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S.O.U.L. - The Book

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This little book is a proposal for us to get together, and communally create the framework for a new humanist-spiritual civilization to be born out of today's disintegrating chaos. Evolution proceeds, contrary to common belief, not at a steady, uniform pace. Instead, it's characterized by long periods of equilibrium, when progress or change is slow or non-existent, punctuated by brief periods of crisis. It's in such turbulent times, that dominant species like ours either adapt and jump quickly to the next level, or decline rapidly, perhaps into extinction. Our work here proposes to initiate just that kind of rapid evolutionary adjustment for our species.

One of the pitfalls of writing this kind of a book is, that the words we use can often be used against us. The audacity of this proposal's scope will provoke ridicule and fear. And frankly, that may well be justified if all we did was to write this book. Imagine a manual on how to teach people who have never ventured into the water, to teach themselves to swim. The proposed organization, S.O.U.L., and the website will provide the support for us all to learn how to swim in the turbulent seas of global change, and reach the shores of a new, kinder, more humane human civilization.

It is critical for the thoughts expressed in this book to be transferred to the reader with a minimum of random change. Science does that with mathematics, the most precise language invented by mankind. Besides mathematics, the most important tools we have are words. In order for us to increase the precision of our communication with each other, it's useful to examine the nature of language, words, briefly.

In a delightful book called *The Four Agreements*, Don Miguel Ruiz describes the magic that all of us human beings possess: the magic of words. Words are seemingly random combinations of sounds or letters. The combination "chair" is, for example, quite as meaningless to a Chinese as it is to a cat. But when English speakers utter it, it conveys meaning. Similarly, when Chinese people exchange rapid-fire sequences of their seemingly random sounds, they are most definitely communicating.

Our ability to use words is so sophisticated that we can instantly invoke love, peace, understanding – or resentment, anger, outrage – in others. We can heal with words and we can kill with them. We can allow others a peek into our inner self, for better or for worse. Words are magic – black magic if used with malice, white magic if used with love. Miguel admonished us to use our words wisely, truthfully, lovingly. Down the line, they create our communal world.

Words, magic as they are, do have a serious drawback. It's precisely because they're so magical that they're relied on to do more than they can. After all, they're only tools we use to signal messages, emotions and ideas to others. We often fall into the trap of confusing the word or symbol for the idea that it stands for. It's easy to see that we can't sit in the letter

combination "chair"; the word is not the same as the sitting implement. It's not so easy with abstract words like love and anger. And it becomes very confusing when we consider words like "God"; There's no agreement if "God"; the three letter word, stands for an abstract idea, a concrete entity or a childish superstition.

One reason for discussing the magic of words in this introduction is to persuade my agnostic or atheist friends to bear with me when I use the terms "God"; or "spirituality"; They are only labels I use to try to convey certain ideas about our common reality. I am an ex-science teacher with an M.S. in genetics. I'm also spiritual — a mystic, if you will. But we don't operate in two separate realities, the scientific, physical on one hand and the spiritual on the other hand. This strange misconception allows religionists to reject the basic science behind the light bulb, and scientific types to reject anything that can't be explained physically. Science and mysticism are obviously two different, complementary ways of looking at our one and only reality. In the final analysis, the words "God"; "love"; and "life"; are only little words, tools to exchange ideas from one mind to another, not all that different in principle from the scientific words "quarks"; "super-strings"; and "gravitons"; They're all tools to help share the understanding that each of us may have of our wonderful world, so that we may increase that understanding.

Some of the most sophisticated uses of word magic are poetry and metaphor. In fact, good poetry is metaphor. We have to resort to these highly advanced kinds of word magic when we talk about the unfathomable. Metaphor is an attempt to transcend words when words, implements of the mind, cannot convey what we feel. All spirituality is metaphor. When it's taken literally, it loses its meaning. It becomes idolatry, the clinging to an idol, which is a mere symbol of the real thing.

It is my intention to use the magic of words to get beyond the walls that represent the limitations of words. This book appeals to all people, religious and secular, liberal and conservative, rich and poor, white, yellow, black, brown or rainbow, to put aside mentalist arguments or the misuse of words. This mission is not to prove us right and others wrong. Our mission, instead, is to form an image of our collective self, humanity, as we wish it to be, and then to create the framework for our image of humanity, our new collective agreement of reality to actualize.

The first two chapters, Why Unconditional Love, and The Mystery Of Evil, lay the philosophical foundation of a new, more humane and more spiritual civilization. Without this foundation, our movement will prove to be nothing more than just another antagonistic advocacy group fighting for its particular point of view against the established order, energizing it in direct proportion to the effort we expend. Whatever we do to bring about change and however we do that will flow naturally from a new understanding of ourselves in relation with each other, the world, the universe and God.

Our success will be utterly independent of the approval or disapproval of society at large. No longer will our work be held hostage to the necessity of first getting the majority of voters to go along with us, and then, getting them to stay with us for the long haul. Futurists like Barbara Marx Hubbard talk of a critical mass of people, citing a figure of 5% or even

fewer. Such a small percentage of people still amount to millions of us worldwide. Our focused action, flowing out of a new, more focused sense of unity and purpose, will trigger a huge transformation of mankind.

The middle chapters analyze today's accelerating disunity and disintegration, the present state of affairs, and outline all the simultaneous steps that we need to take to form all of the societal structures around which a new, kinder and gentler civilization will coalesce. Barbara Hubbard originated the beautiful metaphor of "imaginal cells," structures amidst the disintegrating body of a caterpillar within its chrysalis that focus the growth of the butterfly. We will be the imaginal cells that facilitate the transformation of our dying caterpillar civilization into the beautiful butterfly that will take flight to explore the cosmos.

The concluding chapters postulate the steps we might take to get us from the starting blocks — the publishing of this little book — to becoming a fully functioning, ad hoc committee to transform this world.