

CHAPTER 4

Signs of Health & Emerging Culture **Stories of Hope and Creative Change** **from 2010 and 2011**

by Kenn Burrows

The problems we face are common problems that we must solve together. We need to find our way back to social connection and collaboration - our future depends on it. -- James Hillman

Live out of your imagination, not your history. -- Stephen Covey

This is a chapter about “Good News”... yet I must warn you, we first have to explore some bad news: Business as usual is not working – for people or the planet. And we are facing a fundamental revision of human culture. This chapter suggests that authentic hope lies in the development and “good news” of an emerging culture – a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Expect a lot of change in the coming years, changes on a bigger scale and happening more quickly than before, due in part to the explosion in digital technology and to necessary adjustments in global economics and society. Our times are increasingly complex with instant sharing of information, and an infinite range of opinion. If you’re feeling overwhelmed these days, you’re not alone. And we seem to have lost our ability to collectively solve the important problems facing us as a human family. Multiple crises seem to proliferate, and we seem powerless to do much about it.

From a socio-biological perspective the primary cause of our global crises is the accelerating complexity of human society, and the limitations of the human mental system that evolved to give priority to short term (here and now) threats -- threats that are obvious, immediate, sudden, personal, and dramatic. We are therefore poorly equipped, to attend to what is invisible, tasteless, long-term, slowly unfolding, theoretical, and vast. Crises like overpopulation, overfishing, invisible toxins, climate change, economic instability and disparity, militarization, climate change, commercialization of everything, and the erosion of soil, aquifers and democracy -- to say nothing of people working well together in communities, groups, and organizations -- do not incite the same attention and engagement as the latest crimes, police actions or personal tragedies. ¹

In addition, studies of perceptual blindness show how human brains are hard wired to exclude (ignore or discredit) information that does not fit into their current system of meaning. ² And when overwhelmed it is common to search for order and comfort in established beliefs and make false correlations – substituting beliefs for facts. Fixed perspectives lack systemic (complex causal) understanding and tend to oversimplify reality and polarize political and cultural discourse. According to author Rebecca Costa there are problematic cultural perspectives and coping behaviors that result in social conflict, and political gridlock, these include: “Irrational

opposition”, “personalization of blame,” “extreme economics” and “silo thinking.”³ You can see these at play in today’s politics and culture wars.

This is not just about the other “party” and their limited thinking; it’s about the very way each of us approaches complex issues and the style of activism we take into the world. The point is: our minds are fundamentally out of step with the needs of our times, and all our ecological and social crises reflect an internal crisis, a “crisis of perception.” To face and shift this crisis we need to explore and expand the limiting worldviews inhabiting our minds and driving our culture. To change our world, we have to change our worldview.

To a great degree our current worldview is driven by cultural beliefs about the market and money systems, and by the material achievements of science. The Market-State externalizes human problems primarily as resource issues to be managed through technology and investment, corporate production and government support. This materialistic-commercial worldview is exclusive; it externalizes costs and leaves nature, society (you and I) and more comprehensive views out of the equation. And we all pay a big price for this exclusion – the loss of full association with each other and our world. This impacts our ecology, our sociality, our health and spirituality.⁴

Let’s take a moment to step back and give perspective to our predicament. As we approach 7 billion people on the planet, and growing reports of ecological and social crises, we naturally tend to see the negative impacts of the modern worldview. Yet, let’s also acknowledge the benefits. The strengths of modern culture (scientific-technical and commercial) have yielded many gifts – a few key examples, comparing today to a century ago: increased life expectancy, vastly improved health care (antibiotics, dentistry, prosthetics, etc.), the computer, personal phone and global information systems, great advancements in transportation, and new economic growth for many and greater economic interconnectivity throughout the world.

How do we take the best of the modern world and balance its excesses? Globalization offers some promising trends. In particular, the flow of information across cultures has led to more connections and sharing than ever before. History’s greatest theme has been the trading of goods and ideas. If we maintain the open exchange of information and the social media that the internet provides, we will have a rich field of possibility. The interaction of more people and more ideas invites new thinking and new possibilities and a deepening of our collective intelligence. In this way of thinking – the more we share, the more we have. This co-creativity is the hope of the future and together.... we are inventing a new global era.⁵

To solve the massive problems the human family is facing, the world needs lots of new and workable ideas. If you want meaningful work helping change the world...here it is! The future is calling for innovators, people who can see and think in new creative ways. And innovators are collaborators - creativity feeds off social interaction and loves novelty and diversity; it is by nature inclusive and integrative. Collaboration with others can be challenging, yet it is rich in rewards if you are willing to be inclusive in your thinking.

Innovators are also “knowledge workers”.... people comfortable with ideas or knowledge as a key aspect of social exchange. Knowledge workers are aware that we are beginning to redefine everything, because of the new openness in communication systems. They learn how to hold multiple points of view and think comprehensively; they are drawn to the challenges of

complexity. Knowledge workers wear different hats: designers, programmers, architects, writers, educators, managers, etc. Their worldview is holistic, informed by systems thinking – recognizing that all issues and views are connected and part of a larger reality, and when you talk about social justice and I talk about the environment – that we’re talking about the same reality – from equally valuable perspectives. Knowledge workers are bridge-builders and translators – able to help others connect the dots and understand a larger sense of things. They don’t normally get stuck in false dichotomies, i.e. liberal-conservative politics, public-private sectors, etc. Knowledge workers are outliers; they get their ideas from anywhere. They don’t have their identity wrapped up in any single ideology or group... but will associate with many.⁶ They honor the worldview of those they are with, being aware that every view has value and perspective to offer. Good knowledge workers learn how to swim in the paradoxes inherent in human existence and constantly look to “pattern recognition” for what is emerging out of relationship with others.

Innovators know that problems are natural to living, and that creative attention to problems is the first step in the change process. Problems are necessary catalysts that drive all evolution. And doomsayers are usually overstating the risks and understating the power of collaboration and innovation - that we always have the choice of being a victim or an innovator. Victims tend to focus on what they don’t want/what isn’t working (problem focus) and fear more of it. People feel victimized by the economy, not having enough time, circumstances like an illness, a bad childhood... Innovators focus on what they want and reach for a shift in thinking (and identity) that is life changing. And focusing on what you want begins the shift.⁷

And collaborators know when problems are clearly identified and people see a way to a help... they will. Rebecca Solnit stated it this way: “Most of the real work on this planet is not done for profit: it's done at home, for each other, for affection, out of idealism. Behind the (capitalist) system we all know, is a shadow system of kindness, the other invisible hand. Much of its work now lies in simply undoing the depredations of the official system. Its achievements are often hard to see or grasp.”⁸

An example on Wikipedia – a fundraising plea from a Russian woman scientist: "Almost every day I come home from work and spend several hours improving Wikipedia! Why would I donate so much of my free time? Because I believe that by giving my time and effort -- along with thousands of other people -- we will one day have shared and free knowledge for all people."

