



LOVE

&

REVOLUTION

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**RADICAL HONESTY
CONSCIOUS TRIBES
LOCAL COMMUNITY**

**Mark Josephs
“Mark the Mystic Activist”**

CREATIVE COMMONS

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LOVE & REVOLUTION

Radical Honesty, Conscious Tribes, Local Community

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Preface:

A Radical Proposal

I

With my mind I believe.
And I believe in my beliefs.
But more honestly, and more humbly, than my believing -
is just my sense of it all:

II

a unified, dominant, global culture -
cut loose from the natural world, floating -
dreaming of being digital, mind, abstract information -
bodiless, cosmic, computer-people-beyond-people...
As if we could dream without bodies!
As if we could be bodies without hearts!

Here we are:
floating in dreams of superhuman freedom -
living in concrete,
metal and plastic, loud sound and bright lights -
sensational, glamorous, numb.

We've been had, my friend!
On our screen we're in paradise,
but outside it's a slum!
Fancy, rich man's slum...
Filthy poor man's slum...
No birds, no fish,
no dancing naked in the rain,
no muddy toes and children laughing:
slum, slum, slum!

I will say what I see in poetry and I will say what I see in prose...
In these two hundred pages I will probably repeat myself a hundred times:
the collective consciousness, the human mind -
is being persuaded away...

I don't blame the leaders.
I don't blame the led.
We're persuading ourselves away...

Once we worshipped gods.
Then we worshipped priests and kings.
Now we worship bureaucrats.

Let me be direct:
I can't hear a word the politicians say -
their slick sincerity makes me sick!

III

So here's my proposal:
that we say "fuck that" -
and take a stand.

A stand for simplicity.
A stand for the truth beyond our truths:
that you and I, both of us, admit -
neither of us knows.

I propose a revolutionary pilgrimage
back to each other -
back to ourselves in each other.
Back to naked-in-the-rain, yes -
but deeper than that:
back to the naked heart.

I've never met an insect without a will of its own.
I've never met a tree that doesn't make decisions.

I propose a revolutionary pilgrimage back to a world
where the air not empty -
where everything speaks to everything.
A pilgrimage back to the present,
back to honesty, to not-knowing -
a united, collective pilgrimage to the joy
beyond definitions.

"Oh, so you're back-to-nature!"

"You'd return us to the middle ages!"

"You'd return us to the caves!"

No! We *are* nature!

I am talking about back-to-ourselves.

I am talking about realistic
philosophical, psychological, social and political constructs
to return us to the sky and stars
and forests and waterfalls
we are.

And just to be clear:
I am talking about something more radical than evolution,
but I am not proposing violence.
As John Lennon sang before he was shot:
“when you talk about destruction -
don’t you know that you can count me out”.

And although I am lighthearted, this is a very serious book -
proposing, I believe (presumptuous as this might sound):
a deeper approach to revolution than has ever been attempted before.

IV

So what –
less poetically –
exactly *is* this proposal then?
OK - well, in a nutshell,
the thesis of this book is this:

1. What we do depends on the quality of our consciousness.
2. The chaos and conflict being generated by the dominant, global culture is the natural consequence of its quality of consciousness.
3. To co-create new cultures we need to cultivate a new quality of consciousness.
4. This cannot be done alone, so *we need to form Conscious Tribes* - groups of people who are cultivating this new quality of consciousness together.
5. The principle that can unite these Conscious Tribes is Radical Honesty – each person’s sense that “all I ever have is my own, unique, limited, subjective experience of reality”.
6. By learning to *relate* in Radical Honesty (in the presentness and respect and intimacy of Conscious Relating) these Conscious Tribes become microcosms of the alternative cultures they seek to co-create.
7. Conscious Tribes become fully themselves when they begin to *act* – shaping the infrastructures of radically-honest, consciously-relating, nature-embedded local communities.
8. Such local communities can link interdependently to form Conscious Cultures.

V

Just as the individual psyche opens and closes,
the collective history of humanity can be seen
as a living tale of tyrannies and rebellions -
shaping itself, right now,
out of us.

So if you feel, as I do, the amoral, artificial, mechanical, global grip tightening -
I invite you to study this text closely,
and discuss it with your friends -
and act on it
while there remains room for manoeuvre!

*

.

The Stories & Poems

My intention in putting short stories and poems between the chapters is to bring beauty and subtlety and humour and happiness to the text.

It is to reveal something of the vast, dancing spacescape and timescape from which the book's narrowed and sharpened, fiercely logical, activist argument arises.

*It is to let the muse blow through us all -
because although I don't know if the ugliness and violence and pain of Dystopia can be avoided,
my heart is overwhelmed by the intuition of inescapable perfection.*

*The stories and poems are intended to remind us
that it is joy that will give us the energy we need
for our multi-generational revolutionary journey.*



Chapter 1

The Evolution Of The Family

I

By “Conscious Tribe” I mean a group of people who are responding to the current global civilisational ‘megacrisis’ (that I referred to lightly in the preface) - by co-creating a new kind of family in their local area.

By “Conscious Tribe” I mean a non-biological, extended family. Or, more accurately - because it might include biological brothers and sisters, for example, or parents and their children – by “Conscious Tribe” I mean *an extended family not limited by biological bonds*.

The Conscious Tribe I am proposing is therefore larger than the modern, biological, ‘nuclear’ family. And it has a purpose that most modern biological families don’t have: The Conscious Tribe is *committed to the path of individual consciousness, conscious relating and conscious action*.

