

## What people like you are saying...

*"The genius Paul is blessed with is his ability to bridge wisdom with business in a simple, powerful way. His leadership comes from the courage to challenge our habit of splitting mind-body-spirit in professional settings, and instead, inviting us to listen deeply to our hearts' wisdom in the face of difficult situations. I recommend the practice of remembrance to anyone ready to take their leadership to the next level."*

Margit Bantowsky, Environmental Engineer  
Washington State Department of Ecology

*"This book has huge promise for transforming who we are and how we work together. Paul's work has helped several organizations I work with get to the real essence of their mission together. As a result, we have been able to save time and stay true to the core values that help us thrive, even when the environment seems full of adversity! This book will open a doorway to the greater Guidance within your own self."*

Bryn Clark, Chairman of the Board  
National Certification Commission for  
Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

*"The unity building methodology cuts through defensive and unproductive group dynamics, opens minds and hearts, and energizes participants to tap their deeper wisdom to expand the creativity and productivity of the group. Paul is a master at opening up the immediate reality of practical, applied spirituality beyond concepts, language, ego and limiting beliefs. This book raises the bar for all who want to build community, empower organizations or lead positive culture change."*

John Davies, Co-Director of Partners in Peacebuilding  
Center for International Development and  
Conflict Management, University of Maryland

*"Paul Werder has opened the door for a new understanding of corporate development and transformation. His work on unity building in my view is the best thing since M. Scott Peck's work appeared years ago and represents the deepest understanding of corporate dynamics found in the United States today. We have and continue to ask Paul to teach and bring his work into the university and consider him to be one of the most profound facilitators we have met."*

Robert Jaffe MD, President  
University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism

*"What is leadership if not learning how to speak from the heart and the spirit? Paul Werder has shown us how to stop beating around the bush and enter right into the center of the process for learning how to lead. Highly recommended."*

Wayne Jonas MD, President and CEO  
Samueli Institute

*"Having worked with Paul over many years, I know that his approach to leadership provides the perfect companion on this never-ending journey. Paul's teachings have shown me how to travel my path courageously, with a full and open heart. His teachings have enhanced both my work life and my personal life, helping me bridge the two and live more authentically."*

Alysa Rose, President  
Rejuvenation Incorporated

*“**Building Unity** is a book that explores the possibilities of finding courage and strength from a source that is there to help when we open our hearts to the best within us. These principles have given me a deeper experience of personal satisfaction and effectiveness while implementing the culture changes we needed to improve our business performance.”*

Meredith Schreiber, Store Manager  
Powell’s City of Books

*“After 20+ years as a business manager, it’s clear to me that our greatest competitive advantage is the flexibility and creativity that comes from effective communications. Paul’s work breaks through log-jams of negativity, and enables people to communicate honestly and effectively. The better we communicate, the better our products and services, the happier our clients, and the more successful our company.”*

Doug Verigin, COO  
Market Decisions Corporation

*“After reading **Building Unity**, I have a new vision of community both personally and professionally. As a business owner and mother of two teenagers, this is vitally important. Paul has incredible insight which we have used to grow our business and significantly expand our influence in the market.”*

Nancy Wilson, CEO  
Meeting Strategies Worldwide



# **BUILDING UNITY**



# **BUILDING UNITY**

EXPERIENCING LOVE, PEACE AND WISDOM  
IN BUSINESS AND DAILY LIFE

by  
Paul Werder

First Edition  
Beavercreek, Oregon

Building Unity  
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*In Gratitude to the people who have contributed so much to Building Unity.*

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*Cover Photo:* Hosta leaf with drops of dew in the morning sunlight

## DEDICATION

Building Unity is dedicated to every ordinary person who longs to discover their divine qualities and make their extraordinary contribution to the world.



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## Thank You, Scott Peck

On December 3, 2001, approximately four years before Scott Peck passed away, his Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE) board decided to close down their organization. They acknowledged that the good works that had come out of their community-building model had often occurred “in spite of rather than because of our organization.”

This statement confirms two things I have learned as a community builder. First, that the work of building community is as difficult as it is important. Second, that Scott Peck was right when he said that community building could not fulfill its highest aspirations “without some form of spiritual healing.”

Healing occurs when people set aside their egos and their need for control. In the letter from the board of FCE to their friends in December 2001, Peck’s organization took a giant step toward that healing when they stated, “We will place these works in the public domain, available to any community builder, anywhere in the world. Thus, anyone with the passion to build community will be able to use CFP manuals to train community builders or make use of other FCE materials to build community in organizations.”

