

## How Do We Heal the World?

An excerpt from *The Hand That Rocks the World*, by David Shackleton

“The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual – for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.” – M. Scott Peck

“The discovery of truth is prevented more effectively, not by the false appearance things present and which mislead into error, not directly by weakness of the reasoning powers, but by preconceived opinion, by prejudice.” – Arthur Schopenhauer

“Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains to bring it to light.” – George Washington

*“Those who journey from political correctness to truth often risk public disapprobation, but it is notable that most never lose their tolerance or humanity. They may question the politics of race, but not that racism is bad; they may question campaigns about women’s pay, but not that women and men deserve equality of treatment.” – Anthony Browne.*

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”<sup>ii</sup> – Alexander Solzhenitsyn

For an individual to contemplate changing society is a daunting prospect. Society is vast and has huge momentum. Yet who can know what the full effect of an action might be? Chaos theory tells us that in dynamic systems large consequences can flow from tiny beginnings. M. Scott Peck wrote, “The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual – for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.” What is the nature of this internal battle? How does it begin, and how is it fought?

The battle of the heart cannot be fought at all in stage 2. In stage 2 our view of the world is an artifact of our own needs, our need to avoid the pain of guilt. We do not let anything in that seriously challenges our worldview because we need that worldview too much, to reassure us of our worth, our innocence. It is in stage 3 where the battle begins. In stage 3 we become willing to look for truth even though we expect that truth to convict us. In stage 3, a feminist may look at men with a wish to know their truth for the first time, and discover that she has been lying to herself, with assistance from the culture, about female intrinsic innocence and male guilt. It is in stage 3 that the battle is fought, and it is bloody, and it is glorious. We reach stage 4, for any particular issue, when the battle is won. Of course, there are always other issues, other battles.

In the end there is only one answer to how we can change the world for the better. We do it by growing ourselves up. From stage 2 we may be very active to change the world, but our actions do not come from love and are not based in truth, they come from our own need to avoid pain. Our actions from stage 2 aren’t about the world at all, no matter what we believe. They are about us and they are usually based on false perceptions of the world, which we have made into a projection screen for our own guilt. Because of this, our actions often do harm rather than good. From stage 3 we can help the world through the example of our honesty and our devotion to discover truth and to act from love, but we are not yet powerful to see clearly and act confidently. From stage 4 we see clearly and act from love, and our actions are powerfully helpful, though it may not look that way to those who do not know what to look for, who do not understand that the avoidance of pain is the problem and not the goal.

What can we do to heal the world? At this basic level, the answer is simple. We can grow ourselves up, move from stage 2, denial, through stage 3, recovery, to stage 4, wisdom. That is the whole answer. It will work, and nothing else will. We do that simply by wanting it. There are endless techniques for spiritual or psychological growth offered in the world, but in the end techniques don't matter much because if we want to grow we use whatever techniques we find for that purpose, and if we don't want to grow, we use whatever techniques we find in order to avoid growing (usually while making a pretense of growth). So all that matters is whether and how much we want to grow, to recover, to find truth. How do we increase our wanting of it? I have no idea. That is a complete mystery to me. I don't know where my own wanting truth came from, and so there isn't much more I can say about that.

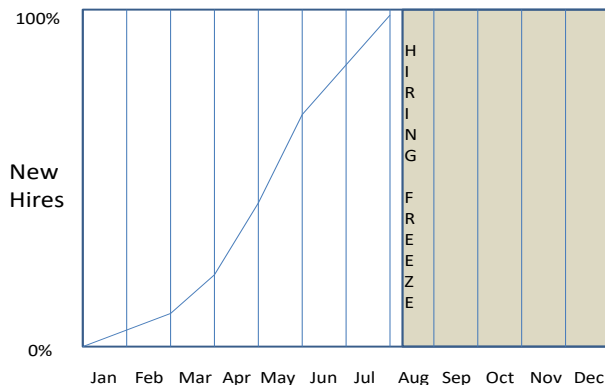
But for those who are on the journey, for those in stage 3 who are trying to understand the nature of the world and how to be in it, it may be that more detail about the process, information about how others have managed to influence the world in positive ways, would be useful. That is what the rest of this book is about.