II

What do I mean by 'the path of individual consciousness'?

In my opinion, the closer we get to our experience (which is only ever of the present moment), and which can only be felt (we cannot 'think our experience') - in other words, the more honest we are with ourselves: the more aware we become that we are within, and are part of, A Great Mystery - a mystery beyond our intellectual and even existential comprehension - a miraculous, awesome mystery of which everyone has their own, unique, limited, subjective knowledge. This “getting closer” is what I mean by 'the path of individual consciousness'... It is the path of learning to stay-with, and deepen-into, our own, unique experience of The Great Mystery we call “existence”.

By 'conscious relating' I mean the art of relating to each other in this consciousness. To feel oneself to be part of A Great Mystery is to feel oneself to be a Unique Expression of that Great Mystery. And by 'conscious relating' I mean learning to relate to each other as such: as Unique Expression of The Great Mystery to Unique Expression of The Great Mystery! In other words, conscious relating is about living the path of individual consciousness – in our relating. Which can be exquisite and ecstatic!

Finally, by 'conscious action' I mean the art of relating to our world consciously - the art of intuiting the intelligent, infinitely-complex, indefinable nature of the reality we inhabit and, therefore, acting with deep respect, appreciation and care. On a very practical level, this means aligning our daily activities with our awakening consciousness – it means learning to plant and harvest and cook, and build and make, and transport and travel, and heal and share knowledge in ways that make us less and less dependent on the alienated dominant culture, and more and more embedded in nature, and locally self-reliant.

Individual Consciousness. Conscious Relating. Conscious Action. These are the areas of focus of The Conscious Tribe. They focus on these areas acknowledging that few of us were educated to walk the path of individual consciousness, few of us are therefore well practiced in conscious relating - and many of us are so pinned down by work and rent and taxes and pets and schools and shopping it's difficult to have time for much conscious action! They are realistic. They are realistic revolutionaries! And as such, The Conscious Tribe is committed to a *shared learning path*.

Together, the members of a Conscious Tribe learn to live-inside and honour The Great Mystery - without being confined to any dogma (this is their commitment to individual consciousness). They learn to honour everyone's uniqueness (this is their commitment to conscious relating). And their direction is naturally ecological and localist - because they increasingly align their daily lives with their respect and love for the place where they live - even if a lot of it's buried under asphalt! (This is their commitment to conscious action.)

III

The Conscious Tribe is therefore: *a non-biological extended family, committed to consciousness* - and a possible evolutionary path for the family as we know it.

As I understand it - the industrial era began the disruption of the extended family. By the end of the twentieth century the production-line, nuclear family was in tatters, and individualism enthroned. And today not only unconscious, but anti-conscious technocratic and transhumanist forces seek to dismember even the concept of the individual.

I see the Conscious Tribe as a simple, profound, actionable and necessary alternative. I see a lot of beautiful personal transformational work taking place - from meditation to therapy to expressive dance to ayuhasca ceremonies. And I see people becoming equipped with beautiful new knowledge and skills - from permaculture to eco-construction to herbal healing to alternative currencies. But what will hold it all together? What holds societies together?

I believe it is families, clans, communities, tribes... Why? Because I see a culture as (1) a group of people who share an Existential Orientation - a way of seeing the world - and who (2) transmit that orientation to their children - thus perpetuating the culture. And I believe this transmission comes principally through parents and grandparents and uncles and aunts and the people closest to us as we grow up. In other words - more deeply than the way information is communicated, and values and behaviours indoctrinated, in our schools.

I believe our Existential Orientation is not predominantly transmitted consciously, or deliberately. I'm seventy years old now - and even now I sometimes catch myself smiling a certain way, and say to myself - "that's exactly the way my father used to smile!"

My sense is that children *feel* the way we enter the forest - and immediately understand how afraid, or not, to be. They *feel* how deeply we look into each other's eyes, and how deeply we let each other touch each other's skin - and immediately understand how close one is allowed to get. They *feel* how much we believe what we say we believe. They *feel* how much we love the fire, the air, the water and the earth - the plants, the insects and the thunder...

Deeper than words - they receive an energetic transmission from the family or tribe as a whole – one that lets them know which emotions and attitudes are acceptable, and to what depth; what is noble and respectable; where tenderness is due – and what is reprehensible, what is repugnant, and what should be rejected. This, I believe, is how entire civilisations are perpetuated from generation to generation!

You can't fool the kids! They'll adapt - they'll contort themselves around our contortions – but if we want to co-create new, honest, open, loving communities and cultures, then I feel we need to *live* in honesty, openness and love. We need to learn to live in an energy field of honesty, openness and love - so that our children (and we ourselves) can imbibe that field. This means becoming self-educating, mutually-supporting, extended families - what I call Conscious Tribes.

I learnt to smile from my father, somehow, without ever thinking about it, without ever intending to learn to smile like that – without ever sitting in front of a mirror and practicing that smile! I also imbibed his sense of humour, and his common sense, and his generosity - and his inhibitions and frustrations and compensations and fears!

I believe our children imbibe what we are, not what we say we are - so in my opinion, our wholehearted, sincere commitment to the path of individual consciousness and conscious relating and conscious action is not only our deepest service to ourselves – it is also the deepest service we can offer to the generations to come.

I believe that our unified commitment to the *non-biological, consciousness-committed extended family* - the Conscious Tribe – can be the “social glue” we need in order to shape the alternative cultures we seek to co-create.