The FCE opened the door for the world to build upon what they had begun. It was a selfless act that

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transmitted what Scott Peck had always been about: love, peace, and wisdom. I am forever grateful to Scott Peck and the FCE for emptying themselves of the barriers to communication. I pray that the good works of all future community builders be a blessing for the souls of the pioneers who have passed along their torches.

## A Business Parable

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# The Leader's Gift

This is a true story that illustrates the need for transformation in the way we work together in organizations and groups. It also shows that this transformational time is already here.

A long time ago, just before the twenty-first century, there was a very wise and experienced vice president of engineering in a global company. As an industry leader, this company could tolerate nothing less than being number one in everything. To say that the company had a competitive culture would be an understatement. However, this vice president, John, had created a collaborative environment among his five engineering managers, who were all very talented and accomplished.

John could see that he would be moving up the career ladder and would be asked to choose his successor. Word of his eventual transfer was impossible to keep from his five ambitious managers. He was concerned that the competitive opportunity could damage their collaborative culture, since it existed inside the company

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shark tank. He also had a hunch that the group would not readily accept the person he thought he might choose, so he came up with a novel idea. He brought all five managers into a session and simply said, “You all know I will be leaving this position in about two years, and some of you may want my job. I will likely have a lot of say about who is selected. All of you are potentially qualified, and you all know what my values are. However, there is only one criterion that I will use to make my recommendation when the time comes. I have written it down and placed it in this sealed envelope. I will only tell you that the last thing we need around here is a free-for-all competition for this promotion at the expense of others. We will open this envelope after the eventual selection is made, and I am asking you not to discuss it until then.” With that he asked all five of them to sign the envelope to indicate they understood his intention and ended the meeting.

The five managers were annoyed, amused, and engaged all at once. They talked about it among themselves, of course, speculating about that one single criterion. They debated that it might be customer service or contribution to the bottom line, innovation or the ability to bring new products to market in a hurry. But after awhile the speculation became a distraction. They shrugged it off as just another challenge from their quirky boss.

A little over a year later, John announced to his team that a huge new customer opportunity was coming to

them. Executives from the prospect organization would be coming in for a presentation in thirty days. If the deal came to fruition, it would be the single biggest sale in the division's history and would have ripple effects throughout the company. The organization began to exhibit the nervous excitement that always came about when big opportunities surfaced. But this time it was different. One by one the five managers started to sense that this was their big chance to make an impression and set themselves up for the eventual promotion. They individually went into their "let's get it done" mode. The envelope had been mostly forgotten. Meetings became a bit tense, and conversations were more and more abbreviated as the big day approached.

By the morning of the presentation, everything was set to score the big win. The least experienced of the group and the youngest by almost a decade was Tim. He was scheduled to make the last part of the presentation because it involved the maintenance of their product, which was his arena. But Tim never got a chance to make his presentation because the client insisted the team move up the delivery schedule to a date they deemed unreasonable. Every one of the five managers privately realized that shortening the quality assurance schedule was the only way to meet the demand. Confusion reigned as the team floundered and back-pedaled, unable to respond skillfully. Tim reflected quietly for a while and observed the prospect becoming more and more removed from the conversation. When

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a quiet moment presented itself, Tim made eye contact with the leader of the prospect team and said, “Now you’ll see how our creative process really works. We love to do the impossible with no notice around here, and you have just given us a great opportunity to practice what sets us apart.”

Tim’s comment settled everyone down, and the team went into problem-solving mode. Within twenty minutes the prospect was asking all the right questions again, and it was clear that the game was on. When everyone stood up and shook hands, the prospect leader looked at Tim and made a special point of thanking him for his contribution to the meeting: “You didn’t say much but what you did say counted.”

Tim smiled and said, “These guys are the best mentors in the world. They’ve all taught me a lot.” Everyone left the meeting with the feeling that all was right with the world.

A week later, John called his group together on short notice. “I have decided it’s time to announce my successor, even though I won’t be leaving for another four months,” he said. He pulled out the envelope and read the statement everyone was waiting for: “Leadership is given to the one who brings out the best from others and makes everyone else successful.”

John waited to see their reactions and finally said, “I hope it won’t come as too big a surprise that I’ve asked Tim to be the new vice president.”

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One of the older guys sent Tim a grudging compliment, saying, “It was that comment to the client that saved our bacon, wasn’t it?”

