

The Way Forward

By Peter Shepherd

The year 2012 has been prophesied since ancient times as a turning point in the consciousness of humanity. Many expect great things to happen, to come upon us as if "from above" like an act of God. However, I feel this is an unenlightened view of the nature of God and of ourselves. God is love and God lives within us, each and every single one of us. **The turn-around in consciousness - a Spiritual Awakening - will need to come from within us**; it is a change that we are creating - and it is that which has been correctly prophesied. The situation and the potential for creative action are right. This is the time.

We are the channel for the action of God. If we don't act, nothing will happen. No one will be any the wiser; we will just have missed the opportunity of hundreds of lifetimes.

In order to create our reality - to make things happen in our experience of the world - we operate at all levels of our being: the spiritual, mental, emotional, physical. We do this 100% of the time whether we are aware of it or not. It is possible to improve our life experience by becoming more conscious of our creative process.

In Western culture, we are brought up to view our lives primarily as a physical manifestation: we go to work, produce things, get paid, survive, try to keep our bodies healthy, find a partner, make a family home. Talk of "creating our reality" from a spiritual viewpoint seems out of touch with reality, maybe even a bit crazy. But if you follow it through - as I will try to explain - it does all tie together. The everyday life we experience is very much affected by our spiritual nature, our creative will. Then we manifest that "will" according to the beliefs we hold, the feelings that result from those beliefs, and our resulting actions.

We can start living consciously by manifesting what we want right here and now by putting into place our plans and dreams in the real world.

A Multi-Domain Approach

I believe in a multi-domain approach. We are not just one with God; nor just angelic beings; nor just a witnessing consciousness; nor just a creative mind; nor just a scheming ego; nor just a social being struggling to survive; nor just a lover, parent or friend; nor just a creature programmed by genes; nor just one with the super energies of the planet and the Universe. We are all of these things at the same time. A unified field.

Manifestation, as described in *The Secret*, is a spiritually powered process. With the right spiritual, mental, and emotion preparation, things seem to "just happen" or fall into our lap. While this may sometimes be the apparency, in practice it isn't the whole picture. The other domains of our being play at least an equal part. Although opportunities may arise that seem magical - synchronicities, because we are connected beings, the unified field again - and like-minded people will naturally identify with our desire (law of attraction) and share their resources, the primary channel of achievement of what we desire is provided by ourselves, our own actions and communications and mental resources, such as intellect, creativity and intuition.

As a result of the Law of Attraction, magical results come about. Of course this "magic" isn't really magic; if it happens then there must be science to explain it, albeit not the orthodox. **Metaphysics is a super-set of physics, not its enemy.** Perhaps Sheldrake's theories of information fields are the closest - I perceive it more in the order of information/thought than about energy/vibration - it is in the zero-point, the implicit encoding of the holographic universe. But then they are two sides of the same coin anyway, as in the case of gravity; whether potential or energy, either way it has a field of influence.

The implicit, hidden world is that of creative potential, of Spirit, outside of space and time; the real world is its explicit manifestation through creativity; and the mind is the intermediary, interpreting intuitions and drawing up plans of action. Therefore, I think for most of us the Law of Attraction works at the mental/spiritual level, not the physical. But also Spirit has the power to align causes and effect sequences right down to the material level. Each person is an independent cause, but also they are part of the universal Spirit or Source, and in this respect they also act as One.

Telepathic influences on others and their resulting actions cause events to occur and things to appear as if by magic or synchronicity. But it isn't really magic, it's cause and effect. Spirit works on matter through mind and actions. Real action needs to be taken to manifest real things... there are such solid agreements cementing the physical: a lifetime's conditioning and learning to play "the game of life." It wouldn't be much of a game if any of us could easily change the rules or alter the playing field! We have the potential of being games makers, and I believe we should rise to that, but when we play football that's what we do.

Good old "goal setting and getting" is as important as ever. That's practical, "get down to it" psychology. Our knowledge base and mind development and social skills (concentration, study, communication, memory, creativity, intuition, leadership, etc.) are as important as ever. These are our cognitive contributions. Vital if we want to make a difference: to think and live outside of the box of our cultural norm. In addition, to achieve anything meaningful we need to put our heart and soul into the mix too.

