

Chapter Thirteen: Transformation is an Inside Job

Excerpt from HOME, We Can Choose Humanity's Future by Ruth L. Miller

"You can't solve a problem at the level the problem was created." ~ Albert Einstein

Working with systems we must step "above" or "outside of" a system to change it. So if we have concerns about the system of our economy or the larger culture, we need to "step outside" of it, to a level of system above it.

How does one step outside of a cultural system? How does one move to "a level above" the culture that shapes all of our life and understanding?

If we look at the two most successful cultural transformers of the past century, we may be able to get a hint. Mohandas Gandhi (now called Mahatma, or Saint), led his country out from under the British Empire by transforming his culture from a subject people to a politically and economically independent nation. His approach? He meditated, prayed, fasted, and, following his inner spirit, used the tools at hand, especially the media, to make public his *living* the culture he intended for all to experience.

Martin Luther King, Jr. transformed the U. S. A. from a racially segregated culture in which people of color were prevented from participating fully as social, political, or economic members, to what is in many ways a racially diverse culture, with legal sanctions against institutional segregation. His method? Prayer, following his inner spirit, use of the pulpit and media (*his* tools) to make his ideas known, and *living* as if cultural barriers against people of color did not exist.

Both men refused to get "hooked" into the "normal" way of doing things. Both of them accomplished what they intended by *being* what they intended to experience in the world. Their influence will be felt as long as either nation is remembered *because they stopped fighting the system and rose above it*. Nonviolence (the part of their strategy for which they are best known) was not merely a means to the end they sought; it was the natural result from raising their consciousness to a level above the system they had been living in. It was the way their higher, inner awareness told them that they could "solve the problem."

Outer Results from Inner Shifts

Two things seem to occur as we look within and shift our own consciousness. First, whatever action we need to take becomes clear *in the process of changing the thought patterns* we've been operating from. It seems that when we quiet the thoughts that say "look at all that's wrong" we become aware of a different kind of knowing, a deep intuition, sometimes called "the still small voice."

This awareness within us directs us to act in ways that help us – and everyone around us – to experience more of what's right in life. Both King and Gandhi referred to this experience and the support they received from it. The biblical Jesus, another transformer of culture, referred to this loving "voice" as "*Abba*," meaning "Daddy."

Excerpt from HOME, We Can Choose Humanity's Future by Ruth L. Miller

The second shift that occurs is that *the thing we were concerned about in the world around us tends to be reduced*. Physicists like Brian Greene, Amit Goswami, and Fred Alan Wolf suggest that the entire universe is really patterns of energy, sometimes looking like matter. And, they tell us, when we change our consciousness, we are changing the pattern of energy that we are. So, like the magnet that attracts only certain kinds of particles, we attract only those forms of matter and energy that "fit" our energy pattern. Our internal shift results in a change in the things we experience and the people we meet so that less of what we were concerned about occurs in our lives.

So we truly begin to transform the culture we live in whenever we "raise" our own consciousness. Our thoughts and actions contribute to the collective super-consciousness of our community described in Chapter 2 of this book. We share our story and bring the super-conscious ideal into common awareness. Thus we attract people and situations that support our new patterns of thought and action. We awaken the personal awareness of those around us to the possibility of a different life, and of transforming the culture.

This means, then, that if there are things occurring in our world that are not what we want to experience, if we feel distress or even shame about aspects of our society or economy, the first place to look is in our own consciousness. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a hundred-fifty years ago, laid out this idea in his essays and lectures.

Are we concerned about violence? Then we must ask what violence are we thinking and acting out in our own lives – in our hidden thoughts, perhaps, or in our television viewing. Are we concerned about injustice? Then we must look at the ways that we are not treating ourselves and our families justly. Are we concerned about poverty? Lack of opportunity? The disparity between the "haves" and "have-nots?" Once again, the *first* solution is within our selves, remembering that culture is the shared consciousness of its members.

The Freedom of Self-discovery

This process of looking within ourselves begins with taking the time to discover what we really think and believe. It's time to let go of what our parents, or our friends, or our teachers, or our bosses, or the news, or the ads have told us we believe and desire. It's time to discover what makes our personal body-mind systems feel complete, whole, satisfied.

Once we've experienced this kind of time, once we've discovered what we really think and believe, we come to see two things:

1. that though we act and speak uniquely, we're not really all that different from everyone else; and
2. some part of us calls us to be greater, nobler, fuller, more complete beings than we've been.

