

When Butterflies Flap Their Wings: COMMUNITY and CONTRADICTION

by
Juan C. Moreno
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
University of Minnesota Extension Service

*“The University is a community of scholars who come together around issues of parking.”
--Popular University of Minnesota Folk Saying*

“In and through community lies the salvation of the world.” --Scott Peck

*“Not everything that can be counted counts; and not everything that counts can be counted.”
--Albert Einstein*

“For want of a nail, the shoe was lost. For want of a shoe, the horse was lost. For want of a horse, the soldier was lost. For want of a soldier, the battle was lost. For want of a battle, the war was lost.” --Grade School Poem

“Reality is reflected in a mirror and our own face obstructs the view.” --Nietzsche

“The intellect can understand any part of a thing as a part, but not as a whole. It can understand anything which God is not.” --R. H. Blyth

*“You think because you understand one, you must understand two, because one and one makes two. But you must also understand **and**.” --Sufi teaching*

*“In a full heart there is room for everything, and in an empty heart there is room for nothing.”
--Antonio Porchia*

“Ignorance of the cause frustrates the effect.” --Francis Bacon

“There’s a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure truth.” --Maya Angelou

*“The great enemy of the truth is very often not the **lie** deliberate, contrived, and dishonest but the **myth** persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic.” --John F. Kennedy*

We humans are deeply a community building species. Anyone who has ever joined a Little League, a youth gang, a temple, a women's club, a professional society, a support group, indeed anyone who has even been part of a family (however we define family), knows that none of us can go it alone. Community is a word of many meanings so that trying to define it is like trying to nail jell-o to the wall. For some, community is a neighborhood defined by warm and reciprocal relationships, where neighbors water plants for those on vacation and everyone keeps an eye out for the neighborhood children. For others, community is the byproduct of civic engagement, the magic that can develop when parents become involved in local schools and citizens begin to work together to set shared goals and solve shared problems. For still others, community is simply a special quality of human relationship arising from deeply shared beliefs and values, such as the community working courageously all over the world on behalf of human

rights and dignity. Today, increasingly, there is talk of communities of interest as well as “virtual communities” linked together in cyberspace and virtual reality.

To imagine authentic community at its best, however, is to imagine human relationships characterized by the values of justice and caring. Carol Gilligan (author of *“In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development”*) suggests that an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality--that everyone should be treated the same--and an ethic of caring rests on the premise of nonviolence--that no one should be hurt. An ethic of care, she explains, creates a connection between relationship and responsibility and acknowledges the roots of aggression as flowing from a failure of relationship.

When embraced by an individual, the values of justice and caring are revealed in the actions of extending oneself to others and extending oneself on behalf of others. When embraced by a community, the values of justice and caring are expressed as a sharing of responsibility for who we are and how we live together as a people. Altruism and solidarity thus play an important role in creating and sustaining such a community. Authentic community is--like the human condition itself--filled with significant discoveries, difficulties, complexities, mysteries, tensions, paradoxes, uncertainties, ambiguities as well as incompleteness and chaos. Exercising leadership under these circumstances requires of us the capacity to accept surprises that upset our rational, scientific, and orderly views of the world, and become artists who ride the waves of an elusive reality gracefully. In this process we are empowered by a spirit within and beyond ourselves. Some additional reflections, insights, and observations into the nature of human communities follow:

1. Authentic community is ultimately mysterious as well as deeply spiritual.
2. Because of the inherent imperfections of its members, a healthy and vital community is--at its best--only an approximation to an ideal. Communities are fragile and endless works-in-progress. Like peace, justice, love, freedom, and order; authentic community is forever an incomplete and unfinished process, but always full of possibility. A robust community embraces paradox and incompleteness.
3. Authentic community is not only synergistic but also the very embodiment of gestalt: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Because of these phenomena, not everything that happens in community can be accurately measured, counted, and/or weighted. Since those elements are the foundation of the scientific method as well as analytical thinking, applying them to community does not often provide us with a complete, accurate, and holistic picture of what is truly going on. Ultimately, little worth believing in is scientifically provable.
4. In analytical thinking, we understand things by taking them apart. In systems thinking, we understand things by looking at what they are a part of. The tools of our culture lend themselves more to analytical thinking than to systems thinking. By appreciating that the two perspectives can coexist simultaneously, we can expand our own capacity for more integrative and holistic thinking--a vital skill for understanding community in all of its complexity.

