



1

To Choose Life

*How shall I begin my song
in the blue night that is settling?
In the great night my heart will go out,
toward me the darkness comes rattling.
In the great night, my heart will go out.*

— Papago Medicine Woman Chant

*I call heaven and earth to record this day to your
account, that I have set before you life and death, blessing
and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you
and your seed shall live.*

— Deut. 30.19

WE LIVE IN AN EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT ON EARTH. We possess more technical prowess and knowledge than our ancestors could have dreamt of. Our telescopes let us see through time to the beginnings of the universe; our microscopes pry open the codes at the core of organic life; our satellites reveal global weather patterns and hidden behaviors of remote nations. And our electronic surveillance capacity leaves no aspect of anyone's life

safe from corporate and governmental scrutiny. Who, even a century ago, could have imagined such immensity of information and power?

At the same time we witness destruction of life in dimensions that confronted no previous generation in recorded history. Certainly our ancestors knew wars, plagues and famine, but today it is not just a forest here and some farmlands and fisheries there. Today entire species are dying, and whole cultures, and ecosystems on a global scale, even to the oxygen-producing plankton of our seas.

Scientists may try to tell us what is at stake when we burn rainforests and fossil fuels, dump toxic wastes in air, soil, sea and use chemicals that devour our planet's protective ozone shield. But their warnings are hard to heed. For ours is an Industrial Growth Society.ⁱ Our political economy requires ever-increasing extraction and consumption of resources. To the Industrial Growth Society, the Earth is supply house and sewer. The planet's body is not only dug up and turned into goods to sell, it is also a *sink* for the often toxic products of our industries. If we sense that the tempo is accelerating, we are right — for the logic of the Industrial Growth Society is exponential, demanding not only *growth*, but rising rates of growth and market

share. The logic of ever-expanding need for resources and markets is generating what is increasingly recognized as a global corporate empire, secured by military threats, interventions and occupations.

The Industrial Growth Society generates great suffering worldwide. Buddhist social thinkers see that what is at work here are institutionalized forms of the three mutually reinforcing *poisons* at the root of all

Just as a continually growing cancer eventually destroys its life-support systems by destroying its host, a continuously expanding global economy is slowly destroying its host — the Earth's ecosystem.

— Lester Brown
State of the World, 1998

ⁱ We are indebted to Norwegian eco-philosopher Sigmund Kvaloy for this term. We use it as a more inclusive term than capitalism, because it also applies to state-controlled industrial economies premised on growth.

human suffering: greed, aggression and delusion. Consumerism can be seen as institutionalized greed, the military-industrial complex as institutionalized aggression and state- and corporate-controlled media as institutionalized delusion. It follows that we are confronting in the Industrial Growth Society universal errors to which all humans are prone, rather than evil or satanic forces. It also follows that once these errors become institutionalized as political, economic and legal agents in their own right, they attain a degree of autonomy extending beyond the control and the conscious choices of any individuals involved. This understanding can motivate us not to condemn so much as to work to free ourselves and others who are in bondage to these institutionalized poisons.

In any case, we are wreaking unparalleled destruction on the life of our planet. What will be left for those who come after? What is in store for the future ones? Too busy running to think about that, we try to close our minds to nightmare scenarios of struggle over what's left in a wasted, contaminated world.

We've come so far. The life that is in us has survived so many millennia of trials and evolved through so many challenges, and there is so much promise still to unfold — yet we can lose it all as the web of living systems unravels. Yahweh's words through Moses now bear a literal truth: "I have set before you life and death; therefore, choose life."

We Can Still Opt for a Life-Sustaining World

We *can* choose life. Even as we face global climate disruption, world-encompassing nuclear contamination, hydro-fracking, mountaintop removal mining, tar sands extraction, deep sea drilling and the genetic engineering of our food supply, we can still choose life. We can still act for the sake of a livable world.

It is crucial that we know this: *we can meet our needs without destroying our life-support system.* We have the scientific knowledge and the technical means to do that. We have the savvy and the resources to grow sufficient quantities of real, unaltered food. We know how to protect clean air and water. We can generate the energy we require through solar power, wind, tides, algae and fungi. We have

birth control methods to slow the growth of, and eventually reduce, human population. We have the technical and social mechanisms to dismantle weapons, deflect wars and give everyone a voice in democratic self-governance. We can exercise our moral imagination to bring our lifestyles and consumption into harmony with the living systems of Earth. All we need is the collective will.