This chapter is a call to help evolve the modern worldview by integrating the best of it with the relational worlds of body, nature and community... joining with others who are taking the future into their own hands and living lives of meaning and purpose. The news stories in this chapter are examples of people doing just that -- making good news – becoming more collaborative, innovative and building the future! There are six Good News clusters – each an essential area of need and innovation: *Community and Collaboration*, *Economy and Fair Exchange*, *Media and Education*, *Mind and Consciousness*, *Nature and Technology*, and *Politics and People Power*. The stories in each cluster are informative and inspiring signs of the emerging, creative culture.

Final thoughts for your journey for this coming year of change:

- (1) Humor, compassion and positive emotions are great tools to help meet the challenges of complexity and support creative social change. Studies of effective traffic safety ads

show the use of humor and empowerment (appeal to positive emotions) work much better than fear-based ads.⁹ This is something to remember for daily life and for our activism.

- (2) A reminder there is great goodness in the world of which you are a part – “a fierce affection and determination (that) pushes back everywhere at the forces of destruction.”¹⁰ Find yourself a community and feel and gain support from those associations.
- (3) The Institute of Noetic Sciences published studies about their “Worldview Literacy Project” which describes five developmental levels of social consciousness and an educational curriculum to facilitate worldview development. Their studies show success in training young people to shift their worldview by cultivating social-emotional intelligence and new states of mind that help them navigate complexity.¹¹ These are the skills and capacities for the knowledge workers of the 21st century. This is Good News!
- (4) If you ask... where should I begin? There are many resources in this chapter to help you get oriented. And ultimately, that is up to you. Find an important question and listen to yourself - your heart will answer! We are eco-systems and nature knows what to do.

COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

These news stories are about the power of sharing and community. Community is about people coming together out of common need to build a circle of trust and association—a social fabric that provides meaning, justice, shared resources, and social support.

The Antidote to Apathy – Redesigning Public Communication

Perhaps apathy is not as some kind of internal symptom, but as a complex cultural web of cultural obstacles that reinforces disengagement. If we can identify those obstacles and work together to remove them... things could get quite exciting!

Dave Meslin, “The Antidote to Apathy,” TED, TEDx Toronto, Oct. 2010

http://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy.html

Neighbors for Common Security

Communities around the country are coming together to support each other in hard times. Known as “Common Security Clubs,” “Resilience Circles,” or by other names, these are places for neighbors to face a tough economy together by learning the root causes of the economic crisis, forming bartering and sharing cooperatives, creating locally rooted support networks, etc.

Sources: Sarah Byrnes, “Can Small Group Organizing Save the Country?” *Yes! Magazine*, November 5, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/common-security-clubs/can-small-group-organizing-save-the-country>; Sarah Byrnes, “Writing Our Own Economic Future,” *Yes! Magazine*, April 20, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/common-security-clubs/dont-get-fooled-again-writing-our-own-economic-future>.

Reclaiming Public Space

People are working to reclaim streets as public spaces, partnering with residents and local businesses to create a renewed sense of community. Claim a small space and make it beautiful and inviting with art, plants, and seating areas, or clean and create common space. Putting the public space back where it’s supposed to be has a profound effect on the social culture. Here are some great examples and photos of reclaimed public spaces in a number of cities.

Sources: Erika Kosina, “Reclaim Your Streets,” *Yes! Magazine*, September 22, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/reclaim-your-streets-how-to-create-safe-and-social-pedestrian-plazas>; Brooke Jarvis, “Building the World We Want,” *Yes! Magazine*, May 12, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/building-the-world-we-want-interview-with-mark-lakeman>.

20 Easy Ways to Share and Spark Your Life

Take a leap into the expansive world of sharing and explore creative ways to make sharing a meaningful part of your life with this great list of ways to share (tool-sharing, bartering, yard-sharing, “freecycling,” co-working, etc.), which shows that a complete lifestyle based on sharing is possible and can be very rewarding. And there is always food and time to share.

Source: Kelly McCartney, “Top 20 How-To-Share Posts,” *Shareable*, January 9, 2011, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/shareables-top-20-how-to-share-posts>
<http://shareable.net/how-to-share>.

The Power of Conversation to Change the World

Conversation shifts our thinking and deepens social connections. It is essential for sharing resources, and for mutual understanding that leads to co-creating and caring for our world. It enables communities to connect, find common ground, and pursue common action.

Source: Melinda Blau, “Art of Conversation Is Key to Sharing,” *Shareable*, April 18, 2011, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/why-the-art-of-conversation-is-key-to-sharing>.
The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD): <http://ncdd.org>.

Unexpected Benefits From Disaster in Japan

The disaster in Japan has caused people in the city of Sendai to come together and become a strongly knit, supportive community. The recent events have brought a lot of people who were once strangers together, many showing compassionate acts to help one another through times of distress. Instead of stepping on one another for survival people are lending their helping hands, so reaffirming the positive side of human nature and community bonds.

Source: Anne Thomas, “A Letter From Sendai,” *Ode*, March 14, 2011, http://www.odemagazine.com/blogs/readers_blog/24755/a_letter_from_sendai.

Happiness Not Linked to Material Wealth

In a worldwide survey, people in poorer countries reported greater happiness than people in many of the world’s wealthier nations. Research suggests this is due to the strong link between national and personal satisfaction among poor people, and among those with strong cultural and regional ties.

Source: Mike Morrison et al., “Subjective Well-Being and National Satisfaction,” *Psychological Science*, February 2011, <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/22/2/166.abstract>.

Co-ops Support Community

Co-ops create equitable and stable economies, build strong communities that promote education, and merge economic growth with social goals. Co-ops exist to serve people’s needs, not to maximize profits for shareholders.

Source: Steven Van Yoder, “Fixing the Free Market,” *Ode*, October 2010, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/73/fixing-the-free-market/all>.

3 Ways to Bring People Together in Your Neighborhood

Great ways to connect your community: set up a “gift circle” for neighbors to meet each others’ needs by sharing what they have; throw a community swap meet where people come together with food, music, and all kinds of creative exchanges; or start a neighborhood work group that pools local talent for meaningful collaboration on community projects.

Sources: Charles Eisenstein, “A Circle of Gifts,” *Shareable*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/charles-eisenstein-gift-economy-gift-circles>; Shira Golding, “How to Throw a Community Swap Meet,” *Shareable*, January 24, 2010, <http://shareable.net/blog/how-to-throw-your-own-community-swap-meet>; Emily Doskow, “How to Start a Neighborhood Work Group,” *Shareable*, March 1, 2010, <http://shareable.net/blog/how-to-start-a-neighborhood-work-group>.