5. In understanding the complexities and rhythms of community life, we must be alert to the tendency to view one perspective as good and the other as bad (analysis vs. systems). Both are absolutely equal and necessary.
6. When we hold opposing ideas together at once, there is a necessary and inescapable tension that can either fracture our understanding or generate greater flexibility. By holding onto twin realities simultaneously, we can better bend and flow with the community we are trying to understand and respond to it and to each other in more creative ways.
7. To think about the whole (community) we are obliged to hold the multiple paradoxes of community life together--in their tension, chaos, ambiguity, contradiction, and uncertainty.
8. A community usually has many parts. It is, in that sense, a multifaceted system that needs to function in concert and harmony. As a consequence, it is possible for some parts of a community to be working better than others.
9. In a system like community, every part is related to every other part and change in one part will lead to change in all other parts.
10. Every part of a community forms a web of simultaneously independent and interdependent relationships. Like a matrix, the web has many intersections and many junctions. At every intersection and at every joint there is the potential for a squeak. As a consequence, in community, every part as well as every joint and every connection must be attended to. Relationships are the glue that hold community together. Social capital increases or decreases in direct proportion to the quantity and quality of relationships.
11. Because of its systemic nature; linear, cause and effect relationships (Newtonian Physics: mechanistic paradigm which maintains that all physical reality can be reduced to a few particles and the laws and forces acting among them) do not always operate in community, as do non-linear dynamics (New Sciences: revolutionary discoveries in quantum physics, chaos theory, and biology that are overturning centuries-old models of science).
12. In community a small action can have a very large reaction (The Butterfly Effect: a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil sets off a tornado in Texas) or vice versa. Also, the law of unintended consequences can play a significant role in the multiple dynamics at work in the life of community. In this instance, an action in one part of the system can cause a reaction in another--totally unrelated part (The ENRON Effect: the collapse of a business in Houston leads to campaign finance reform in Washington).
13. In a well functioning system, no one part is always operating at its full capacity or potential. If it does so constantly, it will tend to cave under its own weight (i.e. a person

will have a heart attack if the heart is operating at 100% capacity all of the time). In a thriving system, all parts function in concert and harmony with one another in an elegant display of synchronization and rhythm--compensating and adjusting to each other's successes and strengths as well as failures and weaknesses along the way.

14. Because of its systemic, complex, and uncertain nature, the sustainment of a healthy and vital community--over the long term--requires constant and intentional vigilance, attention, and commitment. Community is incrementally built or destroyed daily by our individual and collective actions--or by our failures to act.
15. Because there is no way of predicting all the variables at play, uncertainty and randomness are inherent elements in all human as well as natural systems. As a consequence, uncertainty and randomness are essential features of community life and there is no model yet available to help us eliminate their influence.
16. Community organizations tend to move towards greater simplicity, control, and order whereas community life is generally complex, messy, chaotic, and random.
17. Authentic community arises out of the premise of equality of its members. Equality, in most human relationships, is elusive at best and, at worst, probably non-existent.
18. Authentic community also arises out of an ethic of caring, mercy, and solidarity yet apathy, incivility, and violence of all sorts are quite prevalent in our communities.
19. Civic engagement is the foundation of our society's democratic experiment in community. Apathy, indifference, and free loading are antithetical to our democratic ideals of community as is decision making that considers only the views of those who show up. While we may think of community as a birthright, an authentic community is something each of us earns through our daily activities. It is also something we may lose through our neglect, apathy, and inaction.
20. Community building is a balancing act between the individual and the group.
21. Community requires strong boundaries and soft borders.
22. Tragedy often leads to the building of community. The very nature of tragic events often leads to the unusually rapid development of community.
23. The American Indian "sweat lodge" experience may also lead to the rapid development of community.
24. In the absence of tragedy or something resembling the "sweat lodge" experience, building authentic community requires time. Time is a commodity that is increasingly in short supply in our midst. There is no such thing as an instantaneous community.

