

# THE **GREATNESS** **CHALLENGE**<sup>SM</sup>



## **8** ***(R)evolutionary Axioms for Reshaping Your Future***

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# ***THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE***

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### ***Consciousness & The Evolving Self***

*We are moving into a new paradigm,  
leaving the world of the old structures behind.*

*Where do we go for our guidance?*

*I suggest to you that we have no place but our own well.*

*We all have this well inside.*

**Marion Woodman**

*If we are to continue our evolutionary journey, it is imperative that we  
now make some equally prodigious leaps in our ability to transform our  
minds.*

*We must wake up and develop the wisdom that will allow us to use our  
new powers for our own good and for the good of all.*

*This is the challenge of our times.*

**Peter Russell**

Our Earth was born 15 billion years ago.

In a divine occurrence, our planet came to life.

Swirling gasses created the atmosphere, and the Earth's core formed into rocks and oceans and continents. Spinning through space, this small blue and green sphere spawned plants, animals, and then hominids from its fertile lands and waters. Our first cousins discovered fire, tools, cave painting, and above all learned that while other animals were larger, toothier, and hairier, we had an amazing gift: ***consciousness***.

Small in stature compared to the looming threats that stalked their plains and valleys, our ancestors developed the tools and social organization that allowed them to endure: Foraging. Fire. Language. Tool-making. Ceremonies to mark death and birth. The very things that allowed us to survive and *thrive* were rooted in humans' evolving ability to create meaning of their world.

Now the threats we face are not saber-toothed tigers or woolly mammoths but beasts of our own species' making: pollution, terrorism, corruption, and collapse of the very social and economic structures that once led to our flourishing. We are called once again to use the very tool that enabled us to survive millions of years: ***our consciousness***.

It is through evolved consciousness that we will find solutions and connect to a greater meaning, thriving as individuals and as a collective.

**The Greatness Challenge** is a guide for expanding consciousness, so you can prosper with a purpose, and live authentically from the Soul. As you do, you add value and transform everything around you. Live your true greatness, and you contribute to the continuing life of our species and the sustainability of our precious planet. Each of us is needed. Each person's gift is vital.

We are brought together on this odyssey into a greater future as we evolve together from great to greatness.

Thank you for coming along.

# 1

## ***The Greatness Challenge***

*Within a few generations, perhaps within our own lifetimes,  
we could reach the end of our evolutionary journey.*

**Peter Russell**

*Only challenge produces the opportunity for greatness. Given the  
extraordinary challenges the world faces today, the potential for  
greatness is monumental.*

**James Kouzes and Barry Posner**

Ask yourself these four questions:

- How is your life different today than it was four years ago?
- What changes have you felt around you and within you?
- How are you handling the (r)evolutionary shifts that have

shaken most of us to the core?

- Are you confident you have the tools to leverage the transitions into leading and living with a new greatness?

It is easy to believe the world may be on the verge of collapse, especially as we look back through the last decade.

Stockholders watch as life earnings disappear in a matter of moments. Madoff and Stanford follow in the footsteps of Enron, leaving destroyed lives and families behind them—and they were just the beginning. U.S. banks send us plunging into the Great Recession—and then

*All processes of nature are forcing us to spring forward from hardship and uncertainty into a greater future.*

proceed to give record bonuses to top execs, with the fall of Lehman Bros and the stimulus of AIG. Fair and objective journalism has been replaced by the likes of Murdoch, making a profit from sensational lies and hacking. Millions lose their jobs, unemployment cresting ten percent. Foreclosure signs line the streets of some of the nation's largest cities. Panicked Americans scream down narrow alleys in the shadow of collapsing towers. There is mind-boggling annihilation in the Sudan and untold death at the hands of nature—tsunamis across the Asian rim, Katrina here in the United States, tornadoes wiping out communities.

Priests have sex with their young parishioners. Rabbis and mayors arrested for corruption and money laundering while public servants have affairs and lie publicly about them.

Since the turning of the millennium, we have witnessed an ever-accelerating decay of economic, religious, and social structures, culminating in the current Great Recession.

*If we move quickly to take collaborative action, we will move from breakdown into breakthrough. Best hurry or we could very well morph into something we never intended. And certainly don't want.*

Cherished institutions are falling apart because of cancerous greed and lack of commitment to something bigger for the longer term. And our natural resources are decaying. Scientists warn us that we are on the path towards extinction as our ecosystems suffer accelerated destruction.

Not to worry.

We are right on time.

We are on the verge of a process of renewal.

All processes of nature are forcing us to spring forward from hardship and uncertainty into a greater future. The big challenge for all of us is putting Greatness, a “New Age” meme, into real time.

Spiraling forward in our personal and planetary development (just like adolescence or the midlife renewal process), we must accomplish

certain developmental tasks if we are to move through the sequential stages of our life course—our time here on earth.

Our world is undergoing a major cleanup. A major tug of war encompasses the world. As always it's about power and control over resources, peoples, and landmass. Pushed past its natural limits, our planet, and life as we know it, is destined to break down. Self-correcting, the earth always jumps into the next phase of her development. If we move quickly to take collaborative action, we will move from breakdown into breakthrough. Best hurry or we could very well morph into something we never intended. And certainly don't want.

We are being asked to meet **The Greatness Challenge**.

That's why we've experienced an accelerated return to spirituality. We all yearn to make every moment count. Each of us, at every age and stage, wants significance. Our mantra has matured to, "Doing well doing good." Thank goodness we who are Baby Boomers are projected to inherit upwards of 11 trillion dollars as our generation moves to the front line. Combined Baby Boomers and 70+ers are projected to control far more than that.

The timing couldn't be better. Now, at last, the symbol of the Feminine in all of us, our Mother Earth, is calling to us. She is challenging us to self-correct, and quickly.

We've had plenty of warnings. From global AIDS epidemics and surging breast cancer to the breakdown of our beloved institutions. The intensity of the alerts is getting deafening. Aberrant weather patterns and the dying off of whole species are clearly bell-weepers. And now global warming is on its way to becoming irrevocable. This is our wake-up call. This is not a test!

As Americans, we've been shaken to the core to find that our basic foundational tenets are being tested. Work as we know it is changing before our eyes. Jobs are being out-sourced overseas and industries are dying while others get gobbled up. Our skill gaps are widening and our less-than-adequate education leaves us vulnerable to foreign competition. Morale is at its lowest. All these factors contribute to our diminished position as the world's greatest innovator and model of social, religious, and economic freedom as unemployment rates soar and people lose their homes.

I sometimes feel that I'm in some modern-day epic unfolding before my eyes. Some part of me believes we will all be saved. I guess that's why I still love *Star Wars*. So I admit it. I do trust the force!

No, we can't go back to how it used to be.

But we can either deter or eradicate the potential demise of this planet—our piece of the universe—by our actions today.

Writes the author of *A New America: An Awakened Future on Our Horizon*, “As an economic, political, cultural and military superpower that has gained much from its dominance, the U.S. has a unique responsibility to the world. We also have an exceptional opportunity to evolve into a true participatory democracy and re-energize the concept of civil spirituality from which to guide our values, ethics, and actions. We each have the innate gifts to be a part of birthing a new world.”

**This is the time for Greatness.**

Clearly there's a new meme moving through our consciousness. It's gaining momentum. Will you be its “tipping point” or be left behind?

I know it's hard to think about *greatness* in the face of so many threats at our borders and in our very own space in time. Besieged by bad news, feeling squeezed in every way, and witnessing rampant corruption and falling icons, it's easy to get caught up in our iPads and iPods. We just get too busy doing our life and being successful to give greatness more than a cursory glance—or

*If you aren't having a great life or heading toward greatness, what are you waiting for?*

newly unemployed, we panic as we think of how we will survive. It's become harder and harder to push away our everyday stressors. No matter what, we still have to pay the rent or mortgage, make payroll, manage braces and tuition, and all the rest. And let's not forget, we still want to grab a vacation in Costa Rica or Mexico. And these days, how many of us can?

With discontinuous change accelerating, we don't want to make waves. Only a short time until the day ends, vacation starts, or retirement looms. Why think about greatness?

Because it's the only way to go. Why would we want anything less?

If you aren't having a great life or heading toward greatness, what are you waiting for? If you're already well on your way, let this book serve as a friendly reminder and resource. Either way, let's teach others to reach for their greatness.

Most people can't imagine that they have the potential to reach greatness. More often than not, folks respond much like this accomplished woman: "When I think of greatness, I think of the really great like MLK or Mother Teresa or JFK and can't imagine that I am like one of those people." It's not surprising then that when surveyed, community college students routinely said they wanted to reach greatness, but when asked what that meant for them, they drew a blank.