To choose life means to build a life-sustaining society. “A sustainable society is one that satisfies its needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations,”¹ according to Lester Brown of Earth Policy Institute. In contrast to the Industrial Growth Society, a Life-Sustaining Society operates within the carrying capacity of its life-support system, regional and planetary, both in the resources it consumes and the wastes it produces.

To choose life in this planet-time is a mighty adventure. As people everywhere are discovering, this adventure ignites more courage and solidarity than any military campaign. From high school students restoring streams for salmon spawning, to inner-city neighbors creating community gardens on vacant lots, from First Nations peoples blocking oil production and pipelines on their ancestral lands to village women bringing solar and water-purifying technologies to their communities — numberless people are organizing, learning, taking action.

This multifaceted human activity on behalf of life may not make today’s headlines or newscasts, but to our progeny it will matter more than anything else we do. For, if there is to be a livable world for those who come after us, it will be because we have managed to make the transition from the Industrial Growth Society to a Life-Sustaining Society. When people of the future look back at this historical moment, they will see more clearly than we can now, how revolutionary our actions were. Perhaps they’ll call it the time of the Great Turning.

They will recognize it as epochal. While the agricultural revolution took centuries and the industrial revolution took generations, this ecological revolution has to happen within a matter of years. It also has to be conscious — involving not only the political economy, but the habits, values and understandings that foster it.

Choosing Our Story

By *story* is meant our version of reality, the lens through which we see and understand what is happening now in our world. Often our story is largely unconscious and unquestioned, and we assume it to be the only reality.

In the industrialized world today, the most commonly held stories seem to boil down to three. We have found it helpful in workshops to present these three stories as all happening right now; in that sense, they are all “true.” We can choose the one we want to get behind, the one that seems to hold the widest and most useful perspective.

1. **Business As Usual** is the story of the Industrial Growth Society. We hear it from politicians, business schools, corporations and corporate-controlled media. Here the defining assumption is that there is little need to change the way we live. The central plot is about getting ahead. Economic recessions and extreme weather conditions are just temporary difficulties from which we will surely recover, and even profit.
2. **The Great Unraveling** is the story we tend to hear from environmental scientists, independent journalists and activists. It draws attention to the disasters that Business As Usual has caused and continues to create. It is an account backed by evidence of the ongoing derangement and collapse of biological, ecological, economic and social systems.
3. **The Great Turning** is the story we hear from those who see the Great Unraveling and don't want it to have the last word. It involves the emergence of new and creative human responses that enable the transition from the Industrial Growth Society to a Life-Sustaining Society. The central plot is about joining together to act for the sake of life on Earth.

All together, we are changing from a society whose organizing principle is the pyramid or hierarchy to one whose image is a circle. Humans are linked, not ranked. Humans and the environment are linked, not ranked.

— Gloria Steinem

The Great Turning ⁱⁱ

Let us borrow the perspective of future generations and, in that larger context of time, look at how this Great Turning is gaining momentum today, through the choices of countless individuals and groups. We can see that it is happening simultaneously in three areas or dimensions that are mutually reinforcing. These are:

1. Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings
2. Analysis and transformation of the foundations of our common life
3. A fundamental shift in worldview and values

Many of us are engaged in all three, each of which is necessary to the creation of a life-sustaining society. People working quietly behind the scenes in any of these three dimensions may not consider themselves activists, but we do. We consider anyone acting for a purpose larger than personal gain or advantage to be an activist.

1. Holding Actions in Defense of Life

Perhaps the most visible dimension of the Great Turning consists of the countless actions to slow down the destruction being wrought by the Industrial Growth Society. These take political, legislative and legal forms, as well as direct action. We call them *holding actions* because they attempt to hold the line, to buy time for systemic changes to take place. Holding actions can take various forms:

- ✦ Documenting the deleterious effects of the Industrial Growth Society on ecosystems as well as on animal and human health and rights

ⁱⁱ. This term, the Great Turning, is a cultural meme that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s to convey the revolutionary nature of the changes seen as necessary for the survival of life on Earth. Craig Shindler and Gary Lapid used it as the title of their 1989 book (Craig Schindler and Gary Lapid., *The Great Turning: Personal Peace, Global Victory*. Bear & Co, 1989) advocating a turn away from war and toward peace. The term arose again spontaneously from role-plays in the Work That Reconnects, as people spoke for future beings in Deep Time practices.

