

Excerpts from:

[Finding Our Way Forward, New Perspectives on Our Evolving Human Potential](#)

From the Introduction- Seeing with New Eyes (p.7):

"In this book, I present a worldview which places our current world situation into a developmental context. Allowing ourselves to accept such a view of what is happening (as opposed to looking for the next new, more correct, fundamentalist rigidity of thinking) can enable us to adapt resiliently and gracefully to the fast-changing world we live in. Such a shift would in turn allow us to find our way successfully through this tumultuous time in world history."

From Chapter 2 - The Human Adventure (p.13-14)

In our own lives we are being challenged, both individually and collectively, to adapt to our environments by developing new thought processes, behaviors, skills and capacities as we go through the experiences our modern lives bring us. This ability to adapt is the kind of evolutionary change that plays an integral part in our daily lives, though it can often show up in such small increments that we rarely bring it into focus and see it for what it is.

By giving focus to this capacity for adaptation that is a part of human development, we can begin to explore its relevance to our ordinary everyday lives. Adaptation is the capability we have to adjust to new conditions when they appear in our environment. We individually adapt our behaviors when we have our first child, when the weather turns cold or when we move from one place to another. We adapt collectively when our landfills are overflowing, our air polluted or our laws become outdated. We adjust in this way in order to survive and to have our loved ones or communities be more likely to survive.

Adaptation then is the ability to alter our way of life, our habits, our thinking and our behaviors when it is necessary for survival or for whatever matters to us. We all tend to utilize a variety of commonly used thought processes which were entirely appropriate for earlier stages of development, or which were appropriate in childhood, but which are no longer truly helpful to us.

A prime example of non-biological adaptation happens when we realize that these old ways of thinking are no longer useful in dealing with the often chronic states of fear, stress and anxiety presented to us by our modern adult lives. Our old personal interpretation systems which may have previously been successful in protecting us from life's dangers have become obsolete and harmful and we need to adapt to our new reality. This particular adaptation in the way we think is, in my opinion, is highly relevant to dealing with the requirements of living a truly successful and fulfilling life in today's world.

From Chapter 5 - What We Essentially Are (p.49-50):

"The world situation, by its very existence, offers us the opportunity to move beyond our old ways of being, which are no longer capable of bringing constructive resolution to the world's challenges. We begin to discover an entirely new relationship with our thought processes and to use our logical capabilities to serve the same awe-inspiring life force that caused them to develop in the first place, and which continues to enliven their remarkable powers.

What we think about ourselves and our surroundings has, over the past several thousand years, overshadowed a pre-existing, more direct perception. Our family pet, for instance, would have a very different perception of a given event than we would, because the animal's perception is not mediated by the use of logical thought. A dog doesn't logically decide whether or not he likes living with his owners, or whether the city park might be too dangerous to walk in at night. Obviously both ways of being can work together for a survival advantage. In the case of us humans, thought has come to mediate almost our entire experience of life, separating us from our actual experiences by spinning ideas about what is happening that have become more prominent than what actually *is* happening. This causes an ongoing distortion of reality that fundamentally affects both our internal sense of who we are and the way we respond to the whole of our environment.

Thinking is not something bad or harmful, just limited in its areas of usefulness. Indeed, it is a fantastic tool! We are increasingly ready for our development to move us to the point where thought comes into its truly useful role as the most wondrous tool in our toolbox and is no longer required to be in charge of everything. This way of living works much better than having our thoughts trying endlessly and hopelessly to make logical decisions based on information we have acquired, and in that way solve all the world's problems and make everything turn out all right."

From Chapter 5 - What We Essentially Are (p.55):

"This discovery of what we truly are, and the process of learning to function from it, is the new frontier for our times. Individually and collectively, we are connecting with a deep clear well of "un-thought-about" potential, from which our lives can begin to flow outward into the world of experiences, thoughts and things. This is where we are loved unconditionally, and connected infinitely closely with the divine (by any name). This is the place where we find a deeply satisfying fulfillment that material goods, eternal youth or relationships could never supply. This shift to being in touch with and living our lives from our true self (which was previously hidden behind the curtain of thoughts) is our current developmental task."

From Chapter 7 - Seeing with New Eyes- (p.71-72):

"The world situation we are presented with in the 21st century is a natural outcome of the state of consciousness that created it. People navigating through life guided by thought processes based on a view of themselves as separate and insecure individuals, naturally create a world full of conflict and fear. Consider, however, that this may also be part of a perfect unfolding.

This may be how life works: that each level or stage of human development brings with it, as it approaches obsolescence, its own crisis. Each time of crisis forces individuals to question their current reality system, and to try to find a new stability by stretching into new versions of

themselves with more advanced capabilities. We are also pushed by crisis into outgrowing any old habits that no longer help us survive successfully. As our old paradigms and models begin to fail us and we can not find answers on the same level that we find the problems, we are forced to let go of our old ways of constructing reality and look again to see what we may have missed.