When we've spent a little more time, and gotten past our thoughts and into the silence behind them, we discover the "still, small voice", the higher, more complete, consciousness that dwells inside every human being. We experience its capacity for leading us past potential difficulties, for helping us release the thoughts and beliefs

that have limited us, and for providing us with the awareness that, no matter what we do or say, we are loved.

When we learn to follow that quiet, loving Presence within, we find ourselves doing things we never thought possible, creating works of beauty beyond our previous imaginings, and speaking words of power and authority we've never known before.

When we come to trust that guiding light in our hearts, we begin to encounter people and situations that fit our needs perfectly, moving us along to exactly the place and time that lets us accomplish our heart's desires, joyfully and effortlessly.

Only to the extent that we feel fear, lack, or limitation are we blocked in our upward movement. And as we spend the time we once used to run around doing things reflecting on those feelings, we begin to uncover the thoughts and beliefs behind them – and we let go. We turn them over to the powerful Presence within, knowing that, in so doing, we eliminate them and are freed from their effects in our lives.

Gandhi and King, Emerson and Thoreau, Moses and Jesus and Mohammed and Baha'u'llah (founder of the Baha'i tradition), the Christian apostles and the exiled Tibetan lamas – all have had this experience, and come to depend on it, as they've moved forward to create a new way of being in the world.

Transforming Our World

So, as we are freed, we radiate clear love and power – affecting everyone around us, and opening the possibility that they, too, will go inside and discover the potential there. As our personality (*persona* meaning mask) dissolves and our deeper individuality (undivided, conscious Self) is developed, others are influenced positively when they're in our presence (our new energy field), and they, too, go on to become fuller, more complete individuals as a result. Our actions in alignment with our true desires and wellbeing encourage others to act similarly.

If this seems a strange way to transform a culture, consider. Has any culture been transformed any other way? It's sadly true that cultures have been decimated and annihilated with weapons and disease, they've been inundated with people and products, and they've experienced countless changes in governments, but transformed?

Consider the "developing" countries. For over a hundred years, Europeans and Americans have been pouring money, people, products, and projects into these "backward" nations. We have succeeded only in building a few Western-style cities (surrounded by slums) and an impoverished countryside filled with populations that hold virtually the same beliefs and values that their great-grandparents had.

By contrast, compare the beliefs and attitudes "Generation-X" folks have toward peoples of color with those of their grandparents. *Quelle difference!* It's a whole different world.

Small Steps, from the Inside Out

The culture we've been presented is disintegrating around us. Humanity will be living another way within decades. Do we simply let that happen? Or do we choose what way of life we want for our grandchildren and their grandchildren?

If we accept that our current economic structure, and the way of life that goes with it, can't be sustained, our task is clear. Each and every one of us must stop accumulating for a while and reflect. We must discover our heart's true desires (not our parents', friends', or the ads' desires for us!). We need to accept that what we've been doing is not fulfilling those for us. We need to acknowledge whatever progress we've made, declare our willingness to "stop the insanity" (of doing the same thing over and expecting different results), and then try something different.

Then we need to be still for a while. Perhaps a walk along the beach or in a forest, or an afternoon appreciating a beautiful garden or listening to uplifting music – perhaps several days of such activities. We need to raise our awareness to a higher level, to let go of our habitual thoughts and worries long enough to allow a new, quiet, voice inside us to be heard.

When we hear that voice, get that insight, or see that possibility, we need to record it – on paper or electronically – because our old thought patterns will quickly shove it aside if we don't.

And then we need to act on what we've learned. It's not enough to understand; it's in the action that our new consciousness – our new individuality – is empowered. We may call a group together to start the dialogue process suggested earlier in this book, or begin the process for forming a lasting community outlined in the Appendix. We may gather some neighbors together to address a shared concern or open to a new possibility. We may write letters or a book, or start a blog or vlog, to share the insights we've gained.

And when we're done with this action, we rest again, reflect again, and become still again, ready to discover our next step, our next possibility.

In this way, and ultimately only this way, each of us is transformed; the culture is transformed, and with it, that visible manifestation of our inner thoughts and beliefs – the culture, with the economy, the political system, and the education and training system that support it – is transformed. It becomes a system of support, production, and distribution that provides all our heart's true desires, whatever they may be, without effort, without toil, but as the joyful creation that is our birthright as human beings.

And so it is.