- ✦ Blowing the whistle and exposing illegal and unconstitutional corporate and governmental practices
- ✦ Circulating petitions, writing letters to the editor and to officials, writing articles, blogs and books, lobbying legislators
- ✦ Giving talks, showing films, tabling in public places, organizing study/action groups
- ✦ Vigils, marches and other demonstrations of protest
- ✦ Bringing legal actions against corporations and government agencies
- ✦ Divestment campaigns
- ✦ Boycotting and picketing institutions and businesses to protest unfair and dangerous practices
- ✦ Maintaining a long-term protest camp, such as climate camps in the UK
- ✦ Blockading construction of ecologically destructive and military installations
- ✦ Civil disobedience, including trespassing and symbolic sabotage on government or corporate property, tax resistance, refusing to move when ordered to do so
- ✦ Providing sanctuary to people in danger of unfair arrest
- ✦ Fasting and hunger strikes
- ✦ Providing shelter, food, clinics and legal assistance for people especially victimized by the Industrial Growth Society

Practices, policies and institutions targeted by these holding actions include:

- ✦ Extraction, transport and refining of fossil fuels
- ✦ Nuclear power, nuclear bomb production and testing
- ✦ Hydro-fracking
- ✦ Uranium and other heavy metal mining
- ✦ Mountaintop removal mining
- ✦ Deforestation
- ✦ Genetic modification
- ✦ Dredge fishing, drift nets and factory ships
- ✦ Privatization of water (extraction and bottling)
- ✦ Chemically-based agriculture and factory farming

- ♦ Animal abuse
- ♦ Secret international trade agreements (e.g. Transpacific Trade Partnership, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)
- ♦ Decimation of civil liberties and Constitutional rights, including reproductive rights, along with mass surveillance by corporations and government
- ♦ Military invasions and occupations
- ♦ Torture and rendition
- ♦ Drone warfare
- ♦ Arms industry and trade
- ♦ Abuses of First Nations sovereignty
- ♦ Mass incarceration, solitary confinement, forced feeding and the prison industrial system
- ♦ Extended detention and deportation of undocumented people, including children
- ♦ Human trafficking and slavery
- ♦ Homelessness, hunger and joblessness
- ♦ Profit-based health care and Big Pharma, including their campaign against herbalists and midwives
- ♦ Assaults on state-funded social and medical supports such as Social Security and Medicare in the US
- ♦ Corporate financing of political campaigns
- ♦ Predatory financial capitalism in all its forms: credit card debt, student loan debt, subprime mortgages, hedge funds and derivatives

Climate change is global-scale violence, against places and species as well as against human beings. Once we call it by name, we can start having a real conversation about our priorities and values.

— Rebecca Solnit

This first dimension of the Great Turning is wearing. It is heroic work. When we're in the spotlight, it can bring respect and applause from the many who see what's at stake. We can also get stressed out of our minds by nonstop crises, battles lost, constant searches for funding and escalating threats and violence against activists.

Protests and civil disobedience become ever more dangerous as law

enforcement officers — and the laws themselves — treat activists as terrorists, repressing dissent, abusing demonstrators and punishing whistle-blowers. Shock tactics, arbitrary arrests and police brutality are condoned, even encouraged. As the corporate empire is exposed and threatened, the violence of its response becomes more naked and indifferent to public opinion.

So we often take a lot of punishment for this kind of activism, and may need to step back to take a breather. Let's not feel guilty in doing so, for in truth we are not abandoning the cause. We are choosing to continue the work of the Great Turning in another form — the way the head goose, when she's tired, repositions herself to fly in the wind stream of the others, and another flyer takes her place.

Holding actions are essential because they buy time and save some lives, ecosystems, species and cultures, as well as some of the gene pool, for the life-sustaining society to come. By themselves, however, holding actions cannot bring that society about. For that, we require systems and structures more appropriate to our collective needs.