CONSCIOUS TRIBES

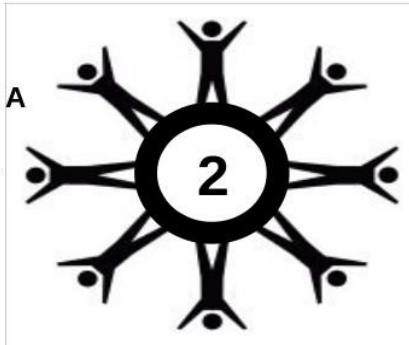
Seeds of Conscious Cultures

WE TRAVEL IN
THE DIRECTION
OF LOCALISATION

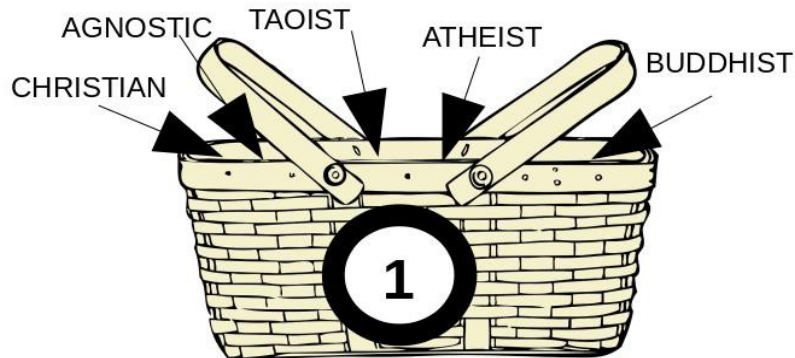


AND A MORE
NATURAL
WAY OF LIFE

WE BECOME A
NON-
BIOLOGICAL
EXTENDED
FAMILY



Traveling
together on a
profoundly
intimate
shared journey
of learning
to relate
from our own
unique
experience



EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN, UNIQUE,
SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE
OF THE INDEFINABLE MOMENT.

Silent Kiss

I

*My very close friend got a lot done.
A lot!
But she was cracking up -
and she knew it!
She told me she needed to get away.
I lived in the countryside,
so, of course, I invited her to stay.*

*She left the world of machines
and non-stop doing, doing, doing -
to do nothing,
resolutely,
for a while.*

*She set up an automated reply on her laptop and phone:
"Had to stop.
Will listen/read messages when I start again.
Can't say when."
And she came and sat in my garden
and watched trees all day,
in a daze.*

II

*"It took me a month to unwind -
to unfurl" she said, years later.*

*"It took a month for my nerves to trust
the silence wouldn't be broken,
suddenly
roughly."*

Her world got softer and softer.

*Another month passed.
Another month of dawns and days,
and dusks and nights.*

*The quiet nights of darkness and stars -
and quiet nights of full moons and bright dreams -
blew their quietness, softly, into her days.*

III

*Every morning she'd get up at dawn,
and go for a walk.
And walk slower and slower and slower.*

*Until on one such dawn walk
my friend walked into indefinability.*

*When I met her she was sitting on a rock
beside a path.
She invited me to sit beside her.*

*"I feel like a sprouting seed" she said.
"If sprouts had eyes they'd look around like this" she said, laughing...
And she opened her eyes wide -
like a baby or a buddha -
and I noticed
the beauty she was seeing
was making her cry,
softly.*

*She pursed her lips
and kissed the air.
"The silence has lips" she said,
"I'm kissing the lips of the silence!"*



Chapter 2

Conscious Tribes, Energy Fields

Conscious Tribes are groups of 10, 20, 30 people - united existentially, psycho-emotionally, and creatively - in their action, in the co-creation of conscious local cultures.

MADE OF US

My impression is that many of us share the vision of decentralised, conscious, community-based cultures embedded in nature. But how to make them real? Or another way to put this question might be "how do we weave ourselves together? How do we weave new social fabrics?"

The Conscious Tribes proposal is to form small, local tribes aligned with the cultures we wish to co-create. And not just aligned at the practical, physical, creative level of permaculture, eco-construction, local food production, alternative economics, and so on. Above all, as I have said, I believe we need to study the subtle yet simple art of becoming “non-biological extended families” - of learning to love each other and be-loved-by each other “universally” (more about this term later). I believe we need to learn to travel through The Great Mystery in deep intimacy with each other, while we’re in the process of co-creating our new cultures. Why?

Because traveling in this way, our hearts stay open and strong. And I believe that’s the vision we share: the vision of strong and open-hearted cultures. And because traveling in this way, we all become more authentically ourselves. And because traveling in this way, we come to know our oneness. And because whatever cultures we now co-create Will Be Made Of Us.

So forming a Conscious Tribe isn’t like setting up a club, or forming an association. It’s about embarking upon a profound and intimate journey with others - the journey, or adventure, of the heart. Conscious Tribes are places of activism - of participation in the practical, real, physical co-creation of alternative cultures. Yes. But above all, they are places of homecoming for the heart and soul - places that support us in living our everyday lives in consciousness, humility, intensity, and love. Because then, as Gandhi said, We Are The Change.

FOUR LEVELS

I have said Conscious Tribes have three areas of concern: the areas of (1) individual consciousness, (2) conscious relating, and (3) conscious action. We could also call these areas three ‘levels’: (1) the spiritual or existential or energetic level of self-knowing, and remembering our interconnectedness and belonging; (2) the psycho-emotional level of opening our hearts through the “interferences” of our individual and collective conditionings; and (3) the material or physical level of re-discovering our bodies’ actual relationship with the natural world, and learning to act accordingly.