From the time I was a little girl, I gorged myself on stories of people of greatness—Madame Curie, Einstein, Ben Franklin, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Babe Ruth, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carl Jung, Anne Frank, Piaget, and so many more—and left adolescence with icons like JFK, MLK, Golda Meir, Gloria Steinem, and Muhammad Ali. I wanted to be just like them. I dreamed of having a life like theirs . . . to make my life be about standing up for what I believed and showing up in times of crisis. I envisioned taking emboldened stands while dipping into a seemingly never-ending source of pure divine inspiration and unlimited energy to persevere. Like them, I committed early on to adding value, to making my work and life matter.

Being what I have termed a “wounded learner,” my earliest calling was to awaken the untapped potential in myself and others. Educating preteens and adolescents in the mid to late sixties, I used the “new sciences” to turn them on to their own unique greatness and to live it in every fiber of their being. Each of them touched their greatness--whether it was merely a spark or fully ignited. Early on I learned that greatness resides in us all.

Whether you are a schoolteacher, a mad scientist, or a driven CEO, we all are made from the same stuff. After all, we only use a mere 5% of our available brain power. If we only doubled what we use, we would be making quantum leaps for humanity. It is the same with our innate greatness.

We all have enormously untapped reservoirs of greatness, just waiting to be released. No matter what life cycle or stage of life we are in, be it a stay-at-home mom or a soon-to-be retiree, we

can bring our unique brand of greatness to whatever we do and to all we engage. It is our divine-given gift, and thus our responsibility as conscious human beings to share it with

*No matter what life cycle or stage of life we are in, be it a stay-at-home mom or a soon-to-be retiree, we can bring our unique brand of greatness to whatever we do and to all we engage.*

others so that they too may ignite it within themselves. No matter what you are doing in the moment, whether it's planning for public housing, changing diapers, mounting a fund-raiser, sitting on a board or leading your own business, bring your greatness to it. These times demand it.

In broadest terms, greatness is a vague concept that is almost completely dependent on a person's perspective and biases. Without a clear personal definition, we can be assured to never reach our own greatness, much less catalyze someone else's.

I know that when I'm in my greatness I "ring true." Like a tuning fork, I vibrate with my own unique tonality. In those moments, I am on purpose, in total alignment with my bio-rhythms, in touch with all that is and able to access my deepest knowing. It may present itself as I magnetize a team of senior executives to perform beyond all expectations, or when I touch someone so deeply when they most need to be inspired to bold action and to live their truth in the face of unnerving odds.

Personal greatness is reached when we are living our truest sense of purpose, fulfilling our core values with passion and attaining a heightened sense of satisfaction and joy when we come into our own actualization. This greatness is only to be exceeded by that exhibited by those in whom we engender the same. To borrow from author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, when we are in our "flow," we are guaranteed we are living our greatness!

As history teaches us, extraordinary greatness arises when we are faced with daunting challenges. In those harrowing moments, we are called to take emboldened stands for what matters most to us. This kind of greatness may come as if out of nowhere, brought to the forefront by unexpected momentous events. In June 2009, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama launched their Summer of Service, in which they called upon Americans to share their talents as volunteers during this

time of crisis. In nonprofit organizations across the nation, there is a reported increase in volunteer participation with a rise in greater civic responsibility.

Stories abound from the heroic efforts of complete strangers in the aftermath of 9/11 or 3/11 in Spain to the elderly women villagers who protested against pollution from nearby

factories in Huaxi, a village in southeastern

China. Or when thousands of U.S. farm-workers

won a sweet victory in their struggle against fast-

food giant Taco Bell, one of the largest buyers of tomatoes in the country,

for decent working conditions and *un centavo mas*—one cent more—per

pound of tomatoes they pick. Or the young people in Oakland, California,

who wanted to talk about real solutions to the poverty, racism, and

powerlessness they grew up with. Frustrated by the violence and mind-

numbing entertainment fare offered by all the city's hip-hop radio stations,

a feisty collaboration of young people confronted a major radio

conglomerate--and won.

For others, it is a conscious choice to live and lead from their

greatness. These are the visionaries we all recognize, the very great among

us. These enlightened leaders speak their truth and act in ways that support

*If you wait for others to define you, you will miss your chance to fully realize who you are and what is possible.*

a greater future for us all. They bring their Visionary Greatness<sup>SM</sup> into the public forum as leaders in business, the arts, politics, the sciences, spirituality, and social services. These enlightened leaders lead from a deeper sense of purpose and vision, in ways that positively transform the many and the world around them.

Getting from great to greatness is a moment-by-moment endeavor. It takes fortitude, focus, great passion, and a total commitment to what is at hand. It also demands courage and enormous “humanity.” Perhaps most of all, it demands that we accept that getting to greatness is a process of continuous improvement, a lifelong endeavor. The goal is not perfection, but rather to be all you can be in every moment, to be the change *you* want to see. Remember, most of the truly great are so focused on their vision for the future that they don’t stop to define what it is they exhibit—they just live and lead with greatness as a matter of course.

The time is ripe now for those of us who want to take a quantum leap to go from doing great to leading with greatness for the common good. Every great epoch and life stage gets birthed into existence by a collision of forces. Take a look back at planetary as well as human history. Even family history. It takes a great force to catalyze quantum leaps of growth and development.

“Life is so short!” writes Bonnie, a 50-something powerhouse caught between elder-caretaking and her life passing her by.

“How do I lead and live in these turbulent times?” asks a 46-year old family business owner.

“I’m yearning for something I can’t quite get my arms around,” laments a 38-year old CEO who’s got it all.

“It’s all such B.S.! No more spin. Teach me how to be real,” implores a 41-year old CFO of a Corporate 500 company.

*This potential for greatness lives in each of us, and we are being called to make a difference.*

Many of us are going back to the basics:

seeking more meaning and quality time. Some of us have been forced to downsize as we have

lost clients or contracts or have been outplaced or forced into early retirement. Others are coming out of retirement and having to retread their lives. Some are leaving high-paced lives and choosing new lifestyles and directions in favor of lives that give them greater freedom and flexibility.

Whether you’re focused on your job, determined to lead your company through these tough times, making a difference in your community, or simply wanting more time with your loved ones, major change is in the offing—and it is time you learn tools for reinventing yourself and your professional life and identity. If you wait for others to

define you, you will miss your chance to fully realize who you are and what is possible.

Thankfully, we are in charge of our own greatness. We are each on the vanguard of change. Our willingness to catalyze greatness in others will lead us into a far greater future. On a personal, community, and organizational level, we as leaders have to turn our attention to tapping the greatness within.

For those of us who envision a greater future, now is the time to go for it! New skill sets, knowledge, and perspectives are required. Old habits don't go easily. We weren't trained for this new tour of duty. Change is the norm. Time is moving rapidly with little to spare. That's the nature of life these days.

In this ebook, I beseech you to belly up to the realization that we can no longer afford to rest on our laurels. The world is shifting to a different playing field, one *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman says is "flattened by instant connectivity." If we don't wake up in time to retool for this new epoch, we may find ourselves sucked into the backdraft of the future.

However, from the vibrating heart of our dissipating structures comes the promise of our true greatness: a greatness of awareness and action that

will change the world. From the midst of the Great Recession, we are entering the Great Transition. This potential for greatness lives in each of us, and we are being called to make a difference. That is the premise of ***The Greatness Challenge***, in which I offer a template for personal and collective greatness.

***The Greatness Challenge*** is a guide for the growing wave of us

*As we look toward greater balance, we are potentially moving toward the creation of an enlightened leadership that no longer focuses on the bottom-line only, but rather at the triple-bottom line of people, planet, and profits.*

who want to add value in all we do and who

are being called to personal and collective

evolution—from dentists to doctors,

executives to engineers, artists to teachers

and visionary leaders and futurists who are

looking to redesign their lives so that every moment counts . . . for those of you who seek work that not only fills your bank accounts but your “values” bank as you yearn to do well doing good . . . for leaders who seek a pathway to visionary leadership, so the impact you have is of the greatest benefit for all. This ebook is also for those longing to transition out of jobs and careers that pay the mortgage but leave the Soul bankrupt.

As Abraham Maslow, renowned father of the human potential movement, explained, there is a developmental hierarchy of needs. The lower rungs are safety and survival-based needs; once those needs are

addressed, the pathway is open for greater self-actualizing and transcendent understanding. Indeed, as an ICF Master Certified Coach and speaker, I see more and more accomplished clients who have fulfilled their basic shelter and food needs and are looking for greater purpose and meaning . . . demanding authentic communication and connection. Having realized success at great personal cost, they look for a more balanced marriage of their work, family, and personal lives. Their new priority is to have time for what really matters most.

And what better antidote could there be for a world of accelerating chaos? Our current model of win-and-consume-at-all-costs is damaging both to individuals and the planet, and thousands are now beginning to question developed countries'—especially America's-- way of doing business. As we face the challenges of our conflict-ridden and increasingly fast-paced lives, a new paradigm is being born.

