

What's wrong with the world and how to fix it

By David A. Schwerin, Ph.D.

The Nobel Peace Prize is an honor that is still missing from my resume. It takes some gall, therefore, to author an article proclaiming answers to seemingly intractable problems. The title for this article is the subtitle of a new book, *Conscious Globalism*. It was truly difficult to append this presumptuous statement to an otherwise serious title. But the answers prescribed have been around for eons. What follows simply takes these age-old ideas and filters them through several decades of observations, experiences and personal development work.

It turns out that the way to fix our countless problems and resolve global conflicts is relatively easy – at least easy to state; a far bit harder to implement. First, we have to be aware of the source of our problems (i.e. terrorism is not a cause but an effect) and then become conscious of the part we all play in creating them. Since beliefs determine behavior, we must start with how and what we think.

I often ask audiences I address, “How many agree with the statement ‘we are all one’?” The number of people who will openly agree with this statement varies considerably; those who agree with my next question are significantly smaller in number. “Of those who believe everything is intimately connected, ‘how many consistently follow the golden rule and always consider the common good’?” The silence is usually deafening. So why aren't we able to do as we believe? Simply put, there is a part of us that doesn't believe! First, we have been conditioned to believe our self-interest is best served by focusing solely on our own needs. Things are in limited supply and if I don't get mine, and soon, someone else surely will. We don't take into account that any action that harms another will always have negative consequences. Too often cause and effect are not noticeably linked. Second, our senses inform us that all things are separate. It certainly looks like I am over here and you over there and there is nothing important between us. What we believe is frequently what we see. However, as Einstein profoundly stated, “what humans can touch, smell, see and hear is less than one-millionth of reality.” In other words, countless elements escape our observation and this leads to inaccurate conclusions.

Because many of our beliefs are based on a partial, distorted view of reality, a part of our personality (some call it the lower or shadow part) remains immature and plagued by misconceptions. This fault-prone part is fearful, selfish, willful, suspicious and arrogant. This voice abhors change and, in its ignorance and laziness, is steeped in the idea that all things are separate and autonomous. Another part of our personality is a romanticized image of ourselves that we portray to the world in an attempt to gain acceptance and/or avoid responsibility for shortcomings. This persona blames others for its failures, is quick to judge and conceitedly thinks of itself as special. Of course we have a higher part that includes the will to love, to be in truth and to serve the best in life. It is the nonjudgmental witness that acts as our moral conscience and empowers us to discern goodness and truth without negating what others do or say. The immature part of our personality, with which we usually identify, is a small fragment compared to the higher

component that is eternally aware of its connection to the whole. But until we become conscious of our lower part and observe how behavior that arises from its distorted views creates havoc in our lives we neither see the need nor have the motivation to change our beliefs.

Beliefs based on the faulty premise that all things are separate dominate today's world. Headlines describing corporate greed, political scandals and cultural genocide are constant reminders of society's distorted beliefs and the dreadfully destructive behavior that follows. As long as such views prevail, conflict and strife are bound to persist. To fix the world we must first deal with our own faults and misconceptions. This takes persistence, patience, self-acceptance and mentoring. We can then become role models for others and demonstrate the enormous rewards – less conflict and discontent; more joy and fulfillment – that emanate from this critical change in thinking. The challenges of aligning with a connected worldview cannot be denied. But once a critical mass (5-10% of the population) makes this shift, repairing the world becomes not only possible but an exciting adventure to be sought and savored.

David is Treasurer of the Philadelphia Pathwork Region and Chairman of the Pathwork Press. He has made presentations throughout the U.S. and China. His second book, *Conscious Globalism: What's wrong with the world and how to fix it* will be available in the U.S. and China in 2005. His web site www.consciousthinking.com expands on ideas in this article.