(We could also say the Conscious Tribe is active on a fourth level - the mental or intellectual level of our understandings and beliefs – a level that impacts all of its areas of concern.)

I will be making specific recommendations to help Conscious Tribes come together, and get started in all of these areas/levels. I will be recommending (1) ways in which they can not only understand we all are part-of The Great Mystery - but precise ways to feel that, more and more deeply, (2) specific ways to practice seeing each other, and communicating, in presentness and intimacy, and (3)

detailed suggestions for making all of this a physical reality – so that each Conscious Tribe can be part of the co-creation of its own, local, nature-embedded, community culture.

(And regarding the fourth level, the level of our ideas and understandings – I will also be offering a lot of concepts to support Conscious Tribes in remaining deeply united.)

ENERGY FIELDS

Since Conscious Tribes are engaged with all of these areas/levels of our experience, you could say they embody a holistic or integral approach to community co-creation. And I'd agree. But that way of putting it sounds a bit dull to me! I see them as so much more than that...

Because they are set up to attend lovingly to the existential, mental, emotional and physical levels of our being, they offer us the opportunity of bringing our consciousness, minds, hearts and bodies into alignment. Conscious Tribes offer everyone the possibility of a journey of individual self-knowledge. I see them as places of personal transformation.

And I see them as more than that too! Because, as each individual transforms, so does the energy field of the tribe - which then becomes more and more palpable, and powerfully supportive of everyone.

And I see them as more than that too!! The energy field of the Conscious Tribe also, I believe, inevitably radiates out beyond the tribe - and carries healing into the turmoil of the world - contributing to our collective evolution. I see the energy field of the Conscious Tribe as radiating out spacially (touching those around them), and also (as I described in the last chapter) as radiating temporally (touching the generation to come). This is why I often refer to Conscious Tribes as "seeds" of conscious cultures to come.

And...

You can form one if you want!

You can take these words off the page, and give them shape in your local area!

You can start talking with your friends about forming your own, local Conscious Tribe!

There's no need for any authorisation or permission!

There's no Conscious Tribes Headquarters where you have to file your application – and provide the documentation that proves your worthiness!

You can just do it!

Extra support's available, if you want it (all the information's in the last chapter).

And perhaps read some more chapters - and then see what you feel!

But as soon as you feel ready... well:

my only intention and aim and prayer and dream in writing this book

is to share a clear-enough vision and offer solid-enough resources

so that people will feel inspired and equipped to start their own Conscious Tribes.



Two Orcs in a Pub, A Poem of Love

I

*I was watching The Lord of the Rings.
It was a scene with Orcs.
I was looking at one, and thinking
“how disappointed he must be feeling -
after four years at drama school -
to be dressed and made-up
as an Orc,
and told to run and grunt.
Well, I hope, at least, he’s well paid!”*

*Little did I know
that very night I would meet
that very actor
at the pub,
and recount to him my thoughts -
to which he would reply...*

*“It was while dressed and made-up
as an Orc
that I looked around
at the other Orcs
and saw,
for the first time,
the shared existential situation of all creatures -
and was invaded and overcome
by a Universal Love!
A Love that has since then
never let me go!”*

II

*It was at this point that
two Orcs entered the pub,
hideously.
“Two beers!” one of them grunted at the bartender,
who was trembling.
“John! Mary! Over here!” my new actor-friend called out
to the Orcs.
The crowd parted nervously
as the two huge, repulsive Orcs paced decisively
towards our table.*

*Seeing, I assume, my confusion, one explained
“Our eyes met
on the set
of The Lord of the Rings,
while dressed and made-up
as Orcs.
This is how we celebrate the anniversary
of that moment!”*

*And oblivious to the unromantic crowd -
their sickening bodies turned towards each other,
and their eyes met,
once again -
and from their eyes a blinding love
shot out -
as bright as the flames of the Fires of Doom -
and lit the whole pub!
One Love to bind us all!*

Chapter 3

One Realisation To Bond Us All

LIVE IN LOVE?! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?!

Is it possible to transform the dominant global culture – to replace its view of us as amoral bio-mechanisms - existing meaninglessly in a meaningless universe - with a view of ourselves as creatures of flesh and love - thinking expressions of a thinking universe? The truth is - I don't know!

Is it possible to snap the dominant culture out of its trance of superficiality? Is it possible to expose its dream of a cybernetic humanity as a nightmare? I don't know! But, as I have been saying, I believe that if we are going to *try*, if we are going to try to “seed” alternative cultures then the *quality* – the quality of consciousness – of those seeds (Tribes) is all important.

And for the quality of those Tribes to be truly, qualitatively transformational, we have to learn to live as siblings - we have to open to each other with the same unconditional embrace that many of us offer to our biological siblings - even though they might be very different from us.

And I believe this requires a great opening because most of have been conditioned into a very constricted way of being. We don't consider it 'normal' to love everyone. It's perhaps OK for a (so called) music “star” to call out “I love you all!” at the end of a concert. But to love everyone in the supermarket, or on the train – now *that* would be odd!

If we take it further, and imagine a politician suggesting a programme of emotional education to enable people to Live in Love – we can imagine the public astonishment. “Is that politician on drugs?” “Has that politician gone mad?”

But in my opinion, to love everyone: to look gently and empathically towards everyone, to appreciate their uniqueness, and only want for them that they find their freedom and fulfillment – is 'normal' and natural. See how children and animals love indiscriminately!