2. Transforming the Foundations of Our Common Life

The second dimension of the Great Turning is also essential in order to free ourselves and our planet from the damage inflicted by the Industrial Growth Society. It has two aspects:

1. Understanding the dynamics of corporate capitalism, including the structures of law and governance that support it
2. Generating structures based on the inherent authority and rights of We the People to govern ourselves and to protect the grounds of our common life

What are the assumptions and agreements that create obscene wealth for a few, while impoverishing the rest of humanity? What indentures us to an insatiable economy that uses our larger body, Earth, as supply house and sewer? What are the structures of law that make it illegal for local communities to define their own future and protect themselves from corporate harm?

We are in an era of profound change that urgently requires new ways of thinking instead of more business as usual; capitalism, in its current form, has no place in the world around us.

— Klaus Schwab, founder
World Economic Forum

This is not a pretty picture. It takes courage and confidence in our own intelligence to look at it clearly; the rewards are great when we do. As citizens are discovering in a plethora of websites, blogs and publications, we can demystify the workings of the Industrial Growth Society. For all its apparent might, we also see its fragility — how

dependent it is on our obedience and on deception, secrecy, surveillance and force.

In this second dimension of the Great Turning, we are not only studying the structural causes of the global crisis; we are also learning old and new ways to better serve the common good. These two efforts go hand in hand. They use the same mental muscles, the same kind of knowledge, the same itch for practicality. In countless localities, like green shoots pushing up through the rubble, social and economic arrangements are sprouting to free us from injustice and ruin. They may be hard to see at first, because they are seldom featured in the media. Not waiting for our national or state politicians to catch up with us, we are banding together, taking action in our own communities. Paul Hawken, in describing this upwelling of grass roots initiatives, called these actions “the largest social movement in human history.” In the early 20th century, the Wobblies (as Industrial Workers of the World were known) struggled to “build the new within the shell of the old.” The actions that burgeon from our hands and minds may appear marginal, but they hold the seeds for the future.

Some examples of the second dimension of the Great Turning include:

- Study circles and symposia to explore and understand the workings of the global economy
- Retrieval and creation of laws to protect the commons from privatization and industrial harm, formulating and claiming

Community Rights, the Rights of Nature, the Rights of Future Generations

- ✦ Establishment of the Precautionary Principleⁱⁱⁱ as the legal basis for health and environmental policy
- ✦ Cultural recognition and legal definition of the rights of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) persons
- ✦ People's Tribunals and Truth & Reconciliation Commissions
- ✦ Restorative justice and conflict resolution to replace litigation and punishment
- ✦ Holistic measures of wealth and prosperity, e.g. the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), Social Progress Indicator (SPI), Gross National Happiness (GNH) to replace the dangerously misleading index called the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- ✦ Renewable, localized, non-polluting energy generation such as wind, solar and tidal technologies
- ✦ Land trusts serving the needs of local ecosystems and future generations
- ✦ Intentional sustainable communities, such as cohousing and ecovillages
- ✦ Permaculture courses; family and community gardens; farmers' markets, local food clubs; Community Supported Agriculture
- ✦ Municipal composting, recycling and zero-waste programs
- ✦ Citizen restoration projects reclaiming streams, watersheds, wetlands and arable land

ⁱⁱⁱ. "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action." "The Wingspread Consensus Statement on the Precautionary Principle." Wingspread Conference on the Precautionary Principle, January 26, 1998. [online]. [cited June 8, 2014]. sehn.org/wing.html.

- Holistic health and wellness programs; locally grown herbal medicines
- Local currencies, Time Banks, tool sharing and skill banks that cycle resources within the community
- Cooperative forms of ownership, including food co-ops, worker-owned enterprises, credit unions and state banks
- Citizen radiation monitoring networks such as SafeCast, measuring nuclear contamination from Fukushima in the absence of government monitoring and reporting
- The Occupy movement, demonstrating radical democracy in the center of town, occupying public spaces, providing free food, health care, education and talks; exploring consensus decision-making

The broadside below from the Community Rights movement in the United States, circa 2014, illustrates the originality and practicality of campaigns in the second dimension of the Great Turning.²

Community Rights: First Steps in Dismantling Corporate Rule

Since 2000, the Community Rights movement has been spreading across the United States, one city, town, and county at a time. Communities are passing new-paradigm laws that:

- 1) strip corporations of all of their so-called constitutional “rights”;
- 2) ban a variety of corporate activities that are legal but harmful to people and environment;
- 3) declare the inherent right of a community to govern itself.