Many people sincerely wish for their life circumstances to be different, to win the lottery or to obtain promotion. Most of the time this doesn't come about - "wishful thinking" or desire doesn't cut it and one suffers. What is needed is creative intention or will, not just a wish or desire. It's the process of manifesting and it needs to be done without attachment, and it needs to be followed through with the correct attitude and actions.

When the Buddhists speak of desire as something to overcome in order to prevent suffering, they mean the attachment to a possession or an outcome, such that you can't be happily without it. Buddha was right, but it isn't desire itself that he was warning about, it's attachment to the outcome or object of desire. So as a result you have a fear of not attaining it or of then losing it. So you put force and effort in there. Force results in counter-force, a reaction. That acts as a counter-intention and nullifies the intention. Nothing happens.

Manifesting intentions need to be effortless and without attachment to the outcome, i.e. with unconditional love and gratitude, but not with fear or greed. That suffering one normally feels when your desires don't manifest is from an attachment of some sort, the source of the counter-intention. It wasn't a pure intention, it was undermined by counter-intentions, feelings that point in quite the other direction.

Subconscious forces, such as hidden conflicting beliefs and suppressed fears, are resolved only through deep introspective work on oneself. And one's ethics need to be cleared, such that one feels more worthy of the exchange of wealth for value that you have created for others or services done. One also needs considerable emotional intelligence, intuition, and creativity because we have to clear our intentions, be open to guidance and play an active part in the manifestation process.

Your every thought and word is contributing to your life experience. Your thoughts produce your emotions which, in turn, result in how you feel about a particular event occurring in your life. This is why two people can look at the exact same event and have opposite feelings about it. You are creating your own subjective reality, moment by moment, with the thoughts you choose to think and what you say, both to yourself and others. And through the power of Spirit your subjective reality impinges on the physical reality.

It isn't so much a "magical" process as a way of being that is quite foreign to most people. The average guy just does not realize that he can change his actions, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and identity. Instead they are perceived as the result of influences upon him, so he feels molded and in effect, with few choices. Life just happens to him, and it's all other people's fault. The truth - that he is responsible for the quality of his life - is, in that context, a revelation. Because if he's responsible, then he can change things around.

This is the reason *Tools for Transformation* exists - to help people in the process of improving their lives. All the products we recommend support an improved ability to manifest your dreams - to take your life to a new conscious level.

The Manifestation Process

Creation occurs when we have a clear image of a desired state and trust that we can make it happen. If we can make it happen subjectively then generally we can make it happen in the physical world too. Motivation and the energy to create comes from this desire: the structural tension between the current reality and the desired achievable reality, the vision.

With the Manifestation Process you create the best spiritual, mental and emotional way of being which will empower you to achieve your desires and attract the resources you need. These are the steps:

1. Define the goal, the state desired.
2. What would it be like if you could....?
3. Expose resistances (irrational fears and limiting beliefs) - experience them to the degree that you realize that you create these; you can then change them or just let them go.
4. Pretend that you can....
5. Describe the scenario in detail. What does that feel like....? (all senses and emotions, body-mind-spirit)
6. Be thankful that you can make it so in your subjective reality, feel gratitude like you already have what you are desiring; at the same time feel without attachment that it is for the good of all, and also that you could happily let go of the same. (Attachment leads to suffering; it also leads to not having, as the jealous husband will tell you.)
7. Open yourself to, accept responsibility for, and feel one with being an agent (not necessarily the only agent) for the actions and wisdom and whatever else is required to manifest the state desired in our shared physical reality. Feel this inspiring and motivating energy. Be a joyful player in the game of manifestation here on Earth. Determine your next steps in the game plan, what you can do now to get things moving.
8. Flow unconditional love from Higher Self through your body-mind to all people and all things.

You envision the reality you want, as if it is in the now and even - or perhaps especially - be grateful for it! That's creating from the God/Spirit level, the spark of God that you are. Yes, you start from lack (want), but you don't move forward in lack. Many, many people have found this does make a difference in this material world... it isn't just wishful thinking.

With the blocks removed about considering it's OK to be/do/have whatever, you can then more easily do whatever it takes to manifest it. It's the Robert Fritz creating principle: a crystal clear vision inspires and energizes the path of least resistance to your goal. Your current abilities and having are irrelevant to you being able to start creating; that's where you're going and you now - with that empowering vision - have the energy to work through any barriers, and acquire any necessary skills and resources along the way.

