ranspersonal identification, feeling at one with what is beyond your go, which includes the whole of creation. And then there is love. Love s something more than connectedness. Love is . . . you can't really define ove. It is not a feeling; love just IS. It's irreducible. It's like one of those hings where, if you have to say what it is, it shows you don't know.

From Consciousness in Action by Andrew Beath

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE THIRD ATTRIBUTE

Introspection for Self-Discovery

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing the self is enlightenment.
—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

OVER THE PAST 10 years my friend Jack Zimmerman and I have been engaged in a reforestation experiment on 42 acres near Hilo, Hawaii. Our goal is to discover which native trees will prosper on land where indigenous forests were lost to the sugarcane and macadamia nut industries. The trip to the project on the Big Island usually requires a layover in Honolulu.

The city bustles with transport boats in Pearl Harbor, high-rises everywhere, busy tourists, locals, and automobile traffic. But what's below this noisy surface? While oil tankers, cargo boats, fishing vessels, and recreational speedboats roil the harbor, under the waves is a spectacular world of beauty. It remains invisible until one descends to investigate. Then vibrant coral reefs inhabited by multicolored tropical fish are revealed. Not far from the harbor I once saw humpback whales. One adult on each side protected a vulnerable calf on their migratory journey. I swam underwater to hear their magnificent songs resonating from the rocks and filling the bay.

Like deep-sea diving, self-reflection takes us beneath the cacophony of surface tension, which is often a realm of competition and isolation. Self-reflection is a pathway to deeper connection and intimacy. When we purposefully explore our own subterranean depths, connections grow and a passion often emerges. This introspective journey is an essential passage in our life adventure, enhancing our creativity and showing us methods for social change.

> *Again and again someone in the crowd wakes up, he has no ground in the crowd, and he emerges according to much broader laws. He carries strange customs with him and demands room for bold gestures. The future speaks ruthlessly through him.*
>
> —Rainer Maria Rilke, "Über Kunst"

Discovering the Source of Motivation

In aspiring to be more conscious, I find it useful to examine whether or not my choices are primarily based on self-interest. Perhaps what is important to me is to be seen as a hero, and I am gearing my activism to those projects that are likely to be applauded. Although it feels good to be appreciated for my contributions, my effectiveness will suffer if this is my primary motivation. But when my incentive is to add beauty and love to the world, recognition is not necessary. Without it I am still able to experience joy and fulfillment. Like excessive wealth, the aggressive pursuit of self-importance can blunt one's sensitivity and become a type of bondage.

Trying to live up to an externally generated principle, like the ideal of being a good person, may also separate me from my authentic self. In times of stress it will be hard to maintain a course that is not a product of my own personally discovered and integrated values. And though my efforts toward "goodness" may lead to constructive work, insight from introspection is indispensable for social transformation.

Likewise, those motivated by an oppressive sense of obligation are more likely to burn out and experience a diminished capacity to appreciate life and community. As a co-founder of a coalition to protect the last wetlands in Los Angeles, which were scheduled for a massive development project, I worked with two impressively capable activists. They started out cooperatively, but soon it was clear that one needed to corner all the recognition.

For a while, this did not affect the other woman because she was focused on the work. However, it eventually demoralized her. Their partnership failed and the wetlands restoration efforts suffered. They were unable to demonstrate the cooperation they asked their neighbors to adopt to preserve the wetlands. We need the good works, but we need just as much the growth of our own consciousness to help sustain our efforts.

> *If we attempt to act and to do things for others without deepening our own self-understanding, our own freedom, integrity and capacity to love, we will not have anything to give to others. We will communicate nothing but the contagion of our own obsession, our aggressiveness, our ego-centered ambitions.*
>
> —Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*

Our Hidden Self

Through introspection we develop an understanding of our obscure motives, recollect our buried experiences and recognize how our resulting perspectives have shaped our emotions and influenced our behavior. Self-reflection is an essential step in freeing ourselves from reacting in preprogrammed ways when difficult events trigger our conditioned patterns. The freer we are, the more sensitive our intuition becomes. Clarity deepens from this ongoing process of introspection and self-liberation.