These new-paradigm laws challenge existing legal structures that forbid communities to pass laws protecting their own health and welfare. Thus, each of these local ordinances is in itself an act of municipal civil disobedience.

Imagine if ...

We Change the Ground Rules

- No more playing by corporate rules.
- No more battling one corporate harm at a time.
- We no longer allow corporations to operate when they harm people and nature. ☛

We Learn Our History

- Why has it been illegal for communities to pass laws that protect us from corporate harms?
- What can we learn from the American revolutionaries, the Abolitionists, the Suffragists, the Populists?

We Define Ourselves and Our Responsibilities

- We are not merely consumers and workers. We are We the People. We are the sovereign people. We are guardians of life for present and future generations.
- Corporations are not “good corporate citizens”. They are merely private property — legal fictions — business structures — and we will define them as such in order to protect the health and welfare of our communities.
- To do this, we will reclaim our language and our thought-forms from corporate culture.

We Govern Ourselves

- Corporations have become a cancer on the body politic. They have to be removed from all political participation. No corporate money in politics. No lobbying. No corporate-sponsored “educating” of citizens.
- We the People have the inherent right of self-governance.

We Meet Our Common Needs Democratically

- We don’t need Safeway Corp to feed us. We can feed ourselves from local sources.
- We don’t need Fox Corp and MSNBC Corp to tell us the news or Disney Corp to entertain us. We can inform one another and entertain ourselves within our communities and through citizen-controlled media.
- We the People can reclaim our self-governing authority to restrict the creation of business institutions to those that do not harm communities, people, and nature.

We Define Rather Than Regulate

- Most regulations are written by the industries being regulated, letting “the fox guard the hen house.”
- Let’s start defining what we need and banning what we don’t.

3. *Shift in Perception and Values*

It is hard to undertake the holding actions or initiatives described above unless we are nurtured by deeply held values and ways of seeing ourselves and the world. The actions we take — and structures we build — mirror how we relate to Earth and each other. They require a shift in our perception of reality — and that shift is happening now, both as cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening. This is the third dimension of the Great Turning.

The deep imagination is also our primary resource for recognizing the emerging future, for “seeing” the visionary possibilities of what we can create right now — individually and collectively... It is our essential resource for all genuine human creativity.

— Bill Plotkin

The insights and experiences that enable us to make this shift may arise from grief for our world that contradicts illusions of the separate and isolated self. Or they may arise from breakthroughs in science, such as quantum physics and systems theory. Or we may find ourselves inspired by the wisdom traditions of native peoples and mystical voices in the major religions; we hearken to their teachings as to some half-forgotten song that reminds us again that our world is a sacred whole in which we have a sacred mission.

Now, in our time, these three rivers — anguish for our world, scientific breakthroughs and ancestral teachings — flow together. From the confluence of these rivers we drink. We awaken to what we once knew: we are alive in a living Earth, the source of all we are and can achieve. Despite our conditioning by the industrial society of the last two centuries, we want to name, once again, this world as holy.

These insights and experiences are necessary to free us from the grip of the Industrial Growth Society. They offer us nobler goals and deeper pleasures. They help us redefine our wealth and our worth. The reorganization of our perceptions liberates us from illusions about what we need to own and what our place is in the order of things. Moving us beyond tired old notions of competitive individualism, we come home to each other and our mutual belonging in the living body of Earth.

May a good vision catch me
 May a benevolent vision take hold of me, and move me
 May a deep and full vision come over me
 And burst open around me . . .
 May I awaken into the story that surrounds,
 May I awaken into the beautiful story.

