

What does it mean to think with a Global Perspective?

Think of three movies running in your brain right now. The first movie is a personal one-me. What is going on right now to or for me? The second movie focuses on our proximate situation-my family, friends, colleagues and other valuable relationships. What is happening to any of them that I can affect? The third movie is about the whole Earth. The headlines I read on my tablet, television or phone. More bad news? Or is it good that tragedy is news and not the reverse? What emotions well up as I ponder my role and capacity to address an issue 7 billion people face?

Three movies demand our attention-all at once. Our brain is underutilized anyway. Let's give this a shot.

Global perspectives combines all three movies. It sees an overriding image-that of Earth from beyond the atmosphere. Only recently, in an historic sense, was this movie showing at a brain near you.

Let me share five "writers and actors" of a global perspectives "movie"

1. Interdependence-the acknowledgement that people in all areas need each other to thrive. No group or nation stands apart and is able to provide for its needs alone. While the sovereign nation is a legal reality, the actual interaction today between nations, NGOs, businesses, immigrants, tourists, and "terrorists" shows that independence is slowly fading. We certainly are not equally interdependent, but all of us are in the same boat-sink or swim together.
2. Conflict Management-Conflict is universal. It can be healthy or toxic. At its most lethal level, failure to manage our fears from becoming hatreds can now achieve the destruction of life on this planet. This reality is only 70 years old. This is the third movie. What about the first two movies? Am I managing my internal conflicts? Do I fight or flee when I face a conflict with another person? Do I fight "fair"? The ability to use our language, to tell our story after we listen to the other person is uniquely human. No conflict is unbridgeable. Whether the issue is your neighbor's loud party, a debate over a city's ordinance on parking, a state's decision on electronic surveillance of traffic or the current negotiations with Iran, the same principles apply. Can we imagine how this conflict feels to them? Are we listening to their words and watching their body language? The conflict likely evolved over time after a "flashpoint" moment. Are we willing to invest energy over time to defuse the anger or frustration we are experiencing? It's time to turn down the lights and watch the movie "Will this conflict end with pain or be a pane in the window of my life?"
3. Sustainability of the Earth -Earth Day first occurred in the spring of 1970. The "big blue marble" looked so beautiful from beyond the atmosphere. Yet up close trouble was brewing. Rachel Carson was warning us in Silent Spring the natural order was deteriorating due to human intervention. Today signs are flashing again. Seven billion people today-10 billion not far away in the world grandparents say "we want the world to be better for our grandchildren". To protect our environment is a conservative notion-a notion that for 10,000 years the balance of nature in the death and rebirth of its living species was in rhythm. Since the Industrial era in Europe, the US and now all over the world, human activity has changed, even disrupted, that rhythm. Given the scientific facts gleaned in from credible organizations, the debate over climate change's

presence is over. In addition, 99% of the scientific community also agrees human activity is an instrumental reason for the deterioration of the climate- the air, the water, the soil. The radical notion is that we have the luxury to further despoil these resources for short term gain, for profit. What about those grandchildren?

4. Human Dignity and Rights-all humans are better than the worst thing they have ever done. The dignity of each person is a natural right. History teaches us that the evolution of this notion is a recent phenomenon. Servitude, slavery, dehumanization and genocide are the cruel features of the kingdom, the empire, and the modern nation state. We remember the pharaoh, the tribal barbarian, the sultan, the emperor, the king, the military ruler, the doge, the dictator as agents of this "official" agent of the imposition of pain and suffering to the masses of people they "ruled over, reigned" with the authority of better weapons, "divine rule" and just plain fear. Today we face these same threats to the dignity of many without the means to defend or protect themselves. We operate with the universal declaration of human rights developed by the United Nations. At one level, it deters some of the abhorrent behaviors carried out by other humans for a variety of nefarious reasons. It is at that third movie-the global one. What about at the personal and community level? Do I concern myself with issues in which human dignity is on the line? Do I need to know them personally or individually in order to act? Do I speak up using my best voice? What would happen if I were the recipient of language or behavior which humiliated me? Who would speak up for me?

5. Alternative Futures- We get to choose. Our destiny is in our hands. Not everything gets to choose at the same level of magnitude. At the personal movie, we might call it self-improvement, hitting bottom or seeing a way out. At the second movie, it is the collective action of a group, organization to reframe what they stand for, who to include, what to accomplish. It is the empowerment to choose a pathway to a better future. In the third movie, it is the choice to live with the images of our past, the fear of risking a new way, or deciding that it is prudent to hold what we believe in our hands and really examine. To ask the question, "Why is this what I believe? Where did it come from? Is it still "true"? The word "choice" is active, not passive. We choose when we decide between available options, when we vote, when we talk and listen to others, when we model what we believe. Listen to a 20th century who led India from colonial control to independence without firing a shot at the British who withdrew voluntarily. The Great Soul, Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you seek in the world"

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