Couchsurfing: Offer Your Couch, Make New Friends

The gift economy is alive and global among an improbable network of “Couchsurfers.” Since its launch in 2003, Couchsurfing.org has become an international phenomenon. It has attracted 1,930,000 registered Couchsurfers from around the world and facilitated 2,086,778 successful surf and host experiences. Couches are offered in 230 countries and 73,339 cities.

Source: David Bollier, “When Couches Become Communities,” *Yes! Magazine*, July 29, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/when-couches-become-communities>.

More Friends, Bigger Brain

Research shows that the amygdala—a small, almond-shaped region located deep inside our brain—is linked to the size of our social networks.

Source: Sian Beilock, *Greater Good Science Center*, March 3, 2011, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/more_friends_bigger_brain.

ECONOMY & FAIR EXCHANGE

It is increasingly clear that our entire economic system needs major reform. A “New Economy” movement is emerging that seeks a shift away from the current money system and the financial bottom line toward a community-based, partnership economy. The new economy redefines wealth to emphasize sharing and access over ownership. It recognizes and promotes three types of wealth production: the gift economy (family, close friends, and intimates), community-exchange systems (time banks, co-ops, gift circles, community currencies, etc.), and federal money. In this third area, the focus is on the use of public/partnership banks that serve the community and return any profits to the residents. The news stories below explore these innovative options.

The New Economy Movement

The emergence of the term “new economy” in public discourse in recent decades may be a sign that support for status quo capitalism is wavering. A growing movement of people accepts the idea that the entire economic system must be radically restructured for critical social and

environmental goals to be met. They call for institutions with more egalitarian priorities than the narrow corporate focus on profits and growth. As the economy continues to falter, this movement is working to define a viable path toward long-term systemic change.

Source: Gar Alperovitz, *Nation*, May 25, 2011, <http://www.thenation.com/article/160949/new-economy-movement>.

How to Get Free from Wall Street: Redefine Wealth and Create New Systems of Exchange

Economist David Korten proposes that we create real wealth through increased political participation; by basing value on living systems rather than on the money system; by shifting power from global financial markets to local, community-controlled economies; and by expanding the areas of our lives that are based on gift economies, barter, mutual aid, and caring for the greater good.

Source: Doug Pibel, *Yes! Magazine*, October 1, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-resilient-community/get-free-from-wall-street>.

State Banking Takes Off—With Profits for Public vs. Private Gain

Fourteen states have introduced bills to form state-owned banks or are studying their feasibility. All of these bills were inspired by the Bank of North Dakota (BND), the nation's only state-owned bank. While other states are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, the state of North Dakota continues to report surpluses. On April 20, BND reported profits for 2010 of \$62 million, setting a record for the seventh straight year. These profits belong to the citizens and are produced without taxation. BND partners with local banks to provide credit for local businesses and homeowners. It also helps with state and local government funding. Now other states are on track to follow North Dakota's example, moving their state reserves from Wall Street banks to a bank owned by their residents.

Sources: John David, "Reviving Main Street: A Call for Public Banks," *Shareable*, May 16, 2011, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/reviving-main-street-a-call-for-public-banks>; Ellen Brown, "Washington State Joins the Movement for Public Banking," *Yes! Magazine*, January 24, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/washington-state-joins-movement-for-public-banking>; Public Banking Institute: <http://publicbankinginstitute.org>.

Timebanks Swap Skills, Not Dollars

Modern forms of time exchange, called Timebanks and LETS (Local Employment Trading Systems), have been around since the 1980s. They are based on the hour as a unit of account, and everyone's hour could either be exchanged for another hour of service or for the equivalent in goods. Now, with more than one in ten Americans unemployed (likely twice that, given recording problems), time exchanges are making a comeback in communities across the U.S. The network Timebank USA alone includes more than 120 timebanks. Every community determines its own rules, but the idea is to allow people to purchase the services that they need without toiling endlessly to meet high prices in the market economy. It is a way to help the underprivileged and for the underserved to help each other through an organized system of reciprocity. In the process, people get to know and trust their neighbors, establishing caring relationships that can help reweave the fabric of our communities and replace our culture's over-reliance on individual financial security.

Sources: Mira Luna, "How to Share Time," *Yes! Magazine*, July 8, 2010,

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/how-to-share-time>; Mira Luna, “How to Share Time Through Timebanking,” *Shareable*, January 27, 2010, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-share-time-through-timebanking>.

Ways Our World is Becoming More Shareable

There are countless examples of how our world is becoming more shareable: carsharing, bikesharing, ridesharing, yardsharing, co-working, co-housing, tool libraries, open space, world café, public transit, urban agriculture, civic engagement, bike lanes, social enterprises, nonprofit groups, microfinance, the internet, social media, cooperatives, employee-owned firms, community land trusts, resident-owned communities, and much more.

Sources: Neal Gorenflo, “10 Ways Our World is Becoming More Shareable,” *Shareable*, March 8, 2010, <http://shareable.net/blog/10-ways-our-world-is-becoming-more-shareable>; Neal Gorenflo, “Top 10 Tips for Starting a Campus Food Coop,” *Shareable*, March 20, 2011, <http://www.shareable.net/blog/top-10-tips-for-starting-a-campus-food-coop>.

Americans Buying More Locally

There are now more than 5,274 active farmers markets in the U.S.; nearly half of them started within the last decade. Food co-ops and neighborhood greengrocers are likewise on the rise. Local business alliances have now formed in over 130 cities and collectively count some 30,000 businesses as members. These alliances are making a compelling case that choosing independent businesses and locally produced goods is critical for rebuilding prosperity, averting environmental catastrophe, and ensuring that we are not smothered by corporate uniformity.

Sources: Stacy Mitchell, “A New Deal for Local Economies,” *Yes! Magazine*, April 29, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/a-new-deal-for-local-economies>; Jeff Milchen, “5 Ways to Help Your Community Go Local,” *Yes! Magazine*, February 3, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/5-ways-to-help-your-community-go-local>.

Homemade Prosperity: The Re-Emergence of Home Economics

By reducing expenses in creative ways (preserving the harvest from local farms, re-purposing used clothing, etc.), Americans are transforming their homes from units of consumption into units of production. Now, instead of the family working to support the household, the household works to support the family. Members of this growing home economics movement enjoy time with family and a greatly reduced ecological footprint.

Source: Shannon Hayes, “Homemade Prosperity,” *Yes! Magazine*, December 10, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/what-happy-families-know/homemade-prosperity>.

MEDIA & EDUCATION

We’ve entered the digital age and the media explosion is impacting everything. Journalism is struggling to reinvent itself and local newspapers (those still standing) are trying to find a new commercial model that will allow them to survive. What about public accountability in this era? Media freedom? And education... it will never be the same, nor perhaps should it be. Yet where is this all going? The following independent news stories point toward trends and possibilities.