That's why the vision has to be genuine, specific and what you truly want, and any blocks and conflicting beliefs that you may hold need to be exposed and released. Otherwise wishes and prayers can be, in effect, the avoidance of a reality that one is unwilling to confront. But if it's genuinely your vision, and in accordance with the knowing of your Higher Self, it will happen, and you won't be able to stop yourself running around like a wild thing making it happen - since YOU are the most important channel of your creative power, just as much as the world around you.

Then you act, according to your intuitive knowing. You can tell if that comes from Spirit because it will have the presence of Love. That means acceptance without judgment. And without negative emotions like fear or hatred, which are resistances against what exists - that which you are creating! You may be guided to sources of information to help you act more effectively.

So then do it, the first step, the first communication. Make the plunge, and then learn from your experiences in manifesting what you want. Spirit will offer these learning opportunities (sometimes they may appear as "mistakes") as part of your ongoing connection with your true all-knowing Higher Self.

Be The Change

Current events have demonstrated a tremendous desire on the behalf of perhaps the majority of people in the world for peace in their lives. They are no longer satisfied with the mentality of political conflict, which endangers economic progress and human rights and freedoms. But most importantly, I feel that many people are now aware that if we want peace in the world, first we need to make peace with our own lives. It's human nature that needs to change, and we are capable of making such a transformation.

Our experience in the world reflects our inner state - yes, this is a kind of magic, but that is the reality, the world is miraculous. I have seen so much evidence of this when I - or a student or client - have made a genuine shift in our belief system that resolves an inner conflict, then very soon our real-world circumstances change accordingly. We mirror our internal state - our resistance/fear and acceptance/love - in our personal life experience. As a group we mirror our consciousness in world events. It is our personal responsibility to become aware of our contribution to the group consciousness, to help create a world with more opportunities for ourselves and our loved ones - which ultimately means for everyone.

So what wars do we wage inside? The purposes and goals that we hold dearly - some we may have brought into this life or felt most strongly as a child or young person - are often compromised in the face of problems that we discover in trying to achieve them, and we may forget about them (actually suppress them) and opt for safer solutions. Playing the safe game is a sad conflict with the game we really (still) want to play. **We have become someone else, a substitute for our true self.** Reinforcing this position are the attachments we have come to cling on to, the fears we may have of losing control of our safe space, the resistance we feel against elements of change, and the judgments we make that prevent acceptance of what is.

To better our position, to be able to open up our space and express our true desires, we first need to come to terms with our situation. Our true nature is an expression of love and that is the quality that we need first to rediscover in our consciousness.

There's no beauty that you could perceive or create if it weren't already within you.

Before we can contribute through our consciousness toward peace in the world, we need to make peace with ourselves. **Before we can love others unconditionally, we need to be able to genuinely love ourselves.** Before we can forgive and cease making judgments of others, we need to learn how to forgive ourselves and warmly accept ourselves just as we are. So let's look at how to do that...

We all do things we aren't proud of, we wouldn't be human if we didn't. Something that affects others in a way that we wouldn't be willing to experience ourselves. Sometimes we chose to act in a way that we know at the time isn't being true to ourselves, but it seems like a solution to our situation. Or maybe we are tempted to put our own interests first. Other times we may be carried away by emotions of anger or jealousy and do something out of spite we may later regret.

Or we don't do something, like helping a friend in need, that we know we really

wanted to. Alternatively we may have the best of intentions, but things don't go as predicted, we make a mistake or realize something we have done was harmful, even though we didn't mean it to be.

These sorts of actions can leave us feeling ashamed and depressed, and we can end up carrying our guilt for years, but if we want to live happy lives, we need to take responsibility for the consequences of our behavior and move on.

Feeling guilty shouldn't be confused with taking responsibility for our past. Responsibility means that we make a concerted effort to change the behavior pattern that resulted in the mistaken choice, and the beliefs and feelings that empowered it. We need to move on by making peace with the past.

The natural tendency when we do something without integrity is to try to justify our actions, to make ourselves right. Or we may say the action was deserved, making the other person wrong. Both of these are avoiding the reality, by denying our own sense of truth and our own responsibility for our actions. We avoid our feelings of guilt by pretending it wasn't a mistake or misconceived choice that we acted on, indeed it was "right." **We avoid our feelings of shame (feeling bad about how others perceive us) by pretending that it is the other who should be ashamed.**

The problem isn't the harmful action or making a mistake - that's happened and can't be undone. The problem is what we tell ourselves afterward. Whether we are honest or if we lie to ourselves. It is that lie which causes all the damage to our own integrity and to further relationships with the other we have wronged. We need to drop our defenses, drop the lies we may have told ourselves to hide the truth, face up to the reality of our actions and their consequences - and forgive ourselves.