One's personal history often leaves a reservoir of discontent. The discovery of the origin of our feelings is important—whether they're mean and aggressive or loving and sublime. Some of our dysfunctional reactions are visible, but most of them tend to hide. Our psyches contain arrays of not-yet-recognized influences from our mammalian heritage, prenatal experience, birth trauma, events of our childhood and social pressures of our culture.

Some psychologists use the term "shadow" to describe our hidden

drives, both constructive and destructive. Much of the unhealthy content of the shadow derives from the residue of our life's distresses and is the source of our rage, greed, envy, jealousy, lust for power and other self-centered drives. It is the cause of both our internal discontent and the consequent disharmony we impress on the world. However, if I recognize repetitive patterns of behavior, I may become aware of my hidden emotions. Then, when I witness my inner self and discover the sources of these tensions, I am able to make healthier choices. This awareness allows constructive release of psychic pain and is a critical component of personal growth.

I didn't trust it for a moment,
but I drank it anyway,
the wine of my own poetry.
It gave me the daring to take hold
of the darkness and tear it down
and cut it into little pieces.

—Lalla, *Naked Song*

The Bradley Method of Ecological Restoration

The Bradley Method of ecological restoration is a useful biological metaphor for the human psyche. It is a process for healing environmental damage that describes how the removal of nonnative species (exotics) eventually leads to a restored ecosystem. By the same token, as an individual weeds out those portions of her psychological and emotional development that are dysfunctional, she is watering, feeding and providing light for her larger, eco-centric self. Human exotics include religious and political dogma, consumerism, abuse and the consequent unhealthy socialization that causes us to feel disconnected. In my discussions with **John Seed** he described the process as follows:

The Bradley Method is a system for regenerating natural ecosystems. It was developed by two Sydney sisters by the name of Bradley and is now used around the world. What the Bradleys found is that if you want to encourage the return of the original vegetation of a place, it is not necessary—in fact it may be counterproductive—to engage in laborious and heroic tree planting. Basically, you have to be able to recognize the species that are native to the area and the exotics that have invaded—both in their seedling and mature forms. The technique then consists of removing the exotics without treading on the natives.

All that's really needed is to remove the foreign influences that suppress the native plants. These influences include things like fire and grazing as well as the exotic competitors for space and other resources. If we are able to do that, we can then leave nature alone to take its course, because nature knows the correct succession of events that allows for the return of the native plants.

We could just go ahead and plant the species that we'd like to see return to the area. But unless the shade has been created by annual weeds to allow the pioneer tree species (those that come first in the sequence) to emerge in a natural way and then drop their leaves and create the necessary biomass, then the climax species (those that thrive as the final phase of development) are not going to have the resources they need to flourish.

The Bradley sisters found that no matter what size area you plan to manage in this way, you have to start from the strongest point of natural expression. Even though we might come on an area and feel our hearts breaking to see an erosion gully that's washing away with every rain—and we want to fix it as quickly as we can—it's not going to succeed if we start there. But if we go to a corner of the land that hasn't been managed as heavily, and therefore there are some pioneer species that have already started to re-grow, and we begin at that area and move backwards—inviting nature to expand out from those areas—that turns out to be the quickest way to repair the erosion gully as well. It may take five or six years for the spreading natural vigor to move in that direction. But by the time it gets there, nature has become very strong and is able to reclaim that area.

I believe that biological metaphors are much more useful for understanding human beings than mechanical ones because we are biological beings. The Bradley Method for restoring the native vegetation to an area provides an excellent metaphor for how humanity can regain the

innate intelligence that allowed us to live in harmony with nature for millions of years—we don't need to graft new ideas onto our thinking. Once we create space within ourselves by removing misconceptions, there will be a spontaneous regeneration of our sense of connectedness to life and our love for nature.

There's a problem as long as we have the idea, for example, that only human beings have a soul and are created in God's image, or that the Earth has no value until human beings add their labor and intelligence. In this case it's difficult for any ecological identity to take hold. But once we help enough people to experience their connection to nature, we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to add any new ideas. In the absence of false beliefs, the ecological identity emerges and reasserts itself.

Truth Is Relative

When we awaken our awareness it extends our perceptual boundaries. It also enables us to recognize the limitations of consensual reality. In this way, self-reflection helps to deconstruct the dysfunctional cultural paradigms responsible for aggression and ecological destruction.