John jumped in before Tim could respond. “No, it was something subtle that I can always count on from Tim. When the prospect complimented him, Tim passed the credit on to you guys. Yes, he was smart enough to turn that meeting around, but he was also wise enough to have the team get the win. Tim is the most selfless leader we have here.”

After a quiet pause, Tim spoke up. “I didn’t really have my eye on this job, but I’ll be happy to do whatever is asked of me. I trust you will all teach me to be a good leader.” This happened where you would least expect it: in a company known for being a shark tank.



## Introduction

When I first realized I was meant to write this book, I asked myself, “How did this happen?” I looked over my past to see if anything had foretold this turn of events. I remembered a time with my beloved spouse, Jenell. It was probably the second year of our marriage. We had nothing to speak of except our love for one another. During a quiet moment she was looking at me with a depth of love in her eyes that reached right into the core of my soul. It was both amazing and too much for me at the same time. I wasn’t ready for that level of intimacy, so I felt a need to turn away from the love beaming through her eyes. Her open heart was more than I could handle in that moment of connection, and so I turned it into a moment of separation.

I was often willing to ignore the difficulties in our marriage. My tendency to settle for superficial peacefulness often triggered Jenell’s frustration, and she sometimes had to get upset to get my attention. This dynamic is a classic example of the first two stages of Scott Peck’s community-building model: pseudocommunity and chaos. In these stages, people go back and forth between being superficial or evasive and engaging in unconstructive fighting, trying to get the other person to change. These two forms of communication describe the essence of our society’s unfulfilling way of being with one another.

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Fortunately Jenell understood that real intimacy could not be achieved in a state of superficial pseudocommunity. She has upheld a high standard of communication in our marriage over the years, even though I have not always done my part. Jenell's commitment to telling the truth is probably the single most important reason our marriage has been successful. I have never met anyone with a stronger commitment to deeply looking inside for her truth and then standing up for it. Even more importantly, Jenell encouraged me to identify and speak about my own feelings when I couldn't find them. Again and again we have come through our difficulties to find a deeper experience of love and a greater acceptance of our differences. There appears to be no end to this learning process. If I were to summarize the two key lessons that have come out of our marriage, they would be to stay honestly present and to make our spiritual journey the priority.

Jenell helped me discover a spirituality that is much more expansive than my previous concept of God. I discovered that to really experience the love, peace, and wisdom of God I had to suspend my ideas of what God is. When I did so and when I became really honest with myself and Jenell, the feelings of love and peace and wisdom were palpable. I discovered the difference between believing in God and opening my heart to truth. This one shift in perspective has allowed me to discover the divine in everyone and everything.

## Introduction

When I first met Jenell, I thought life would be one unending experience of genuine community. This is what Scott Peck refers to as the fourth stage of community building, where people are deeply connected and respectful of one another's differences. At the time I didn't realize that first I would have to go through a third stage: emptiness. Jenell is my perfect soul mate. She continues to show me the parts of myself that inhibit my experience of love, peace, and wisdom. These are the aspects of my self or ego that I have needed to empty again and again. Jenell has always been committed to living Scott Peck's principles. Without her I would not have understood his teachings. I have learned many of my lessons the hard way. So I offer this book to you, the reader, with deep gratitude and much humility.

Paul Werder  
Beavercreek, Oregon  
June 2007



## Chapter 1

• ——— •

# A World Crying for Authenticity

I was about to give a talk at our monthly Breakfast for Champions seminar for clients and prospects, when I noticed someone sitting a few feet away from me at the front table. Doug was wearing a white shirt with a pink bow tie and blue sports coat. His attire was quite stylish for our Portland, Oregon, business community at the time. He was also wearing a smile brighter than his shiny bald head, and he exuded enormous confidence. He seemed to be at peace with himself, so he was an intimidating presence to me at that juncture of my spiritual and business journey. There were seventy other people in the room, so I decided to focus my attention elsewhere, hoping that the tightness in my gut would go away once I started the presentation.

One of my partners at the time, Jerry, did the introduction that morning. He gave a two-minute Barnum-and-Bailey introduction to our topic that all but promised God-realization to everyone in the room in

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the next sixty minutes. I loved Jerry's enthusiasm, but I am not one for hype, so I was not happy with his introduction. The topic was service-oriented selling, and it was great material, but Jerry's over-the-top introduction was an anti-demonstration of my topic.