There is a big bonus to being realistic and truthful - we can learn the valuable lesson that the experience offers us. Indeed, it's only when we have learned that lesson that we can let go of the past error and live our life as truly ourselves in the present. To forgive ourselves we need to learn the lesson.

Forgiveness has nothing to do with feeling sorry or apologizing, neither of which actually changes anything. From a higher perspective there is no right or wrong. There are choices and experiences. There is cause and effect. And neither can forgiveness be given by another; it has to be granted by ourselves. Unless we can truly forgive ourselves, we can never really move on and be free of the past.

What gets in the way of this forgiveness is judgment that I am a bad person. I need to separate my inherent worth from my actions. I am basically a loving being, I know that. We all are. Actually I am not even my thoughts and feelings. I create these and sometimes through ignorance or misguidedly I create them inappropriately, and my consequent actions can result in hurt for others. Then the

best I can do is to learn from that so in the future I can create more truly to my nature.

I need to realize that my choice was a result of my ignorance - I didn't know what I can now see to be the lesson from the experience. I just wanted to get to my destination quickly. I didn't think about the possible outcomes that could result from driving irresponsibly, I thought it was OK to cross a red light. So my basic motive wasn't bad, but I was operating on false information, I was misguided.

We can't move on if we regret the past, nor if we have contempt for ourselves. To feel like this implies that we view our past as meaningless and of no value, and ourselves as no longer to be trusted. On the contrary, forgiving ourselves requires finding value in our experiences and in ourselves. Instead of just writing off an experience as a painful episode and trying to forget it, we should try to learn whatever we can from it .

Life is a journey of learning and the most worthwhile learning is derived from our personal experiences. When things go as we want, because we have good information and appropriate beliefs, then our learning is reinforced by this positive feedback. When things go astray, because we have faulty information and inappropriate beliefs, then we and those at the effect of our actions suffer. But here we have a chance to learn something new. Much of our new learning and personal growth does therefore come about as a result of painful experiences; provided we are willing and open to learn those lessons.

If we wish to grow and to use our experiences beneficially, it is vital that we focus on what we can learn rather than resisting the reality of what occurred.

Find something you did (or failed to do) that you still feel bad about, that you regret, or that makes you feel ashamed. Now begin to take meaning and value out of this experience. Ask yourself: "What has this taught me about myself, about others, and about my life?" Based on this lesson, work out what beliefs you need to change, what fixed ideas you can let go of, what assumptions you made that are no longer helpful.

Self-forgiveness recaptures the energy that you were giving away in guilt and resistance against the past. It frees you to be yourself again - a new, happier and wiser you.

If we can forgive ourselves, then we can more easily forgive others. If we don't feel able to forgive others, then we clearly haven't learned to love ourselves. And the irony is, when we do truly love ourselves, we and others will not even need any forgiveness because we are able to accept the past, present, and future as it is, without judgment. Our creation. Discrimination - of good/bad, right/wrong, ugly/beautiful - is not part of the vocabulary of love.

A Beautiful Approach...

I feel a positive approach is the way to go. An approach to life empowered by the love that is the nature of our being, and is effective in creating peace and happiness. The alternative - applying resistance, judgment, antagonism and hatred - is to be ruled by fear, which is to deny one's essence, and has the effect of empowering that which one opposes.

Behind the apparent reality of war and violence, the higher reality is love and peace. The energy of love comes from all our hearts, but is misdirected if we have attention on our fears, which occurs if we resist the reality of what appears to us and our own part in creating that reality. For we do indeed create our life experience. That is a high-level spiritual viewpoint, the viewpoint of God, but if we accept that we are individual lamps of God-light, to manifest God in our lives we need to recognize our causation and incorporate that knowledge into our world view and understanding of events.