Social Media Isn’t Changing the World; It’s Creating a New One

Social Media is a great tool for spreading information and connecting people from all over the world. Ninety-six percent of Generation Y has joined a social network. It is estimated that Google, Facebook, and Twitter connect two billion people worldwide—a third of the planet's population! More video was uploaded to YouTube in six months than was produced by the three major TV networks in 60 years. Wikipedia has over 13 million articles, all written by volunteers. Through social media, a radically new order based on open access, decentralized creativity, collaborative intelligence, and easy sharing is emerging.

Source: Neal Gorenflo, *Shareable*, October 12, 2010, <http://shareable.net/blog/social-media-isnt-changing-the-world-its-creating-a-new-one>.

National Conference for Media Reform 2011: Change the Media, Change the World

Enjoy audio and video archives of this historic conference with presentations on: Journalism and Public Media, Social Justice and Movement Building, Policy and Politics, Technology and Innovation, Media Makers, and Culture and the Arts.

Source: Session Archives, April 8-10, 2011, <http://conference.freepress.net/archive>.

Good News Sources

Good: Good News daily, videos, infographics, projects, slideshows. <http://www.good.is>.

Happy News: Compelling stories, news, and activities. <http://www.happynews.com>.

OdeWire: Tired of hearing bad news daily? Calling all intelligent optimists! Get your daily dose of what's going right in our complex world by turning to OdeWire, a new 24/7 outlet for optimistic/solution-oriented news harvested from multiple news sources. <http://odewire.com/>.

Changing the Educational Paradigm

Shifting from educational factories to creative, 21st century education.

Source: RSA Animate and Sir Ken Robinson, *YouTube*, October 14, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U>.

Let's Use Video to Reinvent Education

Media-led learning enables children of various learning abilities to learn at their own pace, helping shift the education paradigm to a more self-directed and effective learning experience.

Source: Salman Khan, *TED*, March 2011, http://www.ted.com/talks/salman_khan_let_s_use_video_to_reinvent_education.html.

Virtual Reality & Inner Space: Technology's New Frontier?

Virtual reality is immersive and interactive—and it's changing people's lives, tapping into individuals' potential to transform themselves and their world. Coming Home, for example, is a program that uses virtual reality to help veterans struggling with mental health issues.

Source: Matthew Gilbert, *Institute of Noetic Sciences*, November 16, 2010, <http://www.noetic.org/blog/inner-space-technologys-new-frontier/>.

Transformative Films Educate and Awaken as Well as Entertain

Transformative movies are deeply impacting 21st century audiences. What differentiates these films from others is their explicit intention to either affirm a positive vision of the world or to actually change people—to challenge personal or cultural conditioning or beliefs.

Source: Matthew Gilbert, “Transformational Films: A Genre on the Threshold,” *Institute of Noetic Sciences*, February 2011, <http://www.noetic.org/noetic/issue-7-february/transformational-films-a-genre-on-the-threshold/>.

The Greatest TED Talk Ever Sold

Using humor, transparency, and bold parody of PR industry reps to explore the underlying dynamics of branding and marketing hype.

Source: Morgan Spurlock, *TED*, February 2011, http://www.ted.com/talks/morgan_spurlock_the_greatest_ted_talk_ever_sold.html.

Innovations in Journalism and News

Community-Funded Reporting—A New Model for Journalism

Through Spot.Us the public can commission and participate with journalists to do reporting on important and overlooked topics. Contributions are tax deductible and Spot.Us partners with news organizations to distribute content under appropriate licenses: <http://spot.us>.

Journalism That Matters—Lively Interaction Between Journalists and Community

Journalism That Matters supports journalists and leaders who are shaping the news and information ecology so that journalism serves the needs of people to be self-governing. JTM focuses on cultivating “healthy journalists” and informative interaction between journalists, educators, reformers, and community members. They support renewing the inner life of the journalist, and embrace all forms of media engagement: <http://journalismthatmatters.org>.

Real Talk Express: Hip-Hop & Street News

Jasiri X’s groundbreaking Hip-Hop news series: <http://www.realtalkxpress.com>.

WikiLeaks: Pentagon Papers 2.0?

The website WikiLeaks has released hundreds of thousands of classified intelligence reports, military logs, diplomatic cables, and other material related to U.S. foreign policy, including to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The documents have brought the misdeeds of war into the sunlight of public attention, fueling today’s anti-war movement in much the same way the Pentagon Papers once galvanized those protesting the Vietnam War.

Source: Phyllis Bennis, *Yes! Magazine*, July 27, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/pentagon-papers-2.0-afghanistan>.

MIND & CONSCIOUSNESS

The news stories that follow report new studies of consciousness on two levels: (1) personal and (2) psychosocial. These studies emphasize how our worldviews and habits of thought shape and limit our perspective, and how, when we open our minds and hearts, everything else seems to change as well: our health, our capacity to create, and our ability to relate and succeed.

Mind & Consciousness—Personal

PTSD Treatment Success Using MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy

Clinical research studies showed psychotherapy assisted by the drug MDMA significantly outperformed the pharmaceutical industry in effective PTSD treatment. A recent pilot study showed the rate of clinical response for the active treatment group was 83%, with 30% of treatment-group participants no longer meeting criteria for PTSD just 2 months after the study and no evidence of impaired cognitive functioning. These results are especially significant considering the chronic and resistant nature of PTSD. To do this research, scientists have had to overcome greatly exaggerated estimates of the risks of MDMA put forth by anti-drug authorities seeking to block research into the beneficial uses of MDMA and other psychedelic medicines.

Note: MDMA is not Ecstasy. Substances sold on the street under the name Ecstasy often contain MDMA, but also may contain ketamine, caffeine, BZP, and other narcotics or stimulants. In laboratory studies, pure MDMA has been proven sufficiently safe for human consumption when taken a limited number of times in moderate doses.

Sources: Michael C Mithoefer et al., “The Safety and Efficacy of MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy in Subjects with Chronic, Treatment-Resistant PTSD,” *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, July 2010, <http://www.maps.org/mdma/ptsdpaper.pdf>; Jessica Winter, “Can a Single Pill Change Your Life?” *O, The Oprah Magazine*, February 15, 2011, <http://www.oprah.com/health/PTSD-and-MDMA-Therapy-Medical-Uses-of-Ecstasy>; “Harvard Study Published in Addiction Shows Ecstasy Not Associated with Cognitive Decline,” *PR Newswire*, February 15, 2011, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/harvard-study-published-in-addiction-shows-ecstasy-not-associated-with-cognitive-decline-116226594.html>; “MDMA to Treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,” *PTSD Trauma Treatment*, November 26, 2010, <http://www.ptsdtraumatreatment.org/ptsd-treatment/mdma-to-treat-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-%E2%80%93-unnecessary-risk/>.

Precognition—Evidence That People Can Sense and Predict Future Events

The term “psi” denotes anomalous processes of information or energy transfer that are currently unexplained in terms of known physical or biological mechanisms. A paper by Cornell psychology professor Daryl Bem shows that a significant number of people are able to sense and predict future events. Resistance to this idea quickly surfaced, and scientists are in the throes of a heated debate about how to interpret the data. Human potential is poised for redefinition, warranting a closer look at all psi phenomena.