So there I was, in front of seventy people expecting miracles, feeling intimidated by Doug and angry at Jerry. Of course, I didn't want to reveal my feelings and appear unprofessional. As I started into my first sentence or two, I realized I was not really looking at any one person but was talking to the crowd in a strange and unconscious way. I did not want to be seen. I began to black out and had a feeling that I actually might faint. It was *the* moment of terror that had always been my worst nightmare. I had organized my entire life around avoiding embarrassing situations, and I was suddenly afraid I was about to undergo an intimate experience of public humiliation.

Those eight seconds of hesitation seemed like an hour. Fortunately, as I was standing there in panic, for some reason I blurted out, "I'm sorry. I get a little nervous sometimes when I do these talks, and when I say it out loud it goes away." And it did go away, and the world did not end. Afterward people said they liked seeing my vulnerability as well as hearing the presentation. As if I had had a choice! This experience was an early clue to one of the secrets of community building: when we allow ourselves to be real and admit our anxieties and

frailties, we begin to free ourselves from them. At that time I was unaware of what had stimulated my anxiety and my quick recovery, so I continued to fumble along my path a bit clueless.

Doug decided to hire me for a consulting project in his company, and we worked together successfully for a few years after that inauspicious beginning. My work focused on organizational transformation and leadership development. I was a coach committed to bringing ethical principles to business so that people's work lives could nourish them beyond their need for financial security. After Doug became more familiar with my work, he handed me a copy of *The Different Drum* by Scott Peck. It was a book that truly changed my life.

As I studied Peck's community-building model, I kept feeling a deep resonance with my own work and was excited to see how he was taking team-building to a new level. It was a masterpiece: simple, powerful, and profound; a truly elegant piece of work that encouraged deeper levels of honesty and respect than were the norm in business environments. I couldn't wait to talk about it with my colleagues and learn more about how the model was being used in practical applications.

But on a deeper level I was longing for permission to be authentic—to be comfortable in my own skin, with all my anxieties and judgments included. We often want to teach what we are dying to learn.

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**Community Building:** The process of two or more people accepting and transcending their differences, so they can communicate effectively for their common good.

My journey of discovery was expedited when I attended a workshop on Peck's model in Los Angeles. I was blown away. We met in a group of fifty attendees with two facilitators for two and a half days. There was no agenda other than the intention to experience community. There were only two rules. The first rule was that one person could speak at a time. The facilitators remained silent, only giving five minutes of feedback on the process every two hours. Just as people were getting comfortable with one another on the second day, one of the participants announced that he always went to church on Sundays, so he would not be attending the next day. He was planning to break the second rule we had all agreed to the night before! All hell broke loose, with everyone trying to change his mind and rescue him from breaking the trust of the group. Peck's model was coming to life before my very eyes. We moved from being a nice, polite group discussing superficial topics to an angry mob trying to change this person's mind to fulfill our own idea of the way things should be. I sat there in growing impatience, judging the group for

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wasting so much time and energy. “Let him go. This is a simple problem to solve,” I thought to myself—for about five hours, without saying anything. Even as I was observing the group dynamic as a student of community building, I could not help but become embroiled in the emotional upset that was unfolding.

In spite of the group’s attempt to control the guy who had been the focus of our first full day together, he didn’t show up Sunday morning, and the group survived. Actually the group did more than survive. We successfully went through Peck’s third stage: emptying ourselves of the upsetting thoughts and emotions that had come to the surface as we haggled over the group’s integrity. We experienced a growing of self-responsibility and a willingness to own our personal impediments to hearing and caring for one another. And just as Peck had described in his book, the group became a genuine community for a few hours. We enjoyed heartfelt sharing and compassion as well as periods of silence and acceptance of one another. It was a wonderful experience.

Over the next few years, I began to experiment with Peck’s model and found it to be an effective process for my business and nonprofit clients. As I learned to facilitate the process with frequent feedback and some directive coaching, I found that groups could open up and address their most uncomfortable problems in as little as four hours. I knew I was on to something powerful.

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By the mid-nineties my company was doing quite well. We had a small group of consultants doing innovative work in the realm of bringing more humanity into the workplace. Our clients found that honest dialogue improved their profitability. But as happens when we teach what we need to learn, there were some rough spots on the road to success. One of my partners, Carol, was a very talented professional who kept saying, “Paul, you don’t respect me.” My typical response was to say, “Yes, I do.” This went on for close to two years. Then, without much notice, Carol left the company, saying she could not work with me. Two others left at the same time.