### **Social Systems are Resilient**

In 1992, I was working for a Canadian telecom company. At one point, I investigated a number of chronic problems to see why they were so difficult to change. One was why there was a company-wide hiring freeze by about the middle of every year. It seemed strange that we couldn't get our act together so that we could budget and manage our new hire recruitment better than that. I started by going to talk to the accountants who were in charge of company wide recruitment management.

“Why do you guys force a hiring freeze by July or August of every year?” I asked? The accountants were helpful. “It's the managers,” they told me. “They recruit at an astonishing rate during the first six months of the year. Over the whole company, the entire new hire budget is consumed by about July, because the rate of hiring is so high. If that rate continued, we would completely blow our budget and there would be hell to pay. We'd probably have to lay people off to get our payroll down to what we could afford again. Every year, we have no alternative but to institute a hiring freeze. We certainly don't want to.”

They showed me a recruitment rate chart from the previous year. I have reproduced it roughly, from memory, below. They had a point.



*Annual Hiring Chart*

Chart in hand, I went to talk to some line managers. I showed them the graph.

“Why do you recruit so fast and basically consume the entire hiring budget in the first half of the year?” I asked them.

“Are you crazy?” one of them said. “Every year, there’s a company-wide hiring freeze by July or August. Look, it’s there on the chart. If we don’t get our new hires in the door by then, we lose the opportunity for the whole year. It’s a terrible rush, and sometimes we choose a candidate who isn’t exactly who we want, just because we can’t afford to wait until the hiring window opens up again next January.”

I stood there with my mouth open. It was so obvious. Of course that’s what they would do. Given the repetitive pattern of hiring freezes every year, what else could they do?

In a state of some excitement, I rushed back to the head office accountants. They were as surprised as I to hear what the line managers had said, and as rueful as I to realize that it was so obvious in hindsight. “So the solution is clear,” I said. “Just stop calling a hiring freeze. The managers have already done all of their recruitment for the whole year by July. They’re not going to hire any more people even if you don’t institute a hiring freeze. In a year or two, after they realize that the hiring freezes really have gone away, they’ll start spreading their recruiting into the rest of the year, which will be better for everyone.”

I saw their expressions change. “We couldn’t do that. What if the recruitment *did* continue and we really blew our hiring budget? It’s our responsibility to prevent that. If we didn’t institute a hiring freeze and the hiring budget overran, it would be worth our jobs, and rightly so. We can’t take the risk.”

I went back to talk to the line managers again. “Look, guys,” I said. “You’re in control of this. The accountants only institute a hiring freeze when the year’s hiring budget is already consumed. If you took your time hiring, so that the hiring rate didn’t go through the roof by July, they wouldn’t slap a freeze on at all. It’s your insisting on getting everyone by July that results in the hiring freeze.”

“You’re probably right,” they said, “but we can’t take that risk. For that to work, a majority of us would have to slow our hiring across the whole company. How could you get so many to do it? While that’s what we’d like to do, if other managers didn’t do it and a hiring freeze was called, the ones who took their time would be screwed. Would *you* take that risk?” I admitted that I wouldn’t.

I learned something that day about the resilience, the resistance to change of human systems. They may end up doing things that no one really wants, and it may be entirely within our power to change them, and yet everyone, from their own perspective, has good reasons not to change.

This is a very common situation. Do you see how closely it resembles the stage 2 codependent relationship dynamics that we discussed earlier? As I see it, this is codependence on a larger scale, on a system-wide scale. Everyone involved feels that their own behavior is constrained by the actions of others; that other people have the real power in the situation, the power that matters. What is going on at a deeper level, as we have discussed, is that people’s needs are being met by the system the way it is. Everybody is getting something important out of the arrangement (in this case, the security of a regular paycheck through the approval of their superiors), and they are unwilling to do anything that would jeopardize those needs.

