



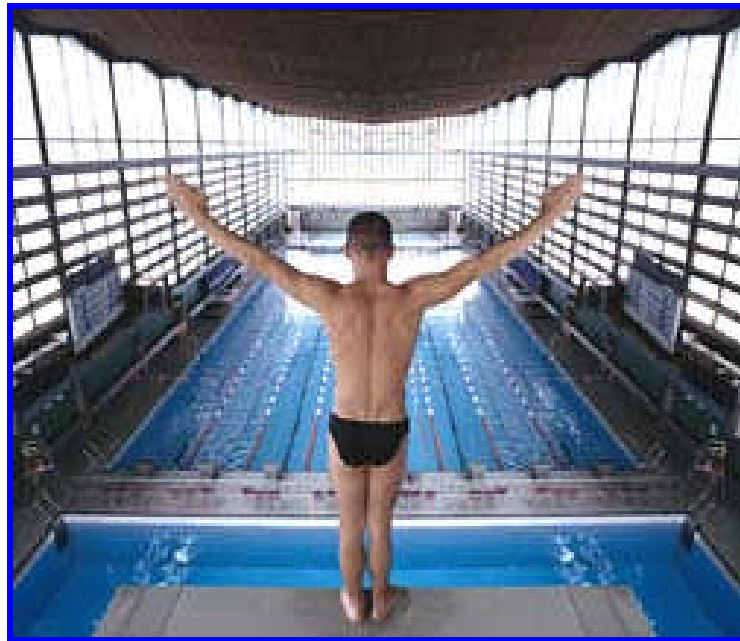
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SYNERGISTIC EMERGENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

PNE Inspirations

Spring/Summer 2007

Standing at the Edge of Reason: “GETTING REAL”



Our spotlight this issue shines on getting real.

John Lennon sang to his son, in the song, *Beautiful Boy*, “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.”

I agree with John. We spend much of our time and energy, in short, our life, making and acting out our plans until something happens that brings us to the edge of reason.

Usually it's a defining moment that is screaming for us to pay attention and finally get real about life.

Getting real moments happen when your aliveness (or someone's you love) is at stake and you start asking the real questions, e.g., *what is really important, what do you really want to do with your time, who do you need to forgive and who have you not expressed your love to?*

We do everything to avoid standing at the edge. In the Indian epic *Mahabharata*, a great sage once was asked: 'Sir, of all of the things you've observed in life, what is the most amazing?' And he responds: 'That a man seeing all around him die, never thinks that he will die.' Even when people find out they're going to die, you hear about the classic stages of denial, bargaining, etc.

“There's no easy way out. If there were, I would have bought it. And believe me, it would be one of my favorite things.”

–Oprah Winfrey

I think to myself, “Isn't it just easier to cut to the chase and get real? Why waste precious time and energy? More importantly, why do people squander a rare opportunity?”

Yes ... I said rare *opportunity*.

Getting real, whether it's dealing with crisis or death, always has the door of this rare opportunity open to it. But first, you have to go through many uncomfortable layers. Loss, pain and grief often present themselves on the way to getting real. Words can't ever express the deep chasms brought by these experiences. There's no way out of these feelings, only through them. Being human means to feel. Along with the burning of such intense experiences/feelings is, surprisingly, a deepening gratitude for little things and an allowing for a rich connectedness to family members, community and the natural world. Some people even say they felt more alive, with a sweet experience of grace, during challenging times. **A vibrant sense of life pops open for a person who gets real in this way.**

Recently, a good friend of mine was in a course where they were asked to intentionally create a personal crisis as a technique to get real. I suggested taking on the reality that the planet has a climate crisis at hand. I was amazed at how easily dismissed this was because it wasn't considered *personal enough*.

I thought to myself, "They need to get real!" Global warming/climate crisis has been acknowledged as man-made. Each of us personally has contributed to the making of this crisis. *How much more personal can you get?* **Everyone** is involved and affected by the climate. The crisis already has a list of casualties. Earth's warming climate is estimated to contribute to more than 150,000 deaths and 5 million illnesses each year, according to the World Health Organization, a toll they say could double or more by 2030.

We have a new term called *environmental refugees*, which means people displaced by the effects of climate change. Some scholars are predicting that as many as 50 million people worldwide could be displaced by 2010 because of rising sea levels, desertification, dried up aquifers, weather-induced flooding and other serious environmental changes, according to Andrew Simms, policy director of the [New Economics Foundation](#) in the United Kingdom. Bottom line, not only are the past effects of climate crisis personal, but the future ones will be too. Schedule it in with your name on it. The scientists are already doing this for us.



Whether the crisis is about you, a loved one, or the climate, the opportunity for a richness in *being connected* is the same. I see that as the climate gets hotter and the weather more severe, suffering will increase. Let us not miss the opportunity for global unity and connectedness through meeting and addressing global warming together.

All of these things hold the answer to the question, "What's a life for?" It's about the ongoing growth of our ability to love and be loved. Never was the real purpose of life about cultivating status, power and money. The two approaches are mutually exclusive; you can't do both at the same time. There are no shortcuts. You're either cultivating love (life) or, like John says, you're busy making plans, doing something else.

"Let us not miss the opportunity for global unity and connectedness through meeting and addressing global warming together."