But how can I look kindly upon others, if I don't look kindly upon myself – and let others look kindly upon me? How can I appreciate others' uniqueness, if I don't stand boldly and humbly in my own? How can I want that others find freedom and joy, if I am afraid of my own?

As I see it – the opening of the heart towards the world begins with the opening of the heart towards oneself. “Towards oneself”? The very phrase suggests the presence of two: of one-who-loves, and one-who-is-loved... It suggests that I can look upon myself – with this particular body, character, history, and cultural conditioning – and criticise or admire what I see.

Is that how it is? There's one way to find out: by looking! By “looking upon” myself. This vantage point has been given many names: consciousness, essence, soul, centre, self. This looking is the first, crucial step in understanding the Conscious Tribes Vision – because it leads to the realisation that sits at the heart of the whole Conscious Tribes Vision for personal and collective transformation. And that realisation is this:

That when I look upon myself in utter, naked honesty – when I really face the mirror - when I really face my self-judgements and lack of self-love, and how ungenerous I am with my empathy, and how “normal” I have become – when I really face the flimsiness of my dearest beliefs – when I

really face the fact that nobody else is responsible for how I feel, or the choices I make – when I really face the earth and the sky and time, my aloneness, and how little I face myself – I see that: ***I only have my own unique experience of any moment.*** All realities might be interconnected - but I am in my own! I call this realisation “Radical Honesty”.

ONE REALISATION TO BOND US ALL

In Radical Honesty I see that (even if I feel inseparably part of everything) I am perceiving through ***my*** senses, evaluating with ***my*** mind, feeling with ***my*** heart – and I see everyone around me (even if I feel We Are One) as experiencing the same moment differently – through ***their*** senses, mind and heart. I realise that my experience is unique – that nobody else, anywhere, is having exactly the same experience as me.

This might not be true for you. This might not be a realisation that makes sense to you. And that, of course, is fine. But let me say now that this realisation is at the heart of the whole Conscious Tribes proposal. In other words, Conscious Tribes are not just empty baskets into which everyone can bring their faith, or lack of faith (like in the image at the end of chapter one). Yes, in that image it indicates that any and every belief system can fit into the Conscious Tribes approach (and it can) – but underneath the image are the words “everyone has their unique, subjective experience of the indefinable moment”. One realisation to bond us all!

In other words... someone might come to the Conscious Tribe as, let’s say, a Taoist (believing Taoism to be the most subtle, simple and beautiful of all paths), and someone else might come as an Atheist (believing Atheism to be the most honest, noble and courageous of all paths). But both come (and everyone else comes) having realised, individually, for themselves, that ***I only have my own unique experience of any moment.***

This is not a philosophical statement. It is not “nobody has anything other than their own experience”. It is not a statement about other people, or about what is and isn’t possible. It is a purely personal realisation. It is a statement about what one feels to be true - about oneself.

And The Conscious Tribes invitation, or proposition, is that this realisation (1) will hold them together as a Tribe, (2) take them into deeper and deeper intimacy as they explore it together, and practice relating from it, and (3) temper and mature the ways in which they hold their beliefs.

And also that, from this one realisation, a whole series of other realisations will follow... We begin to feel a deep equality with everyone. Seeing others as inside ***their*** unique story, we sense our sameness in two ways: that “we are one” in the sense that our Essences are One – that One Consciousness is Manifesting as Many - and secondly, in the sense that we are all in the same existential situation. We are all experiencing subjectively – through our limited, conditioned bodies, hearts and minds.

We begin to feel that ***of course*** we are all siblings - biological and non-biological siblings. We feel our own present moment. We feel the Mystery of Our Own Moment. And we feel the perhaps-infinite Mystery of which we are part. We feel We Belong. We feel that ***of course*** One Realisation bonds us all! We feel we are part of The Family of All Life! And we begin to become less “normal”: we begin to feel a non-sentimental, non-romantic Universal Love for everyone, for all other creatures, and for Existence Itself.

At the same time, as we settle more and more deeply into being-with our experience (rather than being swept away by it) – a whole parade of “interferences” comes to our attention. We see how our judgements, angers, fears and shames create “interferences” that make it difficult, sometimes even

impossible, for us to stay-with our actual experience. And there is the challenge! There is the Path of The Conscious Tribe!

When we first realise that we only ever experience our own experience, because we're being honest with ourselves, we also realise that most of the time we don't "experience our experience". We realise we don't feel our belonging to the Great Mystery... while driving the car, or in the office, or at the factory, or at home, or on the street... We realise that we live, generally speaking, listening to the soundtrack of the mind - in for the most part, a quite numb, mundane state. And so, again: there is the challenge! There is the Path of The Conscious Tribe!

ONE PRACTICE TO BOND US ALL

So The Conscious Tribe proposal is not a vague, relativistic (anything goes), new-agey mishmash of angels and candles, with a touch of therapy - and a sprinkling of eco-self-sufficiency! It is a specific path, rooted in a specific realisation – even if, in my opinion, it is a universal realisation requiring only honesty.

The members of a Conscious Tribe are bonded in their realisation that they each only have their own experience of any given moment. They are therefore bonded in humility, in equality, and in mutual respect. They are not focussed on judging or analysing or therapising each other. They are focussed on themselves – together. They are bonded on the Path of Radical Honesty.

And as I have been saying, consciousness brings unconsciousness to light. The commitment to presence reveals our absence. The realisation of our equality exposes our feelings of superiority and inferiority. The aliveness and joy we share as a Tribe highlights the cut-offness and dullness with which we go through our days...