I am not describing this situation and naming it as codependence, as an addiction dynamic, in order to criticize or judge it or the people involved – just the opposite. I describe it in these terms in order to make it *understandable*, in order to show it in a light that encourages us to empathize with it. These are good, regular people, they are like you and me. The fact that we are *all* almost completely enmeshed in this addictive culture is not something to be ashamed of. It’s not wrong. It just is. We’re not who we think we are in our cover story; our behaviors don’t flow from the reasons that we believe, but that doesn’t mean we’re bad. We’re just psychologically immature, and that’s no crime.

Another situation that I investigated was closer to home for me. My job had been to manage a group of engineers who were designing semicustom integrated circuits (silicon chips) for the company’s products.

I was part of a large IC design group of perhaps a hundred engineers, designing thirty or forty silicon chips a year. One thing I had noticed was that we were almost always late to complete a design, at least as far as our customers were concerned. Since custom IC design took two or three years, the silicon was usually the longest lead-time item in the product delivery, so our lateness often made the whole product late to market. It was a very big problem.

Over the years, many sincere and serious attempts had been made to address it, and had resulted in tighter design processes, error checking, design tool enhancements, etc. Yet the late design completions had stubbornly refused to go away.

I spent several weeks meeting with silicon designers and managers, and also system designers and managers. It took some time for me to sort through the information they provided and realize what was significant. Eventually I noticed a similar pattern to the 'hiring freeze' problem. The system designers were blaming the silicon group: the silicon designers blamed the system group. I thought I knew what was going on.

Part of the answer lay in our organizational structure. Because of the highly specialized complexity of custom silicon design, a separate design group had been created, with a separate management structure all the way up to vice president level. This organizational structure interacted with the corporate culture in an interesting way.

Since custom silicon design takes so long, system product designers made sure to get it started early. The design contract with the silicon group was concluded as soon as possible, so that the silicon design could get under way as early as possible. A specification to act as the design goal for the silicon designers was developed, but since it was so early in the system design, it was necessarily somewhat speculative. A silicon design schedule was developed and agreed to, and the overall system design schedule was usually built around the silicon schedule.

However, in the course of system development, there would always be design changes from what was initially contemplated, and these system changes would inevitably alter the original silicon design specification. At this point the silicon designers would attempt to revise their own delivery schedule, arguing, with merit, that the specification changes meant doing work over again, which would extend the delivery schedule. The system people, with their whole product delivery dependent on the silicon schedule, would insist that the silicon schedule could not change, or could change only minimally. The usual result was that the silicon design team would reluctantly agree to "make best efforts" to meet an unchanged design schedule, and would do so, but would end up late against that schedule (but on time based on their revised, unofficial schedule).

Are you getting a sense of how this all played out? The silicon design team was blamed by the system design customer for making the system late to market, while the system designers were blamed by the silicon guys for forcing an unavoidable delay through specification changes, while not permitting the design schedule to extend to accommodate the changes. Each group's story was familiar and made sense to its own management in its separate division. It 'felt right', and so the managers and engineers in each group were 'excused' by their executives for the poor result which was seen as the fault of the other organization. The hierarchical bridging between the silicon and system divisions, way up at the president level, was too far away for these different stories to be put up against each other and integrated, reconciled.

Once again we can see codependence in action, where each party sees the other as powerful and at fault, while their own behavior is reasonable – not perfect, perhaps, but excusable compared to those other guys. But let's not overlook the role of the corporate culture here, for it's the key piece. The unspoken though not unconscious corporate culture at this time measured and judged engineers and managers by how well they delivered against their agreed-to responsibilities. To succeed against your agreed

deliverables was a brownie point, and would lead to pay raises and promotions, but a number of such brownie points were needed for a person to rise very far. However, a single significant failure to meet your deliverables, where you were personally to blame, was a career-killer, usually unrecoverable. (Let me note that this is certainly not an unusual business culture – it's probably almost universal.)

