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Getting Angry, Brave and Concrete!

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Why living and loving conflicts, ego and chaos is more integral, innovative and creative than what softy green leadership gurus are wanting us to believe.

Since I was asked to write about leadership, I felt more and more upset about needing to look at it in an intellectual and reflective way, while experiencing it as a war between ignored conflicts and weak leadership. I am only a human and not a god, sitting on the top, reflecting world chaos, while having a cup of tea.

This stuff makes me mad! Looking at the world my children must live in I could cry.

You may call me red or irrational. I am not diplomatic, not always nice, not well behaved. I know that I am not the answer to everything, but are you willing to allow my expression to be a part of this world? This conflict is the story of leadership I want to tell.

Because second tier approach is not about distance or standing above the primitive. It is about experiencing the shit we do every day and not being able to escape into a compartmentalised view. Exploding as “all I am“ and rebirthing into a breaking down world, in which wisdom does not free you from conflicts, it just allows you to watch the boxing match from the grand stand, while getting your nose punched at the same time.

Let’s be unfair. Most people talking about integral or holistic “we are all connected in one world“ leadership have absolutely no power in the “real world“. They don’t lead anybody. Because they run away from their conflicts. Seek a new utopia, a world which for them would be perfect and for the others would be a guaranteed path to hell and fascism. They are caught in hope. They are lost in a lie they can not live in their daily life without turning into ignorant spiritual party people.

Nobody can live a spiritual and valuable life seeking truth in this world without facing conflicts. Except best selling and well financed authors and gurus. But spiritual VIPs will never answer to your concrete question, seeking a solution for your individual life. It’s like diets. They never really seem to work for me.

Now listen guys! Don’t ever let them tell you your conflicts are not a good thing or you will never become an independent leader. We live for our conflicts. We would lose our identity if we had none. And I do not understand why we should swap our integrity for becoming uniformed enlightenment.

Come on guys! Life is too great to want to become an experience you can get after five beers, good sex or smoking a joint. You can't really think this is the top of Leadership? Forget Utopia and start living your conflicts in a conscious way. That is what leads to concrete integral approach.

Think of the really brave men who integrated new perspectives into our world! Their life was full of conflicts until the end. They lived with them.

We all grew up experiencing how crisis would make great character and prosperity would create monsters. My dad used to be the boss of an oil rig in the North Sea. An Irishman and extremist in many ways. He had conflicts with the police and nearly everybody who ever met him, but at the end of the day he was the only one who would protect the important things with his life. He would say: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

It did take me over 20 years to accept that a developing world with freedom, creativity, wealth and economical strength always needs the two sides: the open creativity or spiritual awareness and the toughness that only brave men have, to face conflicts as if they were the blood flowing through their veins. This is what Don Beck means, when he talks about integrating the first tier spectrum. It's all about being a broken soul, a gambler, a looser and a hero, a good man, a loving human in one person.

Integral Leadership is not a phony cult for softies and intellectual gurus. It is about becoming authentic. But authentic means being you in the context you live in. Not being you on a different planet.

You need to have a pitchfork under your bed guys!

And stop listening to brilliant science fiction authors like Ken Wilber or Andrew Cowan as if they would have the answer to everything! This only makes them turn into Ron Hubbards. Start thinking for your self!

You need friends with huge conflicts in their life, if you want to have something like compassion. You need your ego to survive as a free man and hero, to become more as a selfish man, turning his eyes away from tyranny.

Now, if I go back to the grand stand for a moment and ask myself why I am telling you all this, if I go to a reflective perspective, I would see that something is out of balance. A helpful perspective. But my answer to this is not to stay out of the fight, but to keep one fist in the game. If I would not do so, I would lose my integrity and society would lose diversity. So let's get back to the war! Having stepped out for one moment is the integral act. It already has changed the game.

Today we need one leg in, to be able to understand the fire of the feelings, and one leg out of the game, to be able to see new ways of solving things. At the moment political leadership is mostly both legs out or both legs in.

We live in a world in which too many are standing on the grand stand, with no authentic leadership. Leadership today does not exist. It has been replaced by a scientific bureaucracy and by ideological ideas in which collectivism stands above individualism. This is only one step away from fascism and very far away from integral leadership.

The wolves out there are taking over the game guys! They are phony leaders like European politicians, that call it “global governance“and live it as a “grab everything by bureaucracy” power trip. Their integral vision is one of centralisation and complex laws, leading into a less and less concrete or authentic style of leadership. They will not say: “Let’s go and win or fail!” They would rather rule through manipulating consensus behind groups and closed doors. If we let them rule our society, our children will wake up in a corrupt tyranny our grandfathers fighting against died for.

Not only in Germany. but also on the whole planet political leaders are seeking for an abstract definition of political order, with no controversy, surprises or unique approach.