So there I was the leadership and team-building expert, with an embarrassing situation to contend with. I was a leader without a team. I attended a workshop called Relationships at Work, to see if I could learn something from this nightmare. On the third and final day, a woman participant with whom I had hardly spoken gave me some feedback that almost put me on the floor. She said, “Paul, I don’t think you really respect me” I was stunned. It was as if Carol was coming to life in someone I had just met. This time I decided there must be something going on I was not aware of. Instead of always being someone else’s coach, it was time for me to find my own coach.

Her name was Sheron. She taught me about my heart and how to release the pent-up judgments and

emotions that I did not want to acknowledge. I saw her every two weeks for several months, until she almost fired me as a client. Within the first ten minutes of our session that day, she stopped me from continuing with my commentary. “Paul, how many times do you want to drive over here and pay me good money to complain about what bad things your former partners did to you? The only thing worth looking at is your part, and if you aren’t interested in doing that, perhaps we should discontinue.”

Wow. I loved her for being so truthful and sincere. I knew right then that she was helping me learn what so inspired me in *The Different Drum*. It was time for me to empty myself of the barriers to communication and learn to be with people in a more vulnerable and sincere way. Sheron gave me my first glimpse of spiritual healing when she encouraged me to feel the validity of my emotions and simultaneously open my heart to find the love, peace, and wisdom that were underneath those feelings. She offered a deeper and more effective approach to emptying the problematic issues that had always been in my way: judgment, blame, and feelings of inadequacy. I was discovering that becoming mentally aware of my issues was an insufficient remedy for the difficulties in my life. I was delighted to finally discover that there was real relief available in my own heart.

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**Spiritual Healing:** Relief from mental, emotional, and physical pain and illness that comes when we open our hearts to receiving divine love, peace, and wisdom.

Sheron's work was so impressive that I eventually wanted to meet her teacher and ultimately his teacher. It was not long before I enrolled in the spiritual healing school where she had learned to help people release their struggles and illnesses. This was the beginning of a journey that has been indescribable in its beauty, freedom, difficulty, and fulfillment.

As I learned the principles and practices of spiritual healing, I became a much more effective coach and group facilitator. My community-building sessions with clients became deeper experiences of loving acceptance and inspiration. I realized that my professional toolbox was insufficient for the problems I was encountering in my organizational development work. I soon discovered that I was a spiritual teacher as well as a business consultant. I eventually learned to integrate spirituality into my leadership and community-building work. In hindsight, I could not be more surprised that my journey has taken such a dramatic turn.

Scott Peck was instrumental in getting me started in a direction my heart longed for. I will be forever grateful to him for the body of work he contributed to all of us

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who are seeking better alternatives for living harmoniously with one another. Unfortunately I look at the world today, almost twenty years after *The Different Drum* was published, with his same feelings of remorse. The chaos we are experiencing nationally, internationally, and in our organizational lives is literally killing us.

Peck's work was a landmark solution to what ails our civilization. He gave us a framework for identifying our dysfunction in group dynamics that centers on either superficially avoiding conflict (pseudocommunity) or pummeling one another with conflict (chaos). He also showed us a way to accept and transcend our differences (emptiness or emptying) and reach group harmony that honors our differences (community). But it was not enough.

In the beginning of *The Different Drum*, Scott Peck states, "We cannot heal the mess we've made of the world without some kind of spiritual healing." I humbly pray that this book begins to provide what has been missing. I have been blessed with a set of teachings and healing practices that are beyond what I could have ever hoped to discover. They are simple, powerful, and profound. As you experiment with them, you will discover that they are universally applicable and do not depend on any particular belief system. I have found that spiritual healing is always available for anyone who opens their heart to the truth of their own experience while simultaneously asking for divine help. For those with a

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sincere desire to experience the reality of love, peace, and wisdom within your own heart, I promise that you will be surprised by what you discover when you turn away from your unhealthy ego needs and toward the divine.

These teachings speak to people of all cultures, spiritual traditions, and religions. That is the basis for the community-building model. We need to embrace our differences at one level so we can discover our unity at a deeper level. World peace will come when people can put aside their beliefs long enough to experience the love, peace, and wisdom that are at the core of all spiritual paths.

My intention is to provide you with practical tools that transform your experience of working and living with others. I have found this work to be effective in all settings of organizational life: families, businesses, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, spiritual communities, and government. It is my belief that discovering peace within ourselves will help us experience peace within organizational life. And once we have peaceful businesses and governmental agencies focused on enriching humanity's experience of life, we will be capable of resolving the global strife that is jeopardizing our future. Ultimately the future of the world rests on our capacity to exercise real leadership, and real leadership rests on universal spiritual principles.