One finds the courage to object by looking inside oneself and witnessing society from an unbiased perspective. Destructive behavior toward others alienates a person from himself. As was brought home to us by veterans of the Vietnam War and recent Iraqi wars, some soldiers never recover from the kills they were ordered to execute. Muhammad Ali, who at the time of the Vietnam War was the world boxing champion known as Cassius Clay, refused to go. His objections and those of thousands of others helped us see our collective dysfunction and end the war.

National borders or differences in language, culture and appearance cannot alter the fact that we are one family. Through recent genetic analysis many scientists now believe we are descended from one woman who lived in Africa. This ancient ancestor may well be the mother of all humanity. If so, then we are all literally related—our forebears were brothers and sisters.

Those who engage in the dance of self-discovery are usually rewarded with a felt sense of the sacred. Depth of personal truth is a direct result of deepened consciousness. A continual examination of one's ideas and emotions helps to determine whether they are products of conditioning or are rooted in the universal wisdom that is creation's shared ground of being. Doing this helps to heal the wounds of estrangement in our relationships with ourselves, one another and the natural world.

Perhaps our biggest challenge is confronting the rationalizations with which we deceive even ourselves, because when we successfully deceive ourselves, we are unaware that we are doing so. Even awakened spiritual teachers are not immune to the tricks of the ego. But the more we delve into the mysteries of creation—and heal from the disappointments of our own life—the more likely we are to gain wisdom and deepen our personal truth. And the more we invite real feedback from trusted intimates, the more we are able to be honest with ourselves.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest-house
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture,

Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you
Out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing,

And invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.

—Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*

Becoming Aware of Spirit

Spirituality can also be an escape that defends us from our emotional traumas and allows us to ignore our innermost feelings. But these eventually return to control us. Thus, personal growth involves rootedness in the Earth as well as transcendence in spirit.

At the present time there are more people than ever before who have become intimate with the sacred mysteries of Earth-as-a-living-being. Various forms of introspection and liberation are informing thousands of teachers who not only respect ancient philosophies but also provide expanded insight based on new contemporary knowledge of life's interconnections.

Most religions ask their followers to accept their precepts on faith. But it is possible to do one's own consciousness research and go beyond the passive acceptance of dogma. Self-discovery allows us to find for ourselves what Jesus and other spiritual masters have found, and then live it in our daily lives.

I have spent time in the presence of spiritual teachers of many faiths and heard several claim to be enlightened. Some say they know the way to truth—but I am cautious around such people. It is likely that a spiritual teacher, unless he is a fraud, has had an experience of direct connection with the creative source. With proper focus and intention, transcendent experiences are available to everybody. But this proximity to the divine can lead to a mistaken sense of self-importance.

Gracious humility is one of the most visible characteristics of awakened consciousness. To be humble is to be flexible, respectful toward others and open-minded. These qualities signal wisdom and strength. A teacher may deceive himself and at the same time believe his own deceptions sincerely. No matter who the teacher is, I ask myself, "Is her

counsel coming from her personal knowledge and integration with the divine or just from some episodes of proximity to its wisdom?" It can be hard to tell the difference. One who claims to be enlightened may be caught in self-deception.

A spiritual community often helps to deepen awareness, especially when its values promote self-knowledge and increased discernment. But spiritual practices can also be stupefying. Some avatars encourage slavish devotion as a means to vanquish one's ego. Years can be wasted when people get trapped in these spiritual cul-de-sacs.

Even profound levels of spiritual awakening do not automatically confer emotional wholeness. In fact, elements of the psyche's shadow are sometimes accentuated. And there is a great deal of inner work to be done after an awakening. Even respected spiritual leaders have become entangled in inappropriate sexual conduct and shady financial dealings. Recent revelations of such occurrences have weakened the Catholic Church and a number of Buddhist and Hindu organizations in America.

Love the Earth and the Sun and the animals. . . . Re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body.

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Whitman's introduction 5)

Ego and Introspection

There are a multitude of approaches to self-discovery. Some of these are considered in a systematic way in Chapter 11's discussion about liberation pathways. Creative expression through writing is one such pathway that has the capability to open a window to one's soul. **Peter Levitt** writes and teaches poetry and prose based on his decades-long study of meditation and life philosophy. Introspection is integral to his creativity.