Nothing could be less integral then that.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is the living example of political silence hiding behind the idea of consensus as an integral zeitgeist. This is like lowering down the loudness of school kids to cope with their diversity. It is integrating Individualism by not talking about the conflicts and bringing everybody into a passive sleep, with no dreams or big future visions. This fake holistic approach is not only leading Germany into a deep depression. It is also leading to accepting that nothing can be done to change. Even the strong governments must give up, failing to find consensus at G 20 meetings. The public shall just take it as a god given fact, something normal in a civilised world. That change is not possible or takes eons of time because conflict is sold to us as evil, not as a chance for more freedom and development, flowing into democracy.

This running away from conflicts makes the political world intransparent. The emotional biography of our leaders is not open to the public. We can not understand their true motivation.

This is what will destroy democracy, if we keep exploding the size of decision making on this planet. Globalising decisions and leadership will kill transparency and open doors for more corruption. The political class is hiding from the public. Acting like a company selling chocolate bars, forcing itself to keep smiling into the camera, so people will never ask about the ingrediences.

The reason why we still don’t see much integral leadership out there is rather clear. The pure integral idea in its green interpretation is not very sexy to powerbrokers and the people left to keep the integral flag in the sky do often not want to get tangled up in daily politics, conflicts or stand up in the office and start changing things. This could be the answer as to why the integral idea shows hardly any development on the level of daily management. It is used as good but 20 year old methods like Spiral Dynamics Integral or Wilber’s Quadrants, but far away from deeper integration or adaptation into a creative process of finding individual answers and expressions to integral ideas on every possible level. If integral principals would be fully integrated, the integral answer would look totally different in Spain, Africa or Japan.

Official leadership, because of propaganda and good marketing, may often seem perfect, but even green idols like Obama show hardly any practical change in politics besides nice words. Selling us “feeling integral“ as a political strategy.

But what happened?

We wanted to create a garden of diversity. Then came the man who sells lawnmowers, the real players in the game of power and global influence, and we got lost in compartmentalised discussions about steps of evolution and theoretical background of enlightenment. Suddenly changing society and living with the changes was a

pure spiritual and not a political question. Understanding the integral idea from the beginning it should truly be a human question leading to cultural, economic, spiritual and scientific answers, not turning into a religion.

Because the integral movement was occupied by the dynamics of religious leadership, what happened was that the permanent enforcement into positivism and dogma kept critical questions off the screen. The integral believers seeking leadership still think they are the elite, who does not need to develop towards the conflicts appearing. There is no reality check happening. The others have already accepted that Leadership in general is fading away. Those who want leading power to grow from integral concepts often have enough experience that their system creates the illusion that what they see from the top of the ladder is a solution to the problem that means something to the people standing in the mud. Not realising that all the muddy ones see up there is a big cloud.

This spiritual-cultural monarchy, especially in Germany, where political power since World War 2 always wants to hide, loves to create an abstract distance between integral leadership and what true leaders in politics, building their power on the muddy ones, want the theory to be for their own daily use. While integral aristocrats are telling the public to eat cake if they have no bread, to talk about ideals and seek inner change, while others fight undiscussed and hidden wars, the wolves out there are taking over the game. The Angela Merkel style of integration works like a stealth bomber for the dark side taking over. Making integral politics look like a “no conflicts needed” concept of success, possibly leading us into a dark age of new collectivism and doctrine.

The blue globalists, the orange gamblers, the green tree huggers are all using the idea that everything is connected and we need new answers in Leadership, to the complexity we are facing, for their own purpose and development and their own strategy of manipulating the grid. This is not generally a bad thing, but brings us to the answer why a simple theory like the integral-sustainable-one world idea leads us to weak and dishonest leadership in general. The integral Idea has turned into a no-leadership possible gridlock. Everything is explained over the systemic paradigm. It is not expressed by the individual in his concrete context with his life circumstances.

All big Visions of a new society tend to tangle up the intellectual elite in a simple answer to everything, which is still made impossible by the oligarchigal power structures to bring to the ground, without others using it to create the opposite of what was originally planned. This happened with capitalism, socialism, democracy, wide parts of the environmental and the integral movement.

It is time to end the isolation of integral ideas as a spiritual and pure systemic approach. And to begin with getting involved in daily conflicts in front of our own door. I think we need to back off from the big questions and get into the small and concrete.

There is a main thing most spiritual gurus of our times have totally forgotten to teach. Resistance. If you have a conflict which is reflecting something that should be changed, then do not let go of the conflict. Change what must be changed. Be persistent! Power comes from not letting go too soon. But then it is better to think smaller, then big. It is more realistic to have success if you stand up in the office and stop being a mindless slave. Those who fear that power, will always want you to focus just on the world or see yourself as weak and not spiritual enough to live through the fire.

As I said before, what you need are friends with big problems. This will strengthen the relationship. It will allow new alliances to grow through human experiences and new approaches. These will be face to face and without the need to institutionalize the “we“. The integral idea will then spread in a healthy way through society.