We are in fact in the throes of a shakeup . . . and shake out . . . down to our very core. We, each of us—all of us—are being besieged by new threats in the world and are responding by asking, “How can we make the world more whole? How can I make choices that benefit the world and not only myself? How can I lead in a way that is keeping with my values?” As we look toward greater balance, we are potentially moving toward the

creation of an enlightened leadership that no longer focuses on the bottom-line only, but rather at the triple-bottom line of people, planet, and profits.

***The Greatness Challenge*** is based on my 35-plus years' experience coaching, training, and convening accomplished women and men who are looking for what's next in their lives. My (r)evolutionary processes have set the foundation for thousands of people to develop personal and collective greatness by identifying their core values and building lives and workplaces consistent with them. It could mean riding a bike to work or changing a company's structure to be more environmental or family friendly. Or it may show up as incorporating a philosophy of lifetime employability, portable retirement savings, and health coverage so that we all have the security to move with the quicksilver shifts of global markets and workflow at home.

We can all move into a future built on elevated purpose—and in this way, go from doing great to living our greatness. As Peter Russell noted “If we are to continue our evolutionary journey, it is imperative that we now make some equally prodigious leaps in our ability to transform our minds. We must wake up and develop the wisdom that will allow us to use our new powers for our own good and for the good of all. This is the challenge of our times.”

***The Greatness Challenge*** is a transformative consciousness guide for those who are being called to personal and professional visionary leadership as well as collective evolution. The book offers readers a clear set of eight (r)evolutionary processes that lead to enhanced awareness and a greater life for all. It's perspective is not limited to one religion or spiritual orientation and does not restrict itself to solely an organizational or personal perspective of greatness but instead shows the interplay between individual and collective evolution.

There are others championing greatness; however, this book offers a uniquely female perspective to human potential, consciousness, and greatness. The greatness we most need now is new, emerging out of a holistic view of the world that emphasizes connectedness, collaboration, inner knowing, ancestral wisdom—and most of all, truth telling. These are the characteristics assigned to the archetype of the Sacred Feminine in us all. This feminine perspective is a necessary counterpoint to the more traditional patriarchal view rooted in the “old game”—one that is rapidly falling apart and endangering all of humanity's future.

Clearly the underlying problem is not a male versus female one. These chaotic times demand the integration of both our inner feminine and our masculine strengths as well as the collaboration of all genders in the outer

world. What is apparent is that the female experience and worldview provides a growing awareness that our system is entering breakdown, that we must avert breakdown and move toward breakthrough. By the very nature of their discontinuous changing roles and life cycles, women are more apt to ride the waves of sudden change and disorienting breakdowns. Far more in touch with their inner world, women will more readily align to this deep feminine force desperately calling us to transform.

From the hallowed halls of academia to the towers of global corporations, and all in between, things need to change fast. And they are changing. “Every 12 seconds another woman leaves corporate America to start her own business,” according to the National Foundation of Women Business Owners. (This is twice the rate for men.) And now, thousands more are leaving without choice as businesses downsize, and women are looking at new ways of creating home-based businesses.

Women can no longer sit on the sidelines. They must come to the forefront, bringing their deep feminine wisdom. The timing couldn't be better.

Recent studies suggest that 44 percent of new women business owners are leaving corporate life after banging into the glass ceiling. Further, the majority of these women adamantly declare that nothing will bring them back. Lack of recognition and upward mobility may only be the presenting reason. Our departure is indicative of our dying Souls seeking new ground to express our collective unrealized feminine aspect. Our current win-lose, short-term profit-driven system thwarts passionate self-expression and leaves no room for values-driven self-fulfillment.

Women in the largest numbers ever are now in positions of power, albeit not the dominant gender, but nevertheless having a significant impact in all walks of life. They

*Now in midlife and moving toward elderhood, droves of women are rediscovering the wholeness of being female.*

have reached for their dreams. In the process, they have broken many of the self-limiting ancestral beliefs such as “a woman’s only place is in the home” and “nice women don’t succeed” that were handed down from grandmother to mother to daughter: However, in the process many women have traded in their most precious assets—their deep inner feminine knowing and expansive capacity for nurturance and healing—for their share of the game chips.

Now in midlife and moving toward elderhood, droves of women are rediscovering the wholeness of being female. The best news yet is that the bulk of the \$11 trillion-plus in assets projected to be passed down to Baby Boomers and 70+ers will eventually end up in women's hands—what I lovingly jest will be our version of the Widows' Welcome Wagon. Thus we will hold the financial reigns of a new paradigm.

American women, from the time of the earliest suffragettes, have been on the front lines of change, blazing new trails. Going forward, “old

girl” networks will proliferate as more women

rise rapidly through the ranks to the executive

suite and stand at the helm of their own

companies. Being at the threshold, we are being

called forth to breathe fresh life into our

Visionary Feminine. It is from this new vantage

point that women will lead the way with a new greatness.

As more and more women move toward a new worldview, the men in their lives are coming forward to join them. Together they are ushering in a new epoch. Men too are looking for a greatness that is all encompassing, allowing them to fully potentiate. Together as men and women we are evolving to a more authentic, enlightened approach to life and work that

*As each of us evolves a more authentic and conscious life, society as a whole evolves as well. When we create lives that reflect our core beliefs for the common good, then it is inevitable, our world will improve.*

will engage our total being in birthing a better road to the future . . . full of possibility and greatness.

***The Greatness Challenge*** invites you to an evolutionary journey into the future. Each chapter opens with a scientific metaphor that ties into my background in the *new* sciences, human potential, change and transition, transformation, and life course development. Weaving together natural phenomena with concepts in consciousness, I will ask you to join me on a quest that will shift the way you perceive and interpret (y)our world so that you can take new action—from the boardroom to the bedroom.

As with any venture or journey, we need to know where we are headed, how to get there, what to take with us or leave behind, and what to do once we get there. So if you aspire to greatness, craft your own personal definition to guide you into the future. And if you are leading others, be sure to communicate your vision so that together you can create an extraordinary future.

The time is ripe now for those of us who want to take a quantum leap from “doing great to leading with greatness.”

As each of us evolves a more authentic and conscious life, society as a whole evolves as well. When we create lives that reflect our core beliefs for

the common good, then it is inevitable, our world will improve. Will we choose to succumb to the terrors of our day and our possible extinction—or choose our greatness? ***The Greatness Challenge*** is a guide for those who are ready to meet the challenge as we move into the twenty-first century.

So get ready.

Greatness awaits.

## 2

### ***Star Formation***

*Stars form when enormous compression waves traveling through gas clouds create dense knots of gas in the cloud. . . . As a knot grows, its gravitational force increases, and it attracts more gas particles.*

*Eventually, the knot coalesces into a growing sphere of compressed gas that reaches internal temperatures of a few million degrees. At this point the gases in the knot's interior become so hot that their atomic nuclei begin fusing, creating large amounts of nuclear energy and forming a new star.*

**—Encarta, “Star Formation”**

*As new stars were formed, tiny condensations of matter accreted near*

*them . . .*

*that would become the planets. And on these worlds, organic molecules*

*formed*

*made of atoms that had been cooked inside the stars . . .*

***We are star stuff.***

**—Carl Sagan, *Cosmos***

You wake up in the morning, crack open your eyes, look up at the ceiling, and take a long deep breath as you pull away the covers. You hear the words inside your head, “What’s next?” That’s a sign it’s time to get started. . . .

You are being called to greatness.

You may not yet know it.

However, this stirring inside is an invitation to a new life.

For all of us.

Greatness may begin as restlessness, boredom, disillusionment, or a hunger for something greater. It could be a thirst for the mystical, a longing for the adventurous, the pangs of a heart that wishes to break out and have an even more lasting impact in life. Are you living in monochrome instead of full spectrum color? Are you driving to work through a maze of honking cars and familiar blurred landscapes wondering where it is taking you? Are you shuffling through the papers on your office desk asking, “Is this all there is?”

Now is the time to take the next step.

And you are not alone.

I first began to question one day when I looked around my highly coveted corner office. The sun streamed in, warming me and illuminating the piles of memoranda, research, and unanswered telephone messages stacked up on my glistening lacquered desk.

I leaned back in my executive chair and wondered why I was there.

It had begun on another bright sunny day, ten years earlier, when I was walking down the Avenue of the Americas with my lover. We were both running successful businesses and creating a wonderful life together. The whole world seemed to be ahead of us as we strolled along, sharing our dreams. I pointed to the top of a cluster of skyscrapers, the bastion of big business, and proclaimed, “One day, I will have an office up there, and I’ll be making a six- figure income!”

But the view from the top proved to be very different from my original view from the street. I’d got what I wanted and even more . . . but at what cost?

I thought of the abusive, driven bosses I had tolerated along the way; my “real woman” role model—powerful, vulnerable, and compassionate—outmaneuvered and scapegoated by her most trusted allies. I thought of our two “little ones” who would be graduating soon. Custody conflicts had kept me from them when they were small. Now they were home with us, and I

was an absentee mom—and an absentee wife to the wonderful man who had made my kids his own. I was always at the office working late, dragging home an enormous briefcase on weekends.

