

Waking Up From The American Dream

Getting Involved And Making A Difference: The Cost, The Price, The Benefits
by Betty Smith

Einstein made a statement at the birth of the atomic bomb that applies to all of our life problems, individually and collectively. When you have an issue, problem, or challenge, he said, it cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness in which it was created. In other words, if you don't recognize the existence of a problem or challenge, or that the culture in which you live is steeped in the problem, you will not be moved to involve yourself and seek to bring about change. You have a choice to go along with the status quo and spend a life time in denial, or wake up to a different way of being, a different way of thinking, a different set of values and beliefs.

Our current educational system which is stifled by the thinking that created it during the industrial revolution, pursues the same goals as it did over 150 years ago: to produce obedient workers for the companies and corporations. Rote memorization, unquestioning compliance and dutiful submission to authority—particularly the corporate God. In order to condition people to be good employees and law abiding citizens, it became the job of politics, society, government, religion and the traditional model of parenting to infuse each person with one version of truth. These varied aspects of the one collective dictated what people should think, how they should behave what they should desire and the ultimate--what should be true for a person. Afterall, the more you desire and consume in this revolution, the more you contribute to the growth of the system, and therefore, the more worth you feel as a human being. The preeminent hallmark of success for individuals became fame, fortune and power.

The industrial revolution spawned the thinking that defined our culture and educational system—detached, analytical, logic, completely divorced from soul and spirit. The classical way of teaching left-brain thinking is to have the student sit in silence, upright in a chair, speaking only when given permission by the authority (teacher) in charge, do what they are told without question, drop what ever interests them at the sound of the bell and shuffle off to another class, only to do it all over again. This extremely powerful conditioning process is endorsed, upheld and advanced by politics, society, government, religion, and the traditional model of parenting. Few people survive with any kind of passion or ability to get involved as adults and make a difference in their own lives, much less anything in the culture at large. In many cases the molding of habitual behaviors produced by the industrial revolution completely alienates people from themselves and their natural environment with overwhelming feelings of powerlessness and isolation.

However a few people do survive, and find that life itself is stronger than any conditioning or indoctrination. Those who have a strong internal motivator

wake up, then in turn seek to wake up as many other people as they can and bring to light what is really going on. To each degree one wakes up, that person raises his or her consciousness and is able to think and act differently with beliefs and values derived from life experience, rather than a directive. Now the individual has the ability to solve personal and global problems from a new vantage point, that the previous way of thinking, acting and believing created.

There is a price tag, however. In some cases it is somewhat like submitting to surgery without an anesthetic--some people make it and some don't. In order to survive our conditioning, we have numbed out our anger, hurt, frustration, despair, depression, fatigue, and feelings of entrapment and worthlessness. When we start down the path of waking up, we are confronted with our real feelings. In the process of seeking to awaken others, feelings we have repressed or numbed often surface through that very interaction, even if only through the written word or video images. This is particularly true for leaders of the evolutionary shift in consciousness (aka, Cultural Creatives). The voice within urges them to step forward, and that act in itself brings people face-to-face with a past that told them they were nobody.

As we raise our consciousness and level of wakefulness, we come to know what is true for ourselves, rather than observing and accepting what appears to be true for others and adopting it as our own. Once we begin questioning the status quo and cease mimicking those we perceive as successful or powerful, the more we discover what *is* true for ourselves. And when we discover *that* truth, the more we have a direct experience of the organizing power and promise of life. That is where the healing starts. From the healing, a new truth is revealed: it is our ability to think independently and live uniquely that allows us to get involved. In so doing, we restore and heal our environment; in turn we heal ourselves. It's a symbiotic process. We and our environment are all part of the same oneness of life. Self-awareness breeds courage—the courage to step into our pain. And that single act of bravery opens us to healing, which gives birth to motivation, breaking us free from the shackles of paralysis and apathy. The circle of life expands in a new way.

Lester Brown, Editor of the World Watch Magazine, writes of three revolutions in the human journey. First is the agricultural revolution that took thousands of years. The second is the industrial revolution which ran its course in two hundred years and the third is the ecological revolution, which we are now in, and will be for decades if we are to survive. The stakes in this modern-day revolution are extremely high and will be determined by our will to heal and survive.

If we persevere in our commitment to the process of waking up, continue to learn from our experiences and become involved, we WILL make a difference. This is when magic begins to happen. Experience teaches that whatever we

dwell on consciously or UNCONSCIOUSLY will come to pass. This power lies within us. As we learn the exercise of mindfulness and listening to our thoughts, we gradually comprehend the power of thought. Forgiveness of oneself and others releases the anger, frustration, despair, entrapment, fatigue and feelings of powerlessness and depression and is replaced by a profound sense of well-being, thankfulness and love, filling every nook and cranny of one's being.

Getting involved can be a fun process. Involvement and making a difference creates energy, enthusiasm and trips our creative and innovative buttons. And with all the challenges we face locally, nationally, and globally, we need to use every ounce of our creativity, individually and collectively. Meeting other evolving people is one of the great fringe benefits. The gift of wonder with which a child is born, is the ultimate secret we discover. As we intimately interact with each other and dance with the joy and harmony of life, the more fun, laughter, and humor we have. When we move forward joyously, the more effective we are, and the quicker we reach our destination of creating a sustainable culture, that we say we desire!

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