We all face the issue of how best to go about integrating a spiritual viewpoint into our daily lives. The everyday game of life appears very different from the view of the angels. Many things happen that we do not consciously initiate. We have friends and enemies, loves and hates. Some are on our side, others against us. The spiritual, bird's-eye view however - the conscious view - is that this game of our lives is something we continuously create in order to teach ourselves experiential lessons. We reflect our state of being in our surroundings so they act as a mirror. This is God experiencing His/Her creation to the full. We are also engaged in raising the vibration of Earth energies towards a higher dimension, closer to our source, the creative power behind all. We aren't just individual islands, our purpose really extends to a universal scale.

So we need to live our human lives; but instead of making the world increasingly solid (and our fears and resistances increasingly strong), we need to step back and remember that each one of us is actually creating the reality we experience through the power of our higher selves, at one with God. Then step back in and encompass all with our presence. Reality is lighter than we may think, and we can change our life experience by adjusting our viewpoints and beliefs to become closer to our true nature - which is in every case loving and non-judgmental.

The personal insights that I have discovered bear out the truth of this spiritual viewpoint, that we do indeed create our lives and situation based on our beliefs. Often it is particularly the subconscious and suppressed beliefs that determine our internal conflicts and fears, and cause us to lose sight of our essential being. There are ways and means of uncovering this stuff and of realizing our essence - that is there all along - so we can knowingly create our reality in accordance with our loving nature.

Human beings in the last 2000 years have progressed little (in terms of human nature), but times are changing. Personal growth tools help us to learn faster and more effectively from our experience and so enhance the quality of the further experiences we will create. We also aspire to discover our spiritual nature and again, we haven't made a lot of progress unaided (and religion hasn't been a great help). But that is the past and now is a new time, the right time to take advantage of the opportunities we have for positive change. **Opportunities that lie in our own hands.**

We all have a belief system full of ideas imprinted by our culture and upbringing, and as the effect of earlier traumatic experiences, and even influences we are born with. They are here with us all the time in the present and effect our view of things and our interpretation of events, so that we are not really free to be ourselves, and to know our true selves, our true goals, and our purposes in life.

As we unlayer these beliefs, we find at the bottom some beautiful truths, simple as truths always are, about our basic loving nature. That is also the nature of each of us, our spirituality. Love expressed as creative will. That love becomes distorted by our mental structures and conflicts into the range of painful emotions and self-defeating behavior that most people either experience frequently or cover up, and live within 'safe' boundaries so they aren't triggered. But really we create that experience and it mirrors what's going on inside of us. On the scale of group consciousness, this extends to world events.

With learning, obtained from consciously experiencing and being open to guidance from Spirit, one becomes more enlightened - then indeed magic can happen. With clarity, life becomes much more simple and open to your creative influence.

The "human identity" experience that we are all so familiar with is in fact a veil, a projection, not a truth in any way. It is a habit that we acquire early in childhood. Certainly one can maximize the veil and have a "good life" experience. And certainly one can decide that the veil represents a truth and deal with the resulting limitations. However, the truth is that there is no separation and you do have conscious access to how you are creating your reality in every moment. That is the whole, the "human identity" is a subset. One is only locked into that viewpoint if one chooses to be.

At the same time, I also feel that we are here to experience life at the physical level and to understand ourselves from that viewpoint too. The human experience is not something to reject or lessen, it's a great privilege. We are "the man in the heavens," there is no "up there" and "down here" - metaphysics and physics are one - we simply are all of it.

Spirit-mind-emotions-body-the world: this is a circle, a wholeness. We are all connected. Because spirit is of the nature of information, not within the

boundaries of space and time, the beliefs of a few conscious beings influence the group consciousness of Mankind - or perhaps I should say group unconsciousness, since relatively little conscious will is expressed here, but the unconscious still responds. I feel the recent war has been a wake-up call on this planet and things are changing; there could be an exponential increase in the expression of our true nature, of love, in our world. It is up to each of us to play our part.

Actually the process is simply stated: we need to look afresh, in the present moment, and clear away our false assumptions and fixed ideas by shining a light of objectivity and honesty. Our guidance in this process is love. We can all do this and the time is right.

"When we love, we are the universe and the universe lives in us."--O. Pirmez

Q: What, specifically, do I need to know about the New Earth?

A: The New Earth is the reality we create here in our lives. It's not imposed upon us, it's our creation. It will be a reflection of ourselves. Mankind is undergoing a transformation; it requires our ongoing attention and faith in the outcome.