The natural, human response to this is to find ways to excuse your own failures, so that that deadly career-killer result can be avoided. That means finding ways to take credit when you succeed, but to avoid responsibility when you fail. This need to manipulate objective truth explains why codependence creates false worldviews and cover stories and avoids the truth, which it thinks will convict it. One good way to excuse yourself from failures is to have a scapegoat who can be held responsible for things that go wrong. This is what the behavior pattern between the system and silicon design groups accomplished. Each group was enabled to take credit, within their own management structure, for what was seen to have succeeded, while blaming the other group for major failures. The pattern was resilient, resistant to change (even though everyone was sincerely trying to succeed, to deliver on time) because it provided for the real needs of the participants. The ability to blame the other organization was like a drug which kept the deep anxiety of their dependence on an unknowable fate, of striving for an uncertain success, at bay. Their jobs and paychecks and social standing within the company felt more secure through this pattern, and so it remained, despite genuine and sustained attempts to solve the late delivery problem within both divisions.

Do you find this human behavior as fascinating as I do? I find it exciting to see below the surface, to discern the deeper engine of human social interaction. It makes such sense, once we see it laid out in this way. We are all just doing what we must, trying to deal with our needs and fears as best we can. As waves and tides move the water molecules of the ocean, we are moved together in a huge, coordinated, repetitive dance that few of us understand. Can you find empathy, fellow-feeling for people caught in these patterns? Can you see that the bigger and more troubling patterns, the wars and violence and such, are just similar patterns of well-meaning codependent people, doing what seems right to them in cultures they didn't invent and under forces they can't control. They're not really victims in the way that they may think they are, but they certainly don't feel the power that they have to do things differently.

When we do begin to understand, what can we do? We can work on our own recovery, of course, and that is utterly central. Without that, things change only by unconscious evolution. But as, or after, we work on ourselves, what can be done to change the larger system?

For large human systems to change, it often takes heroic action from some individuals. Some people, often just one, have to decide to take the risk, and at that level the risk is high, the personal consequences can be severe. The situation isn't helped by the fact that, while people in positions of power are best placed to initiate such changes, the behavior that has got them into those positions, for which they have been recognized and promoted, has not usually been heroic risk-taking. Society more often rewards those who play it safe, who take smaller, carefully calibrated risks and succeed in pulling them off, and find ways to duck the blame for any failures as I have described.

However, there are exceptions. I saw one during my time at the telecom company. A senior engineering executive was responsible for a large product development group, some three or four hundred engineers. His group was awarded a major development project in the usual way, funded by the factory that would eventually make the new product. However, the first year's design budget that was offered was not enough, in this executive's opinion, to pay for the design work that was required. The market window was short, and the money offered would only pay for a design team half the size of what was needed to design the product in the available time. The executive announced that he was not willing to plan for failure, and he launched a design project involving double the budgeted number of engineers, whose combined salaries would exhaust the year's funding by July. The executive was completely up front with his customer and his engineering team about this: the designers all knew that they were taking a major

risk, and that there might be no money to pay them by mid year. The engineers and managers trusted their executive, and plowed ahead.

This leader was basically betting his career that the client factory would see the wisdom of his approach, or at least trust his judgment, by the time the money ran out, and would find a way to increase the budget. So it turned out; the executive's credibility was good and the project budget was doubled in order to meet the burn rate that had been judged necessary to achieve the market window.

This is high stakes stuff. If the factory had not come forward with the extra money, that executive's career would have been toast. A lot of people may have been laid off, and probably no client factory (not to mention engineering team) would ever trust him to lead a design project for them again. Few of us are willing to take such risks, and fewer still are in positions of authority where we can make such a large difference. Yet, such are the actions by which the world is positively changed through human agency, rather than the more usual process of slow, unconscious cultural evolution. Such heroic human actions are not always so spectacular, or even noticed, but they are real, the personal risks are real, and the heroism is real. I give honor here to the men and women who accept such risks for the sake of truth and justice and healing, for the sake of us all. I especially include in this group those who risked in this way and failed, the dead-ended or career restarted managers and others whom most regard as failures. They have my respect and my admiration.

