead of trying to minimize the unemployment rate, why wouldn't we try to maximize it? What if the goal was 95% unemployment rate? In other words, by automating production and taking away the need to have a permanent job we could free people to be more and do what matters. Who needs money to complicate things if the option is a more equal society with machines doing our work? Wassily Leontief said: "The role of humans as the most important factor of production is bound to diminish in the same way that the role of horses in agricultural production was first diminished and then eliminated by the introduction of tractors".

In Plato's Republic he says that a state needs "a farmer, a builder, and a weaver, and also, I think, a shoemaker and one or two others to provide for our bodily needs". Even with our current technology we can automate most of these tasks in the scientific-spiritual society – maybe still leaving the bodily needs for human hands. "Society needs people who take care of the elderly and who know how to be compassionate and honest. Society needs people who work in hospitals; society needs all kinds of skills that are not just cognitive, they're emotional, they're affectional. You can't run the society on data and computer screens alone." says Alvin Toffler[105]. However, most of the repetitive tasks can be left for machines to handle: motivation and quality issues are eradicated when people are taken out of their repetitive jobs and replaced with machines who don't mind the boring routine. When employment rate is no longer a measure, it's ok to let technology free people to more important jobs.

With the rule of 150 any standard production could be optimized and automated. Geological, chemical and biological sources of the planet can be mapped out and linked to a constantly updating information management system, so that at all times we stay aware of what is the hand we are playing with. This information can be used by computers to guide and optimize both production and delivery of basic necessities.

Let's look at automated food production as an example. The standards would be high: it should minimize logistics needs, be as organic and sustainable as possible, be nutritious, fresh and taste good. A local community would consist of maximum 150 people, a district would have maximum 150 communities, a city would have maximum 150 districts, and in a region there would be maximum 150 cities. This way certain produce could be local to community (for 150 people), some to district (for 22,500 people), some to city (for 3,375,00 people) and some to region (for 506,250,000 people). In other words, production would happen in an optimal location. This kind of non-competitive, optimized and planned approach would not only reduce need for shipping and warehousing but also eliminate overlap in production. Specialty restaurants and home bakeries would be local to the community. Districts would take care of semi-bulk production of vegetables and fruits in common gardens. Cities would produce bulk like flour and milk. Men's black socks could be produced regionally in huge quantities and distributed quarterly (they are food for washing machines).

Very little decision-making would be needed for the standard automated production. The commonly agreed development activities would then come into focus and people could get together based on their skills and interests to come up with new solutions or to implement good practices borrowed from elsewhere.

Agile development for common good

The new culture supports rapid technology transfer: development ideas, progress of work and outcomes of the projects can be shared globally and across disciplines without a need to hoard information. People are

[105] http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/lm/stories/s10440.htm

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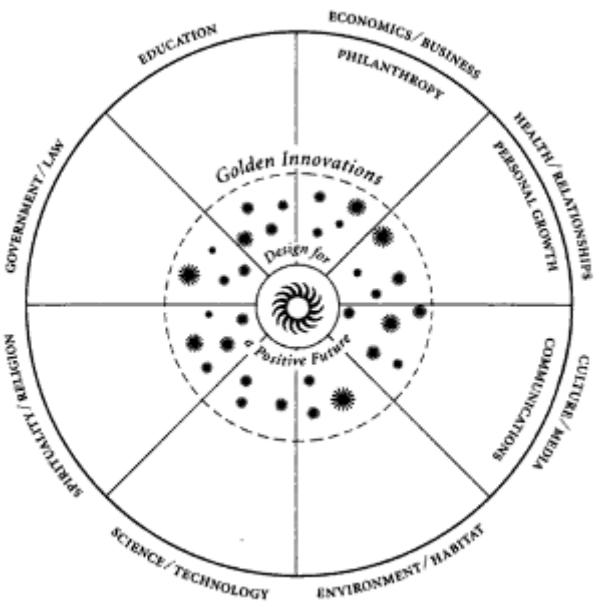
generally more aware of what's happening in communities around the world and the emphasis on dialogue brings together talent from various sectors across cultures.

When people and societies act for a common good from the standpoint of generosity and abundance, the incentive to innovate and come up with unique solutions is no longer about self-interest or profit. Need for rigid organizations decreases dramatically: ad-hoc project teams can be formed to fulfill a development function and then dissolved after the job is done. Thus people can have multiple roles and there is no need to egoistic identification with the title. I love writing, cooking, badminton and facilitation but I am not only a chef, an author, a badminton player or a trainer. These are things that I do, not what I am.

In her book "Conscious Evolution" Barbara Marx Hubbard proposes a people-centric method called Synergistic Convening (SYNCON) for this kind of development projects. In this model all development is decentralized: People meet in each sector of "the innovations wheel" (picture 15) looking at the development challenge from different angles, and form circles according to their interests and calling. Each group has a secretary, facilitator and a spokesperson. Note that the sectors on the wheel can be changed. For example business and law are quite irrelevant in the scientific-spiritual society, and e.g. artists, designers and biologists could be added to the innovations wheel.

Each member of the circle responds to three questions: a) what is my passion to create now; b) to do this, what do I need that I do not have; and c) what resources can I give to others. This is shared and then participants form smaller groups based on common interests. People support one another and make a mutual plan of action. Smaller groups reassemble in their sector of the wheel and share their joint strategies. Each sector prepares a merged statement of goals, needs, and resources. Then the whole big group meets and each sector spokesperson presents the shared statement of goals, needs and resources to the assembly. People listen actively and draw connections between needs and wants. Synergies, linkages and connections are further sought by people visiting groups on other sectors. In the end each group represents its goals, needs and resources. These are shared on a co-creation website through which more people can partake in projects or become inspired and guided for newly emerging projects.



Picture 11. The innovations wheel. (from Hubbard, B.: *Conscious Evolution*, p. 130)

It should be mentioned that we don't have to wait for a future society to be in place to use this kind of method. In fact, organizations around the world are already today using non-traditional meeting, brainstorming and design processes. In general, multi-discipline approaches, sharing and peer support are currently taking a lion's share in development. Hoarding information and resources is history.

The new economy, prosperity and well-being

When more and more people are released to use science and technology for everyone's well-being and cost is no longer an issue for research, we can soon expect a lot of scientific breakthroughs. One of the basic necessities that could use a few breakthroughs is energy. The time of fossil fuels is long gone. When I was a young boy I asked some adults why we couldn't build a belt in the equator to collect sun's radiation. They laughed me off saying it's impossible. Now we know that the area of world's deserts get enough solar

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radiation in six hours to power the earth for an entire year. The problem has been how to harness that energy. Desertec[106] is a project where mirrors will boil water in a pipe that is then turned into energy and delivered from Africa and Middle East to Europe. It's costly to build but after the initial cost, this is very affordable energy. Note that this is again a commercial project, where money is always an obstacle. Without that obstacle, it would have been done already. In fact, in the scientific-spiritual society a small boy with an idea would be welcomed and listened to.

We have discussed the new moneyless economy already. We also touched on the issue of world population stabilization; noting that equal opportunity and fulfilling the basic needs of everyone decreases the need to have a large family. This effect is multiplied by the change of values: egoless people feeling the connectedness of the community don't necessarily have a need to bring up a lot of children on their own when love, compassion and affection surrounds the whole community. We discussed that one of the outcomes of scientific-spiritual society is a well preserved planet and humankind that lives in balance with and as part of the nature. We have definitely covered the topic of new world ethics and justice. That leaves us with only one issue that we haven't yet talked about regarding new economy, prosperity and well-being: that of human settlements.

	Urban Population in %			Urban Population Growth Rate in %		
	1980	2000	2020	1980-85	2000-05	2020-25
World	39	47	57	2.6	2.2	1.7
Africa	27	38	49	4.4	4.0	3.0
Europe	69	75	80	0.8	0.3	0.1
North America	74	77	82	1.2	1.0	0.9
Central America	60	67	73	3.1	2.0	1.5
South America	68	80	85	3.1	1.8	1.1
Asia	27	38	50	3.6	2.8	2.0
Oceania	71	70	72	1.4	1.3	1.3
Developing Countries	29	41	52	3.8	2.9	2.1
Developed Countries	71	76	81	0.9	0.5	0.3

Source: WRI,UNEP,UNDP, World Bank (1998).

Table 6. Urban population (Hall & Pfeiffer: Urban future 21) .

The human habitat

If in year 1000 the biggest city in the world was perhaps Córdoba in Spain with 450,000 inhabitants and nowadays the Tokyo metropolitan area in Japan with a population of 32,450,000 we can only guess what the cities in 1000 years time will look like (assuming we even make it that far). Cities are in fact quite a new phenomenon; it has not been customary for people to live in cities but now it is estimated that if urbanization continues at the same rate, soon 60% of the people of the world will live in cities (Table 6).

The Venus Project is the life work of social engineer and structural designer Jacques Fresco. Fresco wants to create a peaceful and sustainable global civilization through the creation of interconnected circular cities – fully integrative systems designed to evolve like a living organism. These environments would be efficient in the minimum expenditure of energy while affording each citizen the highest standard of living. Fresco calls this a resource-based economy.

For an uneducated mind this kind of future vision might sound like a utopian dream, but it is not that far-fetched: sustainability is in the core of urban planning of the cities in the making. "Take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but footprints. Kill nothing but time." is a motto for building the Dubai Waterfront – an ecological metropolis (although it can be argued how wise a location Dubai is in the first place or if this will ever be built now that their economy crashed).

Vauban district in Freiburg, Germany, houses 5,000 people with no energy consumption at all. Some of the houses actually sell electricity back to the grid, much like the households in UK powered by Solar Century roofs. The technology for transportation in Vauban is ingenious: mainly bicycles and pedestrian locomotion

[106] http://www.desertec.org

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take "Vaubaners" around. Zero-emissions and a zero-waste Masdar City being built in United Arab Emirates will use a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system that combines the convenience and privacy of automobiles with the environmental benefits of mass transit (see picture 16). Songdo IBD in Korea is a green city with an automatic garbage collection system that uses underground conveyers inside pipelines, with automatic sorting, compression and dehydration of waste. Songdo is a ubiquitous city (or U-city) where all the information systems share data, and computers are built into the houses, streets and office buildings making the functioning of holistic automated systems possible.

Leading a life in a fully automated clean community sounds too good to be true. There is one caveat though: All these examples of future cities might be out of reach for an average citizen as long as monetarism perpetuates. Building cool new cities is not an answer if the underlying values don't change; if only the rich are worthy to enjoy the new technological solutions. Fresco's thoughts go deep into the human nature, however: "The greatest lesson we might learn could be that human beings free of debt, insecurity, and fear become much more amiable. No one will be out to sell anyone anything or to deprive another of possessions or money. In a resource-based economy, the basis for unhealthy human aggression will be outgrown. People will no longer be burdened by the nagging concerns that consume so much of our attention, such as mortgages, health care costs, fire insurance, economic recession, the loss of jobs, recession, depression, and taxes."[107]

Picture 12. PRT Podcar fits 4-6 people, goes faster than a bus and functions without a driver.

It is not said that everyone in the future scientific-spiritual society would want to live in cities. Some people might want to get back to nature and live like hunter-gatherers in tribes. Thom Hartmann summarizes the five primary traits of tribal groups: 1) tribes have political independence; 2) they have an egalitarian structure; 3) they get their resources from renewable local sources; 4) they have a unique sense of their own identity; and 5) they respect the identity of other tribes.[108] That doesn't sound bad either. The high-technology society and the simpler life of the countryside can coexist in harmony. People who choose to live in rural areas are no longer forced to flock to the cities just to survive. This might in fact alleviate the unplanned urbanization characteristic of our times. What's more, share technology would be available also for the villagers and tribes. I wouldn't mind living in a high-tech eco-village in the middle of the nature.

One more critical question remains regarding the new prosperity. How do we get there? We have already touched on what you can do on the individual level and how you can hook up with others in your neighborhood to share and do things without money. How about companies? Noam Chomsky suggests that we suffer collectively from democratic deficit; meaning that people know exactly what should be done, but the politicians are not running people's agenda. Thus he advises that workers should take over the companies that they are working for – especially in the case of factory shutdowns. According to him in the 19th century it used to be completely normal for people who work in a mill to own the mill[109].