The sunlight continued to stream through my window, but I felt cold. What had happened to my aliveness, my juicy feminine passions, the freshness I'd had when I'd started out on this path to “fame and fortune”?

I was in a hurry, but where was I going? Where had the time gone? What was I trying to prove—and to whom?

The product area in which I excelled was private pension planning and retirement services, which early on led me into a deep study of the “Graying of America.” While I was learning about the age wave, I was also applying principles of transformational management and visionary leadership, and those I hired had to be willing to buy into the (r)evolutionary model. They were collaborative and communicative and were willing to grow as people and employees. They had to be open-minded and not hierarchical—willing, for example, to brainstorm in workshops with people from receptionist to the vice president, internally, across functional boundaries, and with our external vendors and key resources. They could see beyond title and position and just roll with the punches. And, of course, they had to be willing to work with joy.

Sheer joy was a fundamental component of making our team the most successful in the nation; within a few years, our stand-alone division broke every record in the industry. However, while we were doing well, the rest of the company struggled under traditional leadership and massive top-down outplacement. On one hand, I sat in the beauty of my office, in delight of what we as a group had created—a model for enlightened management and Soul at work. On the other hand, I watched on the sidelines as mentors, friends, and colleagues were scapegoated, lied to, and fired as turf wars raged and the larger company struggled to survive. I decided after ten years it was time to move on. I looked at the world from my window. What was next?

*But if I had no goals, what was I? Who was I?*

I was moving down a path without a known destination. A great inner force urged me toward something that was not yet apparent. I'd take a short sabbatical, six months to a year. That is what I would tell everyone. Especially the headhunters! It felt so good to turn down what used to be world-class gem opportunities I would have danced in the street for before. Ah, delicious! Ah, delirious! Travel with my husband . . . time to play with my wonderful teenagers. Doing what I wanted, when I wanted to do it. It was all a reverie until my pre-determined

deadline came and went. It dawned on me that I didn't know what I wanted to go back to. What were my real desires? What was I striving toward?

Suddenly I had no goals. I had nothing to prove. But if I had no goals, what was I? *Who* was I? The *not knowing* was sheer torture! I fought with it. I wrestled with it. I wasn't *a somebody* anymore! I had no title. I belonged nowhere. I no longer had a suitable answer to "And what do you do?" Uneasy, I quickly made up business cards with my name and *Enterprises* following. God forbid I should say, "I'm in between." I clearly had to be a *this* or a *that*. My kids would be leaving home soon. Not a corporate something, not a mother, certainly not a full-time wife. But what was I? I was desperate to be *doing something*.

As I tried to force myself into high gear, to go out and get myself going again, I felt the spirit drain out of me. I can remember lying on my living room couch, wanting to get up to go across the room, unable to summon the energy. I had to *stop and be still*. I had to listen to my inner cries. I had to surrender. In some deep recess of my Soul, I knew that I was going through a *death* that had to be. I had to trust that a *rebirth* would come.

*There is a figure emerging from the shadows, draped in layers of black. As the figure turns, I recognize the female, with flaming red hair:*

*my beloved aunt, long since dead, but now alive, apparently . . . or back to haunt me. She lets out a cackle that sends chills up and down my body. Her eyes pierce through me with an underworld glare. I awaken in a cold sweat.*

“They” asked, “What do you *want?*” I couldn’t answer.

They asked, “What do you *feel?*” I didn’t know.

I was as removed from my deepest feelings as I could be. And now, incredibly, two years had passed since I had left on my sabbatical. I felt despair, shame. Still lost, still nowhere to go. My daughter had left home for college; our son would soon follow; my husband was involved in his business, and me, I was sinking deeper and deeper. It was like gravity pulling me down, down, down into the farthest reaches of my psyche. I’d pull off one layer, only to find another. Still I had no idea of who I really

was.

*A lost connection to my own inner knowing began to emerge. I saw that for so many years I had stepped on the pipeline to my Soul. I had stopped the flow of my passion.*

An eerie experience turned into a harbinger of my future. My husband and I were out of town for a friend’s wedding. I walked from the powder room into the sitting area, passing a large gilded

mirror, and I casually glanced at myself. The reflection was me, but with the skin of an elderly woman. An ancient woman. Eyes seeing, yet seeing

forever. Those eyes spoke to me. No words forming on her lips, but I could feel her message. My ancestral line. Our collective heritage. I tried to shake my head, to clear the image. My husband, a few steps away, reached out, touched my shoulder—he'd seen her too.

I called her Ancient Future, staring at me with the image of who I was becoming and the connection to all that was past. In her apparition, I sensed somehow the deepest truth of my Soul. A lost connection to my own inner knowing began to emerge. I saw that for so many years I had stepped on the pipeline to my Soul. I had stopped the flow of my passion. I had almost completely extinguished my spirit-fire. Somehow I'd done that, perhaps many times. Over the years, I'd climbed up the ladder of success, I, who had prided myself on being a business visionary, an agent of change. I'd been outspoken, I'd been a risk-taker, but I had cheated myself of my greatest gift: my authenticity. I had become one of them. I fit in. I was accepted. I thought I had wanted that. But what of *me*, the whole of me?

One day, as I danced in a dance class, a voice gripped my throat, literally, and it came ringing out of my mouth and reverberated against every wall and window. It rang with such a power that it seemed to come from the old weathered lips of Ancient Future, from the very core of my Soul. The vibration shook through me with a power I have never before

experienced, and I knew then that it was the essence of her vibration that I was to bring back with me into the workplace. And my time had come. The depth of her spirit began to speak out in all I did.

The gift of the midlife crossing is that we are guided to take time out, to return to the inner spiral of our Soul. Native Americans use the spiral to symbolize the continuum of life. The early years they picture as a *going out from* the center of the spiral. Later years, *going into*. Midlife is the internal wake-up call. If heard, it beckons us to move toward wholeness by going within.

When I finally allowed myself to dip into the spiral, I was guided on my life's path to my renewed work. While I had been coaching throughout all these years, I formalized my new found-wisdom in 1988 when I established Future Works Institute as a Master Certified Coach, speaker, and Futurist, bringing with me more insight into the midlife transition as well as new tools from the quest into the Canyon of the Soul<sup>SM</sup>. I could share what I learned about connecting to the parts of our selves that lay dormant and forgotten, whose very essence and voice could reawaken us again.

I could go back to a corporate environment, but I realized my real Soul gift was with the individuals who are on the vanguard and looking themselves to create careers that speak to who they really are. This includes those who are already in leadership positions seeking to integrate their whole being, becoming what Dana Parry and Peter Block refer to as the new earth “stewards” so they can bring meaning and change to our world. Future Works Institute allowed me a balanced life where I could fully live the principles I believe in—and it was just the beginning. From there I grew into my next role as The Everyday Futurist<sup>SM</sup>. Now, in 2011, I lean back in my chair. I look *not* at some corporate office, but at my own home, filled with symbols of a well-lived life. From the journey through the midlife passage, I understood: My work is in developing greatness. My gift is star formation.

Do you want to transition out of a job that pays the mortgage but

leaves your Soul bankrupt? Are you asking

yourself should you stay or should you go, in the

light of troubling times? Want to re-design your

life, so you have greater positive impact on your

*We are moving toward lives that are inwardly focused, based on who we are and not just what we do.*

family, colleagues, and community? Are you a leader who is looking for a pathway to enlightened leadership, so the impact you have is of the greatest good for all?

We are moving toward lives that are inwardly focused, based on who we *are* and not just what we do. Almost 80 million Baby Boomers are entering what psychologist Erik Erickson identified as the fall and winter of our lives, when reflection and inner focus become critical. These are the years when after having accomplished so much, many of us want to build on our success to create legacies, healthier relationships, and happier lives.

John Sutton sits at the edge of a ridge in Sedona, Arizona, overlooking the incredible landscape of jutting red mountains and canyons, feeling like he is at the edge of the world, high above the dry desert. He has come here for retreat, to find time alone as he longs to make sense of his life and his growing restlessness and dissatisfaction. It's not that his life is so bad. Matter of fact, by most people's standards, he is a huge success. An investment banker, he has been married for twenty-five years to the same wonderful wife and has two great kids, who are surviving adolescence as gracefully as possible.

He looks up at the stars as they emerge, one by one.

He thinks of when he was a boy, and he and his father would stretch out on sleeping bags on their camping trips alone.

“The stars you see now were born thousands of years ago.”

John recalls looking into the skies, wondering how their light traveled such distances, imagining the planet in the days of dinosaurs.

“Those stars we see today are made of the dust of dying stars from thousands of years ago,” his father explained.