How do we get ourselves to the place where we can make such choices? First, we have to be genuinely confident in our judgment; we have to deeply believe that we know the *truth* about a situation. We have to trust ourselves to see clearly what right action in this circumstance is. Secondly, we have to genuinely love ourselves. This means knowing that our identity is secure. To take a major risk, we have to be willing to fail, to lose the bet, with all that that implies – the loss of status, the negative judgments of our peers, the potential loss of income and prospects. We have to know that even if these things come to pass, even if we lose, it was still worth it, because we were true to ourselves. What this means is that we have to love truth and right action more than we love the image of success and status. We have to desire the reality of truth more than the image of truth. We have to be, in short, dedicated to reality at all costs.

We are back to where we started in chapter one, where I argued that what matters is what we really want. If we really want truth, we really do find it. As a result we grow up, our lives change, we become powerful. Let me confess right here that I am not a good example of this maxim. I have wanted truth, and I have found some, but for a long time I have not had the courage to step forward fully with that truth. For fifteen years I have hung back, unsure of myself and unwilling to trust my judgment fully. I think that with this book, I am finally stepping forward in power in service of truth, taking the risk of naming a great evil in our society. It's not a small thing, but it is time. I have hidden for long enough.

I imagine that one of the main groups who could have an interest in this book would be the Men's Human Rights Movement (MHRM), the movement that is seeking to bring balance to the gender debate by opposing feminist one-sided analysis and identifying the ways that men are also victims, and women are also powerful. Unfortunately, this movement tends to be misperceived as backlash to feminism, principally because the advocates, mainly men, are angry. They have good reasons for their anger given that many of them have lost children in family court or suffered from anti-male prejudice in other major ways. Still, it isn't working well for them, principally because most people associate anger in men with violence and aggression. So most MHRM advocates are seen as misogynist, an inaccurate perception since what they are opposed to is feminism, not women, but one that they find difficult to repudiate since most people see no difference between opposition to feminism and opposition to women. We aren't comfortable with the notion of men as victims; it doesn't feel right and so we judge their anger as inappropriate.

I spoke to this in an editorial I wrote for the magazine *Everyman* in 2000:

In the last few weeks, the question of how to work effectively and powerfully for social change has occupied me. From the panel discussion on this topic at the 2000 Everyman Gathering to conversations with leaders in the movement, I have noticed myself taking a position which is often not well understood by others. In essence, this position is, "Let's be, ourselves, the way we want others to be. Let's live our vision of a better world in our own lives."

Here's what I mean by this. We want our politicians, lawyers and judges to listen to us respectfully, and to be willing to hear and accept views that are socially unpopular and challenging to them. We want them to be open to our position, rather than sure that they already have the right of the issue, already see it correctly. Well, are *we* like that? Do we listen to *them* with open minds; are we willing to have them change our mind? When they speak of their difficulties, do we hear them with understanding or with judgment? Are we already convinced that we have the right answer and that they are wrong?

Let's be honest; the issues of prejudice against men and injustice in family court are not issues that will make them winners in the eyes of their constituencies. They know — and we should too — that if they champion these causes, it will cost them support or votes, and quite possibly their job in the next election. The feminist lobby is very powerful, as we know first hand. So we are asking them to do the right thing on *principle*, to voluntarily take a stand against their own interests for the sake of what is right. Let's realize that that is what we are doing and stop being so self-righteous, so strident, so shaming in our demands that they do so. Frankly, we are being hypocritical. For that's not what we did. We are in this battle, almost all of us who are politically active, because the system hurt us, took from us our role as parents or our money or both. We are fighting *entirely* in our own interest, to change a system that injured us personally. So let us have the humility, the integrity, to acknowledge that we are asking politicians, lawyers, judges, etc. to do things of much greater integrity and selflessness than we are doing ourselves. We are asking them to go *against* their self-interest, just because it's right. Well, fair enough. Let's ask for that. But feeling and claiming that they *should*? That they *owe* it to us? That's arrogant in the extreme and hypocritical as well. Our self-righteousness is an affront to them, and I'm not surprised that many of them don't want to give us the time of day. We are at least partly responsible for their reaction against us.