There is a good legal form for this even today: the cooperative. At least in Finland, this traditional form of company that is shared by the workers became popular during the 1990s recession and it might be doing it again in the current economic situation. It's natural: when times are tough, people get together to support

[107] http://www2.thevenusproject.com/blog/2009/05/what-it-means-to-be-human

[108] Thom Hartmann: The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight.

[109] http://www.pdxjustice.org/node/84

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each other. I second Chomsky's motion and encourage people to get out of their slave jobs and start their own cooperatives: Get together with people you like and do what you love to do. My humble wish is that at least part of the economic activity of these cooperatives would be free of charge, and that the values of the cooperatives would follow the general guidelines of the culture we have outlined before. In that way we can take gradual steps towards a new paradigm of a more just world where people are again in power.

The new education system

Finland has supposedly one of the best education systems in the whole world[110] although:

- Finnish students don't start school until the age of seven.
- There's only a 4% difference in achievement between the students at the country's best and worst schools.
- Finns spend less on education than many other nations, including the US and South Korea.

Finnish students top the scores especially in math, reading and science tests. According to the PISA report (2006): "The national authorities in Finland attribute the high proportion of top-performers in part to a major development program for fostering excellence in science education (Luma) that was progressively implemented between 1996 and 2002. Other outcomes attributed to this program have been raising higher education enrolment in science and technology, increased cooperation between teachers, a greater focus on experimental learning and the establishment of specialized classes or streams in schools which specialize in mathematics and science."[111] According to Krishnamurti: "Education is very important, but now education is mere accumulation of knowledge… Intelligence is not the activity of cunning thought. Intelligence can use thought. Without love and compassion there is no intelligence."[112] Needless to say, words like love and compassion were not included in the PISA report, yet it's interesting to see how science, cooperation and experimentation are emphasized also here.

"School should be less about preparation for life and more about life itself."
John Dewey

"The aim of education, generally speaking, has been to equip the child to compete with his fellow citizens in making a living, in accumulating possessions and in being as comfortable and successful as possible… This education has also been primarily competitive, nationalistic and, therefore, separative… World citizenship is not emphasized; his responsibility to his fellowmen is systematically ignored; his memory is developed through the impartation of uncorrelated facts - most of them unrelated to daily living."[113] In university I realized that there was no emphasis for learning; just memorizing facts for the next exam. This had never interested me. Already elementary school history classes were about memorizing dates and names in the history of human suffering: wars, invasions and aggression.

"Two major ideas should immediately be taught to the children of every country. They are: the value of the individual and the fact of the one humanity."[114] Cross-sector organization called Partnership for 21st Century Skills has made a proposition to change the K-12 (primary and secondary) education system in America so that core subjects (like English, Arts, Math and Science) would be amended with 21st century themes of Global Awareness and literacy in Business, Civic and Health issues. On top of this they suggest learning and innovation skills; information, media and technology skills; and life and career skills. Here's a snapshot of these suggested skills:

[110] According to OECD PISA tests 2003 and 2006

[111] http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/13/39725224.pdf

[112] Jiddu Krishnamurti & David Bohm: The Future of Humanity

[113] http://www.potcom.net/pro/home.htm

[114] Alice Bailey: Education in the New Age

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21st century themes

- **Global Awareness:** Understand and address global issues. Collaborate with diverse individuals in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts. Understand other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages.
- **Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy:** Making personal economic choices, understanding the role of the economy in society and using entrepreneurial skills.
- **Civic Literacy**: Staying informed and participating in civic life. Exercising the rights and obligations. Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions.
- **Health Literacy:** Enhancing health through information, proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance and stress reduction. Understanding public health and safety issues.

Learning and innovation skills

- **Creativity & Innovation:** Thinking and working creatively. Creating and implementing new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts) with others, and maximizing creativity through openness and responsiveness. Viewing failure as an opportunity to learn.
- **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving:** Reasoning and using systems thinking. Evaluating evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs and making decisions. Analyzing and interpreting information, synthesizing and making connections between arguments. Reflecting critically and solving different kinds of non-familiar problems. Identifying and asking significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions.
- **Communication & Collaboration:** Oral, written and nonverbal communication skills for different purposes. Listening effectively to decipher meaning. Utilizing multiple media and technologies in diverse environments (including multi-lingual). Collaborating effectively and respectfully with diverse teams. Being flexible, helpful and willing to make compromises to accomplish a common goal. Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member.

Information, media and technology skills

- **Information Literacy:** Learning to access, evaluate, use and manage information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand. Managing the flow of information from a wide variety of sources and understanding the ethical/legal issues of information use.
- **Media Literacy:** Analyzing and understanding how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes. Examining how messages are interpreted and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors. Learning to use media creation tools and appropriate expressions in multi-cultural environments.
- **ICT Literacy:** Using technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information. Using digital technologies (computers, PDAs, media players, GPS), communication/networking tools and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy effectively, ethically and legally.

Life and career skills

- **Flexibility & Adaptability:** Adapting to change: varied roles, jobs, responsibilities, schedules and contexts. Working effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities. Being flexible. Incorporating feedback effectively. Dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism. Understanding, negotiating and balancing diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments.
- **Initiative & Self-Direction:** Managing goals, time and workload. Working independently: monitoring, defining, prioritizing and completing tasks without direct oversight. Exploring and expanding one's own learning and opportunities to gain expertise. Showing initiative and commitment to learning as a lifelong process. Self-reflection to inform future progress.

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- **Social & Cross-Cultural skills:** Knowing when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak. Conducting oneself in a respectable manner. Respecting cultural differences, responding open-mindedly to different ideas and values and leveraging social and cultural differences to create new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work.
- **Productivity & Accountability:** Setting and meeting goals; prioritizing, planning and managing work to achieve the intended result in a team.
- **Leadership & Responsibility:** Using interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal. Leveraging strengths of others. Inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness. Demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior in using influence and power. Acting responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind.

Of course you cannot demand all these skills from fourth graders, but these are good guidelines for what is needed right now in education. As we move increasingly towards the scientific-spiritual society, some of these skills become obsolete (like the financial literacy) but many (like the entrepreneurial skills) remain important.

Nevertheless, it's a bit questionable to assume that we can know what children should learn now to be responsible citizens in 20 years time because we cannot predict what is relevant in the future. In scientific-spiritual society the concept of curriculum might vanish or at least its importance might reduce when agile development is considered also in education. In the new culture, education can become ever more driven by the needs and wants of the individual: more freedom to choose but also more social and practice-driven education through group work. Furthermore, co-creation means that young people will not be mere passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in the creation of the learning experience. "In the 20th century, parents, teachers and society were the educators of children, and the children were always in the position of being taught. In the 21st century, adults shall learn from the wonderful qualities of children, such as their purity, innocence, radiance, wisdom and intuition, to inspire and uplift one another. The young generation shall play a leading role in the creation of peace for a bright future."[115]

In a scientific-spiritual society a formal education system would give hints for children to become self-aware, but would also leave room for non-formal education; learning by doing. Languages, communication and group work in diverse teams would be emphasized to prepare kids for egoless dialogue in their everyday life. Critical thinking, curiosity and freedom to seek for information would be encouraged. Finally, education would not only be for kids, but for everyone. In the spirit of life-long learning boundaries between generations would dissolve and children's creativity would be used in development projects, work previously entitled only to adults.

New media and communications

Alvin Toffler posits that one of the most pressing issues relating to media is that the general public is "determining truth by consensus", i.e. the truth is accepted by individuals based on how many other people believe it. This kind of approach doesn't involve critical thinking or individual initiative to collect and manage information to make sense of it and turn it into knowledge. When this is coupled with the aforementioned corruption of politics, people are getting only a fraction of truth, and even that quite late when the decisions that affect them have already been made. "The downfall of political reporting is well-documented. Politicians always knew they needed the media, which gave the media power. However, one day the politicians realized that the media needed them just as much. By selectively giving exclusives and interviews, politicians can condition the media. It's Pavlovian. Don't ask the difficult questions, you get more interviews. Report favorably, and you get leaked more information. Get more interviews, scoop your

[115] http://www.goipeace.or.jp/english/declaration

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competition with the new stories, and you rate better than those who have the questions, but nobody to answer them."[116]

The rise of the blogosphere and independent media is an interesting phenomenon in itself. It seems that around the globe there are people who wish to be heard, who are good in documenting what is happening around them. Imagine what would be the possibilities when all this potential was harnessed to serve humanity. The scientific-spiritual society would give rise to storytellers who would capture in words, pictures, videos, arts and other more advanced media the good practices and deliver them in an organized manner to every corner of the globe. Thus meaningful co-creation and agile development would be further enhanced by sharing the success stories by people who love what they do. There would be a genuine profusion of good news spreading the globe. These people would also be paramount in idea generation to solve new challenges that unquestionably arise when old struggles have been dealt with. They would create an abundance of information, knowledge, and wisdom open to everyone. They would become the backbone of global oneness and unity; a new media and communications for planet earth. This new media would further create awareness and enhance dialogue. We have already started this development with the Internet. Initiatives like TED[117] disseminate "ideas worth spreading". Just imagine what happens when the clutter is removed and humanity starts pulling towards the same direction with a new set of values.

Spiritual renaissance and inter-religious cooperation

We've touched previously on the issue how science and spirituality have become closer to each other in recent years, namely through the rise of quantum physics – a new strand of science that has increased our understanding of reality and questioned the Newtonian reductionism. A whole new world has opened up to science: a world of chaos, unpredictability and wonder. Scientists around the world have had to admit that maybe everything wasn't that straightforward after all, maybe there's more to our reality than a piece of machinery that is governed by a few laws of nature.

Simultaneously more and more religious people from different faiths have started to realize that in the end their story doesn't differ that much from other religions as they had initially thought. They all carry a message of love, compassion and connectedness. And many of them are talking about a new golden age for humankind. Charter for Compassion[118], United Religions Initiative[119] and Parliament of Religions[120] are examples of many initiatives that are spreading the word of coming together regardless of faith or lack thereof.

In the scientific-spiritual society, understanding old wisdom and teachings is highly important in shaping people into reaching their potential. Spirituality as such doesn't have to have a religion to back it up in the future – it's everyone's own matter how they seek to pursue spirituality in their lives. A future society would merely create space and time for individual spiritual development. That is not yet the case, however. Especially in Western society spirituality is frowned upon and rigid structures coupled with hectic lifestyles leave little room for these endeavors. For the spiritual renaissance to happen it's beneficial if people from different religious backgrounds can team up and provide meaning to the somewhat empty lives of contemporary people.

[116] http://fishbowl.pastiche.org/2003/02/16/the_death_of_democracy/

[117] http://www.ted.com

[118] http://www.charterforcompassion.org

[119] http://www.uri.org

[120] http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/

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According to the Kabbalah "the will to receive" has pushed us further in human development. Humankind first needed to address its desire to fulfill basic physiological needs: sex, nutrition and shelter. Once those were fulfilled it sought for wealth that is basically just the accumulation of the physiological needs. Note that only some cultures moved to the wealth generation through the agricultural revolution some 10,000 years ago; the rest remained as hunter-gatherers of which the remaining tribes still seem to hold keys to ancient wisdom and for example points in this book would be obvious for most of them[121]. Nonetheless, since wealth didn't bring fulfillment, the focus of humankind's desire moved to power, the control of wealth and physiological needs.

Even that left people feeling empty, so they sought knowledge: what all could be achieved in the physical world. Even that era of knowledge, mind and the ego has not fulfilled the emptiness and now we are ready to seek for a more spiritual life. In conclusion, the "will to receive" has taken us this far. Now we either continue following the path of pain and suffering or consciously start evolving towards the spiritual world and "the will to bestow": to give and receive for the sake of giving.

New science and technology

Today's science is also full of elephants. The amount of papers published is a measure functioning as an ego-booster for many scientists. This doesn't really serve humanity. Another shortcoming of the scientific community is that it's so much tied to the world of money. This has a dual effect: 1) the agenda of the funder might skew the results of the research, and 2) research that doesn't serve the agenda of the funders, might never get done. Dr. Stuart Brown[122] says that it was easy for him to get funding for researching drunk drivers and murderers, but when he found out that a common denominator in the killers' stories was lack of play in childhood and wanted to start researching play he could not get funding. Even with his track record, he was not taken seriously, when play as a topic was uninteresting to the funders. (Regardless of opposition he went on with his newly found desire and together with others started the National Institute of Play.)