Sources: Daryl J. Bem, “Feeling the Future: Experimental Evidence for Anomalous Retroactive Influences on Cognition and Affect,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, March 2011, <http://www.dbem.ws/FeelingFuture.pdf>; Cassandra Vieten “It’s About Time: the Scientific Evidence for Psi Experiences,” *Huffington Post*, December 17, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cassandra-vieten/esp-evidence_b_795366.html; Jonah Lehrer “Feeling The Future: Is Precognition Possible?” *Wired*, November 15, 2010, <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2010/11/feeling-the-future-is-precognition-possible>; “Psi and Psychology: the Recent Debate,” *YouTube*, April 25, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Tdiu5kwjKs>.

Meditation and Brain-Mind Changes

Meditation can ease the symptoms of depression and anxiety disorders and improve quality of life for people with chronic diseases. A recent study shows that even novice meditators were able

to significantly increase gray brain matter density after practicing for only 30 minutes each day over an eight-week period.

Sources: Mary Desmond Pinkowish, “The Muse in The Moment,” *Ode*, Spring 2011, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/74/muse-in-the-moment/>; Jason Marsh, “A Little Meditation Goes a Long Way,” *Greater Good Science Center*, February 9, 2011, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/a_little_meditation_goes_a_long_way.

Grief, Fear and Despair: Essential for a Healthy Mind

As the multitude of 21st-century threats to the planet grow more ominous, positive psychology has risen to the top of the pop psych chart. But there are times when “staying positive” hits a wall, and adversity calls on us to attend to the darker realities we’d prefer to avoid, ignore or deny. But that only masks our hidden sorrows, allowing them to grow and consume us. As a culture, we perceive our darker realities as signs of impairment, but perhaps the only thing that’s impaired is our perception.

Source: Miriam Greenspan, “How the Light Gets In,” *Ode*, Spring 2011, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/74/how-the-light-gets-in/>.

Coherence and Chaos—Why We Need Both

On every level of living systems, there exists evidence of the value of both chaos and coherence; healthy function is dependent on their coexistence. Each is important in different situations. When we exclusively reify one over the other, we pay a price. For example, a lack of healthy variability in neural activity is associated with depression. Conversely, a lack of coherence in brain wave patterns is characteristic of schizophrenia. Context matters.

Source: Larry Dossey, “Coherence, Chaos, and the Coincidentia Oppositorum,” *EXPLORE: The Journal of Science & Healing*, November 2010, <http://www.explorejournal.com/article/S1550-8307%2810%2900181-3/fulltext#sec7>.

Tasting the Universe: What Synesthesia Suggests about the Nature of Consciousness

Synesthesia can be simply understood as a blending of senses (tasting colors, seeing music, etc.). It may sound unbelievable, but exacting brain scans can show locations of intense brain activity when synesthesia is stimulated. Many see synesthesia as a disorder, but some believe that it may be a kind of quantum consciousness and should be further studied for its possible implications for human consciousness.

Source: Maureen Seaberg, *Institute of Noetic Sciences*, May 2011, <http://www.noetic.org/noetic/issue-ten-may/tasting-the-universe/>.

Mind & Consciousness—Psychosocial

Primates are Not Genetically Predisposed To Violence

It has long been thought that our primate cousins the chimpanzees have genetic predispositions toward violence, suggesting that violence is a natural part of human nature. However, new evidence suggests that this is not necessarily true. In the Gombe National Park in Tanzania, Jane Goodall studied the primates for decades and reported little aggressive interactions during the first 14 years. But patterns of aggression changed among the troop in later years. Some suggest

this was due to human interactions. Human feeding of the chimpanzees, with its restrictions and control, deeply affected the behavior and culture of the animals.

Source: Darcia Narvaez, “Male Chimps and Humans Genetically Violent—NOT!” *Psychology Today*, March 29, 2011, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201103/male-chimps-and-humans-are-genetically-violent-not>.

Early Societies Suggest Humans are Naturally Collaborative, Not Self-Serving

Humans are not born to be competitive, self-serving, and violent (as many believe) but rather collaborative. The human genus spent 99% of its existence in small-band hunter-gatherer societies. These societies were fiercely egalitarian and didn't have an organized hierarchy or leader. It wasn't until societies began cultivating crops and became sedentary that political hierarchy and therefore violence appeared. But when we believe hierarchy to be a part of human nature, we are more likely to tolerate inequality.

Source: Darcia Narvaez, “What You Think About Evolution and Human Nature May Be Wrong,” *Psychology Today*, April 17, 2011, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201104/what-you-think-about-evolution-and-human-nature-may-be-wrong>.

Studies Indicate Humans are Wired for Empathy

Scientists recently discovered mirror neurons in all primates. Mirror neurons enable us to experience another's plight as if we were experiencing it ourselves. Several studies suggest we are not soft-wired for aggression, violence, and self-interest but for collaboration and companionship. As humans, our main drive is to belong. Our secondary drives of narcissism, materialism, and violence emerge when our homo-empathicus nature is repressed by today's parenting, educational systems, business practices and governments. Consciousness has changed throughout history. As we evolve, we extend our empathetic ties. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors only had empathy for those in their bloodline, the people they interacted with on a daily basis. Any other humans they encountered were considered a threat. Today's technology allows people around the globe to interact, furthering our potential for empathetic connection.

Source: RSA Animate and Jeremy Rifkin, “The Empathic Civilisation,” *YouTube*, May 6, 2010 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnfFRc7g&feature=relmfu>.

Mindfulness and Parenting

Practice mindfulness to reduce stress during pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenting. Staying centered and present with children will foster a strong bond between parent and child and help kids feel safe, secure, and loved. Furthermore, children who are well attended to grow up to be mindful and compassionate themselves, creating a more peaceful future for all.

Source: Cassandra Vieten, “Riding the Rollercoaster of Pregnancy and Early Parenthood,” *Psychology Today*, May 3, 2010, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mindful-motherhood/201005/riding-the-roller-coaster-pregnancy-and-early-parenthood>.

Does Sharing Come Naturally to Kids?

A study on collaboration found that young children naturally share rewards when they are successful at completing a task together.

Source: Jason Marsh, *Greater Good Science Center*, February 24, 2011, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/does_sharing_come_naturally_to_kids.

The Power of Positive Perspectives on Race and Diversity

Journalist Joe Klein said, “Diversity has been written into the DNA of American life; any institution that lacks a rainbow array has come to seem diminished, if not diseased.” Indeed, research has demonstrated that some surprising victims of racism are racists themselves. When racists encounter someone different from them they experience an immediate surge in stress hormones. Over time this response can lead to numerous chronic problems such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Interracial interactions are not inherently stressful. Studies show that people who have a positive attitude when exposed to different ethnicities are more successful academically, occupationally, and socially. A diverse array of perspectives creates better communicators and problem solvers. Expecting kids to act colorblind is illogical. However, research has shown that talking about race and racism helps counteract prejudice.