25. Authentic community requires what Scott Peck (author of "*The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*") calls "soft individualism," or the capacity to become more permeable and transparent. Unfortunately, however, we live in a society that, in the context of our global village, is the very epitome of "rugged individualism" and raw self-interest. This strong and pervasive cultural orientation makes the process of building community in our midst that much more difficult to accomplish.
26. Authentic community needs words, continuity, solidarity, and silence--communication, commitment, commonality, and communion.
27. Communication--and its very close relative dialogue--when properly exercised, is a powerful source of community healing and reconciliation. Sometimes loud, angry, heated yet deeply respectful discourse is necessary if we are to move to higher ground. We are all skilled at avoidance, blame, complaint, denial, violence, withdrawal, and the silent treatment. In an authentic community, members learn to fight gracefully and respectfully.
28. The noble exercise of "dialogos" (from the Latin: "through the word") does not permit discussions to break down into bizarre behaviors or the perceived safety of silence. To those willing to engage in heartfelt dialogue we owe the future of authentic community. From inauthentic congeniality (pseudo-community), through chaos and conflict, we can move onto authentic community whose central trademark is more genuine and more transparent communication.
29. Dialogue presupposes the existence of two fundamental pillars: humility and trust. Humility because I alone do not have access to the whole truth, but together *WE* can expand *OUR* collective truth. Humility in order to accept that I possess but only a part of what is right and reasonable. Humility in order to know that I may have made a mistake. And trust in others, that they are operating in good faith and with the best of intentions.
30. Because we build community in the midst of our differences (including ideological differences), conflict and chaos are necessary paths towards authentic community as is the capacity for "emptiness" and the suspension of judgment and certainty. It may very well be that our deepest human connections are forged within the crucible of conflict.
31. Emptiness is a concept derived from Zen Buddhism that also translates as "open mindedness." When we are able to transcend our personal and unique biographies, we are able to join others at the boundaries of what we share in common. Through emptiness we clear our minds, open our hearts, replenish our spirits, and transform our actions.
32. Community making requires strong and sustained commitment to staying with the process even during the "desert times" of conflict and chaos.
33. In community we transcend our differences with integrity.

34. Increasingly in community, the lines between the local and the global are blurred.
35. In community we are alone and together. We are independent as well as interdependent.
36. In community unity and separateness are simultaneously celebrated. In community we are unique and alike.
37. In community we are awakened to the profound realization that there is no private wealth without common wealth.
38. In community, scarce resources available are widely shared and used in the best--most efficient and effective--manner. As a result, abundance is generated.
39. Collectivist and communitarian societies around the world tend to be economically poorer than individualistic ones. In the hospitality index, however, collectivist societies tend to be richer.
40. An authentic community ought to be, by its very nature, inclusive. An exclusive community is a contradiction in terms. Inclusion involves the “self” as much as the “other.” Simultaneously, however, in an inclusive community individual differences are celebrated.
41. In authentic community fear of the stranger is faced squarely and dealt with honorably.
42. Communities are unhealthy in direct proportion to their secrets.
43. All of our pathologies are exacerbated in community.
44. The parts we least like about ourselves always appear in the context of community.
45. Because of its paradoxical nature, the perfect community will cease to exist the moment you or I join it.
46. Parker Palmer (author of *“To Know As We Are Known”*) defines community in this manner: “Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives, and when that person moves away, someone else arises to take his or her place.”
47. Community is a paradox, not a panacea. If the individual alone is capable of evil, in community the potential for evil is magnified exponentially.
48. The most important shadow of community is diversity and the most important shadow of diversity is community. As a consequence, the best antidote for the multiple excesses of community is to be found within diversity and the best antidote for the multiple excesses of diversity is to be found within community.

49. Other extreme and virulent shadows of community life include: injustices, cults, groupthink, collective myths and illusions (we are all alike/homogeneous), superstitions, shunnings, outcastings, rejections, marginalizations, exclusions, disenfranchisements, gangs, clicks, witch hunts, hysteria, mob mentality, ethnocentrism, secrets (elephants in the community's living room), collusions, conspiracies (including those of silence), systemic and institutionalized prejudices, exploitations, oppressions, manipulations, crusades, ethnic cleansings, social cleansings, lynchings, holocausts, genocides, political power plays; the dissipation, diffusion, and abdication of personal responsibility; the "killing of messengers," the fabrication of "sacrificial lambs" and "fall guys," collective conformity, apathy, indifference, dehumanization of the stranger (and the enemy), and many many others, much too numerous to mention here.
50. Community is perception. As such, it is an awareness and a feeling of peoplehood and belonging. Community is a group of people. Additionally, community is a place as well as a process, a product as well as a persona (identity). Community is also about power, because in uniting with others for a common purpose there is strength in the numbers. Finally, community is a promise, a covenant (troth), we make to each other about how we are going to live and work together.
51. Community can also be based on common interests or, increasingly, on an ability to connect meaningfully with others through cyberspace.
52. Scott Peck in his book "*The Different Drum*" defines Community as "a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to 'rejoice together, mourn together,' and to 'delight in each other, make each others' conditions [their] own.'"
53. As a place, community is a geographic location where all people are able to meet their needs (social, economic, physical, political, spiritual, recreational, educational, environmental, cultural, aesthetic, etc.) and have a voice in shaping their collective future, without compromising the needs of future generations. In an inclusive community, therefore, people think, feel, and act as full members of the whole and all of their multiple differences (race, class, culture, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ideology, etc.) are recognized, understood, and valued.
54. To call a place home demands a reciprocal allegiance between the person and the place. The person gives allegiance to the place in exchange for the place providing some measure of affirmation, inclusivity, and a sense of community and belonging. When this does not occur, as is often the case in many parts of the world, one is forced to remain in a permanent state of "outsiderness" even in one's own home.
55. A longing for home is a universal human yearning, a searching, a remembering, and a desiring for a place that is life affirming and where our basic and not-so-basic needs are met with dignity. There is in every human being an intense longing for home, for a place that is safe, for a place to belong, for a place where we can find a sense of deep