"A very novel approach to the organization of humanity and its proper relations with the Earth and nature is to follow the biological models offered by the formation and admirable functioning of numerous colonies of cells, bacteria and living species observable in nature and now well studied."[123] Dee Hock – the founder of VISA credit card association – coined the term chaordic system. It refers to a system that blends characteristics of chaos and order. In nature we can find a lot of examples of these systems that work surprisingly well. Biomimicry is a fairly new science in which we aim to find solutions from the way how life has organized itself in nature.

Indeed, one of the greatest teachers we can have is nature. We have already learned quite a lot from the oldest sage in existence. Here are some examples of biomimicry. **StoCoat Lotusan®** mimics a lotus plant that resists rain droplets that fall on the plant. Lotusan was developed with this analogy and serves now as dirt-proof coating for buildings: dirt runs off with the water that falls on the facade. **Calera cement** is created by a process that is designed to suck CO2 out of the atmosphere much like the coral. **WhalePower wind turbines** replicate the bumps on the humpback whales' flippers. This technology provides a more reliable, high performance silent wind turbine technology. **Velcro** – the hook-and-loop fastener – is maybe the most famous result of biomimicry. It was inspired by burdock burrs (seeds) that stick to especially woolen clothes. **UltraCane** for visually impaired was developed by a team from Leeds University. Their success-

[121] This is explained in depth in Daniel Quinn's "Ishmael"

[122] http://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital.html

[123] http://www.goodmorningworld.org/earthgov/

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ful “bat cane” innovation was motivated by blind but savvy navigators. **Sharklet Hygienic Surface for Healthcare™** is a non-toxic surface inspired by sharks. It controls bacteria and gives healthcare providers a new tool to reduce infections and enhance infection control practices. **Aquaporin biomimetic membranes** are used for desalination of water. **REGEN Energy EnviroGrid™** couples the simplicity of nature's swarm logic (as in the beehive) with the energy management. EnviroGrid Building Automation System helps minimize peak demand, reduce energy consumption and relieve grid stress. These are just some examples of numerous biomimicry achievements from the recent years, yet only a fraction of potential this new method offers the science and technology community.

Some of the positive examples in our current society (and in this book) might make you think: “If so many things do work in our system, isn't it a sign that a money-based system can take us to a good future?” I would argue that we have these examples not because of but even despite of the current system. People are so curious and good-hearted that even there are a lot of hindrances we are taking steps towards wiser solutions. Our monetary system is slowing down the development. We should not be asking “can we afford it” but “how do we make it happen”. Money is just a measure, an idea. An inch is a measure, a man-made idea. You wouldn’t stop building a house if you ran out of inches, would you? At the very moment there is a grand variety of developments happening where people are contributing their time and energy to common good without asking anything back. This just proves that regardless of the system, people are good and willing to develop the system instead of just maintaining it.

The fragmented science and technology gets a common direction through the new values of scientific-spiritual society. Novel and existing technologies will be directed to common good, and dialogue will make the boundaries between disciplines dissolve. We already have an abundance of solutions: now we just need to remove the obstacles on the way. A new human biology, anthropology, sociology, lifestyles, philosophy, cosmology, deep understanding of evolution and a new world psychology is in the making.

Fear of technology

There is one major doubt that has to be dealt with: the fear of technology. The phenomenon when machines become more intelligent than humans is called the technological singularity. “If the machines are permitted to make all their own decisions, we can't make any conjectures as to the results, because it is impossible to guess how such machines might behave. We only point out that the fate of the human race would be at the mercy of the machines. It might be argued that the human race would never be foolish enough to hand over all the power to the machines. But we are suggesting neither that the human race would voluntarily turn power over to the machines nor that the machines would willfully seize power. What we do suggest is that the human race might easily permit itself to drift into a position of such dependence on the machines that it would have no practical choice but to accept all of the machines' decisions. As society and the problems that face it become more and more complex and machines become more and more intelligent, people will let machines make more of their decisions for them, simply because machine-made decisions will bring better result than man-made ones. Eventually a stage may be reached at which the decisions necessary to keep the system running will be so complex that human beings will be incapable of making them intelligently. At that stage the machines will be in effective control. People won't be able to just turn the machines off, because they will be so dependent on them that turning them off would amount to suicide.” These are the words of Theodore Kaczynski – better known as Unabomber – who needed to kill twenty people to get his voice heard.[124]

“The popular idea, fostered by comic strips and the cheaper forms of science fiction, that intelligent machines must be malevolent entities hostile to man, is so absurd that it is hardly worth wasting energy to refute it. I am almost tempted to argue that only unintelligent machines can be malevolent…Those who

[124] http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Industrial_Society_and_Its_Future

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picture machines as active enemies are merely projecting their own aggressiveness. The higher the intelligence, the greater the degree of cooperativeness is. If there is ever a war between men and machines, it is easy to guess who will start it."[125] Professor Aaron Sloman from University of Birmingham concludes: "There are people who fear that machines will turn nasty and try to take over the world. However, I don't think machines can do anything nastier to us than humans already do to one another all round the world."[126] When asked what he thinks of machines becoming more intelligent than man, Dalai Lama welcomed the idea and was laughingly saying one of them could become Dalai Lama's incarnation.

Our current world view is so distorted, aggressive and fear-driven that we cannot picture a world where technology would be used for good purposes only. When a machine is assigned to a limited task, it fulfills that function without asking questions, no matter how intelligent it was. "Splitting the atom requires great intelligence. Using that intelligence for building and stockpiling atom bombs is insane or at best extremely unintelligent. Stupidity is relatively harmless, but intelligent stupidity is highly dangerous. This intelligent stupidity, for which one could find countless obvious examples, is threatening our survival as a species."[127] We have used great intelligence already to use technology for the good of humanity and some people are dependent on technology. Imagine you had a heart transplant, a peg leg, a hearing aid or – God forbid – eye-glasses. You would be a technology-enhanced post-human being.

Enough irony: Kaczynski had a good point. We might become so dependent on technology that we lose our grip on reality. Some might argue we have already gone past that point. By the time we start making designer babies, the alarm bells should go off. The vanity of people stands out in our current system. Correcting a gene in an embryo to prevent a hereditary disease might sound like a good idea at first. However, should we meddle with parts of the system if we are unaware of the interconnectedness of the human DNA system? We already know that one gene can have an effect to more than one part of the system, but we don't know which parts they are. Therefore fixing a hereditary disease might not be the only change in the outcome. A large part of the scientific community is well aware of the ethical and moral issues of transhumanity – of improving the human body and mind with technology – but some of them are willing to experiment due to the immense potential the new technology poses. We cannot stop that experimentation from happening but it's high time we make sure that it is not done for purely financial motives.

Enjoyment from awakened doing

> *"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."*
>
> ***Confucius***

"Awakened doing is the outer aspect of the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet. The closer we get to the end of our present evolutionary stage, the more dysfunctional the ego becomes, in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it transforms into a butterfly. But the new consciousness is arising even as the old dissolves… The modalities of awakened doing are acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm… You need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all – from the simplest task to the most complex."[128]

Acceptance is a familiar concept for most people who have graduated university. Before you can graduate you have to pass those few courses that you have postponed, because they were uninteresting, difficult or just utterly boring. You have to accept that you are not going to graduate without them. Once you do so,

[125] Arthur C. Clarke: Profiles of the Future

[126] http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/events/hotseat/panel_statements.html

[127] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

[128] Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth

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you notice that it wasn't that difficult after all. The non-acceptance had just created added flavor of dislike towards the courses.

How about enjoyment? As I told you before, "enjoying the moment" is one of my most important values. It has closed many doors ahead of me – for example jobs that were potentially high paying but non-enjoyable. It has caused me to seek enjoyment from external sources. This was never fully satisfying and easily led to boredom when nothing exciting was happening. It took me quite a few years to realize that the source of joy is in me. "You don't have to wait for something 'meaningful' to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do. There is more meaning in joy than you will ever need."[129] Eckhart Tolle suggests. And now I know he's right. Gosh, I even enjoy doing the dishes nowadays – a task so dreary before.

He continues: "Some of those people who, through creative action, enrich the lives of many others simply do what they enjoy doing most without wanting to achieve or become anything through that activity. They may be musicians, artists, writers, scientists, teachers, or builders, or they may bring into manifestation new social or business structures (enlightened businesses). Sometimes for a few years their sphere of influence remains small; and then it can happen that suddenly or gradually a wave of creative empowerment flows into what they do, and their activity expands beyond anything they could have imagined and touches countless others. In addition to enjoyment, intensity is now added to what they do and with it comes a creativity that goes beyond anything an ordinary human could accomplish."[130]

"Enthusiasm means there is deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or a vision that you work toward… At the height of creative activity fueled by enthusiasm, there will be enormous intensity and energy behind what you do. You will feel like an arrow that is moving toward the target – and enjoying the journey."[131] When you are enthusiastically and passionately putting your shoulder to the wheel you start experiencing eustress: you reach the peak point between boredom and stress. Writing this book has been an experience of eustress for me. I could work till five in the morning with amazing enthusiasm. Once again I have witnessed how good does awakened doing feel like.

You are a creator of the new culture

We have gone through a short journey into reality from perspectives of individual, relationships and society. Most likely you already understand that the only way to make things better is to be the change you seek. No higher power is going to make the new culture a reality; you are the key to unlocking humankind's potential. Let's close this chapter with a few ideas of what you could do in order to live the culture of meaningful co-creation and agile development, culture of generosity and abundance, and culture of authenticity, awareness and dialogue.

The first step in your awakened doing is to figure out what you are truly passionate about. If you are 100% sure what your passion in life is, you might as well skip this part. Just bear in mind the words of Finnish writer Rosa Meriläinen: "to wisen is not same as to cast your prejudices in stone"[132]. We'll be using "U journaling practice" from Presencing Institute as a basis for a few questions that might trigger an internal process where you let the answers come to you. This exercise consists of two parts; first one no more than 15 minutes, second 60-90 minutes. Use a watch and keep yourself accountable to sticking to the schedule. You should do this exercise in solitude with a concentrated mind. Prepare a pleasant space for yourself and

[129] *Ibid*

[130] *Ibid*

[131] *Ibid*

[132] http://www.digipaper.fi/arvo/28916/index.php?pgnumb=47

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make sure you are not going to be bothered for the next two hours. Have some pen and paper handy (for the second part you can use a computer if that's what you prefer).

In the first part we aim to find out what's holding you back. Don't use more than 2-3 minutes per question. Write down quickly your thoughts and move on:

1. **Challenges:** Look at yourself from outside as if you were another person: What are the 3 or 4 most important challenges or tasks that your life currently presents? What do you want to achieve? What needs to be done? What feels challenging?

2. **Frustration:** What frustrates you about your current work and personal life situation? What makes you angry? What you can't stand about certain people in your life? What do you hate about yourself? Write down what frustrates you.

3. **Inner resistance:** What is holding you back? Describe 2 or 3 recent situations (in your work or personal life) where you noticed one of the following three voices kicking in, which then prevented you from exploring the situation you were in more deeply:
    - Voice of Judgment: shutting down your open mind (downloading instead of inquiring)
    - Voice of Cynicism: shutting down your open heart (disconnecting instead of relating)
    - Voice of Fear: shutting down your open will (holding on to the past or the present instead of letting go)

Once you are done with your answers, read them through once. Don't make any corrections; just read (only once). Don't dwell on what you have written but move on:

- Fold the paper
- Fold it again
- Rip it in two parts
- Put the layers of paper on top of each other
- Fold once more
- Rip again
- Keep ripping until you only have small shreds of paper
- Take the pieces of paper in the bin or burn them (outside)
- Notice that whatever you wrote doesn't tie you down anymore
- You are free of fear, doubt and disbelief
- There is no suffering
- You can move to the second part with the feeling of peace, love and joy within

Let your calling come to you

In the second part, take some 5-10 minutes to answer each question. Don't over-think; let the answers come to you. If nothing comes up, move on to the next one. It's important to open your mind, open your heart and open your will.