Source: Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, “Should We Talk to Young Children about Race?” *Greater Good Science Center*, May 5, 2011,

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/should_we_talk_to_young_children_about_race;

Elizabeth Page-Gould, “Warning: Racism Is Bad for Your Health,” *Greater Good Science Center*, August 3, 2010,

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_racism_is_bad_for_your_health; Darcia

Narvaez and Patrick L. Hill, “The Relation of Multicultural Experiences to Moral Judgment and Mindsets,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, March 2010,

<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/dhe/3/1/43/>.

The Health Benefits of Gratitude

The world’s leading expert on gratitude finds that people who regularly cultivate gratitude report a host of physical, psychological, and social benefits. Gratitude celebrates the present, blocks negative emotions, and affirms goodness by recognizing external, greater-than-self factors. People who are grateful have a higher sense of self worth because they are continually aware that others are looking out for them.

Source: Robert A. Emmons, “Why Gratitude is Good,” *Greater Good Science Center*, November 16, 2010, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good/.

Giving is Getting: The Benefits of Altruism

Research indicates that altruistic behavior is good for you mentally, emotionally, and physically. In a survey of 4,500 American adults, 73 percent agreed that “volunteering lowered my stress levels,” 89 percent reported that “volunteering has improved my sense of well-being,” and 92 percent agreed that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life. The benefits of altruism may be especially helpful when one is in the midst of a crisis.

Source: Stephen G. Post, “Six Ways to Boost Your ‘Habits of Helping,’” *Greater Good Science Center*, March 15, 2011,

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_ways_to_become_more_altruistic.

Our fates and that of nature are one and the same. Here are news stories of efforts to align human culture with nature, including strategies to reduce environmental degradation caused by human activity, restore ecosystems, and create the health, beauty, and abundance we all seek.

Green Design for a Healthier World

We face many environmental challenges. But imagination and creativity provide the means to transform those challenges into opportunities for meeting human needs while healing and regenerating the world around us—the global commons that is our shared heritage. Through the creative design and use of technology, we can better integrate human and natural systems. With time, as we learn ways to enhance the environments that sustain and enrich us, our collective ecological “footprint” may become one that nourishes rather than diminishes the planet.

• Mushrooms Can Eat Oil Spills and Save the World

Fungi can restore ecosystems, control insect pests, filter farm waste, and treat diseases.

Source: James Trimarco, “Can Mushrooms Rescue the Gulf?” *Yes! Magazine*, October 1, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-resilient-community/can-mushrooms-rescue-the-gulf>.

• A Win for Plastic Recycling!

How to recycle plastics from complex waste streams—at huge energy- and cost savings.

Source: Press Release, “*The Economist* Announces the First of the 2010 Innovation Award Winners,” *Economist*, September 19, 2010,” <http://www.economistconferences.co.uk/press-release/economist-announces-first-2010-innovation-award-winners>.

• Machine Turns Plastic Back into Oil

Source: Carol Smith, “Plastic To Oil Fantastic,” *Our World 2.0*, August 27, 2010, <http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/plastic-to-oil-fantastic/>.

• A Climate Solution?

Burying charcoal sequesters carbon while boosting crop yields.

Source: Andrew Tolve, “The New Black Gold?” *Ode*, July/August 2010, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/71/biochar-black-gold/>.

• Water-Harvesting Device Makes Deserts Bloom

Source: Caspar Llewellyn Smith, “Teach Plants To Grow in Arid Places,” *Guardian*, November 28, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/nov/28/bright-idea-pieter-hoff-agriculture>.

• Home Faucet Attachment Cuts Water Flow—by More Than 90%

Source: Mark van Baal, “Every Little Drupp Counts,” *Ode*, Spring 2011, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/74/dripp-faucet/>.

• Plants Turn Wastewater into Fuel

Source: Mira Stauffacher, “Biology Professor Leads Student in ‘Fuel from Aquatic Biomass’ Project,” *Sonoma State Star*, September 15, 2010,
<http://www.sonomastatestar.com/news/biology-professor-leads-students-in-fuel-from-aquatic-biomass-project-1.1598867>.

- **Turning Windows into Solar Panels**

Source: Nicole Casal Moore, “‘We’ve All Been Taught That This Doesn’t Happen,’” *Michigan Today*, April 13, 2011,
<http://michigantoday.umich.edu/2011/04/story.php?id=7980&tr=y&auid=8154157>.

- **“Artificial Leaf” Harnesses Sun’s Energy**

Source: “Solar ‘Artificial Leaf’ Is Unveiled by MIT Researchers,” *e360 Digest*, March 28, 2011,
http://e360.yale.edu/digest/first_practical_solar_leaf_converts_water_and_sunlight_into_electricity/2870/.

- **Getting Electricity from Freshwater and Saltwater**

Source: “New Battery Uses Seawater and Freshwater to Produce Electricity,” *e360 Digest*, March 30, 2011,
http://e360.yale.edu/digest/new_battery_uses_seawater_and_freshwater_to_produce_electricity/2875/.

- **A Tipping Point for Renewable Energy**

Capacity added in green power could soon exceed that in fossil-fuel stations worldwide.

Source: Brooke Jarvis, *Yes! Magazine*, July 28, 2010,
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/brooke-jarvis/2010-a-tipping-point-for-renewable-energy>.

- **Wind and Solar Are Competitive with Coal and Nuclear**

Accounting for the full economic, environmental, and health costs of coal and nuclear energy makes wind, solar, and other non-fossil fuel power economically competitive.

Sources: Paul R. Epstein et al., “Full Cost Accounting for the Life Cycle of Coal,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, February 2011,
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2010.05890.x/pdf>; “True Cost Accounting for Nuclear Power,” *Living on Earth*, March 25, 2011,
<http://www.loe.org/shows/segments.html?programID=11-P13-00012&segmentID=2>; Robert Costanza et al., “Can Nuclear Power Be Part of the Solution?” *Solutions*, April 5, 2011,
<http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/918>.

Sustainability Means: Resilient Communities

Our most powerful way forward lies in people working with the environment, not against it, to build a healthy and secure foundation upon which all members of the human family and all life on Earth can thrive. With nature as model, mentor, and co-creator with humans, we can establish a permanent culture that’s about regeneration, connectivity, synergy, and abundance. In the process, we will need to collaborate with one another and redefine our relationships with the

environment, rethinking everything from the way we design settlements to how we use resources and get energy. Fortunately, creativity is an unlimited resource. Following are inspired examples of ways in which communities and visionaries are building resilience, adaptability, and ingenuity into their plans for a sustainable future.