So how to keep the Tribe on the Path? And how to keep deepening and opening? Whatsmore, when we come together to become a Conscious Tribe each person brings knowledge, skills, resources, ideas, preferences, prejudices, resistances, ego, needs they're aware of, needs they're not aware of, and so on – which can result in people pulling in different directions...

In this book I'm going to be making recommendations to help Conscious Tribes come together and bond, and begin travelling together. But I want to be absolutely clear that I am only offering these recommendations as starting points.

Above all, I am going to be recommending that the Tribe engage with the silent-and-talking meditative-practice of Conscious Relating. The Practice of Conscious Relating begins by bringing each person's attention to their own, unique experience - and to an awareness of themselves as being both an individual and part-of-everything. The Practice then becomes a "meditation for two" - and then a meditation for the whole Tribe. We learn to meet, and be open to each other, while staying-in our own, unique experience.

I feel it is an exquisite Practice - involving not only silence, but also conversation. And I believe it is an absolutely excellent way of evolving the Conscious Tribe - because it's a relational meditation. It's not like Buddhist meditation, for example (which I don't mean to put down in any way) - which is individual. (Buddhism itself is not, ultimately, an individualistic tradition, of course, because it returns us to our Oneness.) But it suggests an individualistic way of meditating. You sit in meditation alone. Whereas Conscious Relating is about meditating in openness to each other - and learning to relate to each other in that openness - from Essence to Essence, through our personalities...

The Practice of Conscious Relating is designed to help us *live in* a connected consciousness – not

just to feel connected when we meditate, but to be able to hold conversations, and engage in practical tasks – and stay in that state of connection. After all, we’re talking about Conscious Tribes being microcosms of the Conscious Cultures we want to co-create!

I have developed and refined The Practice of Conscious Relating over many years, and I imagine you’ll agree it is an extremely appropriate, relevant Practice for a Conscious Tribe. But I offer even this Practice as a starting point – as a way of *experiencing* what it’s like to meet and relate from within our own experience – as a way of *tasting* that present and intimate energy field, immediately, together.

Then, after a while, if you want, you can adjust the Practice in ways you feel better meet your needs. I call this approach Flexible Form (and talk about it at the end of the chapter “Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations”) - neither adhering rigidly to a pre-established form, nor flitting from one form to another, and deepening into none.

I feel it is important to appreciate this approach from the beginning. Not “we are doing The Practice of Conscious Relating because it is *the* way to evolve a Conscious Tribe”, but “we are doing The Practice of Conscious Relating, and feeling how it feels...” If we just repeat an established format we put ourselves in the position of “followers”, which is not a very empowered position! Not only that, but the format can quickly lose its life, and become formulaic. Whereas if we’re trying out a Practice, and evaluating it for ourselves, we are in an empowered position, with freedom of choice – and it stays alive.

I will be making other recommendations too. But if there is “one realisation to bond us all” - the realisation that “all I ever experience is my own, limited, subjective, unique experience” - then (at least at the beginning, while the Conscious Tribe is forming and finding its way) I’d say there is “one Practice to bond us all” - The Practice of Conscious Relating – a Practice we repeat again and again (because we’re practicing!) - in order to gradually become more powerful in our commitment to “experiencing our experience” than the many-and-powerful forces that are continuously pulling at us (from within and without) inviting us back into unconscious disconnection.

The Practice of Conscious Relating opens us to the Wonder of the Moment, and to Universal Love. And it is an experience we can "duplicate" - with anyone who’s willing! So you might not have formed your ConsciousTribe yet - but you can already practice it with friends, with your biological family, and with people who live locally – and, who knows – maybe your Conscious Tribe will form itself around you!

*

The Revelatory Tale of Bob the Squirrel Messiah, and Young Cyril's Rebellion

I

*Yes, Bob was stoned when he had his vision of The Great Squirrel God,
and yes, he'd always hoarded nuts and slept in his basement -
but when, after an entire winter's hibernation there, Bob called a press conference
in which he leapt, death-defyingly, from branch to branch
on the old oak tree in his front garden -
declaring The Squirrel God had assured him he would not fall -
and he didn't -
millions believed him -
and Squirrelism was born.
And Bob became its Messiah.*

*Dressed in Squirrel jumpsuits with whiskers painted on their cheeks
Messiah Bob's followers would scramble up and down oak trees in public parks on Sundays
as a form of worship of their newfound, adorable, bushy tailed divinity.
And with the understandable over-excitement of the born-again,
they would throw acorns, playfully, at passers by.*

*"Humanity is an evolutionary stage on the way to Squirreldom",
Bob would preach gloriously
to his ever-swelling congregation of followers -
in defiance of all religious and scientific thought.*

*Giant Squirrels on street corners would hop about and hand out pamphlets
with diagrams explaining the evolution of monkey DNA to human DNA to squirrel DNA.
"How arrogant has humanity been to consider itself the apex of evolution!"
Messiah Bob, First Among Squirrels, would chuckle compassionately,
overflowing with the channelled wisdom of The Great Squirrel God.*

*Christians and Muslims devoted to a White Bearded God,
Hindus devoted to Gods with Lots of Arms,
and Scientists and Atheists devoted to Cosmic Meaninglessness
would mutter mockingly as they walked past the Giant Squirrels on street corners...
"People will believe anything! It's amazing. It's astonishing – this new sect.
It's unbelievable how stupid people can be!" they would whisper ever-so-quietly -
concerned, perhaps, that the Squirrels might set upon them with their fake claws.*