Sit down on a floor, on a pillow, chair or a sofa; whatever suits you. Calm down, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and feel your whole body: start from your feet. Feel them touching the surface; feel the energy inside of them. Work your way up to the legs and move your concentration finally to your groin, abdomen, chest, back, hands, arms, armpits, shoulders, and neck. Become conscious of your whole body and feel your circulation. Feel the clothes you are wearing touching your skin. Become aware of your posture. Move your attention to your head; relax your eyelids, your mouth, forehead and cheekbones until you can feel a subtle sensation on top of your head. Take one deep breath and concentrate for a while on your calm breathing. Be in that moment completely. Then shift your focus to your surroundings. Become aware

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of your surroundings: front, sides, and back. Feel present, connected to the earth and aware of the space around you. When you are ready, we can start.

If you are ready, you feel the answers within and you get into the flow. If not, you can always come back to this part. Don't judge. Trust your gut and let it flow.

1. **Achievements:** Write down 3 or 4 important facts about your life journey. What are the important accomplishments you have achieved or competencies you have developed in your life (examples: raising children; finishing your education; preparing good food; making someone happy; being a good listener)? Take pride in the smallest of your achievements.

2. **Aspirations:** What 3 or 4 important aspirations, areas of interest, or undeveloped talents would you like to place more focus on in your future journey (examples: writing a novel or poems; starting a social movement; taking your current work to a new level; learning basics of French)?

3. **Energy:** What are your most vital sources of energy? What is positive? What do you love?

4. **Emerging you:** Over the past couple of days and weeks, just before and during you've been reading this book, what new aspects of your Self have you noticed? What new questions and themes are occurring to you now? What was unexpected discovery? Try to guess: what are you becoming?

5. **Meta-cognition:** Rise above yourself and take a look at yourself on your average day as if you had a bird's eye view. Observe yourself going through the day. What is this person doing? What is (s)he trying to do in this stage of professional and personal journey?

6. **Your community:** Choose 3 people from your community with different perspectives on your life. Who makes up your community? Include people you know and people who just see you occasionally (your family; your friends; a poor homeless person on the street; your acquaintances that you don't know too well; your neighbor; a priest in the church; your teacher). Get into their skin. What are their highest hopes in regard to your future journey? What might you hope for if you were in their shoes and looked at your life through their eyes? What positive they see in you?

7. **Gravestone:** Imagine you could fast-forward to the very last moments of your life, when it is time for you to pass on. Now look back on your life's journey as a whole. What would you want to see at that moment? What footprint do you want to leave behind on the planet? What would you want to be remembered for by the people who live on after you? What is written in your gravestone?

8. **Letter:** From that (future) place, look back at your current situation as if you were looking at a different person. Now try to help that other person from the viewpoint of your highest future Self. What advice would you give? Feel and sense what the advice is. Then write a letter to that person.

9. **Calling:** Stop. Rewind. Return to the present moment. What seems to be your calling in life? What is your passion? Why do you exist? Write down in 1-2 sentences your calling in life.

10. **Dreams**: Crystallize what it is that you want to create: your dreams for the next 3-5 years. What dreams do you have for yourself? How about your work, peers and family? What are some essential core elements of the future that you want to create in your personal, professional, and social life? Describe as concretely as possible the images and elements that occur to you.

11. **Letting-go:** What would you have to let go of in order to bring your dreams into reality? What is the old stuff that must die? What is the old skin (behaviors, thought processes, etc.) that you need to shed?

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12. **Seeds:** What in your current life or context provides the seeds for the future that you want to create? What are you good at? Where do you see your future beginning? Appreciate yourself and write down what works.

13. **Prototyping:** Over the next three months, if you were to prototype a microcosm of the future in which you could discover your dream future, what would that prototype look like? How can you quickly put together a life that has elements of your dreams?

14. **People:** Who can help you make your highest future possibilities a reality? Who could participate? Who keeps you accountable? Who supports you when the times are tough? Who challenges your old frame of reference and behavior? Who understands you? Who might be your core helpers and partners? Make sure you share your future intentions with these people and publicize your plans. The more people you tell, the less likely it is for you to chicken out on what your life is calling you to do.

15. **Action:** If you were to take on the project of bringing your intention into reality, what practical first steps would you take over the next 3 to 4 days? What will you do today and tomorrow?

Whatever you got on the paper, be proud of it. There is one quick task to do: Extend your right arm in front of you. Turn your palm facing the sky. Straighten your arm to an upward position. Bend it behind your back. Tap yourself in the back and say: "Good job!"

"An ant-hill that is destined to become a giant ant-hill will definitely become one, no matter how many times it is destroyed by elephants."
Nigerian proverb

Put your calling into action

It might be that you are already leading a life that lets you be all you can be, and do what you want to do. Even if changes are needed, start with the appreciation of what already is. If you are unemployed, be grateful of the luxury many can't afford: you have time in your hands to fulfill your heart's calling. If you are working with media, you have a power to influence others. If you are in the field of education, you can be a role model for many young people who deserve to lead their adulthood in a new world. If you are doing odd jobs, embrace the variety in your life and direct your steps towards your passions. If you are a researcher you can start thinking how your field could contribute to the future society. If you are an entrepreneur, you have the power to reshape your organization to do good and solve pressing social, environmental or cultural issues. If your employer is in the public sector, you have the power to contribute to public good. If you are in a civil society organization (an NGO) you can take your organization's mandate to a new level and improve lives on the local, national, regional or even global level. If you work in a company you can become a social intrapreneur aiming to improve the relationships at the work place and start making suggestions and generating ideas for the management.

See how you can take your community towards a scientific-spiritual society. Generate a list of ideas for your professional and personal communities:

- How might we provide more meaning?
- How might we create real solutions together where they are needed?
- How might we employ a more agile mindset?
- How might we encourage people to give and share selflessly?
- How might we create an abundance mindset?
- How might we use resources for everyone's benefit?
- How might we help people get rid of their elephant?
- How might we increase awareness of root issues and solutions?
- How might we increase dialogue between unlikely allies?

Before putting your personal calling into action, I want to leave you with a hypothetical scenario that was earlier touched upon briefly. What would happen if, say, a solar flare came through the earth's magnetic

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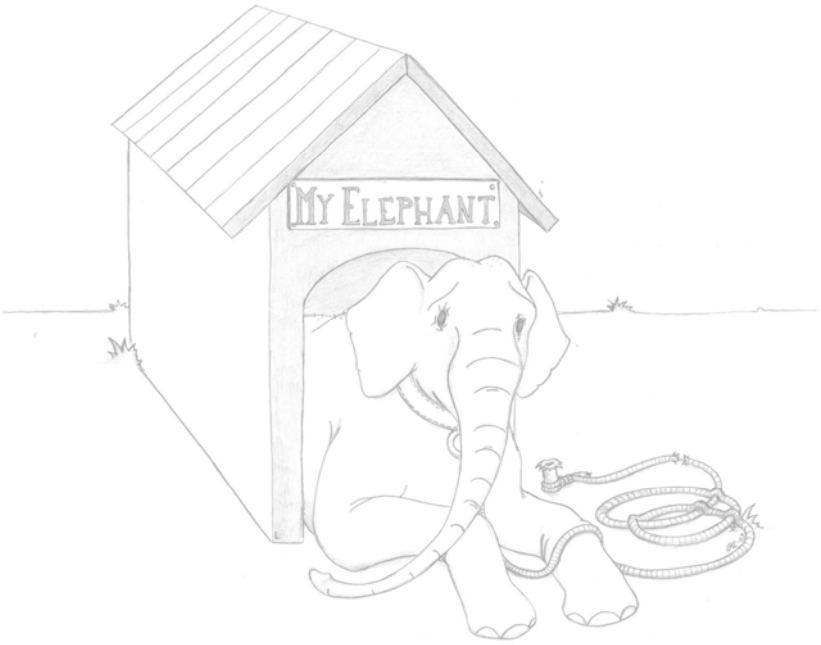
field and took down all the electrical systems for a moment, erasing all the data? The financial systems would effectively be rebooted: all information on bank accounts would be lost. We would no longer know who owed what and to whom. What would we do on that unfortunate event? Would we engage on an arduous task of data re-collection; digging through the old printouts and trying to remember the estimate figures? Or would we do something more meaningful?

Be the awakening

How to get rid of your ego, connect with others and save the world? Can you already see the fallacy in the book's title? I thought of revealing this in the beginning already but where's the fun in that? In Herman Hesse's Siddharta is a powerful passage of the experienced truth: "It is a good thing to experience everything oneself, he thought. As a child I learned that pleasures of the world and riches were not good. I have known it for a long time, but I have only just experienced it. Now I know it not only with my intellect, but with my eyes, with my heart, with my stomach. It is a good thing that I know this." I hope you have experienced this: the fallacy in the title is that you don't need to save the world. The world doesn't need saving. You do! I do. We do.

Remember that you are not your title; you are not your job. Anything that you add to "I am" is a lie coming from your elephant. You are a free spirit, a connected soul. To feel the connectedness remind yourself by saying: "We would not be if you were not if I was not". Don't get lost in trying to achieve something or let the pain of the world override your joy. A global awakening is in the progress: very little doing is actually needed. Concentrate on being and enjoy the present moment because that's all there is. Life happens now. Be aware of your elephant and "mind you". You are already awake. You are already perfect. You don't need to become anything else.



Picture 13. Redundant elephant in the elephant house.

Remember there is no us and them. We are all on the same side. We are interconnected with each other and we are in the same family with trees, soil, and water. "Our human genetic code is constructed by the exact the same four nucleotides, complex molecules, as every other form of life on this planet. At the level of our DNA we are related to the birds, reptiles, amphibians, other mammals and even the plant life. From a purely biological perspective, we human beings are our own species-specific mutation of earth's genetic possibility."[133] Biologically as well as spiritually, we are all one. Therefore, don't hurt anyone – physically, mentally or emotionally – because you are hurting your family. Whenever you leave a conversation, end it as it was your last one with this person. This will have a significant positive impact in your attitude and behavior, and helps keep the elephant in the elephant house (it's like a dog house, just bigger).

[133] Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight

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Turn your attention to what feels right; trust your intuition. Remember that the only way to get trust is to give trust. Enjoy giving for the sake of giving. And accept the blissful abundance of joy and prosperity that comes your way. Let go of the clutter; free yourself of what can possibly feed your elephant. Concentrate on what is good. Be part of the solution, instead of being part of the problem. Connect genuinely with others. Love fully. Accept anicca, dukkha and anatta fully: don't cling, don't resist and don't judge. Kiss the beauty as it flies by. Accept that you cannot influence the history: what happened, happened. Accept the uncertainty of the future: what emerges, emerges. Accept what is: be here now. Be the awakening.

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Chapter four summary

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Key points of this chapter were:

- When introducing a new system, a systemic change is called for. In other words, everything from economy to education and from science to spirituality should be aligned with the common direction. Good news is that the transition to a new society has already started.
- By aligning your doing with your new being, you join the transition. You are a creator of the new culture.

See tips, tricks and tools at the end of the book:

- Movies to watch before saving the world
- Remind yourself of your dreams
- 10 powerful questions for change makers
- Read better books than this one

See frequently asked questions at the end of the book:

- How are the bad deeds of people dealt with in the scientific-spiritual society? Is there a police force, jurisdiction or mental asylums?
- Would people be really fat because they are not doing physical work?
- Can't you own anything in the future? How about personal belongings and things with emotional value?
- Are people going to eat animals in the scientific-spiritual society?
- Why are decisions outsourced to machines? Aren't people voting on the decisions?
- How other things are handled in the future?

Epilogue

INSIGHT FROM THE FUTURE

HOW COULD LIFE BE?

Anna had joined a company that was helping young people to find their calling in life. She was passionate about the job but had agreed to work only 20 hours a week. She wanted to leave room for her own development and spending time with people closest to her.

Anna had not seen the teacher in a long time. She was fiddling with her new business card where her name said simply "A. Were". She was about to give it to the teacher who had agreed to meet her one more time. Anna had demanded to know where the teacher had gained all the wisdom. The answer had been confusing: "from the future". But Anna thought it somehow made sense. There was definitely something otherworldly in the teacher's wisdom.

Beatles was playing in her iPod: "Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us. Above us only sky. Imagine all the people, Living for today... Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too. Imagine all the people. Living life in peace... You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one. Imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can. No need for greed or hunger; a brotherhood of man. Imagine all the people, sharing all the world... You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one."

Anna saw the teacher climbing up the rock where they were supposed to meet. Anna had never been in this grandiose place although it was just half an hour from her home. The evening sun illuminated the trees.