- **The Permaculture Design Movement**

Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people — providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way - working with, rather than against, nature. This permanent agriculture also provides the possibility of a stable social order.

Sources: “UMass Permaculture Documentary,” *YouTube*, February 4, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWHSzGDItBA>; Permaculture Research Institute, April 2011, <http://permaculture.org.au/what-is-permaculture/>.

- **The Transition Town Movement**

“Transition” is an approach to embracing and preparing for a post-carbon future. Closely aligned with the principles of permaculture, the Transition movement fosters resilience and local self-reliance through network-building, reduced energy consumption, and eco-farming.

Source: Mason Inman, “Skill Up, Party Down,” *Yes! Magazine*, September 17, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-resilient-community/party-down>.

- **Integrative Settlement Design Through Nature-Inspired Technologies**

The Sahara Forest Project will use Seawater Greenhouses and concentrated solar power to generate fresh water and abundant energy while producing zero-carbon food and reversing desertification. Radical, closed-loop efficiencies mimic those of natural ecosystems.

Source: Michael Pawlyn, “Using Nature’s Genius in Architecture,” *TED*, November 2010, http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/michael_pawlyn_using_nature_s_genius_in_architecture.html

- **Radically Sustainable Homes Built from Recycled Materials**

“Earthships” are permanent structures that provide their own energy, water, and food and are made from locally sourced recycled materials. Hundreds dot the globe, some now in Haiti.

Source: “Haiti Earthship Project: Overview,” *YouTube*, March 21, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7jAkwHTq4c>.

Research Shows That Eco-Farming, Not Big Ag, Is the Key to Feeding the World

The dominant narrative on the issue of food security and quality is that only industrial-scale corporate agriculture can feed the growing human population; ecology-based and organic farming are mere luxuries. According to this myth, growing enough food will require expanding the current agribusiness model of production, which is fossil fuel-, petrochemical-, water-, and capital-intensive, and based largely on plantation-style monocultures of genetically modified crops. Yet recent scientific evidence demonstrates that farms designed to emulate natural

ecosystems not only protect and restore natural resources, but are more productive than industrial farms—and much more resilient to climate change.

Sources: Tom Levitt, “Agroecological Farming ‘Can Double Food Production in Africa over Next 10 Years,’” *Ecologist*, March 8, 2011, http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_round_up/802483/agroecological_farming_can_double_food_production_in_africa_over_next_10_years.html; Nidhi Prakash, “World Hunger Best Cured by Small-Scale Agriculture,” *Guardian*, January 13, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/13/world-hunger-small-scale-agriculture>; Tom Philpott, “Debunking the Stubborn Myth That Only Industrial Ag Can ‘Feed the World,’” *Grist*, March 10, 2011, <http://www.grist.org/industrial-agriculture/2011-03-10-debunking-myth-that-only-industrial-agriculture-can-feed-world>.

The New Food Manifesto—How Food Impacts Every Aspect of Our Lives

From 100-mile diets to green markets and organics, from obesity to genetically modified organisms, food is always in the news. Food issues are political, social, emotional, psychological, ecological, and economic. The new food movement is an act of popular resistance against a system as harmful to life as military conflict. Food isn’t just something we need to shovel down each day to survive. It’s far more potent: it’s the means, more than any other, by which we humans shape our planet and ourselves. We need a new food manifesto outlining how our food choices can shape a better world. Bring friends together to enjoy good food. And talk about where your food came from—and about your food choices.

Source: Carolyn Steel, *Ode*, Spring 2011, <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/74/new-food-manifesto/>.

Poor People Take the Lead in Defense of Nature

Those hurt most by climate change gather to demand “rights for nature.”

Source: Andres Schipani and John Vidal, “Bolivia Climate Change Talks to Give Poor a Voice,” *Guardian*, April 18, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/18/bolivia-climate-change-talks-cochabamba>.

How to Make Biking Mainstream

Source: Jay Walljasper, *Yes! Magazine*, September 29, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/how-to-make-biking-mainstream-lessons-from-the-dutch>.

The Power of One

Source: “Goldman Environmental Prize Awards \$150,000 to Six Heroes of the Environment,” *Goldman Environmental Prize*, April 11, 2011, http://www.goldmanprize.org/pressroom/2011_print/pressreleases.

More Sources on Aligning Ourselves with Nature

Sustainable World Sourcebook: The go-to guide for getting engaged. Get up to speed fast on the critical issues—and on solutions and actions to take. <http://swcoalition.org/index.php>.

Resource Directory: http://swcoalition.org/media/pdf/sourcebook_resources.pdf.

Bioneers: The solutions to most of our environmental and social crises already exist. “Bioneers” are innovators looking to nature to uncover those solutions. <http://www.bioneers.org/>.

POLITICS & PEOPLE POWER

The political and social consciousness of the world is shifting before our eyes. There is a growing realization that true power resides in “the people,” not in governments or politicians. When people unite and are organized and determined, they are likely to succeed. In the United States, polarized politics, the corrupting influence of corporate money, and the disintegration of democratic values have elicited some pushback. Yet broad movements have yet to gel. The stories below reflect public concerns and actions, both in the U.S. and around the world.

Arab Spring Topples Dictators

In December, following a vegetable seller named Mohammed Bouazizi, the people of Tunisia rose up in an unarmed insurrection to overthrow the regime of dictator Ben Ali. Their success prompted a popular uprising against President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, which, after weeks of unprecedented protests, succeeded in ousting him. Soon, the grassroots struggles for democracy spread, with protests taking place throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Though protests in some nations were violently suppressed, movements of the Arab Spring have dramatically altered the way many view prospects for democratization in the Middle East.

Sources: Steven Zunes, “Egypt: Lessons In Democracy,” *Yes! Magazine*, February 1, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/egypt-lessons-in-democracy>; Fares Mabrouk, “After the Tunisian Revolution, Imagining the Way Forward,” *TED*, March 24, 2011, <http://blog.ted.com/2011/03/24/tedxcarthage-notebook-after-the-tunisian-revolution-imagining-the-way-forward>; Ruairidh Arrow, “Gene Sharp: Author of the Nonviolent Revolution Rulebook,” *BBC*, February 21, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12522848>.

Arizona Awakens the “21st Century Civil Rights Movement”

After Arizona passed SB 1070, a controversial measure also known as the “Show-me-your-papers” law, the public response in opposition to the bill was swift, large, and diverse. Hundreds of thousands of people protested against the law in at least 70 U.S. cities. Sports stars denounced it. Boycotts, including by other U.S. cities, dogged the state for months. Though copycat bills were introduced in many other states, popular pressure kept most from gaining traction; a year later, only Georgia’s bill had passed. The mobilization of Latino communities and their supporters has remained high, influencing the debate on federal immigration reform legislation. As Dr. Warren Stewart, a Phoenix pastor, told supporters of the law: “You have awakened the 21st century civil rights movement.”