Q: What is the single most important thing I can I do now to prepare/take part in the Spiritual Awakening?

A: We each need to play our part in creating the Spiritual Awakening - to awaken ourselves and to consciously flow unconditional love, channeled from God through our Higher Self and through our body-mind to all people and all things. To accept ourselves and others without judgment. To be our true selves, one with God, in love. Then it will happen.

In the words of Thomas, the Indigo Child:

"Choose again. Pretend that you are enlightened. Pretend that you are loved by God. Pretend that you are perfect just the way you are. Take a deep breath now and PRETEND WHAT IS TRUE. Then everything will make sense. When you pretend something that is true, then you immediately become that Truth."

Q: Can you give me a brief time line of the events leading up to the Spiritual Awakening?

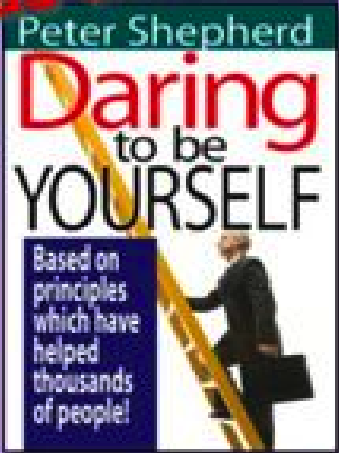
A: I want to make clear that it is in our hands rather than being the effect of energy beams from other galaxies or ancestral prophecies - not that these don't exist, but that we manifest them as well - it's our reality. So we're potentially the cause as well as the effect. And if we don't cause it, it won't happen. But we are,

and we will.

About the Author

Peter Shepherd is a transpersonal psychologist and writer who works particularly in the field of personal development and runs the website, Tools for Transformation: <http://www.trans4mind.com>

The site contains a wide range of freely available resources - including the online book *Transforming the Mind* and a thirty-lesson course *The Positive Approach* - and publishes a popular weekly ezine, *Cultivate Life*.



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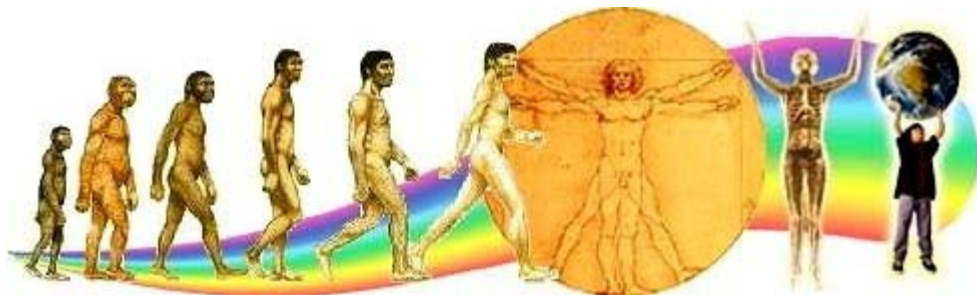
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Why Do Personal Development?

Part of the nature of humans is to be constantly developing, growing and moving toward a balanced and mature way of being. Our present personality is determined by both who and what we have been and by the person we strive to become. The goal of personal development is to learn and apply that which enables us to attain emotional wellbeing, understanding and effectiveness, and to share this knowledge with others.

Personal development is the conscious evolution of human nature, and yet throughout history it has been sorely lacking! Although it is in our nature to learn and grow, we are held back by our culture, which is predominantly focused on survival needs, each of us in competition with others, and our spiritual inner nature is repressed. The animal rules. We make no room for unconditional love.

Even though the culture may have evolved with technological advancement and administrative complexity, human nature has not moved forward as it might. We are now paying the price for human selfishness and inconsideration. Going forward, the quality of our lives on this planet - even our survival - now depends on each of us taking responsibility for our personal growth.

The human being needs to awaken to the soul that inhabits each body and is our true self and source of inner knowing. Awaken through a process of self-discovery, leading to one's own, self-directed spirituality. We need to become mindfully conscious instead of ruled by the dictates of instincts, past habits and fixed beliefs. We need to throw away dogma, open our minds and reconsider. Instead of fear about our survival and competitive angst, we will then be motivated by compassionate understanding and creative love.

For those that do move forward, the next epoch - that is almost upon us as we move into 2012 - will be a celebration of human cooperation and shared love. It's our best hope for the future - and it's in our hands.

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