- *Hi Anna. I'm afraid my time is limited. I'll grant you 20 questions but then I must go. This will be our last time together.*

***A:** Ok. I'm so happy to meet you again and of course sad that you are leaving. But since we don't have much time there's no point of beating around the bush or start arguing if you're really from the future or not. I believe you. Let me start by asking a very personal question that has been bothering me a bit: Are you a man or a woman?*

- *This can be potentially confusing for you, because you have placed such an importance for gender roles in your society. From very early on in childhood you were conditioned to take on a role of a man or a woman. This restricted you and you identified with the role. We learned to reach a balance between feminine and the masculine. In your merely physical terms, though, you might see more of a woman than a man. This question, however, is of no importance anymore.*

***A:** Ok. You are right. It was a bit confusing. But I think I see your point. Let's take an easier one: Are you married?*

- *The establishment of marriage as such is long gone in the society where we live. It was largely a legal arrangement and as we got rid of most of the laws there was no need for anymore. In general, love is no longer restricted to any one being. We tend to love everyone and everything that surrounds us. However, we still have stronger partnerships with a limited number of people – companions that we hold close in our lives. Some people still prefer to have just one partner. In our current circle of companions, at the moment, there are seven adults altogether.*

***A:** Right, let me get this straight. Who's in your family? Do you have kids?*

- *Everyone is the family. There are no boundaries, no separateness. We are taking care of each other's kids and it gives us great joy and happiness.*

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A: *That sounds nice… awkward, but nice. So, what do you do for living?*

- *To my surprise you ask this question only now. Isn't it the most common question for people to ask in your society? No offense, but we find it amusing how people in your time identified themselves through their job, education or title. In our society everything happens through voluntary participation. We don't have jobs as such; we do what we are good at and what we enjoy doing. Your next question would be 'what's the catch' or 'where is the incentive', right? This can be difficult to fathom because you are still living so separate from each other and you haven't realized the connectedness with all things and beings. In our society the incentive to participate comes from the very fact that we are all one: there is no competition, except at the football field and in the organized idea competitions. The good news for you is that you have already started replacing competition with cooperation. You have started awakening to the fact that competition is slowing down progress; it's like using your right foot to step on the left one to try and run faster.*

Now Anna gave the teacher her card where it said "A. Were – Partner". The teacher examined the card, gave a gentle smile and waited for the next question calmly.

A: *I like that analogy. I see your point. I wonder if you really need money in a society like that. There is no need to be better or more well off than your neighbor, right? What do you have then? What do you own?*

- *You are right. Money was an obsolete tool that you will soon find out. In your time many people still cling to that without noticing it's utterly an imaginary concept. Figures on your bank account don't have any value in the end. We no longer have the concept of ownership. Our first priority after the great shift was to ensure basic necessities for all. We realized it's in everyone's benefit to ensure equal opportunity for all. We are much stronger species due to this fact. As for the ownership, it would be stupid to own – say – a car. In the participatory society development goes so fast that if you owned a car it would soon be obsolete – no one would make improvements in it and everyone else would be sharing cars much better than yours. It's amazing how much space we created by stopping at own things: there is no more need for parking lots.*

A: *That makes sense. But I still don't want to let go of the BMW my dad bought me. Anyways, you mentioned that you ensured basic necessities for all. In case you don't have to work in the traditional sense, who makes the food? Who cleans the floors? Who does all the boring stuff?*

- *Most of the repetitive tasks are automated. Buildings have integral cleaning systems. Basic food production is automated and delivery arranged so that food and clean water is available everywhere. However, many people do enjoy cooking so there are quite a few common kitchens where we congregate for more special meals.*

A: *So, you don't work and an automated infrastructure is catering to your essential needs. How do you spend your time? Doesn't it get boring?*

- *First of all, there is a difference between 'not working' and 'not having a job'. It's like the ants, remember? We take part in common development projects according to our competencies and interests. We don't call it work but participation. It is true that we don't have to participate every day and every waking hour. We invest about 5-10% of what you would call time in these projects. Otherwise there is freedom to enjoy and enquire. There is a great emphasis on being rather than doing. It is very common for people to just sit and observe nature or do something together. And no it's not boring. That word is long gone. We don't have time as such. You will soon notice that time has been just an obstacle. It becomes irrelevant very soon. So don't worry if your watch runs out of its battery. Oh yes, it should be mentioned that apart from being and enjoying many concentrate on education.*

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A: *So, how is the education system? What did you study?*

- *Watch your language, Anna. Try to become more present. We did not study, we are still studying: astrology, space travel, meditation, historical anthropology, music, oceans, engineering, football, cybernetics, play, molecular biology, design, gene technology, IT, robotics, media production, and teaching are some of our favorite topics. It really depends on one's interests of what and how much they want to know. But all in all wisdom has great value in our society. It's more than knowledge – more than mere intelligence. Although there is a certain curriculum people go through when they are five to ten years old, other than that education is voluntary both from the learners' and the teachers' side and these roles keep mixing. For instance there is a great deal that can be learned from infants. They are always closest to nature and still carry parts of that wisdom from their earlier lives.*

A: *Whoa, that is a bit too much for me to believe. To be frank, I wasn't paying attention to what you said because I kept pondering on two things… first was football, but I don't want to waste a question in that… the second one was why you told me to watch my language. I realized that the language one uses creates the reality. How do you communicate? Has English become a common language for all?*

- *Ok, next time when you are immersed with your thoughts we'll make sure there is silence. We emphasize listening more than speaking. We realized that there was so much misinterpretation happening in the world because we didn't have a common language. English was not suitable to be a universal auxiliary language due to its limitations. We studied older languages like Pali, Sanskrit, Arabic and Chinese and created a world language that doesn't leave room for interpretation. In our language the sounds – the wavelengths – carry the meaning much more than the words. In written format it resembles scientific formulas. After we cleared all that mess from the old world, we noticed that our species also has telepathic abilities. It helps a lot. One more thing regarding communication is that we practice wisdom collection. We centralize all the knowledge in what you would call the internet. It is automatically translated to all languages.*

A: *You still have internet? What is it used for?*

- *It serves a dual purpose. On one hand it is a repository of knowledge, open for all. On the other hand, it collects all the data that it needs to run the functions of society.*

A: *Wait a minute… Internet runs the society? Now, seriously, who calls the shots?*

- *Soon after the collective awakening, that we refer to as the great shift, we dismantled the obsolete political structure. We realized that with our new set of values and true understanding of the world, we don't need decision makers. Laws, restrictions and punishments gave way to common sense and compassionate communities. What remained were the basic operations: construction, food production, transportation, pollution removal, recycling and the like. These didn't need a political structure but could be outsourced to a computerized decision-making system. That removed so much clutter and errors. We became free to concentrate on development rather than holding the strings.*

A: *Wow! That makes a lot of sense. At first I was about to ask aren't you afraid that the machines take over but then I realized how stupid my question was – that we the people have been our greatest threat so far. So many wars have been started because we couldn't agree with ourselves. That reminds me… What is your religion?*

- *Well, we did come into agreement. People all over the world started realizing that the teachings in all the religions come from the same source. As they started seeing beyond the words – into the real wisdom – they no longer thought that their religion was the only truth. After a while there was no longer a need for religion as such. Knowledge became much more important than beliefs. People no longer hold deities. If something is worshipped it is life on planet earth. We love nature.*

A: *Ok, enough politics and religion. Tell me more about yourself: where do you live for instance?*

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- *We live everywhere. When we realized the ownership of property had become obsolete it freed people to move around, meet other people and stay where they wanted. We don't own land or houses anymore. Some people do prefer staying for longer in the same place and some people are more mobile. We don't have locks in the doors anymore, just a color code that tells if the place is available right now: red means reserved and people would appreciate privacy, yellow means there is someone but you are welcome to join, and green means it's empty.*

A: *Sounds nice. Well then, how do you move around?*

- *Mostly we walk or use bicycles, roller shoes, skateboards or horses. In the city we have travelators and monorails. Also cars can be ordered. For longer distances we take a magnet train or a freight boat. No more waiting at the airports.*

A: *Skateboards and horses? That's not really what I was expecting. How are the cities then?*

- *Some of the best technologies have already been invented. We realized skateboards and horses were not only largely available but also great ways to focus your mind on the present moment as you move around. Otherwise you'd fall and hurt yourself. You asked how the cities are. Although the cities are connected to each other, they are very diverse and differ from each other. But there are some common traits. Cities are optimized in regard to use of space, energy and infrastructure. They are very green, silent and peaceful. Animals are co-habiting the cities with us. Usually the cities are circular, consisting of various rings for different purposes. All in all there's so much good energy around – the cities are much more part of the nature than in your time.*

A: *You keep saying 'our time'. How old are you anyways?*

- *This incarnation in your time would be 118 years old. I know it sounds a lot to you. Once the pollutants were removed and nature was clean again, that only increased our life expectancy. Exercising the mind and body added up. It's amazing how your physical condition improves when you have love and positive energy everywhere. We did save the best practices of western medicine, introduced healing nanobots and new transplant technologies but mainly we are using natural medicine when need be. Healthcare has finally reached its real meaning; it's no longer just treating the symptoms but addressing the root issues proactively – maintaining health more than treating disease.*

A: *Interesting. It really sounds tempting. How do we get to the future?*

- *We'll let that question pass. You should have answers to that already if we were successful.*

Anna noticed that she was running out of questions. She had used a stick to draw a line in the ground for every question she had posed. Quickly calculating she realized she only had three left. For a while she thought why the teacher had refused answering her previous question. Then it dawned to her. With a grin on her face, Anna posed the third last question: "How is your elephant doing?" The teacher beamed in content and answered:

- *It's good to hear that question. You've come a long way in your awakening. It might not come to you as a surprise that in the future people are no longer dominated by their egos. They are less vulnerable, more approachable and less culturally conditioned.*

A: *Are you like the crocodile and the bird? Give me an example of synergy in the future.*

- *Hmm… that's a tough one, because synergy is everywhere. Very well… In our local district all 150 people had come together to re-program the building robots in order to build a new city in the sea. We were very excited about it and everyone was participating to their fullest for several months. But every time we asked the computer to give us a system sketch of the city, there was something missing. We couldn't put our finger to what it was. It just didn't feel right. Our kids heard about the dilemma and all 28 of them gathered to help us. They organized an imagination play that they fed to the computer in real time. We took a system sketch after that and it blew our minds. Now there were slides, colors, and creative structures. All sorts of fish, coral and sea life was harmoniously cir-*

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cling around, even inside the structures. It looked like an underwater amusement park. We loved the sketch and the building robots started their work. Now, that was synergy!

A: *Wow! I can imagine. By the way, I noticed that today you haven't used the word "I" or "me" at all. Instead you keep saying we… I guess you're saying there's no "I" in the future team either. So, you are like ants. My final question is: If we were like ants, how would we plan and build the future society?*

- *One of the historical figures in the future is Ajahn Brahm – a Buddhist monk who lives in your time. He shared a story where he was walking in the mountains and got suddenly surrounded by mist. He didn't know which way to go anymore so he decided to go back. Unfortunately he couldn't see even arm's length forward so he got lost and almost fell down from a cliff. If he had not been completely in the present moment he would have died. Although he didn't know where to go, he knew that he needs to go downward to get a clear vision. He went away from the mist and finally found his way back home. Anna, remember: future is emergent and surprising. It's time for you to let go of the analytical thinking mindset. Let go of the egoism. It's not going to take you any further. Get away from the mist. You don't need to plan a perfect spiritual and harmonious society to the last detail right now, but you can start taking steps towards it. Remember it's not about the destination but the journey; there is no ideal society.*

Anna had been listening intently, staring at the setting sun. Now she noticed that the teacher was gone. Tears ran down her cheeks; tears of joy, peace and love. The mist was rising. She stood up and took the first step.

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Tips, tricks and tools
&
FAQ

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TIPS, TRICKS AND TOOLS - CHAPTER ONE

Powerful movies you should see now

"The power of now" is definitely a must book to read. However, you can get insights from certain movies also. Films that promote the message of living in the present moment include e.g.:

- Peaceful Warrior: The story of a young gymnast and his struggle to make sense of his life in which he is successful but still unfulfilled.
- Into the Wild: The true story of Christopher McCandless – a fresh graduate who gives away his money and hitchhikes to Alaska to be part of nature again.
- I Am Because We Are: A free movie from Madonna who found out about Ubuntu in Malawi.