Sources: Kety Esquivel, *Yes! Magazine*, May 18, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/the-21st-century-civil-rights-movement>; Jordan Flaherty, “In Arizona, A Human Rights Summer,” *Yes! Magazine*, July 30, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/in-arizona-a-human-rights-summer>.

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: Fighting the Israeli Occupation

Increasingly, people and organizations across the United States are standing up to say no to U.S. support for Israeli policies of occupation and apartheid in Palestinian territories. In the first days and weeks after Israel attacked a humanitarian flotilla bringing aid to Gaza, sympathetic actions

occurred across the U.S. In California, hundreds of activists formed a picket line at dawn at the Port of Oakland where an Israeli cargo ship waited and urged dockworkers not to unload the ship in protest of the flotilla assault. Workers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) refused to cross the picket line, a labor arbitrator upheld their right to refuse to unload the ship, and the shipping company abandoned the effort. Workers in Sweden, South Africa, Norway, and Malaysia, have all announced their refusal to unload Israeli ships.

Source: Phyllis Bennis, “Waging Peace from Afar: Divestment and Israeli Occupation,” *Yes! Magazine*, August 20, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/waging-peace-from-afar-divestment-and-israeli-occupation>.

A Realistic Vision for World Peace

Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams says peace is only possible with justice and equality: we all need access to enough resources to live dignified lives; access to education and healthcare; freedom from want and fear; hard work and creativity; collaboration and collective struggle. What’s your definition of peace?

Source: Jody Williams, *TED*, December 2010, http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/jody_williams_a_realistic_vision_for_world_peace.html.

Making Peace Possible: Everyday Acts of Resistance & Positive Change

Monumental change is always a result of smaller acts. Whether it be rejecting fiction-based television news, refusing to cooperate with an unjust system, whistle-blowing, or defying military orders when you know something is wrong, ordinary people are dropping their fears and finding creative ways to challenge leaders who abuse the power given them.

Source: Steve Crawshaw and John Jackson, “10 Everyday Acts of Resistance That Changed the World,” *Yes! Magazine*, April 1, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/10-everyday-acts-of-resistance-that-changed-the-world>.

Wisconsin: First Stop in an American Uprising?

Thousands of citizens filled the streets of Madison and the State Capitol in protest of a bill reducing the rights and benefits of workers. Though the bill passed, it was later defeated in the courts. But the Wisconsin union movement didn’t die; their ardor inspired people across the country and sparked direct actions in all 50 states.

Sources: Sarah van Gelder, *Yes! Magazine*, February 18, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/wisconsin-the-first-stop-in-an-american-uprising>; Micah Uetracht, “Bigger than Unions, Bigger than Wisconsin,” *Yes! Magazine*, February 25, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/bigger-than-unions-bigger-than-wisconsin>.

Pushing Back Against Corporate Spending in Elections

Bipartisan citizens’ groups have been mobilizing to curb corporate spending in a variety of ways, such as amending the Constitution to declare that corporations do not have the same right to free speech as people; requiring shareholders to approve companies’ political spending; passing legislation to require fuller disclosure of where political money originates; and working to expand publicly financed elections.

Sources: Brooke Jarvis, “After the Campaign Cash, the Backlash,” *Yes! Magazine*, November 4, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/brooke-jarvis/after-the-campaign-cash-the-backlash>; Gwen Stowe and Jeff Clements, “Give Us Our Law Back: Montana Fights to Stop Corporate Corruption,” *Yes! Magazine*, May 24, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/give-us-our-law-back-montana-fights-to-stop-corporate-corruption>.

Oregon Senate Approves Citizens’ Initiative Review Bill

The Oregon Senate passed legislation to establish the Citizens’ Initiative Review as a permanent feature of Oregon’s initiative process. The bill, HB 2634, establishes a new state commission to administer future Citizens’ Initiative Reviews (CIRs). The funding for the program will be provided by foundations and private donations—at no additional cost to the state.

Source: Press Release, *Healthy Democracy Oregon*, June 1, 2011, <http://www.healthymocracyoregon.org/blog/2011/06/01/news-release-oregon-senate-approves-citizens%25E2%2580%2599-initiative-review-bill>.

Participatory Budgeting Comes to the U.S.

Through the first “participatory budgeting” experiment in the U.S., residents of Chicago’s 49th Ward spent a year deciding how to spend \$1.3 million in taxpayer dollars. Over 1,600 community members stepped up to decide on improvements for their neighborhoods, showing how participatory budgeting can pave the way for a new kind of grassroots democracy, in Chicago and beyond.

Source: Josh Lerner and Megan Wade Antieau, “Chicago’s \$1.3 Million Experiment in Democracy,” *Yes! Magazine*, April 20, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/chicagos-1.3-million-experiment-in-democracy>.

A Push for Civility in Politics

“I may disagree with you, but I’m pretty sure you’re not Hitler,” read one sign at the Rally to Restore Sanity, organized by comedian Jon Stewart. In an increasingly emotional political climate, hundreds of thousands of people came out to celebrate reasonableness and respect in political debates instead of hatred, violence, and division.

Sources: “Signs of Sanity (and/or Fear),” *Yes! Magazine*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/rally-to-restore-sanity-and-or-fear-1>; Sarah van Gelder and Brooke Jarvis, “Words Matter: How Media Can Build Civility or Destroy It,” *Yes! Magazine*, January 12, 2011, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/words-matter-how-media-can-build-civility-or-destroy-it>.

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To continue your exploration of creativity, integrative thinking and an expanded definition of health and activism, visit *The Holistic Health Learning Center, San Francisco State University*, online, where you'll find an extensive set of links and emerging ideas: www.sfsu.edu/~holistic.

Kenn Burrows has been an educator and consultant for over thirty years, teaching *Holistic Health Studies* at *San Francisco State University* since 1991. He is founder of *The Holistic Health Learning Center*, a unique library and community action center staffed by student volunteers. He is also the producer of the biennial conference: *The Future of Health Care*. Prior to coming to SF State, he taught at *Foothill Community College* for twelve years and operated *Stress-Care*, a corporate training and consulting company. The last sixteen years, he has taught the popular course: *Holistic Health: Human Nature & Global Perspectives*. He also serves as faculty advisor to three different campus student organizations, including *Project Censored - SF State Affiliate*, and he is a member of the Executive Board of the *Media Freedom Foundation*.

Endnotes

¹ Rebecca Costa, "The Watchman's Rattle – Thinking Our Way out of Extinction." Ch.1, Vanguard Press, 2010

² D.J. Simons & C.F. Chabris, "Gorillas In Our Midst: Sustained Inattentional Blindness For Dynamic Events," *Perception*, 28, pp. 1059–1074. (1999)

³ Rebecca Costa, "The Watchman's Rattle – Thinking Our Way out of Extinction." Ch.3, Vanguard Press, 2010

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