Now at 46 years old, John Sutton sits breathing the clear twilight air. He thinks of crowded subways, rushed cups of morning coffee, humid hot summer afternoons, feeling choked in his suit. He remembers once having more time for walks in the woods and camping trips, and although his family still takes them, it is as if he never fully settles into the Earth to make a real connection to himself, to the trees, the grass, the riverbed. Life just seems to keep accelerating. There is no time, it seems, for stargazing.

Years earlier, he became pulled into the currents of booming economies and breakthrough technologies where wireless wonders and the Internet sent him and the economy into a quickening spiral. He thought of how the promise of his brother's dot.com led to one disappointment and then another as he watched portfolios shrink by hundreds of thousands of dollars. He thought of the increasing tensions that led to September 11th,

then his father's bout with cancer . . . each year, a loss of greater innocence—as an American and as a human being. “Where do I belong in all of this?” He wonders. He looks up at the stars as he did as a young boy, giving himself to the vast beauty of the heavens, hoping to find answers there.

And they are there. In part.

Greatness arises from the transitions of life, particularly at midlife, when what once seemed defined and solid becomes as vaporous as the gasses that give rise to forming stars.

*Greatness arises from the transitions of life, particularly at midlife, when what once seemed defined and solid becomes as vaporous as the gasses that give rise to forming stars.*

You may have the house, the car, the children, the money, and the office suite. You have come far in so many ways, but now you are not satisfied. Or perhaps you have lost it all, or despite great gains seek to leave something of meaning behind. As the great philanthropist Andrew Carnegie said, “Any man who dies rich, dies disgraced.”

Something deep within is speaking. Listen. It is the still small voice of your evolutionary self asking you to reach for your greatness.

Paul Kastner sits in his office on the 27th floor; the large glass windows face San Francisco's Bay Bridge and a fluttering of sailboats on the

ocean. He pulls out a sack lunch with an apple and a cheese sandwich along with the thick manuscript that has become the focus of his free moments.

“This is my real work,” he smiles between bites.

A leading San Francisco lawyer, he earns six figures and enjoys two homes: one in Hawaii and the other nestled in the exclusive Marin community of Tiburon. “What I wanted to be was a writer. But my parents and everyone around me told me that no one makes money writing. Do something practical. So I did, and for a while I loved it. I loved the power, the energy, and the rush. But there was always this thought, ‘Someday I will write.’ Then the first divorce . . . and now the second . . . and all the headaches of keeping everything in balance—four kids, two ex-wives, law firm, two houses. . . . I write my novels before work and during lunch. I am being called when I write. I never felt that with law. I never felt I did anything to make the world greater. When I write, I am tapping something deeper, human, universal. I care about what is human . . . relationships . . . family stuff. I failed at two marriages and am struggling through a third. When I write, I explore relationships and the themes that I think really matter.”

Paul Kastner wanted to find a pathway of transition out of his life as lawyer to that of novelist. “The hardest part was taking the steps to change

my life, to understand what my choices were. My current wife doesn't want to give up the lifestyle, and in truth, it was hard facing the sacrifice I would have to make, but I know I have a gift for words, and I want to use that gift to shed some light on how people love."

Marianne Evanson was one of the top publicists for a large New York agency. One afternoon after a meeting, she became sick to her stomach. Her new client was a large corporation with a known history of human rights and environmental abuses. Mary had spent her childhood in Vermont, which inspired in her a love for the pristine beauty of nature. "I knew my time here was short, and that day I asked myself why I was putting my energy every day into projects and companies that didn't share the same values as I did. If I had one cause to live for it would be the protection of the environment. I was sick to my stomach living a life so far from my values."

Marianne made a commitment that day to change. Months later she started her own agency with an environmental edge. She showed companies that being greener could mean a vastly improved image, which translates into greater profits and increasing market share of consumers who more and more want to buy from socially responsible companies. She specializes in grounding her publicity campaigns in environmental and

natural images and themes. They work because she is not the only one who cares about and loves the environment.

“Who doesn’t want a greener planet? Most people do. And business is booming for me, even in this tough economy because companies are seeing both the savings and marketing potential in going green. Everyday I am actively promoting messages I believe in. I used to leave meetings with knots in my stomach. I became ill from staying quiet. Now if a client doesn’t agree with my special focus, then I don’t have to work with them.”

Marianne Evanson took an active stance on something dear to her heart. She is living congruently and authentically. Every minute another species becomes extinct, and we now face the terrifying reality that we may pollute ourselves out of existence. Large corporations continue to spill tons of toxic chemicals into the air and waterways without any accountability.

Marianne is expressing her leadership through her work and is enjoying greater financial success than ever. Paul Kastner is hoping to shed light on the complexities of relationships and family through his novels and writing. He has spent a lifetime defending corporations, and now he is intrigued with the frailty of human connections. He is concerned with what hasn’t worked, and he still longs for loving family and relationships.

Disillusioned by corporate and political corruption, many Americans are demanding greater honesty and responsible leadership and questioning the traditional competition-at-all-cost policies of American business. Like Mary and Paul, they are looking to find new ways to live successfully from their core values.

The magazine *Fast Company* asked their readers on May 25, 2002: *Do you feel betrayed by corporate America?* Although the sample was small (418) and unscientific, the results are worth noting: 81 percent said “yes.” In another poll, one out of four respondents has seriously thought of leaving her job in the last year. More than one in ten has either downsized, cashed out of a high-overhead lifestyle to a simpler one, or taken lower-paying jobs with greater satisfaction. Stress-related disease and fatigue is the number one cause of absenteeism in industrial countries. One in four will experience clinical symptoms of anxiety next year or become clinically depressed. More and more are feeling burned out, bored, disillusioned with the old models of doing business. In a 1999 Roper Poll 87 percent responded that they would leave a higher-paying position for a more modest-paying one if it meant making a difference and healing the planet.

In our increasingly automated world, we face the risk of becoming automatons ourselves—and many of us don't want to live like machines anymore. “I feel like I am on automatic pilot. I wake up, eat breakfast, go to work, eat dinner, go to bed, wake up . . .” shares Janice, a 42-year-old merchandiser, “just moving through life without any real energy or passion for what I do. Even playing with the kids and making love to my husband feels mechanical. There has to be more to life than this.” Having lost connection with our inner life and nature, we are like *Stepford Wives* and

Husbands walking through our well-manicured

lives, lives that didn't prepare us for the upheaval and uncertainty of the recent economic crisis.

*What may seem like a personal quest for meaning is also a mandate for each of us to shine our light onto the troubled world, creating with others a new constellation for a greater tomorrow.*

We have reached a crossroads, and many are asking, “Where do I go from here? What is my vision for tomorrow, and how can I create the

changes that matter?”

What may seem like a personal quest for meaning is also a mandate for each of us to shine our light onto the troubled world, creating with others a new constellation for a greater tomorrow. In the chapters ahead, you will be given the tools to fully live these processes on this quest for greatness. You will become the star you are and light up the world with

your authentic gifts—whether as an entrepreneur, an artist, a business executive, or a scientist.

As in the heavens, new stars are formed from the gasses and vapors of the old; we are being called to create a new consciousness and a greater world from the dust of our collapsing institutions and identities.

Intensifying challenges confront us: terrorism, war, global warming, church scandal, corporate corruption, dissolving families, and now, the Great Recession. The road ahead will be illuminated by those of us who discover and live our light, who discover and live our true purpose. Once again, human survival relies on our gift of consciousness. Will we respond to the greatness challenge?

## 3

***Life's Eruptions***

*Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away*

*Now it looks as though they're here to stay,*

*Oh I believe in yesterday.*

**Paul McCartney**

“Yesterday”

When a volcano erupts, everything around it shakes with its explosive vibrations, and then the lava that pours forth over the land, rivers, and seas begins in time to harden, creating new shores and banks, and becoming home to emerging plants, insects, and animals. From the molten lava and ashes of volcanic disruption can come new life—but also a trail of death and loss.

I link the idea of eruptions to Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine's Theory of Dissipative Structures, which explains that a system that is perturbed sufficiently will either shake up or shake out—will vibrate into extinction or

vibrate into a whole new and more evolved system. Both natural phenomena offer valuable lessons for us. When structures reach the collapsing or explosive point, there are two possibilities: destruction or transformation.

**This is the choice of our time.**

**Not only are 79.6 million Americans in midlife or moving through their 60s, scientists estimate that we are midway through the anticipated life span of the solar system. We are moving through a momentous transition point. As people face the critical questions of life purpose and meaning, they also face the urgent and sometimes harrowing questions of sustaining our way of life on the planet. Potentially, the pursuit of greater personal meaning during times of explosive crisis will lead us to new solutions. History shows us that greatness is often born of crisis. Perhaps like the hot lava that spews from the volcano mouth and courses into the ocean, this troubling time, with all its destructive force, will lead to the forming of new flourishing formations in business, education, family, politics, science, and spirituality.**

*History shows us that greatness is often born of crisis. Perhaps like the hot lava that spews from the volcano mouth and courses into the ocean, this troubling time, with all its destructive force, will lead to the forming of new flourishing formations in business, education, family, politics, science, and spirituality.*

Certainly, our current institutions are failing us: churches are barely recovering from the widespread revelations of sexual abuse; schools are suffering from violence and lack of resources; corporate greed and dishonesty have been exposed over and over again; our domestic divas and investment gurus are sentenced to jail time; families are breaking apart and forming new ones with all the complications and stresses that come with two working parents and stepchildren; and we all watched in horror as symbols of Western economic supremacy crumbled when terrorists invaded our homelands. The disintegration of our established institutions is not unlike the dissolution of our selves that we may experience as we move from the familiar structures of our youth into the formless, foggy pathways that leads us into midlife and toward our elderhood. Inevitable is the collapse that signals change.