My kind of meditation

In the Western world especially people are obsessed with rules. When I came back to Finland from Sri Lanka I noticed that even meditation here is full of rules and procedures. For beginners it can be helpful to learn certain meditation techniques such as metta bhavana (loving kindness), vipassana and breathing meditation. I like to use metta bhavana as part of my meditation because sending loving kindness for yourself and others is a great way to make your mind more still. However, one should not feel obliged to follow these techniques. You can develop your kind of meditation.

WHO: Anyone can meditate; it's no secret science. Before I went to my first guided meditation I was skeptical that it wouldn't be for me. It's ok to be skeptical before, as long as you just let go of the skepticism when you try it.

WHY: It makes sense to be aware of your overall motivation for meditation. The outcomes of meditation can be many: mindfulness, truth, energy, tranquility, concentration, rapture, or even equanimity. I personally have never sought for nibbana (nirvana); it's enough for me to stay still for a moment and feel the inner joy afterwards. Desire, negativity, boredom, restlessness and doubt are the five hindrances for meditation, and getting rid of them is already a wonderful reward.

WHAT: If you observe someone meditating, it's quite uninteresting: sitting and breathing. However, it's good to know what happens in the mind as you do so. First you become aware of the surroundings and your body, through sense perceptions. Soon you can let go of that and only concentrate on breathing. Your thinking mind will interrupt many a times, but you can always get back to breathing. For me meditation doesn't always work. In fact, paradoxically if you want it "to work" it won't. That's why I've decided to just stay meditating for a given time and just be. Usually, however, the time passes quicker than expected. This intense concentration on inaction already makes meditation worthwhile.

WHERE: You can basically meditate anywhere. However, one should be in an environment where you know you are not going to be interrupted for the duration you have chosen. If you have a chance to do it in the nature it gives you an added benefit. I usually meditate when I'm alone. I sit on a pillow, turn off my phone and set an alarm clock for 45 minutes.

HOW: Here are the stages I go through (you decide your own).

- **Posture:** I sit with my legs crossed (not in a lotus position) and try to keep my back straight but relaxed. I like to hold my arms on my legs and slightly let my thumbs touch my index fingers. I take a few deep breaths to relax. Sometimes I force a slight smile on my face if it doesn't come naturally.
- **Awareness:** I start by consciously listening and sensing the surroundings. Then I turn my attention into my body. I feel the sensation in my feet, legs and bottom touching the surface. Then I work my way up the body concentrating on one part at a time, until I reach the top of my head where I can feel a very subtle sensation, as if someone gently holding a hand there.

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- **Concentration on breathing:** I use four different stages of breathing. First I "drop numbers" (1 to 10) at the end of exhaling and repeat the series of ten for about five times. Then the same but drop the number at the beginning of inhaling. Third stage is to follow the whole breath all the way in and out (it naturally gets deeper). Fourth (and most difficult stage) is sensing the air between the nostrils.
- **Metta bhavana:** I wish to myself "May I be well and happy. May I be free from suffering, hatred and anxiety. May I be well, peaceful and happy…" Then I repeat the same for a) someone I look up to: a teacher, b) a good friend, c) someone I've had trouble with, d) a neutral person (someone who I don't know personally) and e) all of these together. Then I visualize the good vibes (in my case they are pink) going to all directions: below me, above me, to the left, to the right, behind me, in front of me, to the east, to the west, to the north, to the south. I keep wishing "May all beings be well, peaceful and happy."
- **Only breathing:** Then I get back to the fourth stage of breathing described before. Whenever thoughts arise or physical feelings surface, I try to accept it and let go of them by getting back to the breathing. I sometimes use the labeling technique: becoming aware of the thinking and letting it go. After a while I might be able to let go of even this but only for a few moments.
- **End of meditation:** I try to avoid opening my eyes before the alarm clock rings (if I do I might not be able to move my feet). I slowly become aware of my body and the surroundings, open my eyes, wiggle my toes and take my time before getting up.
- **After meditation:** My mind still and heart light, I continue sending the good vibes to others even after the meditation. It makes me smile.

WHEN: Ideally you would meditate alone every day once or twice (morning and/or evening) for 15-45 minutes at a time, attend a weekly guided meditation of about two hours and a weekend retreat once a month. If your motivation is to expand your consciousness through insight meditation, a regular practice is required. For merely maintaining internal peace, love and joy, most important is that one keeps up the balanced behavior in everyday life. I sometimes don't do any meditation for months and then get back to the habit when I feel the need for it.

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FAQ – CHAPTER ONE

Why did you take the elephant as a metaphor? Isn't it the same as Hellsten's hippo?
For whatever the reason "elephant" was the first thing that came to my mind when I was talking with a Canadian friend of mine about self, ego and mind. We were basically talking about the same thing but lacked common terminology. By the time of writing I still haven't read Hellsten's book cover to cover but I've skimmed it through after being asked this question. Now I can confidently answer that the hippo (childhood trauma) is one of the elephant's (the ego) closest friends.

Why does the teacher call life drama elephant dung?
When we say that we are going through a rough patch in life, it is only rough to our ego. Losing your job, being bullied or even loss of a close person in your life cannot hurt you, only your elephant. The more you identify with the drama in your life the more vital your elephant becomes. Suffering is elephant food.

What is the Source the teacher mentions?
Everything in the universe is connected; everything began from the same source. We are all part of one big system. At times – especially when you are surrounded by nature – you can feel the connectedness with everything and everyone. We'll address this more in chapter two.

Are you saying thinking is bad?
Nothing is good or bad as such. However, you can become a captive of incessant, uncontrolled thinking. If you are aware of your thinking you can put it in good use - you can work with your elephant. Our technological marvels have been made with the cunning mind, but how we use those technologies needs more than a mind. It needs a heart.

I agree with what you say about identifying with your past drama but how about good stories; can't we tell even them?
Of course you can tell any stories you want. Just be aware if it's just a story or if you are somehow feeding your elephant with it. I have caught myself many times talking about my achievements or good things people have said about me, and realized only later that I was just trying to make myself look good in the eyes of the person I was telling the story to. That was elephant-talk!

Are all needs, wants and desires from the elephant? For example, if I have a desire to escape the rat race, then is that still my elephant?
Usually what you think is coming from your elephant, and what you feel is the "true me". In your example both of these are possible. Maybe you look up to someone who is leading a nice life without having to worry about working every day, and you are envious to that person. In that case it is your elephant: your egoistic mind identifies with that possible future state and creates a desire in your mind. Or maybe it is that you feel that you need to change your life, exit the rat race and change your life situation. Then the message is coming from your being, from within, from who you really are. You can feel it. You are definitely not the only one who seeks to exit the rat race. This is typical for our time.

God, spirit, soul, consciousness, true me... Are all these synonyms?
For me they are. If God really created us in his own image, doesn't it mean that we all together are God? When I say "we" I don't refer to our egoistic minds or our bodies, but our spirit. I'm not saying we should "act like Gods" but find the divinity within – connect to the source.

Are you saying we don't need clothes, dishes, and home electronics at all?
I'm saying we don't need that much of them. Of course you have to wear something and need some appliances in your kitchen, but majority of our stuff is either useless or could be shared with a number of people. Sometimes we collect stuff to fill the empty space in our place. In that case, move, go on a long vacation or get yourself temporarily homeless. It will make you prioritize. Timothy Ferriss asks: "What is the

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20% of my belongings that I use 80% of the time? Eliminate the other 80% in clothing, magazines, books, and all else. Be ruthless - you can always repurchase things you can't live without." The sheer amount of stuff has created a new line of business of professional organizers who help you to decide what to keep and what to toss. See www.napo.net for more details. Consider also how you could share things that you only need occasionally. Use web services where you can loan what you need, get together with your friends to make common purchases when applicable and coordinate with your neighbors what you can share.

Does leaving the rat race mean that we should all become homeless and do nothing?
Being definitely is more important than mere doing. But we can do great things when the being is our basis. We get back to this in chapter three. For now, keep your day job.

What does it mean to be more conscious?
Steve Pavlina defines it as the progressive realization of conscious mastery over your mind. This includes all of the following:

- making careful, intelligent, and deliberate decisions
- maintaining a positive emotional state regardless of circumstances
- developing empowering beliefs while purging disempowering ones
- understanding your own thought processes, emotions, and behaviors
- staying focused on what's most important while tuning out distractions
- building an accurate and effective model of reality

Isn't selfish behavior in human nature?
There is a difference between human nature and human behavior. A large part of our behavior is affected by our surrounding culture. We will come back to this in chapter three, but here's a brief answer. Many argue that people are naturally plain selfish, competitive and greedy. They fail to see that if we function from a new set of values, it changes people's behavior on both individual and community level: Notwithstanding how well off and equal we might be, one will always find people who want to rule and suppress others.

Well, one can only speak for oneself. I don't want to rule or suppress because it's idiotic. We are all on the same side and there's no point harming my brother or sister because it harms me. For now, note that there is a difference between human nature and human behavior: the former comes in genes and the latter is due to the cultural conditioning.

I am an atheist; I find it hard to believe any spiritual teachings…
I've called myself an atheist too. Nowadays I'd rather not put myself in any category. I don't put much emphasis on believing. Knowing through own experiences or at least through rationalization seems to be much more meaningful. However, I don't exclude spiritual truths on the basis that they might not be improvable by science. Only lately science, especially quantum physics, has started realizing that science might not be able to explain everything. In other words, reality can be more than just what we can perceive with our five senses.

I learned a new term called secular humanism that seems to be beyond atheism and agnosticism. On their website they state: "Secular humanists reject supernatural and authoritarian beliefs. They affirm that we must take responsibility for our own lives and the communities and world in which we live. Secular humanism emphasizes reason and scientific inquiry, individual freedom and responsibility, human values and compassion, and the need for tolerance and cooperation." I whole-heartedly stand behind everything said here, but it doesn't mean I would stand against people who wish to keep their own belief systems. In the end even most of the religions are based on very similar stories and teachings (see for example the work of Acharya S).

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What do you mean money is created out of thin air?
It's all public information. The fractional reserve system is explained in a common economics book used in universities globally. The book is "Principles of Economics" (Mankiw, 2008, p. 617-618). Fractional reserve banking means "a banking system in which banks hold only a fraction of deposits as reserves". Traditionally this reserve ratio was 9:1, in the case of Fed 40-something to 1, GoldmanSachs 100-something... At some point it got out of hand.

Here's an example from Mankiw's book (p. 617-618):

- Let's suppose that a bank has 9:1 reserve ratio: It keeps 10 percent of its deposits in reserve and loans out the rest.
- The bank still has $100 in liabilities because making the loans did not alter the bank's obligation to its depositors.
- But now the bank has two kinds of assets: It has $10 of reserves in its vault, and it has loans of $90. (These loans are liabilities of the people taking out the loans but they are assets of the bank making the loans, because the borrowers will later repay the bank.)
- Before a bank makes any loans, the money supply is the $100 of deposits in the bank. When the bank makes these loans the money supply increases. The depositors still have demand deposits totaling $100, but now the borrowers hold $90 in currency. The money supply (which equals currency plus demand deposits) equals $190.
- Thus, when banks hold only a fraction of deposits in reserve, banks create money.
- At first, this creation of money by fractional-reserve banking may seem too good to be true because it appears that the bank has created money out of thin air, but the borrowers are also taking on debts, so the loans do not make them any richer. The economy is no wealthier than before.
- The creation of money does not stop with the first bank: The borrower from first bank uses the $90 to buy something from someone who then deposits the currency in second bank. After the deposit, this bank has liabilities of $90. If second bank has a 9:1 reserve ratio, it keeps assets of $9 in reserve and makes $81 in loans. In this way, second bank creates an additional $81 of money. If this $81 is eventually deposited in third bank, this bank keeps $8.10 in reserve and makes $72.90 in loans. And so on… the $100 of reserves generates $1000 of money.
- $900 has been created out of thin air. But remember: money means debt. Add interest into this equation and the available money supply is always less than the increasingly growing amount of debts, i.e. individuals, companies and governments owe more and more money to each other all the time. This is an unsustainable system.