During our discussions about the seven attributes of conscious activism I asked Peter how he teaches his writing students to get to a place beyond their egos. His comments about one's personal imagina-

tion tapping into a universal imagination provided valuable insights into the process of introspection. Peter considers writing to be an act of consciousness and therefore a spiritual practice. He told me:

> It is a practice through which we can "re-cognize," which means to know again, the full extent of what we really are. There are techniques available through which the imagination can help our boundaries to dissolve and reveal to us the oneness of all life. The imagination is the place in which all boundaries, which are usually determined by the restricted sense of self that our ego promotes, can disappear. That's why writing, or any act of imagination, can be such an important practice; you can write or paint or dance your way into a larger understanding of what you are, what Suzuki-roshi called Big Self.

The Internal Autocrat

One of the things that keeps us from realizing this is that we live with a kind of a totalitarian dictator in our own psyche and, as you know, dictators are always on the lookout for anything that threatens their lock on power. That's why they develop so many ways of checking on their citizens. But it's not uncommon for us to have a relationship with our own egos in which the ego structure is like the totalitarian dictator.

When the ego is unhealthily situated in our psyche, it sends out what may be considered thought patrols, expression patrols, to distract or limit our knowledge of our deeper selves so that we don't imagine or create anything that conflicts with the ego's ability to maintain its power as head of state. Let's call it "the state of things as they are." When we practice a liberation pathway of personal exploration and expression, however, the form of expression—working in conjunction with the imagination—can find ways around the ego's constraints and subvert its control.

The spontaneous mind and the creative expression it depends upon are pretty darned smart and are almost always an element of that pathway. Being open to all possibilities is crucial to creative expression, but it is terrifying to the "head of state" because one of the possibilities just might come to life and dance its way out of reach of the ego's control.

When you follow your writing to the place where you start to touch the depths of what you, and all of life, really are, you go to ground level, so to speak, the ground of the imagination where everything may be found. Once you do this you have dropped beneath the level where the ego can maintain control of your attention in the usual way. Then you cease to hear its constant mantra, "What about me?" Instead, you are present with what the imagination gives you, to help you realize your true nature.

Writing that speaks beyond the needs of the writer's ego is rooted in this larger ground, speaks from this larger ground, and is recognized in the larger ground of the reader's imagination as well. This tends to be the writing that lasts. After some practice in writing techniques that develop spontaneity, people develop the ability to write from what might be thought of as their unconscious and intuitive depths while still using all the craft and skill available to their conscious mind. This is a thrilling and necessary ability to cultivate—being aware and conscious while having full access to your intuition and unconscious mind. There's a current that flows through us when we're in such a deep relationship with ourselves, and through ourselves with all things. Some people have called this current life itself.

As this ability grows strong, a wonderful and comical thing happens; the ego notices it no longer has our full attention, so it starts to take credit for our work. "Hey!" it shouts, "Look at what I'm doing! I'm writing!" Always on the lookout for control, it redefines itself in terms of the liberation for which our deepest self has worked so hard. But it's good when this happens because the idea and experience of self has expanded through the creative act and the ego starts to relax. It's on the side of its own liberation now.

However, it still needs to be helped along. This is as important for social activists to attend to as it is for artists. If we forget, the ego might begin to consume our activity, cloud our vision and, in the end, create the kind of confusion that undermines what we are after. Of course we need a healthy ego, at least one that is facing the right direction and is beginning to look out of a window with a bigger picture before it.

Creative Self-Awareness

The broader, universal imagination expresses itself through the individual imagination, just as the totality of what makes life possible is expressed through everything that exists. It works exactly the same way. What we are calling the imagination wants to be known. This is one of the reasons it gives us its gifts. It wants to be known, and it wants for us to know the totality of what we are as well. It wants us to understand that, in the end, those two things are the same.

There's a wonderful and provocative teaching on the nature of creation that comes from mystical Judaism. According to Genesis, the Divine Plenty (which is a name for God that can also be related to the imagination) created the heavens and the Earth and all things in six days, and on the seventh it took a rest. But why did the Divine Plenty create all of this? If it is really Divine, and Plenty—the Whole, the All—why would it create anything? Doesn't being All mean that you already are everything and are complete? Why "individualize"—why make grass? Why make beings with consciousness of their own?