*But the Squirrels,
endowed, almost mystically, with new auditory capacities,
would hear every word of this vicious critique, and reply, squeakily:
"What makes you less of a sect than us?
All religions are sects,
even science is a sect...
You all believe things you have heard,*

*things you have been told,
and repeat them as if you know them to be The Truth
above all other truths,
when it's obvious that if you'd been born in another time and place
you'd be repeating Other Truths."*

*They could certainly debate, those Squirrels!
"You underestimate the intelligence of other species!" the astute and articulate Squirrels
would shout at the members of the other sects
as they hurried off,
clearly out-argued.*

II

*But not all was well in the forests and city parks where the Squirrels gathered before
enormous screens to watch videos of Messiah Bob's teachings on evolutionary development.
There were women who were hesitant to give birth in nests in trees.
"Perhaps we are not sufficiently evolved" they would wonder -
courageously questioning the message of the Messiah.
There had been numerous accidents while practicing branch acrobatics.
"Is it truly Thy Will, Great Squirrel God" they would enquire in crutches and casts,
"that we will continue to take leaps of faith?"
And, perhaps of most concern, were the number of hypothermic deaths during hibernation.*

*In fact, unbeknown to Bob and his inner circle of Most Devoted Squirrels,
a Squirrelist Revolution, or at the very least Reformation, was well underway.
Rebel Squirrels would fake-hibernate -
and when everyone else was asleep -
hold clandestine meetings and share heresies.*

*"It's true that others are as sectarian as us,
but that doesn't make us any less of a sect!" some Squirrels would dare declare.
"We are not stupid, well maybe a bit -
but above all, we just feel lonely and afraid.
Is that not why we dress up in these jumpsuits,
and bow before The Great Squirrel God?
Is that not why we repeat Messiah Bob's doctrine of genetic evolution so fervently?
Do we not crave the security of certainty -
and the sense of belonging we feel when we nibble nuts together?"*

*One brave young Squirrel named Cyril,
a Squirrel who felt a special affinity with the giant red and white flying Chinese Squirrel,
began to scratch such faithless doubts into the shells of acorns -
in the tradition of Chinese Rice sculpting...
And so the revolution spread.*

*Meticulously engraved microscopic texts such as
"Our existential insecurity and sense of separation
create an inner state of disempowerment,
making us easy to control, manipulate and exploit"*

circulated surreptitiously among Squirrels at their holy suppers.

*Yet this brave, young, heretical, acorn-sculpting Squirrel
had doubts of his own.*

*One fine morning, alone in his secret sculpting studio,
he fell to his knees in his Squirrel jumpsuit,
pressed together the palms of his little Squirrel hands,
entwining his cute little fake Squirrel claws,
and began to pray...*

*“Oh Great Squirrel God,
I feel these engravings are true -
yet they do nothing to remove our loneliness or fear.
My best friend has quit the Squirrels,
and become a football fanatic!
Another has become a politician!
What to do?!”*

It's obvious they're still compensating for their loneliness and fear!”

III

*All of sudden -
light poured in through the window of Cyril's secret studio,
and within the dust that floated in the sunlight
young Cyril saw the unmistakable form of a Giant Flying Chinese Squirrel!
“Are you The Great Squirrel God?” the young devotee enquired humbly of the moving dust.
“I am its cousin” replied the dust, with a slightly Chinese accent.
“I was once a Squirrelist, like you” it seemed to say to Cyril,
“but I stopped believing - in anything.
I stopped believing in believing!”*

*Cyril was in a ecstasy.
With every word the dust spoke
the form of the Giant Flying Chinese Squirrel Disbeliever became more tangible.
And the light just got brighter and brighter.*

*“Then what happened” Cyril gasped, in disbelief.
“Then I felt lonely and afraid” the Flying Chinese Squirrel Dust confessed.
“Oh!” said Cyril, disappointedly, yet surrounded now, it seemed to him,
by not just light, but love.
“But I felt my loneliness and fear, young Tree Hopper -
I felt it, and I felt it, and I felt it -
until I felt myself falling, as if from the highest of oaks -
falling with no branches in sight!”
“Oh!” repeated Cyril, hoping still, for some resolution to this sad tale of letting go...
“Did you hit the ground?” he asked the now fully-tangible, radiant,
giant flying Chinese Squirrel
squatting on its back legs, there in his secret studio, in front of him.*

*“No” it said, smiling inscrutably, like a Taoist Squirrel Master,
“the further I felt, the less I found.
I couldn't find my loneliness.*