If you're interested to have a visual expression of "where does money come from", check these videos:

- Bill Moyers Journal (October 9, 2009)
- Money as Debt & Money as Debt II
- Zeitgeist Addendum
- The Money Fix (trailer)
- Zeitgeist Orientation Guide
- Peter Joseph's lecture

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TIPS, TRICKS AND TOOLS - CHAPTER TWO

Learn more about your personality

Although common personality typologies are out of the scope of this book, one might want to get accustomed to these in order to become familiar with one's ordinary behavior. There are various categorizations available. For example Stephen Strack (1999) lists Theodore Millon's normal personality styles:

- **Introversive/retiring** (asocial, passive–detached). Aloof and solitary by nature, these individuals prefer limited social involvement. They are easygoing, slow-paced, and reserved. They rarely show strong emotion and may appear to others as dull and lacking in spontaneity.
- **Inhibited/hesitating** (avoidant, active–detached). Shy and sensitive to criticism, these individuals keep others at an arm's distance and remain on the periphery of social gatherings. They are typically kind and considerate and do not like to draw attention to themselves. They are wary of novelty and seek stable rather than changeable environments.
- **Cooperative/agreeing** (submissive, passive–dependent). These individuals value communality and seek others' approval. They are docile, obliging, and agreeable. They tend to think poorly of their own skills and seek stronger individuals to lean on.
- **Sociable/outgoing** (gregarious, active–dependent). Active and extroverted, these individuals seek high levels of stimulation and attention. They are often spontaneous, colorful, and dramatic. Their interests and emotions change frequently and others may experience them as shallow and fickle.
- **Confident/asserting** (narcissistic, passive–independent). Typically bold and self-assured, these individuals think highly of themselves and expect others to cater to their wishes and demands. They can be charming and manipulative and others may see them as lacking empathy.
- **Forceful/dissenting** (aggressive, active–independent). Assertive and socially dominant, these individuals are adventurous, competitive, and nonconforming. They persevere in difficult circumstances but can be inconsiderate of others' needs. They are often brusque and insensitive in their tactics and downplay the value of tender emotions.
- **Controlling** (aggressive, active–discordant). Domineering and aggressive, these individuals see themselves as being tough-minded and fearless in a world that is harsh and threatening. They are often exploitive and manipulative and do not mind stepping on others' toes if doing so will get them what they want.
- **Respectful/conforming** (conforming, passive–ambivalent). Rule-bound and conscientious, these individuals are hard-working and respectful of those in authority. They tend to be perfectionist and emotionally constricted. They are methodical and persistent but can be too rigid and moralistic in their efforts to live up to conventional standards.
- **Sensitive/complaining** (negativistic, active–ambivalent). Unconventional and moody, these individuals march to the beat of a different drummer and are not happy with the status quo. They are often loyal and forthright with their opinions but are also awkward, changeable, and fault finding.
- **Yielding** (negativistic, passive–discordant). Submissive and self-demeaning, these individuals expect the worst and often contribute to their own unhappiness. They are frequently moody, irritable, and pessimistic.

Check also:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Belbin's Team Roles
- Enneagram

Change the world one couch at a time

That's the slogan of CouchSurfing – a global online community for travelers who wish to accommodate each other and learn from people from different cultures. CS is a wonderful way to connect to people and get to learn local culture and customs first hand. Next time when you're traveling, think once more if you really want to stay in a hotel!

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CouchSurfers don't have much of a shared identity – nothing much in common except traveling. However, it seems to be enough to bond individuals together. It's nice to know that where ever you go there are CouchSurfers around. To learn more, go to www.couchsurfing.org

Go hitchhiking

The connectedness in humanity is easier to understand when you take yourself out of your daily routines. Hitchhiking is one way to do that. I've had people turning around and coming back to pick me up if they didn't see me in time to stop. I've had delicious cherries, home-made cottage cheese, pickles and cucumber when I was hungry. I've stayed in people's places who offered me a ride. All these experiences prove that people are good and helpful by nature. People do care. Moreover, hitchhiking helps you to connect with yourself and the nature. The concept of waiting will vanish; you start using the extra time to watch lady bugs and listening to the concerto of grasshoppers. It doesn't matter what age you are. I've seen people up to 90 years old hitchhiking (in Lithuania). And no, it is not dangerous! Go for it!

A letting go ritual for forgiveness

Fetzer Institute has a nice rich media tool to help you forgive yourself or others:

Frederic Luskin introduces nine steps to forgiveness (www.learningtoforgive.com):

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a trusted couple of people about your experience.
2. Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else.
3. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that hurt you, or condoning of their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the "peace and understanding that come from blaming that which has hurt you less, taking the life experience less personally, and changing your grievance story."
4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes – or ten years -ago. Forgiveness helps to heal those hurt feelings.
5. At the moment you feel upset practice a simple stress management technique to soothe your body's flight or fight response.
6. Give up expecting things from other people, or your life, that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the "unenforceable rules" you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, peace and prosperity and work hard to get them.
7. Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you. Instead of mentally replaying your hurt seek out new ways to get what you want.
8. Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you. Forgiveness is about personal power.
9. Amend your grievance story to remind you of the heroic choice to forgive.

The practice of forgiveness has been shown to reduce anger, hurt depression and stress and leads to greater feelings of hope, peace, compassion and self confidence. Practicing forgiveness leads to healthy relationships as well as physical health. It also influences our attitude which opens the heart to kindness, beauty, and love.

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FAQ – CHAPTER TWO

Are you saying traditional personal-development literature doesn't work?
Most of the personal development literature doesn't talk about letting go of your ego. However, most of the religions mention it directly or indirectly. Once you understand the concept of elephant you might get more out of the conventional personal development tools also. If you have read a lot of books on that topic, maybe you could revisit them and see if new insights arise.

What are the control dramas?
Control dramas are introduced by James Redfield in Celestine Prophecy. They are mentioned in this book because they are part of your elephant's behavior. There are two aggressive dramas (intimidator and interrogator), and two passive dramas (poor me and aloof). Based on what dramas your parents have been acting out you have developed your own drama – which is not necessarily same as your parents. Here they are briefly explained (try to spot your parents and yourself):

- **Intimidator** – Your parents were often on the verge of exploding, threatening you, being strict and inflexible, and always giving you orders. They might have been angry and self-centered, even making you feel afraid at home.
- **Interrogator** – Your parents pried to see what you were doing. They were critical, undermining, and needy. They seemed to have infallible logic, were sarcastic, and monitored you. They could have been skeptical, sarcastic, self-righteous, and perfectionist.
- **Poor me** – Your parents always saw the negative in you, looked for problems, were always talking about being busy or tired, or made you feel guilty for not solving their problems. They drew attention by sighing, trembling, crying or playing a victim.
- **Aloof** – Your parents tended to be distant, busy, away from home, not too interested in your life, unresponsive, secretive, or preoccupied with their own stuff.

When I identified myself having the poor me drama, I realized my mom was the same and my dad an interrogator. Having this realization – being able to put a name on your elephant's behavior – was really helpful to stop acting it out again. I have mostly got rid of the poor me drama and if I ever run into a situation where it might be surfacing again I can act before it happens and silence my elephant.

What do you mean human and a horse are in a symbiotic relationship?
Well, at least they were, not that long ago. We used horses as transportation and as help on the field. In turn we provided them with food and shelter. We took care of them and they helped us. It was a very mutualistic relationship.

How come people go to jail for their opinions in Finland?
During 1999-2006 there has been annually roughly 40-80 people who "choose to go to jail" because they don't want to support the military system neither by going to army nor doing the lengthier civil service. They have a choice, but if they want to be authentic to their opinions they have no choice but to go to prison. Here's a letter from the latest imprisoned conscientious objector who after eight months of civil service decided he would go to jail instead (so called "total objection"):

"I, Matti Petteri Pöntiö, refuse to continue my civil service from this day onward. I feel this system is an artificial punishment, an extension to forced militaristic obligation that is upheld in a way that violates basic human rights. My pacifistic world view doesn't enjoy freedom of opinion even in this option that seems like a quasi-compromise. I see the total objection as the only solution of clean conscience even if it was against our national modus operandi and even if I get punished by losing my freedom. I regret that I didn't make this decision already in the beginning of my civil service. My human responsibility is to criticize social institutions and cultural phenomena that are against humanity, not to approve them."

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Can you give a few more examples of appreciative inquiry questions?
In AI you "trick" the other person to be positive with positive questions. It's normal for people to tell about what is going wrong, but you can lead the discussion back to positive with the questions you ask. Of course it's easier to help other people to strengthen their relationships but maybe you could try it also on your own relationships. Here are some example questions to get you started:

- **Peak experience:** What has been a high point in your relationship? Describe how you felt and what made the situation possible.
- **Things valued:** What do you value most about yourself, the other person and your relationship?
- **Core factors:** How do you stay fresh, energized and enthusiastic in this relationship? What makes you shine?
- **Three wishes:** Describe your three concrete wishes for the future. How might we achieve them?

What do you mean with scarcity and abundance as drivers?
In our current fear-based system scarcity of resources is largely man-made. Fine, there are some minerals and other natural resources that are running out due to the insane manufacturing of stuff. However, for example energy is not a scarce resource although we have been made to believe so. We address this in chapter three. In a love-based system abundance is natural: people are not hoarding resources and knowledge but share willingly so there's enough for everyone. This lesson can be found also from leadership books: management-oriented people try to optimize scarce resources, whereas people with leadership in the core go out of their way to create an abundance of resources.

What is maximizing trust in decision-making?
Our traditional planning and decision-making process has been highly analytical. It has been based on minimizing doubt. We have carefully collected data and weighed all the possible options before arriving at a conclusion. Often this has led to a situation where the opportunities are gone already at that time or people involved are so tired after the burdensome process that they make poor decisions. In love-based system decision-making is more agile: a general vision is created together and then details are worked up along the way. Key here is maximizing people's trust in the process. For example a Dutch scholar Ap Dijksterhuis has done a lot of groundbreaking work in this area of unconscious-thought theory. According to him simple decisions are best solved with rational mind, but more complex decisions should be approached with the unconscious mind: letting the answers arise.

With letting go, do you mean we should also let go of our technological advancement?
No. Isn't it nice that you can take your laptop to your summer cottage and be in the nature while working? Deciding to remover clutter from your life and simplify it, releases you to concentrate also mentally in a less cluttered state. Instead of giving up all the great technologies we have created, we can start developing the technology not to make money but to help everyone.

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TIPS, TRICKS AND TOOLS - CHAPTER THREE

Web-solutions to encourage sharing

There is a multitude of web-sites that encourage people to share. Here a sample of them:

- **BookCrossing:** Most people read a book only once, and unless it has no emotional value or you need to keep it for later research, you might as well give it to someone else. BookCrossing is an international movement to share the books you read. The basic idea is that you mark the books that you wish to circulate with BookCrossing labels and leave them somewhere to be found. Later people can follow where the book is going by logging on to the website www.bookcrossing.com.
- **Clothes Swapping:** Even clothes can be shared. For more information about Holly and Shirley Yanez's clothes swapping parties visit: www.thehollywoodlookforless.blogspot.com
- **Timebanking:** Timebanking is much like LETS. It is a charity all about giving and receiving. In return for one hour of help, you get 1 time credit. You can spend your time credit having someone help you, or swapping it for a freebie, such as a cinema voucher, at the time bank. Learn more in: www.timebanking.org
- **Freecycle:** This is a non-profit movement of people who are giving (and receiving) stuff for free in their own towns. Visit website www.freecycle.org.
- **Liftsharing:** Why go alone? To find out more about sharing car journeys with other people, check out the following websites (or find the ones near you):
    - www.liftshare.com
    - www.carplus.com
    - www.changeyourworld.com

Being up to date with developments

Think about what kind of news you would like to get. You don't have to receive the same content that mainstream media wants you to know nor do you have to tolerate the incessant stream of information coming your way. You can configure for example Google Reader or Netvibes to deliver you the news that you want. I'm using Netvibes and I get RSS feeds from sources like Reuters, Talousdemokratia (Finnish blog), TED, Helsingin Sanomat (Finnish newspaper), White House, Signs of the times, Technology Review and Alternet. If you wish you could follow both mainstream and alternative media for getting different sides of stories and then make your own conclusions. Here are some sites worth checking:

- **TED** (www.ted.com) – TED shares "ideas worth spreading" through "riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world".
- **Signs of the times** (www.sott.net) – An alternative news site with a concern on how the events on the planet, not only those within the US, affect our spiritual evolution.
- **Guerrilla News Network** (www.guerrillanews.com) – An independent news organization with a mission is to expose people to important global issues through cross-platform guerrilla programming.
- **Disinformation** (www.disinfo.com) – A search service of choice for individuals looking for information on current affairs, politics, strange science and "hidden information" that seldom slips through the cracks of corporate-owned media.
- **AlterNet** (www.alternet.org) – A news magazine and online community that creates original journalism and amplifies the best of hundreds of other independent media sources. AlterNet's aim is to inspire action and advocacy on the environment, human rights and civil liberties, social justice, media, health care issues, and more.
- **RINF** (www.rinf.com) – Source for alternative news from around the world, which is updated around the clock.
- **Unfiltered News** (www.realityzone.com/un.html) – Weekly summaries of unfiltered news and commentary compiled by G. Edward Griffin.

