

A Resonant Event

Lawrence Hagerty

Who can doubt that humanity experienced an emotional unity of consciousness on September 11, 2001? Never before, never in the entire course of human history, has a single event resonated in the minds of so many people at the same time. This was a resonant event unlike any the world has seen before, and now we must decide whether we are going to rise to the challenge it presents or sink deeper into the pit of violence. What we do with this tremendous opportunity for change will most likely seal the fate of our species for the rest of this decade, if not this century.

Until we give birth to a more civilized world, we will have few waking moments during which the horror of September 11th is not somewhere in our thoughts. Like people who suffer from tinnitus, there will be a constant ringing of sorts in our minds that never goes away. Even though we will experience brief periods during which we can successfully ignore the constant ringing, it will always be there to remind us that the entirety of the human species has begun the next phase of our evolution.

In the days immediately following the maniacal attacks, the thought I heard expressed most often was, "I feel so helpless." Fortunately, there is a cure for that feeling, and that is to take charge of your thoughts once again and begin to engage in actions that make this world a more decent, compassionate, and enjoyable place to live. In other words, look for ways to re-humanize the organizations you are involved with. You do this by coming up with new rules, new ways of relating to your fellow humans, to your community, to the environment, and to all life on this beautiful planet, for the old ways of doing things have obviously failed.

What can we do to take charge once again? The answers to that question are as numerous as there are people on Earth. If you are a student you can befriend more foreign students, learn more about *their* countries and what people in their homelands are thinking and saying about the U.S. If you are a factory worker you can help out one of your co-workers who is having a harder time at work than you are. If you work in an office you can smile more. Put a mirror on your desk and watch your expression when you talk on the telephone. Force a smile if you must, eventually it will become contagious. Teachers can help by using examples of good will expressed by a wide range of people, not just U.S. citizens. You get the idea. Just reach out and reconnect with that deep core of humanity of which we all are a part. Then simply do what you know in your heart to be right, and do it with love.

Our species has just experienced an event that will continue to resonate in our consciousness until we learn to live together peacefully. Life on this planet has been punctuated by various other resonant events that in hindsight led to what most people consider to be higher forms of life. The oxygen crisis several billion years ago led to the rise of mammals. The asteroid or meteor impact that wiped out the dinosaurs, along with all other animals larger than a chicken, precipitated the rise of primates. We have now encountered a resonant event of equal magnitude, but this time it is human consciousness that is being presented an evolutionary challenge. We must accept the fact that our entire species is indeed facing a moment of truth. We now hold in our hands the power to destroy much of life on this planet, but we also have the power to evolve into better *human* beings. The day has arrived for each of us to ask ourselves what being "human" actually means, for the destiny of our species will be determined by our collective answer to that question. Our options are actually quite clear. Either we, as a species, evolve to a higher level of consciousness, or we extinguish ourselves.

Fortunately, the large-scale evolution of human consciousness began over 40 years ago. The tide has turned, as researchers Paul Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson reported in their important book, *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing The World*. According to Ray and Anderson, one in every four adult Americans:

- Is strongly aware of problems of the whole planet
- Is concerned about violence to and abuse of women and children
- Is unhappy with both the left and the right in politics and want to find a new way that is not in the mushy middle
- Is concerned about what the big corporations are doing in the name of making more profits
- Love nature and are deeply concerned about its destruction
- Tend to be rather optimistic about our future and distrust the cynical and pessimistic view that is given by the media
- Want to be involved in creating a new and better way of life in this country

This is good news of great importance, particularly since Ray and Anderson's research shows that in Europe there is an even larger percent of the population who support these views. My guess is that the same holds true throughout the world, that the subculture of "cultural creatives" is growing at an unprecedented rate.

If this is so, one might wonder where all of these people are hiding. And that is precisely the issue Ray and Anderson point out as being the most significant weakness of this rapidly growing population of forward-looking individuals. They all believe themselves to be in a small minority. This is where you come in. At the very least, one in every four adults you meet wants to help build a better world in much the same way you do. So the moment has arrived for *you* to stand up and be counted. Speak up for what you believe in, don't remain silent the next time you hear someone calling for revenge, war, and more bloodshed. Do your part to help our collective human consciousness move to ever more lofty heights. Move your thought processes up out of the reptilian fight or flight part of your brain and use the full range of your cognitive abilities. An enormous amount of emotional energy is now stored very close to the surface of our lives. Tap into it and use it wisely. If we so elect, the resonant event we just experienced can provide us with the focus we need as we channel this powerful (and renewable) energy in positive directions.

As true as it is, that the future of human civilization now hangs on a thin peg, it is also true that thus far the peg has not broken. It is now up to all of us to do what we can to strengthen that peg, each in our own small way. Only by raising our level of awareness high enough to see that we are all in this together, here on our little spaceship Earth, will we be able to bring to an end our long history of hate and war. Education, understanding, cooperation, empathy, and love are the tools required to rebuild this sadly fractured world, and I believe these tools are in abundant supply. Now let us put them to work.

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