— David Abram

Some examples of cultivating new perceptions and values include:

- ✦ Grassroots programs to raise awareness of racism in all its forms and transform attitudes, unconscious assumptions, habits and behaviors, e.g. “Unlearning Racism” and “White Awake”
- ✦ First Nation peoples bringing their spiritual message to struggles against Tar Sands extraction and pipelines and the epidemic of open pit mining. The Idle No More movement includes public protests and fasts, enriched by traditional dances and prayers, and petitions to the United Nations.
- ✦ First Nation leaders achieving a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations.
- ✦ Initiatives to promote understanding and celebration of the Rights of Mother Earth, the Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations — and our responsibility to honor and protect those rights
- ✦ Aboriginal teachings for the protection of sacred sites in Africa and Amazonia being put into writing for the development of an Earth jurisprudence.
- ✦ Shamanic traditions, including sweat lodges and trance drumming motivating, guiding and sustaining activists.
- ✦ Wilderness immersion experiences, including vision quests, helping participants to connect more deeply with wild nature, within and without
- ✦ Creation spirituality in Christianity, Sufism in Islam and versions of the Kabbalah in Judaism spreading their messages of the sanctity of all life.

- ✦ Engaged Buddhism and similar currents in Hindu, Taoist, Shinto and other East Asian traditions coming forward to teach respect for Earth and the *interbeing* of all life-forms, as grounds for both spiritual practice and social action.
- ✦ Ecopsychology expanding our understanding of mental health, including our needs for deep relationship to the natural world, and also of the psychological damage wrought by the Industrial Growth Society.
- ✦ Ecofeminism, blending political critique with the women's movement, re-anchoring us in the natural world and refigures world and self in radically relational terms.
- ✦ The environmental justice movement addressing the racism and colonialism evident in the disproportionate damage that the Industrial Growth Society inflicts on disadvantaged communities.
- ✦ Music, visual arts, poetry and visionary novels, dance, theater and film increasingly expressing our interconnectedness, allowing more novelty to break through and enable us to trust more deeply.

Though we hardly have words for it, this cognitive, perceptual and spiritual revolution is occurring at a great rate of speed. These lines from the late California poet Robinson Jeffers capture the flavor of this awakening:

... I entered the life of the brown forest,
And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of
stone, I felt the
 changes in the veins
In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries,
we have our own
 time, not yours; and, I was the stream
Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and
I was the stars
Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of
his own summit;
 and I was the darkness
Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me.

I was mankind
 also, a moving lichen
 On the cheek of the round stone...
 ... how can I express the excellence I have found,
 that has no color but clearness;
 No honey but ecstasy ...³

This shift in our sense of identity will be lifesaving in the socio-political and ecological traumas that lie before us. All honest forecasts are for very rough weather ahead. As distant markets and supplies dry up, financial institutions collapse and climate-induced disasters multiply, the shock waves washing over us could tumble us into fear and chaos.

The realizations we make in the third dimension of the Great Turning save us from succumbing to either panic or paralysis. They help us resist the temptation to stick our heads in the sand. They help us withstand the temptation to turn on each other, finding scapegoats on whom to vent our fear and rage. When we know and revere the wholeness of life, we can stay alert and steady. We know there is no individual salvation. We join hands to find the ways the world self-heals.



Though we can discern the Great Turning and take courage from its manifold activities, we have no assurance that it will unfold quickly enough. We cannot tell which will happen first: the tipping point beyond which we cannot stop the unraveling of the systems supporting complex life-forms — or the moment when the elements of a Life-Sustaining Society cohere and catch hold.

If the Great Turning should fail, it will not be for lack of technology or relevant data so much as for lack of political will. When we are distracted and fearful and the odds are running against us, it is easy to let the heart and mind go numb. The dangers now facing us are so pervasive and yet often so hard to see — and so painful to see when we manage to look at them — that this numbing touches us all. No one is unaffected by it. No one is immune to doubt, denial or

distraction in relation to the severity of our situation, nor to doubt about our power to change it. Yet of all the dangers we face, from climate change to nuclear wars, none is so great as the deadening of our response.

That numbing of mind and heart is already upon us — in the diversions we create for ourselves as individuals and nations, in the fights we pick, the aims we pursue, the stuff we buy. So let us look at it. Let's see how it happens so we can awaken. *The Work That Reconnects* helps us open up our eyes, our minds and hearts. Then, reconnected with our deepest desire, we will choose life.