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- **Worldchanging.com** (www.worldchanging.com) – A nonprofit media organization headquartered in Seattle that comprises a global network of independent journalists, designers and thinkers.
- **Global Research** (www.globalresearch.ca) – The Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG) is an independent research organization and media group of writers, scholars, journalists and activists.
- **Prison Planet** (www.prisonplanet.com) – A very provocative news source by Alex Jones.
- **Project Camelot** (www.projectcamelot.org) - Focus in an investigation into: extraterrestrial visitation and contact, time travel, mind control, classified advanced technology, free energy, possible coming earth changes, and revealing plans that exist to control the human race.
- **Conspiracy Planet** (www.conspiracyplanet.com) – An alternative news and history network.
- **Brasscheck TV** (www.brasschecktv.com) – A collection of interesting videos organized by topic.
- **World Newspapers** (www.world-newspapers.com) – A collection of links to mainstream and alternative media around the world.

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FAQ – CHAPTER THREE

It feels you haven't shown all possibilities for future society. Isn't there something missing from picture 13?
That's a good question. There are indeed two options missing. First of them is the early stage of our current monetary system. Still in the fifties it looked like the answer to all our prayers. The insurmountable debt had not kicked in yet. In that system there was high individual freedom, little or no altruism, and little or no communality. The motto of this kind of system could be "everyone for himself" as opposed to "one for all and all for one" (that would be the scientific-spiritual society).

Now, what would be a society with little or no individual freedom, little or no altruism and high communality? That would be a global dictatorship with a motto "All for one... grudgingly". I didn't want to even consider this option because it's such a negative vision. Remember that at any given time our society forms a triangle according to these three axes. Systems tend to oscillate between chaos and order. Thus having 100% ideal society is next to impossible.

How about local exchange trade systems? Aren't they also using sort of money?
Yes. LETS works fine in the transition but it's not an ultimate solution. It can show people in the right direction and after some time of passing numbers from one person to another we might realize how useless it actually is. However, one key difference with LETS money and fiat money is that the former is abundant (anyone can create it) where as the latter is scarce. It would be stupid to hoard LETS money; they are just useless numbers. In fact, some LETS systems include a rule that if you don't use your money it starts diminishing. This is called negative interest.

Can you give an example of the local exchange trading system?
Local Exchange Trading Systems are local, non-profit exchange networks in which goods and services can be traded without the need for printed currency. One good example is the city of Bath, 156 kilometers from London (in the whole of the UK it is estimated that already 40,000 people are using LETS). This is an excerpt from Bath LETS website (www.bathlets.org.uk):

Background
Local Exchange Trading is a well-established way for people to trade skills and services without the need for money, and is part of the long tradition of self-help that people use in times of economic difficulty.

The Basic Idea
LETS is an energy exchange recognizing the value of reciprocity: you can earn points with one member and spend them with another according to your needs. Members aim to give and take in equal measure over a period of time. To keep track of transactions members give each other "points" with a name that reflects the locality of the group. The local organizers keep the administrative systems going and encourage members to meet up at social events.

Ethos of Bath LETS
We are a member of LETSlink UK, and follow the national guidelines. Each LETS has its own way of working to ensure that it is in tune with local conditions and the wishes of members. In Bath LETS we have agreed that each member's time has the same value as another's time. The standard rate for exchange of skills (whatever they are) is 25 olivers per hour. This differs with Accommodation where the standard rate is usually 25 olivers per night although this might differ with each person (please check).

LETS Work Together
Many people are looking for a sense of belonging to the community which is something which seems to have been lost with the hours we now spend at work earning a living. There is great joy that can be felt from working with other people in a way that feels more wholesome than much of what happens in the

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society we now live in. Bath LETS offers various opportunities for working in teams such as: gardening maintenance, household repairs, and event organization including cleaning, baking cakes, and administration.

You keep mentioning hunter-gatherers. Couldn't we go back into that lifestyle?
Although many of the hunter-gatherer cultures have been either wiped out or assimilated, there are some tribes left. Feel free to join them or start your own tribe. As said, hunter-gatherers can coexist with city life in a scientific-spiritual society. Living in cities can be more ecological than everyone prowling in the woods in their small groups. If seven billion people would just scatter around to hunt and forage, soon there would be nothing to hunt or gather anymore.

If everyone on the planet would benefit of the technologies that have helped the western countries to prosper, wouldn't that lead to population explosion and utter devastation of our planet?
What has happened in the so-called western countries is that while life expectancy has gone up, the family size has decreased. In Finland the population is no longer, growing apart from the meager growth in immigration. Regarding this you can do your own studies in www.gapminder.org. As for prosperity for everyone, with the profit-motive gone there would be no need for continuous economic growth. Society would no longer be based on consumption and property ownership. Resources would be in much more effective use due to the new values. When the majority of things are shared, there's less need for production. In our current society there's too much stuff (electronic appliances, vehicles etc) that just lay dormant most of the time. With the help of technology we can balance development with carrying capacity of the earth. In essence, everything from food production to forestry would be sustainable.

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TIPS, TRICKS AND TOOLS - CHAPTER FOUR

Movies to watch before saving the world
Great movies to see to get inspiration for saving the world include:

- Home
- Zeitgeist: Addendum
- Zeitgeist: Orientation Guide
- Future by Design
- Earth 2.0 (in the making)
- Pay It Forward

Remind yourself of your dreams
Go back to the exercise where you jotted down your dreams and wrote a letter to yourself. Get the best pieces of that exercise that you want to save and go to www.dreaminder.com. You can use Dreaminder to remind you of your dreams for example after six months or one year. It's amazing how well you actually commit to change when you publicize your dreams even just for yourself. You'll be surprised how most of your dreams actually came true.

10 powerful questions for change makers
It's time to move out from the old paradigm where answers were laid out for you. Gazillion guides have been written for people to change their workplace, family or the whole life for better. This era is gone. It's time to admit that there are no right answers. Everyone finds their right answers from within. Let's move from Ten Commandments to Ten Powerful Questions:

1. Do you know and feel that change is needed in the world?
2. What should you start changing first?
3. What three things should you change?
4. What does it take? What does it take? What does it take?
5. How do you feel after you've made the change happen? What will you gain?
6. What obstructs the change? What are the barriers? What should you stop doing?
7. What If you fail? How do you rid yourself of fear, doubt and disbelief?
8. Is there anything you need to stop doing?
9. How do you apply this changed behavior to your relationships and community?
10. How do you energize the action? How do you create meaning for others to act?
11. What else should you ask?

Question number one refers to the fact that many people base their behavior on beliefs. I'd like you to concentrate on knowing, more than believing. Second question sees if you are willing to change yourself first. Third section helps you to get started on a few priorities. Fourth question, asked many times in a row, helps you to break down even insurmountable projects to small doable tasks. Fifth question ensures your motivation; you see the treasure at the end of the rainbow. Number six makes you aware of possible pitfalls you need to get prepared for. Question seven ensures you don't dwell on those pitfalls. Eighth question proposes changes to your own behavior by merely stopping deep-rooted old ways. Numbers nine and ten take Ubuntu forward and spread the change to your relationships and community. Last question reminds you that these are not commandments and that there is no fixed number of ways to make the world a better place.

Read better books than this one
Here is a list of recommended reading:

- Bailey, Alice: The Externalisation of the Hierarchy
- Bailey, Alice: The Problems of Humanity

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- Blanton, Brad: Radical Honesty
- Bolte Taylor, Jill: My Stroke of Insight
- Dass, Ram: Be here now
- Easton, Dossie & Liszt, Catherine: The Ethical Slut
- Ferriss, Timothy: The 4-hour Work Week
- Gladwell, Malcolm: Tipping Point
- Hall, Joe & Hammond, Sue: What is Appreciative Inquiry?
- Hall, Peter & Pfeiffer, Ulrich: Urban future 21
- Heinimäki, Jaakko: Outo hartauskirja
- Hellsten, Tommy: Virtahepo olohuoneessa
- Hesse, Herman: Siddharta
- Ingram, Daniel: Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha
- Kouzes & Posner: The Leadership Challenge
- Lao-Tse: The Tao Teh King
- Laszlo, Ervin: Worldshift 2012
- Lewis, Sarah et al: Appreciative Inquiry for Change Management
- Maharaj, Nisargadatta: I Am That
- Marx Hubbard, Barbara: Conscious Evolution
- Millman, Dan: The Peaceful Warrior
- Muller, Robert: Waging Peace
- Orwell, George: 1984
- Quinn, Daniel: Ishmael
- Redfield, James: The Celetine Prophecy
- Senge, Peter: The Fifth Discipline
- Scharmer, Otto: Theory U
- Tolle, Eckhart: The Power of Now
- Tolle, Eckhart: A New Earth
- Twain, Mark: What is Man?
- Wheatley, Margaret: Leadership and the New Science

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FAQ – CHAPTER FOUR

How are the bad deeds of people dealt with in the scientific-spiritual society? Is there a police force, jurisdiction or mental asylums?
In transition phase we should not let go of the police and jurisdiction right away. As society improves we could start downsizing jobs in those sectors, and finally let them go if they are not needed among awakened humankind anymore. If no one owns anything, what's the point of stealing a car for instance? Soon others would be driving in better community cars and the stolen car would have no value because no one would buy it.

In a more equal society people would be naturally better in handling issues in a genuine dialogue. Even crimes of passion – so common today – would be rare. If crimes would still happen they would be dealt with in the local community. In general, people would be more interested to heal and help the criminals than punishing them. Most sick people are the result of a sick society. Mental illnesses would definitely reduce with the receding stress levels in society. Those who need medical care would be taken care of by the community. Both physical and mental care would improve because doctors are no longer driven by selfish incentives; people whose real calling is in healthcare would continue doing it.

Would people be really fat because they are not doing physical work?
Most of the so called civilized people nowadays are not doing physical work either. Imagine you came to today's society from the early 20th century and saw people staring at the screen and typing. Would it occur to you that they are working? Urban people today are complaining that they don't have time or energy to exercise. In scientific-spiritual society you would have both time and energy. Physical activity might actually increase. It's everyone's own choice, really.

Can't you own anything in the future? How about personal belongings and things with emotional value?
Of course you can have your things. No one would force you to share your toothbrush. And if your brother made you a clay pot with his own hands you would most likely want to save it. For others it wouldn't really have value per se.

Are people going to eat animals in the scientific-spiritual society?
The current style of industrial meat production has to end. Feeding cattle with corn and soya bean (topped with growth hormones) is insanity. Food is not supposed to eat more food than it provides. And animals are not supposed to be born, grown and dead in prison. Most likely in the scientific-spiritual society there could be some cultured meat production that doesn't harm animals, sustainable fisheries and small-scale farming (especially outside the cities). However, 100% vegetarian diet will be more and more preferred as the value of life on this planet is properly understood. Mind you, food is not only an ethical but also cultural consideration. If a traditional dish that includes meat is strongly a part of local culture it might be hard to replace it with a vegetarian option.

Why are decisions outsourced to machines? Aren't people voting on the decisions?
The point was that rudimentary tasks don't need to be voted on; they just need to get done. Preprogrammed machines can do these tasks without human intervention. Local communities can use voting when necessary. But as you grow accustomed to the idea of scientific-spiritual society without money and excessive legislation, ask yourself: "What do we really need to vote for?"

How other things are handled in the future?
How should I know? I'm not from the future. Rather than me giving you answers you could see if you can subscribe to Peter Joseph's and Jacque Fresco's ideas. Here's the The Venus Project FAQ.

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