In our own lives, we experience eruptions. And we ignore them at our own peril. Most of us don't even think about what it will cost us if we don't put our needs and values first. Thinking we can maintain the status quo, we often ignore the subtle warning signs, setting ourselves up for one or more of the following breakdowns. The longer you resist, the more significantly you'll be affected by these self-denial symptoms.

- **Relationship Breakdowns:** Expect to burn out a marriage and/or lose people who are very important to you.
- **Physical Breakdowns:** Expect to be hit with chronic fatigue, female issues, back trouble, fibromyalgia, or pneumonia. Wherever you're physically vulnerable, you will be affected.
- **Spiritual Breakdowns:** Expect to experience confusion, internal churnings, disconnections, desperate yearnings, and fruitless seekings.

In nature every winter, rows of trees stand bare without any apparent purpose, their old leaves crushed into the snow. But with the coming of spring, the very branches that were barren become lush with blossom. What once was in full bloom gives way to the rays of a summer sun and melts into a mulch that nourishes the earth for the next April bouquet. The very basic principle of continual death and rebirth in life informs everything; as one thing dies and changes form, something new is born. Collapse is an inevitable precursor to rebuilding both individuals and societies. Not only do we as individual organisms transform through the seasons, but we as a species evolve over time.

We are all witness to and part of a new shift in consciousness. As consciousness evolves, we are, of course, called to evolve with it. The general malaise I see in clients of all ages reflects an exciting new trend. While bright and ambitious adults were once satisfied merely with the two fancy cars and the nice home, more and more people at younger and younger ages are facing a crisis in meaning and values. The cars and homes are great, they will tell you, but life does not start and end there.

In a post-9/11 world, now in the midst of the Great Recession, people are looking themselves squarely in the mirror and want to make a difference. Baby Boomers and Generation Xers seek spiritually oriented approaches to family, work, and business. “People cannot bear spiritual aridness,” explains therapist Susan Smalley. “Suddenly you are aware of a gnawing dissatisfaction with what you see around you, and you find you are quietly (or not so quietly) seeking a setting where you can express your own meaning and purpose in life . . . a place or a role through which you can ‘sound your own note.’” Living a life that is only bottom-line driven is not enough anymore.

A Gallup Poll revealed increased “interest in spirituality” from 20 percent of those polled in ‘94 to 78 percent post-9/11. The growing spiritualization of America is seen in the number of associations that aim to

bring higher values into the workplace, such as Association for Spirit At Work (8,000 affiliated, and 30 chapters throughout the United States and other countries), World Future Society (25,000 members), Association of Professional Futurists (250 members), Noetic Science (300 groups worldwide), the World Bank (a sponsored 400-member study group, The Spiritual Unfoldment Society, included large corporations such as Boeing and Merck).

Every March, Boston hosts the well-attended International Symposium on Spirituality & Business. Manhattan's Open Center's fall 2004 offerings included popular author and speaker Marion Woodman's recent work, "Being at the Threshold: Searching for the Rising Light in Dark Times" and her day-long workshop "Power of the Unconscious and

the Emerging New Consciousness." Included also was Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest*. All around us books, magazines, and television shows speak to the Soul of a spiritually hungry America.

*I have walked the Earth for thirty years and out of gratitude want to leave some souvenir.*

**Vincent Van Gogh**

Our nation's point of focus is turning inward, as many seek a deeper connection with Soul, Spirit, God, Divine Presence. We are longing for transcendence. Abraham Maslow coined the term of "transcender" for self-actualizing adults whose transcendent

experiences were important and even crucial. These folks were motivated by a “unity consciousness” and a sense of destiny, having had “illuminations or insights or cognitions which changed their view of the world and themselves.” In the early eighties, Marilyn Ferguson noted a new trend of people who are “quietly but powerfully” bringing about social transformation. She describes this group as being held together by a *unity consciousness* and *common vision*. “They merge . . . the practical and the mystical views of reality, transcending the dichotomy between those alleged opposites. They value all in life’s experiences and are more concerned with process and patterns than with content and specific events.”

Author and researcher Paul Ray reported that his San Francisco-based consumer research company, America Lives, has identified a growing subculture of “Cultural Creatives” who are far more receptive to psychological, spiritual, and holistic thinking and approaches to issues. They are looking for more purpose in their lives. Traditional success and relationships are no longer enough. Twenty-four percent of adults—44 million Americans—now fall into this category—and this number is rapidly increasing.

In the voices of my clients and readers, I hear the longing to live life with greater self-awareness and increased alignment with Soul. They are looking for more purpose in their lives. Traditional success and relationships are no longer enough. They now seek greater meaning, balance, and coHERency in their lives; they have climbed the ladders to success and are now looking behind them and wondering where to go next and how to heal their world. A voice of emerging leadership calls from within each of them, a voice longing to find expression that transforms the world and brings meaning. They want to create a legacy that is born of who they are; they form the vanguard of Cultural Creatives, emerging from these troubled times. There is not a moment to waste: we are being called to our personal and collective evolution.

*A voice of emerging leadership calls from within each of them, a voice longing to find expression that transforms the world and brings meaning. They want to create a legacy that is born of who they are.*

## 4

### ***Imaginal Cells and Reinvention***

*Come gather round people wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters around you have grown  
...For the times they are a-changin'.*

**Bob Dylan**

“Times They Are A’ Changing”

*What a man can be, he must be.*

**Abraham Maslow**

All great transformations start from within. One of the most incredible is the caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly. Anyone who feels that a life change is impossible to make need only look to the chrysalis to see that nothing is impossible with vision, internal transformation, persistence and collective action.

Within the chrysalis, the caterpillar first disintegrates into a clump of cells, the larva, which is formless and chaotic—much like the chaos in our lives and in our world from which the greatest transformations are born.

Within this larva, a new kind of cell emerges, which scientists refer to as imaginal cells. These cells are where the butterfly-to-be is first imagined. At first, the caterpillar’s immune system destroys these cells because they are foreign to the organism and therefore seen as a threat—just as society tends to react to any new idea, any vision for truly Great, momentous change.

But the imaginal cells persist and group together as *imaginal disks*, forming bonds that not only strengthen them but allow them to pass genetic information among cells. The more they cluster, and the more they share, the stronger and more numerous they become until they reach a tipping point—becoming the primary cells in the organism, forever changing the consciousness of the caterpillar to that of a butterfly.

*I guess I'm getting older. I have a different perspective. . . . We have such a short time together; we have such a miniscule portion of time on earth. . . . Wish we had more time to work together. . . . I don't want to take any of you for granted.*

**Robert DeNiro**

Much like stem cells in the human body, the imaginal cells transform themselves from blueprints for the entire organism to specialized cells for

different tissues—muscles, nervous system, even the heart. Four imaginal

disks will become the butterfly's four wings. In

*If we work together, we can move our planet from its chaotic larva stage and break free from the chrysalis that boxes in our thinking, our dreams, our potential to be part of a new world consciousness in which everyone has room to fly.*

other words, the imaginal cells create the butterfly from the inside out.

These amazing cells don't simply appear out of thin air. They are within the caterpillar from a very early stage of development, yet they

can't work their magic until the caterpillar reaches the last stage of its life as a caterpillar. Only then are these dormant cells able to emerge, work together and completely transform the caterpillar into a butterfly.

The message for us is clear: Our potential for Greatness, to reinvent ourselves dramatically, does not wane but is at its peak as we age. The transition to midlife and later years is the larva from which we can reimagine ourselves and fly.

### **We're in This Together**

Learning how to evolve consciously will not only benefit us as individuals but will benefit all of humanity. Imagine the effect we can have on the world if we no longer discount the contributions we can make beyond midlife but

instead collectively transform ourselves to be even greater, to fully express our gifts and passions, and to lead the world into the Age of Greatness<sup>SM</sup>.

Instead of the single imaginal cell dying off under the attack of personal and global tragedy—job loss, market crashes, recession, loss of loved ones, poverty, climate change, terrorism and war—we can work together to reinvent the world as we reinvent ourselves. The more we unleash our Greatness, the greater the impact we can have on the world.

### **Asking the Right Questions**

Professional reinventions go hand in hand with personal reinventions.

Reinvention is not an intellectual process but one of mind, body, and soul.

