

Restorative Leadership: For the Sake of Our Children

We do a lot for ourselves. We do even more for a good cause. But we'll put forward our very best effort for our children. If we are to restore our civilization and allow for the natural healing of our planet, we will most certainly find our deepest inspiration when we look into the expectant eyes of our children.

Harboring anger and complaining about life's challenges is a total waste of time. Working hard will not be sufficient. Working smarter is still too small. We must step up to who we are and lead from our hearts like there is no tomorrow. It's urgent, yet only a deeply rooted connection to spiritual principles will allow us to provide our children with the better future that each generation strives to offer the next. We must search our souls quickly so we can move into action in a powerful and timely way.

Is there much more to say on this topic? It is not overly complicated. I think it's time we connect our vision for a restorative civilization with what we are doing for

and with our children today. Here are some questions to get you thinking:

1. Are you restoring yourself? All significant change in our external world begins within. If we want to be of utmost service to our children, we will get to work and *face whatever bogeyman is holding us back from our most powerful contribution*. Every spiritual discipline tells us that we all have unlimited potential for inspired creativity and service. Yet every one of us, at times, feels too small to fulfill our potential. Take yourself on and find the teacher, coach or mentor who can help you bring the best out of yourself – not technically, but as a human being free from inhibition and limitation. Begin today because we're running out of time.

2. Are you being present with your children? Our children learn much more from how we are with them than they do from what we tell them to do or not do. *Your heartfelt presence and love is what your children really need* to become the change agents of the future.



When they feel loved, their relationship to infinite possibility soars. When listened to, their confidence to manifest the “impossible” glows with the most beautiful light we know. Give them a full dose of your heart every day. Watching my daughter care for our grandson has profoundly taught me this lesson. I aspire to bring the best out of my adult children with the kind of constant and unconditional love she exhibits to her little one every day.

3. Are you teaching your children about paradox?

While anything is possible in the heart of a child, we need to learn to be happy and satisfied with what we have, and not always be looking for fulfillment from what we don't have. I believe most of us are just beginning to realize the depth of this lesson ourselves, but our children will best learn this lesson if we lead the way. The recession has offered us a great opportunity to *cross-examine our expectations and entitlement mentality*. We need to give up our trivial, and some of our not so trivial, attachments and find joy in the small things and

beauty all around us. When your children see you bring a sense of peace and emotional maturity to the lifestyle adjustments you are making, they will be far more prepared to live more selfless lives themselves.

4. Are you creating a sense of family or community somewhere, with someone?

Many of us are lone ranger types. Some of us have become estranged from our families of origin or the communities we grew up in. It's not enough to simply hang around with the parents of your children's friends for awhile, until they outgrow those friendships. Intentional community is an important part of restoring our civilization. Perhaps it's with your family of origin that your most important work is to be done. Or maybe it's with a spiritual community that feeds your soul and nurtures strong values in your children. Or doing volunteer work with an environmental group may be more your cup of tea. Is the time for “needing our own space” coming to an end? Whether true or not, *we would all do well to learn how to need one another*, and become more comfortable with closer proximity.



5. Are you expanding your professional contribution at every opportunity? Please notice that this is question #5 not #1. Many of us have compromised a bit on the first four questions while focusing on this question. If we are thinking long term and focusing on where the leverage is, we need to rethink our priorities. Doing what we can is critically important, but *preparing our children for their work* is even more important. Their growing challenges will not allow for the optional response our generation believes it has. If you are not a parent you might consider volunteering some of your time to help with educating and nurturing kids who need a positive influence. Your time invested guiding children will leverage your impact, and teach you a lot. It's great preparation for what you believe your real work is – your professional contribution.

I believe our natural environment will ultimately restore itself if we plant the right seeds. The only seeds that are truly able to provide sustainable growth in a restorative civilization are spiritual seeds. I am speaking of a selfless love that longs to do what is in the best interests of everyone. I am speaking of living within our means and not expecting to live what someone is selling as the American dream. I am speaking of trea-

suring our children's future by treasuring our children now. It is never too late to turn our hearts back to what is good, and right, and just; not because we are supposed to, but because we find true peace and joy in discovering the Oneness at the core of our existence.

Restoring our civilization requires restoring ourselves. And we cannot restore ourselves without turning ourselves back over to divine guidance. Our minds will never figure this out or want to struggle with this idea, but our hearts already know it is true. Real leaders remember this truth deep in their souls and act accordingly. Listen and you will hear. Hear and you will trust. Trust and you will act. Act and you will be fulfilled with a life worth living. Our world was sustainable when it was given to us. For the sake of our children, let's be true to our spiritual selves.



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