

Chapter 1

THE BIG QUESTION

As we look at our cities, our country, and our planet, we know what the challenges are. They are the problem buzzwords of our time: poverty, hunger, the economy, pollution, healthcare, crime, war, and the increasing destruction of our environment. Most of us are aware of the doom-and-gloom scenarios about what will happen by, say, the year 2020—when the population has grown to 8.2 billion or more, there isn't enough food to feed everyone, and we have altered and polluted the planet to such an extent that the environmental issues, such as global warming, have become by far the most significant issues of this millennia as they threaten all life on the planet.

Serious problems, right? But now ask yourself this: Since there are enough resources and manpower on this planet for ALL OF US to live not only abundantly but also in balance with nature, the big question is: WHAT THEN IS THE PROBLEM? Why are two of every five people in the world living in poverty? Why are there people who cannot get proper nutrition, sanitation, and medical care? Let's repeat the startling and simple truth that is the cornerstone for finding a solution:

IF WE CHOOSE TO MAKE LIFE WORK FOR EVERYONE,
THERE ARE ENOUGH RESOURCES AND MANPOWER ON
THIS PLANET FOR *ALL OF US* TO LIVE ABUNDANTLY!

Just now close your eyes and ponder that for a minute. Let it really sink in. Ask yourself why it isn't happening. Then, you may well ask yourself, "What can we do about it?" The forces at work that are causing the imbalances seem to be beyond our control.

There are too many environmental, economic, political, and social causes and situations to correct that it's simply overwhelmingly impossible. At best, most solutions are a Band-Aid approach since everything is interconnected. For example, we can't address starvation in a given geographical area by simply providing food because there are usually political, economic, and environmental causal factors that are quite complex.

Part of the problem is the pervasive, long-standing attitude of againstness that we hold towards each other and towards others. This againstness probably stems from our need/addiction to control our lives. This often happens at the expense of another, and it permeates most of the interactions between one power broker and another, between one interested party and another, and even between one family member and another. This againstness along with the unwillingness to go for a creative approach to collectively make our planetary situation truly work for everyone are roadblocks we must overcome. Given all the imbalances on the planet and the destruction of our environment, the sands are rapidly running through the hourglass for life as we know it on Earth. There is an answer, but it means that we must start making the planet work for all life on the planet. Stated simply:

IF WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE TO HAVE A WORLD,
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO START MAKING IT WORK
FOR EVERYONE.

Given the connectedness of all things, we must go after the one thing that can address and include everything else, and that is HOW WE AS PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER. Currently we live in what can best be described as an everyone-for-themselves world. That may look like every country for themselves or every family or every whatever grouping, but it all boils down to the everyone-for-themselves model. We do not have a "what would work for all of us" mentality and approach to life. The everyone-for-themselves approach to living and survival is so ingrained through thousands of years of practice that most people have never even conceived of an alternative approach—especially one that would include our entire planet. The piecemeal way our lives are set up, the way our

cities are designed, and the way our economy runs all have the end result of isolating and separating us. They are set up for us to try to survive and get ahead on our own and to continue to intrude upon and disrupt our environment.

Therefore we need to move away from this individualistic model to one that really works for all of us and for all life. We have to start acting like one family where the needs of the one are the concern of everyone. This does not mean taking care of those who are thought of as not contributing, but it does mean setting up how we live together in a way that truly works for everyone. This is a total systems-approach—the systems-approach tells us that *all* things are interconnected and that to change a part, i.e. poverty or our ecology, we therefore need to change the entire system in order to really create effective changes. At this point in our history, nothing less is called for and nothing less will work for all of us. This new model has to be that we live on this planet in a way that is *for* THE HIGHEST GOOD OF ALL LIFE so that *we all* can experience more abundance, health, nurturing, loving, and fun.

Think about it, it's very simple to see the solution. In fact, it's so simple that that's why it's hard, because, in our fragmented approach to trying to understand and solve things, we're looking for something complicated to get us out of our present Earth predicament. We have so many thousands of years of programming in our power-based, everyone-for-themselves paradigm to overcome that it's difficult to perceive workable solutions for the planet as a whole. We have an endless history of againstness and conflict that get our minds focused and locked onto looking at life as a struggle for survival on our own as opposed to looking at life as a cooperative adventure that can work for all mankind and for all life on the planet.

We need to create a new model. All the “isms”—capitalism, communism, socialism, nationalism, racism, sexism, etc.—are not working for us, so we have no large-scale model of change to look at. However, CHANGE ON THE SCALE THAT IS NEEDED CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT WHEN PEOPLE SEE AND EXPERIENCE A BETTER WAY.

"Since the everyone-for-themselves approach isn't working for the planet, why do we continue to do it?"