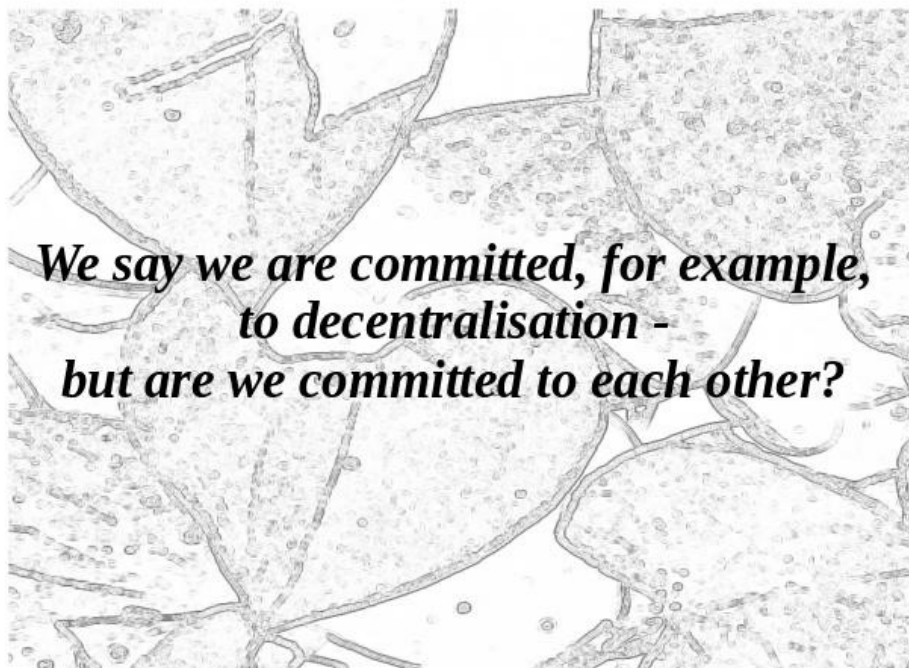
*I couldn't find my fear.
I couldn't find them anywhere!
So I was no longer lonely or afraid.
And I lost the need to believe!"*

*Despite the venerable, disbelieving Taoist Giant Dust Squirrel Apparition's
thick Chinese accent,
its words penetrated every cell of Cyril -
and Cyril was filled with love and light.*

*Somehow,
inexplicably,
Cyril now knew
that loneliness and fear were illusions.*

*His Squirrel jumpsuit fell from his shoulders,
his fake claws fell from his fingertips,
his painted whiskers faded from his cheeks, miraculously -
and as the afternoon passed,
and dusk arrived,
and the sunlight ceased to shine in through his window,
and the dust ceased to dance,
and the answer to his prayer became, once again, invisible -
Cyril felt not only unafraid, but deeply happy
to not be a Squirrel anymore.
He felt unafraid and deeply happy
to not know
what he was.*





***We say we are committed, for example,
to decentralisation -
but are we committed to each other?***

Chapter 4

The Shared Path of The Conscious Tribe

The members of a Conscious Tribe walk a path – together:
a path of presence, intimacy and freedom.

What do they mean by “a path of presence”?

They share an intuition, a recognition:
that the only thing each person has is
their own, unique direct-experience of the present moment.

But they also admit that they don't tend to live that recognition,
that they tend to live “out of themselves” -
not experiencing their direct-experience!

So they are committed to learning to live their recognition, individually –
and to supporting each other in living their recognition.

As they learn, together, to live “inside” their direct-experience
they come face-to-face with the ways in which they are resisting life –
their self-deprecation, their fear, their shame...

And they learn, together, to gently, non-judgementally,
let go of their resistances –
and thus directly-experience the beauty of indefinability -
The Great Mystery unresisted –
and they remember the mystery of their belonging.

*

The path the members of a Conscious Tribe share is a path of presence –
but it is also a path of intimacy.

What do they mean by “a path of intimacy”?

As they learn to stay “inside” their own direct-experience,
and their belonging,
through their daily lives (not just when they're meditating!) -
they discover that everyone else
is also within their unique experience -
whether consciously or not -
and they come to see everyone as
a unique face, a unique expression, of The Great Mystery.

As they become disidentified from their resistance to the indefinable moment –
and self-forgiving, and self-loving -
they see gently beyond the often unkind ways in which they behave
when they are “out of themselves” -
and they remember the pleasure and happiness

of living “in-themselves”, in their essence.

From their own essence
they naturally see and love everyone else’s essence -
and learn to relate from essence to essence
(whether others are in or out of themselves).

And then...
intuiting that ‘essence’ is the same in us all –
when essence that sees
meets essence that sees -
it meets itself.
And the nature of that meeting is love.
Not romantic love.
Not even the love we might feel for our families or friends,
but the most exquisite universal love.

*

The shared path of the members of a Conscious Tribe is a path of presence
(that returns them to the indefinable beauty of their belonging within The Great Mystery),
and it is also a path of intimacy
(that returns us them to each other, to their oneness, and to universal love) –
but it is also a path of freedom.
What do they mean by “a path of freedom”?

As the members of a Conscious Tribe learn to live in presence and intimacy,
they come to know a freedom that is deeper
than any social or political or economic freedom.
They know they are part of life -
and that life itself is free.

They no longer feel limited by the conventions or expectations of their societies.
They become capable of living a more expansive existence.
They become courageous.

The members of a Conscious Tribe support each other in making
minor and major practical decisions
to align their lives with this feeling of freedom.

This process of alignment -
of aligning the practicalities of their everyday lives
with the presence, intimacy and freedom they feel –
is their contribution
to the co-creation of new, conscious cultures.

*

The Keepers of The Secret

*Outside the city -
where the secret hides,
waiting -
night arrives slowly.*

*And now -
the moon!*

*Hush!
It's time to sleep -
under a rock, upon a branch,
on a wooden bed
by an open window.*

*The God and The Goddess embrace
and exhale
into the moonlight
softly, softly, now...
the animals and birds and insects
smile
in their sleep.*





You can stay in touch with the Conscious Tribes Project
by subscribing to the website, here:
www.tribusconscientes.com/blog

You can contact me, Mark, via the website, here:
www.tribusconscientes.com/contact
Or by email:
conscious_tribes@tutanota.com

You can also stay in touch by joining the Conscious Tribes Telegram Channel:
t.me/conscioustribes

The website is in both English and Spanish.
Please send emails in Spanish to
tribusconscientes@protonmail.com

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