The teaching from this tradition is that the Divine Plenty wanted to be known. And both words are important in this teaching: wanted and known. Our creations are also rooted in a desire we have to be known—known to ourselves. And, like the creations of the Divine Plenty, they are vessels of awareness. Creating such vessels, with this motivation at the root of our activity, is part of what it means to be made in the image of a Creator.

Through the creative process, the imagination makes it possible for us to know, and thereby return, to the One we have always been, though we've been separated from it in part by the dualistic thinking that supports the delusion of a permanent, separate self. (This delusion is the product of our old friend, Mr. Unintegrated Ego.) But it takes an act of consciousness. "Act" is the key word here. Human beings have always intuited the oneness, or wholeness, that is ours. Artistic expression is one path by which we are able to satisfy our longing to return.

Insight opens your mind. An open mind leads to an open heart.

—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

CHAPTER NINE

Expanding Personal Consciousness

FROM INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL, human awareness is manifest in a vast array of psychological, emotional and cultural traits. In this respect consciousness is an enormous gestalt, a smorgasbord of possibilities offering unlimited discovery. Eastern philosophy has emphasized consciousness research more than the West, which has relied on scientific materialism. This, in turn, is the main engine that drives the world's massive economic juggernaut.

Consciousness is subjective. I'm convinced that those individuals who are willing to expand their own consciousness and swim in the limitless sea of creative source will be the ones who find solutions to our current human dilemma. This immersion catapults us out of our cultural confinement. From this perspective we understand interconnection and therefore respect diversity in all things. The resulting self-understanding is liberating and provides insights that hearten social change work.

The ability to broaden one's perspective is related to open-mindedness and willingness to embrace new experiences. As an individual's consciousness expands, her cocoon-like confines tear apart. Like a caterpillar whose new butterfly-wings provide a completely different experience of life, broadened consciousness redefines one's worldview.

These seven attributes have been valuable guides for inspiring social change. They are skills for metamorphosis that can help to heal the world.

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER ONE:
Nonviolence—Kindness in the Midst of Passion

As the Dalai Lama has said, "Nonviolence takes a very long time." Nonviolence is a lifelong process of refining the arts of kindness, concern and tolerance for differences. It need not be the absence or suppression of anger or other emotions. It is a behavioral choice we make. There are a number of effective techniques that allow violent feelings to pass through like a temporary storm rather than dictating our actions. It requires an agreement with oneself to act toward others with appreciation of our shared sacred nature.

Acts of intentional violence are founded in pain, disconnecting us from life's creative source. Just feeling violent is painful. And every violent act, even if it is necessary to protect family or to defend against further violence, creates more suffering. It's impossible to live without harming other living beings, so the parameters of nonviolence are difficult. Nature is filled with violent upheavals. No matter how committed, no one can live without doing any harm. This is a complex challenge whose solution stems from a desire for mutual well-being.

> *The principle of nonviolence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form.*
>
> —Mahatma Gandhi, *Mohan-Mala: A Gandhian Rosary*

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER TWO:
Not Knowing Allows Spontaneity in the Moment

Not knowing enables us to put aside our entrenched ideas and reactive behaviors. Intellect and intuition become more balanced. It is a place of open mind and heart accompanied by wonderment, where spirit is readily available.

The ongoing drama of yesterday's problems and tomorrow's plans can take up all of one's interior focus. Alternately, presence is an empty vessel that provides spaciousness for infinite intelligence. It is found in a transition zone between the fullness of opinions and the emptiness of no thought. When a field of noisy voices becomes quiet, there is room for bird songs, wind and the rustle of forest leaves—sounds of silence that were present but unnoticed a minute before. There is a place for both memory and imagination. But to always think about what is not present dishonors the moment.

> *The sage has no set mind. She adopts the concerns of others as her own.*
>
> —*The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu*

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER THREE:
Introspection for Self-Discovery

We each have a personal identity but often fool ourselves into thinking this is all we are. The ego is a harsh taskmaster who often has us on remote control, unconcerned with life's grand perspective. The inner self can lead us out of the prison of separation. As we come to understand our motives, we gain choice and are not obligated to operate from our prior automatic response patterns.

Through self-inquiry we discover an expanded personal imagination and boundless transpersonal experiences. Personal transformation is the first step in social change. Introspection is our most valuable tool for this process.