What do you think the reaction would be if, instead, it felt right to us (that's important, I'm not asking us to fake it) to say: "Sir, I know that you have good and sufficient reasons for the position and the stand that you are currently taking on this issue. I know that what I will ask of you is currently politically unpopular, and may well cost you credibility and votes, so I will understand if you choose not support the position that I am advocating, even if I should convince you that it has merit. I ask only that you hear me out and consider what I will say. I commit to you that I will do the same: I will keep an open mind as you explain the constraints and expectations that are placed upon you in the important role that you play, and I will not jump to hasty conclusions in the event that you do not see the same need for action on these issues that I do."

I suggest to you that a politician, a judge, a lawyer, an academic approached sincerely in this way, would recognize a difference in us, a maturity that is rare among advocates, and would pay greater attention to a presentation that was introduced in this fashion.

How does one get to this place? How do we put away the anger, the pain, and the need for instant solutions and change *RIGHT NOW*? How do we move to a place where we can hear and empathize with those who don't agree with us, and not just expect them to do that for us? My answer is simple to say, but difficult to do. We forgive them. We forgive the lawyers and the judges and the politicians and the feminists and the ex-spouses.

Let me be clear here. Forgiveness doesn't mean that what happened to us was OK; that it wasn't wrong. It doesn't mean that we excuse those who hurt us or that we tolerate or forget what they did.

Nor does it mean that we stop advocating for change. It means that *we stop letting our past hurts dominate our present lives*. Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, whether they actually deserve your forgiveness or not. This is what we need. With the chip off our shoulders, we advocate for change with equanimity, from a sense of peace with those whose minds we seek to change, rather than from righteous, injured judgment.

How do we forgive? By accepting the reality of our pain, our injuries, and grieving them, and thus letting them go. Our attitude of righteous innocence is really a way of holding our pain at a distance by loading it, in our mind, onto those that we hold responsible. I acknowledge, pain truly *is* fearsome, and it is no small task to decide to feel it deeply again. If, however, we accept our pain in the knowledge that it is ours, then we can move through it and out the other side. Find trusted associates to do this work with. I did mine in men's groups; some do it in therapy; some with friends or family. Be sure that I, for one, do not presume to judge that you *should* do it, or to know the size of the blocks or constraints that might keep you from it. You are free, as I am, and it is in a relationship of equals that I, as a friend, invite you to choose this path.

In 2002, I developed my ideas further about how to advocate effectively, and introduced a metaphor as a parable, to help people to feel their way into what I was saying. Here is the editorial I wrote for issue #55 of *Everyman*, June/July 2002:

In my address to the 2002 Everyman Gathering, I said something like, "If I have had one good idea, it is this. We can best change the world from vision, not outrage; from faith and not need."

What do I mean?

A good metaphor bridges from something we already know and understand to something that is new to us, in a way that allows us to extend our existing understanding to the new. Perhaps the best metaphor for healthy advocacy work is healthy parenting. For I think that most of us already understand that parenting done from need, from outrage, is neither healthy nor effective. If I *need* my child to follow in my footsteps, for example, or to succeed where I feel I have failed, or to realize some of my dreams, or (insert your own need here), then I will exert myself to make this happen. I may be subtle or aggressive, manipulative or directive depending on my personality, but I will communicate my need. In doing so, I will damage my child; undermine her/his own dreams. Even worse, my expectations for my child may be completely inappropriate or impossible. To take a silly example, if I, as a father, want my child to excel in calculus by the time she is three years old, then it is clear who has the problem.

Now let's bridge to advocacy work. The key is to see society as an immature child. It may be a stretch at first, but work at it. Like a child who is not yet old enough to do calculus, our society is not yet mature enough to deal with gender appropriately. We are still caught up in chivalry, which was about species survival, and only able to pay lip service to equality, which is about human fulfillment. So in family court, in business, in government, in all aspects of public and private life, we are not yet mature enough to overcome ... our internalized feelings of shame and guilt when we try to hold women to account. What feels right to us is still to protect them, to make them special and to expect men to sacrifice for them.