The world seems to have a habit of presenting us with problems for which we have no solutions within our existing mental frameworks. Take overpopulation as an example. There seems to be such limited responses we can make as individuals to overpopulation – having no children doesn't seem to help much. An alternative way to live with something like overpopulation without frustration or without avoiding thinking about it, would be to develop new ways of perceiving, understanding and responding to what is happening.

The ability to change our perceptions, understandings and responses is not a capability humans have when totally immersed in current thought processes and are unable to see beyond them. This is a relatively new development; a new option. People are currently evolving the capacity to observe their thinking from a vantage point that is slightly outside of the limitations of that thinking - to see their own thought processes at work. The ability to find adequate solutions to something as difficult as overpopulation may seem out of reach at first, but the possibilities are far beyond what could be seen when we looked through old mental filters and obsolete ideas about what is possible.

Contemplating overpopulation in this way has some similarity to the practice of setting students in Zen monasteries to meditate on impossible questions like "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" It is an exercise designed to frustrate the logical linear thinking patterns enough so that they let go and allow us to access our other important inner capabilities. Overpopulation is a "koan" for modern times, and being with it (and all the other intractable issues of our day) in this novel way strikes me as a transformative way of using our astoundingly complex and powerful human brains.

In order to observe our thought processes, we stand aside from the stream of thinking just a little and in this manner we access a greater neurological capacity. We then find ourselves empowered to respond constructively to the hard fact that we are up against problems that do not seem to be solvable any other way."

Chapter 10 - Interpreting What We Perceive (p. 107-108):

"From what I can remember of being a child, the insular nature of the family and local community and the lack of interest in abstractions created for me a narrow, simplified world that was just right for the state of development I was in at the time. As I matured, the world seemed to open up and become larger, deeper and more complex. It is similarly possible as adults to allow our world to keep opening up by not fixating our interpretations of it at any one developmental level.

We can notice, in both our personal growth processes and in humanity's collective maturation process that the boundaries holding us apart from one another are beginning to slowly and steadily relax. As this progresses, we become able to notice that there is a part of ourselves right

in the heart of those people we may previously have called enemies. We find that we have something very fundamental in common with those who, in an earlier stage, we had felt extremely polarized against."

Chapter 17 - Everyday Creativity (p. 167-168):

"Each time we humans come to the end of the usefulness of a mental model which no longer serves us, we are driven to change our mental maps in order to be able to make sense of things again. Today's world situation requires creative new mental models, new perspectives, and new ways of interpreting what we encounter. Our old models are coming to the end of their usefulness, similar to the time when the belief in the world being flat came to the end of its tenure. This time the shift is about who and what we are, and from that, how new ways of living may proceed. In the emerging view, humans are not separate, isolated, combative and selfish individuals satisfying their personal needs, and civilization is no longer about building empires. A whole new view is needed, the magnitude of which is equal to the falling away of our place in the center of the universe.

As has happened in the past, humanity's way of living is not working well. Chaotic and destructive forces come to bear on us, forcing us out of our current ways of perceiving and interpreting what is happening, compelling us into a need to respond creatively. We are being pressured by our world's circumstances to look outside of our current mental maps of the world and forge better maps to help us to be more functional and to find our way forward. This we do in order to hopefully survive and thrive in novel circumstances which therefore deserve a creative new response. Societal changes on a large scale need to grow organically out of transformed ways of thinking, based on new evidence, in order for us to adapt successfully to the fast-moving outer changes we are exposed to. Creativity needs to permeate both the new ways of thinking and the different ways of behaving that flow outward from them.

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The Bedrock

Below the bustle
of our coming and going,
beneath even
the rich topsoil that feeds us,
lies a heart of rock.
Hot and fluid
at its core
the bedrock firms under us
with the seeming constancy
of granite, appearing
here and there
in soaring cliffs, in open rock,
cut by stream beds
or simply lying, like a floor
at the bottom of a hole
we labor to dig.

Deep rock supports all our land-forms,
underlying them with a slow-moving
ancient stability
on which life
can rise and fall.

The rock appears to us
in the high places of the mountains,
but it also holds the oceans
as if in the cup of a huge ancient hand,
with a steadiness that allows
the pull of the moon
to move the tides, to and fro.

This ancient rock
spanning millions of years
spanning galaxies also

lives a broader life-span
within which our human lives,
are a flicker in a broad expanse,
within which stars are born and burn out,
planets cool, life arises and passes,
in the same way
that morning passes here,
bringing afternoon.

The bedrock lets me know my place
in the larger scheme of things.

My human life is a flash
in a broad interplay of life and time,
insignificant when seen separately
yet held now inseparably
within the greater life
animating the whole.

The bedrock speaks
in a language without words
that feels familiar,
that beckons, no, welcomes me
back to the sanity
of something quieter and more steady
that I had nearly forgotten.

It is an open invitation
to relax into an expanded perspective
that includes me in something grand,
beyond the breadth of galaxies.
Something vibrantly alive, and close,
Something right here,
in the center of this human life.