Our intuition and all our senses come alive in the wild, where we are educated by nature's sensuous intelligence. Likewise, there are techniques to roam the natural wilderness of our interior self and extend its borders. Both in nature and in one's inner world, looking carefully reveals interwoven threads in a grand tapestry of life.

> *Without inner peace, it is not possible to have world peace.*
>
> —The Dalai Lama, from the Kala Chakra teaching, given in Santa Monica, California, 1990

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER FOUR:
Eros, the Art of Loving Kindness

Love and beauty are not ethereal qualities. They are essential presences that can resolve the problems we have created. Eros is interrelationship that opens hearts and extends appreciation. This is inner grace. When asked on [illegible] deathbed for his advice about life, Aldous Huxley, England's preeminent scholar and wise elder, simply said, "Just try to be a little kinder." Anger smothers Eros. Without compassion the flames of anger are [illegible]uming. Often they provide much-needed instant energy, but in the long run they deplete us.

Conscious activism is activism from the heart. It is composed of loving-kindness and requires nothing in return. If we love something, we want to help it thrive: redwood trees, rivers and everyone's children. As our capacity for love appreciates, our world grows larger. As our connection with the living planet deepens, so does the place in our hearts from which we experience joy.

Can you give the wisdom of your heart precedence over the learning of your head?

—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER FIVE:
Co-Creating a Healthier World: There is No Enemy

I may disagree with someone's actions or be disgusted by them, but it is not helpful to detest the person. I clearly remember when, through ignorance, I was [illegible] respectful of life's beauty. So it's not necessary or helpful to my cause when I create an enemy out of someone with whom I disagree. We humans are one family and have all participated in creating our current circumstance. Just putting aside fear and hatred is revolutionary behavior that can change the world. Thich Nhat Hanh said, "You don't need the other side to make peace. You can make peace by yourself." Actions are more effective when they stem from compassion than from resentment.

The soft overcomes the hard in the world
as a gentle rider controls a galloping horse.

—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER SIX:
Vision Free of Reaction

It is necessary to confront social injustice and ecological degradatic with opposition—yet other approaches are also needed. Let's stop th destruction and, just as important, let's envision the actions needed fc a healthier future. Activism without this vision could more accurately b called re-activism. To continually struggle against enemies traps us i their drama. Opposition often adds more juice to the entrenched syster I am attempting to improve. To use the strategies of those I hope t change puts me in danger of becoming what I loathe.

Holding the vision for a successful future reduces the likelihood o getting caught up in today's dysfunction. Providing healing alternative will attract others and cause the old system to atrophy. Change born o compassion is more likely to endure than that of opposition.

Because the sage doesn't try anything too big,
she's able to accomplish big things.

—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

ATTRIBUTE NUMBER SEVEN:
Being Joyful Without Attachment to Goals

Joy is inherent in the intricate beauty of nature. As I get older, my appreciation grows. I celebrate Earth's sanctity. Vulnerability, joy and grief are not separate. Each is a part of heightened sensibilities, deep feelings, and concern for others. When I stay grounded in gratitude I stay openhearted, even in the face of ongoing planetary problems. But a need to save the world, or attachment to other unattainable goals, can lead to despair.

It brings pleasure to live in respect. Like "re-inspect," it is to pay attention by seeing deeply. This enhances relationship and loving connection. And we usually want to help the things we love. The state of the world is a mirror of our cultural values. The community of people who value a healthier culture is growing. Society's compassionate heart is feeling more deeply and gaining greater visibility. Joy abounds in this numinous life dance.

Tao and its many manifestations arise from the same source:
subtle wonder within mysterious darkness.

—The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu

About the Author

Andrew Beath is the founder of EarthWays Foundation in Mal
California, and several other nonprofit, social justice and environme
organizations. He completed a graduate degree in international fina
from Wharton in the '70s, and then began working as a corporate-ba
real estate developer in southern California. While walking a moun
site that was slated for a high-end housing development, he overhea
group of trespassing hippies condemning the greed that could des
such beauty. This triggered a 10-year odyssey of global and s
exploration that awakened his spirituality and aligned him with prog
sive ideals. He put his shoulder to the wheel of social change in the '
Since then, his foundation has initiated projects to protect wilderr
and assist threatened indigenous communities in South, Central
North America. He has recently started several centers for consci
activism to teach environmental education and techniques that facili
social change.