What we are seeing happening in family court, in sexual harassment and date rape and domestic violence legislation is *age appropriate behavior*. We need to really *get* this insight. Think of it like a two-year-old's tantrum. Yes, we need to stand up to it and confront it, but not because it's wrong. It's not wrong. It's harmful and counter-effective, but not wrong. It's age-appropriate acting out.

It's hard to get to that place in our relationship to society, where we see it as an immature child, but it's so valuable. Because once we do, we can let go of our outrage. A child is *supposed* to be immature; there would be something wrong if they weren't. Likewise, our society is *supposed* to be immature at this time. Believing that we *should* be more mature than we are today, that we *should* be able to do family court



without gender bias, without chivalry, is like believing a three-year-old *should* be able to do calculus. It's *our* problem.

When we try to change the world from outrage, from our need to have it conform to our picture of how we think it should be, we are like dysfunctional parents, passing on our own wounds and issues to our offspring. We need to change if we want the world to change. We need to become loving parents. I'm not saying it's easy. It's not. It's quite a challenge. I'm saying it's important; it's the only way that our advocacy, our efforts towards change, can be effective. Because once we change in this way, we are able to *respect* the world, to deal with it with dignity, with honor. We stop seeing conspiracy and corruption everywhere, and instead see honest people trying to do right as they see it. With that respect replacing our outrage, is it hard to imagine that we might get a better hearing, that those we seek to convert might be more open to our point of view?

Can we do this? Can we come from vision and not from judgment, from faith and not from need. For that is what healthy parenting is about. We hold a vision of a mature and healthy, happy adult, and we work to help our child grow towards that vision. Not because they are wrong as they are – they are not, of course. Not because they need to be fixed – they don't. In the same way, the world is not wrong as it is, and does not need to be fixed. It needs to be guided forward by those who have the maturity to act as loving parents, who hold a positive vision of what it could become, and not a righteous judgment of how it is wrong right now.

Are you one who is willing to step up to this challenge? Are you inspired by this notion of working with the world from vision rather than from need, from faith rather than from outrage? Hold yourself gently while you do the work. Outrage isn't wrong; it's just age appropriate behavior. It's just a stage on the path of human growth. Create a vision of yourself as a person free of such needs, working with the world from faith in what it could become and respect for where it is now. Hold that vision carefully, and seek ways to move towards it in your own life. From the way you experience yourself doing this, you will gain a real appreciation for the greater power that vision holds compared to judgment.

How do we actually put aside our judgment, what is the process? It is the work of stage 3 on the journey of psychological growth. We grieve the losses that we experienced, the injuries we suffered, until we come to the point where we can let them go and forgive those who hurt us. Not excuse them – there is no making what was done ok, or excusable. No, we hold them to account, and then we forgive. We do it not for them, but to set ourselves free of our anger and resentment, to set ourselves free to choose to trust again, if and when we wish to do so. We do it, in short, to heal ourselves.

Is this approach to social change effective? Probably the two most successful non-violent movements for social and political change in the last hundred years were Gandhi's movement to free India from British colonial rule, and Martin Luther King's movement for racial equality in America. Both took the repudiation of anger as a central plank of their advocacy, both sought to campaign from a vision of change motivated by love rather than by outrage (see MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech for an inspiring example of this approach). It is because their personal leadership was so powerful in inspiring their movements, based on this approach through love and truth, that both of these movement leaders were assassinated by those who opposed their goals. Yes, it is effective.

Let us review what we have covered in this chapter about how to heal the world. We began by acknowledging that we can heal the world only by healing ourselves, by growing ourselves up through the growth model stages 3 and 4, recovery and wisdom. We explored how human systems are resilient because they are meeting people needs (conscious or unconscious). Because of this, it often takes heroic action on the part of individuals to make significant change. In the case of advocates for social change such as the MHRM, we observed that anger is counter-productive, and I suggested that treating others as we would wish to be treated, coming from vision rather than judgment, and regarding the world as a child that needs good parenting are useful tools or concepts in social advocacy work.

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i Anthony Browne, *The Retreat of Reason: Political correctness and the corruption of political debate in modern Britain*. Civitas, 2006.

ii Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2002, p75