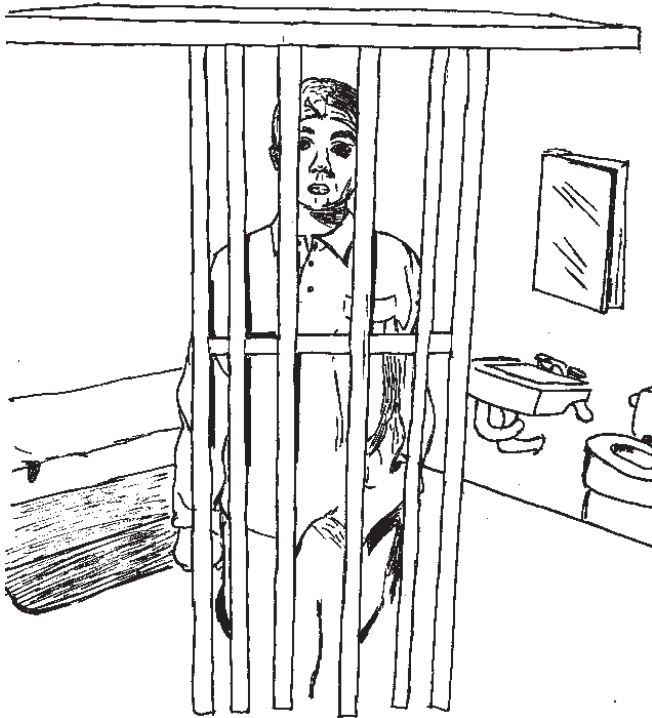
"Because we just do life that way, that's the way life is."

"But, why, when it really isn't working for individuals and for the well-being of the entire planet, do we continue rather than seeking a more workable alternative?"

"Because we've done it this way for thousands of years. It must, then, either be the best way or the only way."

"But why haven't we considered other alternatives?"

"We don't know. It's all we know. It's the way things are."



cartoon by Aly Roth and Ian Dietz

"HELP, I'M IN PRISON. I WANT OUT OF HERE!"

We are only limited by our assumptions. The assumption that we must continue doing the everyone-for-themselves model has us and our world in prison.

Fortunately, the best way to show this is also the easiest for a group of people to bring to pass. The way we live together and relate together in Community is the basic building block that is needed to transform the planet. If we design Communities based on a Highest Good For Everyone model, we can live very, very abundant lifestyles that would appeal to almost everyone while simultaneously restoring our environment. This book, then, is about how we can live in Community for The Highest Good Of *All Life* and about the ultimate transformation of the planet, which will be caused by making life work for all of us.

As you continue reading, you'll keep hearing some form of this term, "For The Highest Good," over and over again. [I apologize if that term doesn't just roll off the tongue, but I don't know of any other term that fully encompasses the concept of making the world work for everyone and for the planet.] It includes both creating the outer form to work for all life and the consciousness which that choice requires, and it permeates every aspect of how we choose to live together on this planet. It's an internal commitment to all life on this earth, to wanting the best for all life on the planet, and it's putting that into action by fundamentally changing the form and consciousness of how we live together. It is the antithesis of the short-sighted everyone-for-themselves paradigm that has wrecked havoc on the earth and resulted in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual hardships and lack that touch all our lives in varying degrees.

Again, the simple truth—there are enough resources and manpower on this planet for all of us to live very abundantly and in harmony with ourselves, each other, and the environment if we change our model of living and our consciousness from everyone-for-themselves to a Highest Good For Everyone model. Drink this in, for this must be *Our Next Evolution*.

As you look at this idea, I invite you to expand your consciousness to include the welfare of the entire planet. Imagine that you are *all* people in *all* countries and in *all* situations. In many cases you would currently have basic human needs that are not being met, and you would be living on the very edge of survival.

FROM NEALE DONALD WALSH'S
CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD: book 2

GOD: *"In terms of geopolitics, why not work together as a world to meet the most basic needs of everyone?"*

AUTHOR: *"We're doing that or trying."*

GOD: *"After all these thousands of years of human history, that's the most you can say?"*

"The fact is, you have barely evolved at all. You still operate in a primitive 'every person for himself' mentality."

"You plunder the Earth, rape her of her resources, exploit her people, and systematically disenfranchise those who disagree with you for doing all of this, calling them the 'radicals.'"

"You do this for your own selfish purposes because you've developed a lifestyle that you cannot maintain any other way."

"You must cut down the millions of acres of trees each year or you won't be able to have your Sunday paper. You must destroy miles of the protective ozone which covers your planet or you cannot have your hair spray. You must pollute your rivers and streams beyond repair or you cannot have your industries to give you Bigger, Better, and More. And you must exploit the least among you—the least advantaged, the least educated, the least aware—or you cannot live at the top of the human scale in unheard of [and unnecessary] luxury. Finally, you must deny that you are doing this, or you cannot live with yourself."

"You cannot find it in your heart to 'live simply, so that others may simply live.' That bumper sticker wisdom is too simple for you. It is too much to ask. Too much to give. After all, you've worked so hard for what you've got! You ain't giving up none of it! And if the rest of the human race—to say nothing of your own children's children—have to suffer for it, tough bananas, right? You did what you had to do to survive, to 'make it'—they can do the same! After all, it is every man for himself, is it not?"

AUTHOR: *"Is there any way out of this mess?"*

GOD: *"Yes. Shall I say it again? A shift of consciousness."*

"You cannot solve the problems which plague humankind through governmental action or political means. You have been trying that for thousands of years."

"The change must be made, can be made only in the hearts of man."

—Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations With God book 2*, Hampton Roads Publishing Co., Inc., 1997, Charlottesville, VA, pages 172-173.

However, the solution is so simple that it has escaped us: let's make the planet work for everyone; let's choose to live *for* THE HIGHEST GOOD OF ALL LIFE.

As you continue reading, I invite you to toss out your reference points and to step outside the box of how you think life has to be. So hold onto your hat as I first point out the obvious in terms of current conditions on the planet, and then I offer a practical solution for not only saving the planet, but also making this Earth a more enjoyable place to hang out for *all* people and for *all* life.