Before undertaking a reinvention, assess carefully:

- where you are
- where you want to go
- why you want to go there
- what's really important to you

Then check your underlying assumptions for unmet needs or overridden values:

- Are you simply bored?
- Does the grass look greener “over there”?
- Are you following a societal dictate?
- Are you doing what other’s expect?
- Are you following your own heartfelt yearning?

You may have so many interests or options that you can’t immediately discern what you want, or you may be so burned out that you can’t answer any of these questions. Reinvention is a process of personal evolution.

There’s no magic wand, however, there are some pitfalls to avoid.

Reinvention most often backfires when:

- you fail to properly research what you think you want
- you are lacking the inner resources required to fuel the change process
- you begin following a road that is not on your map
- Are you a good candidate for reinvention, or are you a high risk? How can you best prepare yourself for this process?

## 5

### ***Eight (R)evolutionary Processes***

*Whoa, there's a choice we're makin'*

*We're savin' our own lives*

*It's true we'll make a better day*

*Just you and me...*

**Daryl Hall & John Oates**

***"We are the World," USA for Africa, 1985***

The eight (r)evolutionary principles in this chapter are based on almost four decades of coaching, training, and convening visionaries. These powerful principles have lit the way for legacy building and social change that reflects this new evolved materialism:

- 1. Align with your soul purpose**
- 2. Access untapped reservoirs of potential by embracing the shadow**

- 3. Integrate the inner feminine with the masculine**
- 4. Shift perspective because thought is energy**
- 5. Invite mastery and mentoring**
- 6. Commit to enhanced consciousness**
- 7. Course correct for continuous quality improvement**
- 8. Transform yourself so you transform (y)our world**

These processes lead to the personal greatness and visionary leadership that are becoming increasingly critical in these times of historical, social, environmental, and economic crisis. As we Americans shift our definition of “success,” we positively redefine not only our country but our contribution to the world as well. The individual’s quest for more meaning in life and work is a collective quest for the survival and thrival of the species as a whole. As each individual evolves, the world also evolves.

### **(R) evolutionary Process 1: Align with Your Soul Purpose**

*I can't get no satisfaction, I can't get no satisfaction*

*“Cause I try and try and I try and try.*

*I can't get no, I can't get no*

*Hey, hey hey, That's what I say.*

*I can't get no satisfaction.*

## **Mick Jagger & Keith Richards**

### **“Satisfaction”**

Aligning with your Soul purpose is the first essential evolutionary process leading to greatness. It means connecting with your core values in a profound way. As people gain greater success, many grow dissatisfied with a life that is focused on external rewards and pressures. With the recent shifts in the global economy, even more people find themselves facing an uncertain future.

Clients tell me that they chose careers or businesses because they “fell into my lap” or “seemed practical” or “were just expected.” They explain to me that they have beautiful homes, loving spouses, and adoring children, but they walk through their lives as if they are sleeping and are wondering what is wrong. There is a deadness, many say, and they long for the aliveness of their first days of being in love or first starting on their career path. “My life feels monochrome,” one client explained, “when it once was in living color.” As midlife approaches, many begin to question their life

choices and quality--and long to build legacies that reflect what really matters. An unsettling dissatisfaction and a voice from within cries out.

An increasing number of others quite content with their careers and significant relationships still feel a general malaise. I refer to these feelings as Soul Seismology<sup>SM</sup> when the authentic Self cracks through the cultivated exterior of people to turn them inward. These inner rumblings are an invitation to traverse the Canyon of the Soul<sup>SM</sup>, where our footing gives way into a deeper landscape, one that demands we look at ourselves in a manner we never have before. The deeper we journey into the walls of the canyon, the more we will discover who we are, truly are, for the Soul of each person lives in the dark crevices, where the ravines are treacherous and the pathway uncertain. The descent—also known as the “the dark night of the Soul”—is necessary for connecting to what really matters most to us. Some need to travel longer and more deeply than others, but with guidance all will ascend with greater alignment to their core Self and with greater clarity of what truly matters.

This descent is not unique to us; it is a universal deepening described in mythology in tales such as the Sumerian myth of the Descent of Inanna and also in discussions of transition, liminality, and rites of passage in anthropology, psychology, and adult development.

## **(R) evolutionary Process 2: Access Untapped Reservoirs of Potential by Embracing the Shadow**

*Hello darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk to you again.  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping.*

**Simon & Garfunkel**

“The Sounds of Silence”

Accessing untapped reservoirs of potential by embracing the shadow is the second essential (r)evolutionary process leading to greatness.

In the natural world, dark matter is often invisible but it still exerts an undeniable force. For example, black holes cannot be

seen, but their gravitational force is distinctly felt in space. In the same way, the “dark” aspects of our psychology may not be apparent but can exert a

*These voices often remain repressed, so people can be accepted, loved, successful—not make waves—but without our awareness, these selves can sabotage or drain us.*

strong force on our actions and thinking. Questing the Canyon of the Soul<sup>SM</sup>, people discover repressed and forgotten aspects of themselves. These are what renowned psychologist Carl Jung called the shadow.

For the workaholic executive, it could be the part of her who wants to eat bon-bons and watch television all day; for the diligent accountant, it could be the sloppy fun-loving four-year-old within him who wants to spill paint all over the kitchen floor and express himself on large wild canvases; for the customer relations executive, it may be the angry warrior who recoils in anger, “Leave me alone. Go take care of your own problems!”

These voices often remain repressed, so people can be accepted, loved, successful—not make waves—but without our awareness, these selves can sabotage or drain us. Many of my most successful clients live in fear of being “found out” for being a sham or a fake; others carry within them the image of the bag lady or homeless man and live in dread that someday they will be roaming the streets with their possessions stacked in shopping carts.

When you really face the images that drive you, you discover your core fears as well as your core desires. You discover buried selves that live inside you like buried treasures that offer new vitality and creativity: the Inner Visionary, the Rusty Knight, the Sleeping Ingenue, the Rising Leader,

the Inner Wise One, the Truth Teller. With the shadow illuminated, you discover aspects of yourself that were once put away as part of the quest for success; now, given the chance to delve deeper, you will discover a rich universe that gives way to more energy, compassion, and insight at the heart of greatness.

### **(R) evolutionary Process 3: Integrate the Inner Feminine with the Masculine**

*The best thing about getting older is that you can really begin to think about your calling, your passion. . . . When I look into the future, it is so bright, it burns my eyes.*

**—Oprah Winfrey**

Integrating the inner feminine with the inner masculine is the third (r)evolutionary process that is essential to greatness.

There is no stronger force in nature for softening the hard edges of stone than water. In the same way, no influence is more healing in taking away the edges of living in a high-pitched accelerated world than that of the Sacred Feminine. The traditional masculine qualities of competitive

achievement, hierarchical organization, and goal-orientation have been at the foundation of our institutions and our very way of life. Both men and women who are successful have to internalize some or all of these values in order to succeed in the mainstream.

As more and more people feel their lives out of balance, they yearn to integrate their masculine qualities with the inner Sacred Feminine: that which is intuitive, connected to body and nature, the Soul's access way to the transcendent, and which allows a softer way of living. As people quest into the Canyon of the Soul<sup>SM</sup>, they often discover their own Sacred Feminine waiting for them like a pool of still water at the heart of fallen stone or the transformative waters of a tsunami eroding what no longer works, leaving a sculpted, newly revealed essence. By connecting to the Sacred Feminine in all her qualities, we forge a more balanced life and a more collaborative, unified way of relating to the earth and ourselves. It is through the Feminine in us all that we discover an innate wisdom that sees connections in all things and the longer view. The Sacred Feminine is rooted in our bodies as is the Soul—what Jung called the Inner Feminine, or Anima. Body, Soul, and Earth, the Sacred Feminine returns us to our sacred roots.

Listen to the voice of the Black Madonna, for she is also part of the

*Unlike years past in which women tried to lead like men, these new leaders are encouraging a more sustainable and long-lasting view based on feminine principles.*

archetypal Sacred Feminine and has many faces

that emerge across the world. Renowned

Jungian analyst and prolific author Marion

Woodman tells us of the Dark Feminine, “her

darkness is associated with the unknown,

repressed side of our femininity” and appears all over the world as Sophia,

Shekinah, Lillith, and Kwan Yin. Her truths are uncompromising, and when

we listen to her, and voice her discerning truth, the world will change.

Not only are we being called to connect to the Sacred Feminine within ourselves—men and women alike—but we see an increasing emergence of women leaders who are blazing the trail. Conferences, workshops, books, and associations are appearing throughout the country because women are taking on new leadership. Unlike years past in which women tried to lead like men, these new leaders are encouraging a more sustainable and long-lasting view based on feminine principles. Greatness is not possible without the Sacred Feminine; only through the marriage of the inner masculine and feminine polarities can we evolve as individuals and as a society.

As we get older, the traditionally “male” strategies that may have worked in our youth to gain success may not work anymore or may no

longer be satisfying. During these tough financial times, many people are seeking new pathways to create financial resilience while also bring more Soul and purpose into their lives.

## **(R) evolutionary Process 4: Shifting Perspective: Thought Is Energy**

*From out of the light there comes a story*

*Open your mind, and feel the glory*

*What's the hurry to die without trying?*

### **Prince**

**“Into the Light”**

Shifting perspective based on the scientific principle that thought is energy is the fourth (r)evolutionary process. Quarks are subatomic particles that teach us not only about matter but also consciousness. Scientists have discovered that just the presence of a researcher can affect the movements of a quark. Our consciousness, therefore, influences matter—even at the

subatomic level. If consciousness influences quarks, then clearly, what we think shapes our world. Our thoughts create our reality.

We can actively reconfigure the archetypes, myths, and stories of our day, from the old stories of Inanna, Odysseus, and the Old Testament to contemporary myths such as *ET* and *Star Wars*, all with messages that are a potential antidote to the negativity of our daily news stories. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* is an example of the cultural hunger for rewriting our future, with an emphasis on the inspirational. Just as stories move and touch us just when we need them most, so do messengers, people, and guidance that arrive just at the right time to lead our way.

How we see the world and ourselves completely creates what comes to us. Both natural and psychological processes confirm over and over again that how we perceive the world is how our world manifests. For example, when we live through the lens of more positive thinking, we tend to create a more positive world. By understanding how images and perception shapes reality, we become masters of one of the critical principles of greatness, that thought is creative.

## **(R) evolutionary Process 5: Invite Mastery and Mentoring**

*Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends.*

*Yes, I get high with a little help from my friends.*

*I'm gonna try with a little help from my friends.*

### **Beatles**

“A Little Help From My Friends”

Inviting mastery and mentoring is the fifth (r)evolutionary process that leads to greatness. No one creates greatness alone. This is the very principle of being human: We are birthed of the dual contributions of our mother and father. Even at the very microscopic level, we are encoded through a double helix, having been created by the chromosomal contribution of our parents.

The double helix is a beautiful metaphor for the duality at the root of all creation. We cannot do anything sustainable alone, which is why it is so important to develop mentors and become a mentor oneself.

Choose your mentors well, as mentorship leads to mastery, and those who teach us are critical to how we learn. Through mentorship, we develop

mastery impossible to achieve alone. And as mentors, we pass on our wisdom, leaving a legacy, sharing what we have received with others. Great mentors not only pass on the fundamentals of mastery in work but share their wisdom about relationships, spirituality, and personal growth. Greatness is possible when we stand on the shoulders of those before us—and offer our shoulders to those who are newly arrived.

### **(R) evolutionary Process 6: Commit to Enhanced Consciousness**

*Everywhere I go, Everyone I see*

*And I see my face looking back at me*

*We are one.*

*Everything I know what I know is true*

*Everyone one of us lives inside you*

**KISS**

“We Are One”

Committing to enhanced consciousness is the sixth (r)evolutionary process that leads to greatness.

If none of the stars sheds light, there can be only darkness. We must first find the light in ourselves before bringing light to the world, as part of a constellation of stars. Many people believe that if they can only achieve and achieve, they will reach greatness. On one hand, it is true that we can gain great success through outward focus; however, over and over again, I have seen that the truly great know themselves, and as their self-knowledge deepens, they transform others.

Many midlifers realize that their whole lives have been focused on external reward, and as they are called into the Canyon of the Soul<sup>SM</sup>, they discover that as they heal themselves, they heal others in new and powerful ways. Greatness is not only about achievement but also the power to change. Your professional and personal life will flourish as you take the evolutionary path to self-transformation. As we ourselves become stars, our presence is deeply felt through the lights of the whole constellation.

Change begins with changing who we are as we align with our Soul purpose, integrate the masculine and feminine aspects within, embrace the shadow, and understand our thoughts, our dreams, our stories, and our messengers. Through self-knowledge, we know our world. Each person's enhanced consciousness adds to the consciousness of the collective.

## **(R)evolutionary Process 7: Course Correct for Continuous Quality Improvement**

*If there's a bustle in your hedgerow  
Don't be alarmed now  
It's just a spring clean for the May queen.  
Yes, there are two paths you can go by  
But in the long run  
There's still time to change the road you're on*

### **Led Zeppelin**

**“Stairway to Heaven”**

Course correcting for quality improvement is the seventh (r)evolutionary process essential for greatness.

In nature, there are many examples of self-correcting systems, where elements of a greater whole are continuously brought into balance. This is called *homeostasis*. Living greatness requires continual self and system correction targeted at bringing the internal and external into balance.

Course-correction tools can direct us to areas that need improvement and allow us to adjust accordingly (and continuously). Greatness is an evolutionary process, and course-correction strategies allow an ongoing appraisal of where we are and where we need to go as we continually seek balance in work, family, and community life.

We know that the midlife crisis is a universal transition point as we self-correct and repurpose in preparation for our older years. The midlife shake-up leads often to questioning and reviewing our lives and looking at the core issues that really matter, as critical and typical as the awkward years of adolescence.

In the same way, as we come into greater balance through our midlife passage, we are also shifting the general priorities and focus of American life because many of us, almost 45 percent, are in midlife and looking for greater purpose and choices that lead to the greater good. It is almost as if when we most need another evolutionary step forward, we are together!

## **(R) evolutionary Process 8: Transform Yourself So You Transform (Y)our World**

*We're one, but we're not the same*

*One love*

*One blood*

*One life*

*We get to carry each other, carry each other*

**U2**

**“We're One”**

*By awakening the visionary  
within you, you—we—can do  
nothing short of saving the  
planet.*

Transform yourself, so you transform (y)our  
world is the eighth and final essential  
(r)evolutionary process that leads to greatness.

To survive the natural world, species must adapt to the changing conditions in the environment around them. So is true with humans. As we create organizations, systems, and relationships that foster sustainability and greater meaning, we adapt successfully to these challenging times.

We can lead the world into a new model for the twenty-first century, one that is focused on the triple bottom line: People, Planet, and Profits. We can live a new “evolved materialism,” prospering while doing work that is humane, collaborative, and environmentally sound. The sustainability of this planet depends on the ever-growing wave of Baby Boomers, 70+ers and others who are looking to transform the world and recalibrate to the new economic realities.

What has been commonly called the “midlife crisis” is acting as an “evolutionary crisis” through which people are seeking expanded purpose and ways to add value in their everyday lives and the world at large. Add to this the plummeting real estate market along with near-worthless investment portfolios, and more and more people are rejecting the current model of win-and-consume-at-all-costs and are looking toward conscious choices that will result in a more sustainable tomorrow.

This is truly the ultimate goal of the eight (r)evolutionary processes. By awakening the visionary within you, you—*we*—can do nothing short of saving the planet.

## 6

### ***The Age of Greatness***

*Hey, we're headed for the future*

*Give us some room*

*We're gonna build a new world*

*Time don't wait around forever*

*We've got to do it right now*

*Let's do it all together*

**Neil Diamond**

“Headed for the Future”

We are at a critical historical juncture. A wave of new thought leaders, including John Renesch, Tim Collins, Jean Houston, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Peter Russell, Tom Peters, Marion Woodman, John Chambers, Michael Ray, Fritoj Capra, Margaret J. Wheatley, and Mark Albion, are leading the vanguard. They are the new Cassandra—prophets in their day—offering both words of wisdom and words of warning: We can prosper or we

can perish. Human beings are on the verge of either completely dissipating and destroying all, or answering the **Greatness Challenge**.

In my 35-plus years as a Futurist, speaker, and Master Coach, I have seen an increasing number of people longing to create a future that is humane, sustainable, and conscious. Reaching a positive tomorrow starts today, and it starts with developing personal greatness through the eight (r)evolutionary processes discussed in this ebook. We can choose hope or hopelessness; the future is in the hands of every one of us.

I wrote **The Greatness Challenge** with faith in our ability to use the human gift of consciousness. Potentially, our longing for deeper meaning will save us. Victor Frankl, Jewish psychologist interned at Auschwitz during World War II, noted that the prisoners who possessed a guiding purpose best survived the camps. For many of us who are Baby Boomers and 70+ers, the call is coming at midlife, and for some, even earlier, to live a life that matters. As we answer the cry for meaning, we are also ensuring our survival and thrival. Those who bring their unique gifts for the common good bring the light of their work and being into the constellation of the collective. We are evolving into a Age of Greatness<sup>SM</sup>. I offer my work and the work of others as an evolutionary roadmap to ensure that we meet the **Greatness Challenge**.

## **Are you ready to Awaken the Visionary Within?**

Come join me and others just like you who are ready to learn more about unleashing their potential for greatness on a FREE weekly call and guided forum at [www.AwakenTheVisionaryWithin.com](http://www.AwakenTheVisionaryWithin.com).

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