connection with others, for a place that can become our beloved community--our very own city on the hill.

56. In the larger systemic sense, there is also a common yearning in our hearts for a more humane, more just, more peaceful, and more environmentally conscious ultimate dwelling place--our inconsequential and modest little planet, the earth. Working towards ridding the earth of its worst scourges: dogma, domination, and dictatorship, is a tangible way of healing the planet, and ourselves in the process.
57. People on the fringes of community life are often the key to discerning its future. Those who have been historically marginalized regularly perceive visions of a more authentic community. Their ability to label and verbalize the multiple hard truths and hypocrisies of community life should be sought out with courage and integrity by those willing to deconstruct "what is" in order to reconstruct "what could be," namely more healthy, thriving, inclusive, and transformational communities. When we are able to see our communities through the eyes of those who are most vulnerable and most excluded in our midst, we are invariably propelled to move towards greater justice. In the process, we not so much empower the powerless as much as we unshackle ourselves from the fears and prejudices that have prevented us from achieving our fullest potential. Communities that pursue justice with intention and passion generate abundance and, consequently, improve the lives of everyone--oppressors as well as oppressed.
58. Communities of all sorts already exist. It is our imperative, however, to declare them as such. By declaring our communities, we appropriate them for ourselves as well as others. In this process, we can begin to work at the service of community in order to find not only our commitments (passions, inspirations, meanings) but also create our possibilities (options, opportunities, alternatives).
59. As a process, community building has developmental stages and its sustainment long-term entails intentional effort and commitment as well as a deep understanding of the nature of group dynamics, social change, and human conflict. Scott Peck (author of "*The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*") has identified some of the key stages of community making and they include: pseudo-community (congeniality and pretense), conflict/chaos (brokenness and separation), emptiness (suspending judgment and bracketing assumptions, reconciliation, and remorse), and authenticity (transparency). Bruce W. Tuckman ("*Developmental Sequences in Small Groups*"), another author on the subject, has identified the following stages: forming (polite and stranger stage), storming (argument and conflict stage), norming (building shared meaning and acceptance of differences stage), and performing (building of trust and action stage).
60. Community, as a living system, can also be compared to a garden. As in a garden, we need community builders (master gardeners) who are always mindful of community life in all of its complexity. We need persons (leaders) who are adept at continuously preparing the soil, planting, fertilizing, cultivating, weeding, watering, and harvesting the garden of community life lest it grow quickly into a jungle. Like gardening, sustaining healthy communities for the long term is hard yet rewarding work.

61. As a product, community is the legacy that we leave behind to future generations.
62. The legacy of community life is both tangible and intangible. Its natural and its constructed assets as well as the organizations that support them are the tangible legacy of community (lakes, mountains, streams, parks, schools, hospitals, temples, government centers, etc.). On the other hand, its beliefs, values, traditions, norms, customs, and cultures are the intangible legacy of community life. One typical manifestation of this phenomenon is captured in the statement: “this is just the way we do things around here.”
63. In the intangible nature of community life, once patterns are established, they are very difficult to overcome and uproot. As a consequence--for good as well as evil--once models of shared norms are in place, like habits and addictions of the collective mind, they persevere in community from generation to generation. Shared norms are the collective culture of a community. They act as the blueprint that determines the way individuals think, feel, and behave. As a consequence, authentic community cultural and transformational change must consider these four elements: winning the minds (knowledge), touching the hearts (beliefs), replenishing the spirits (soul), and changing the habits (actions) of individuals.
64. Because of its complexity, it is infinitely easier to destroy community than it is to build it up. It is also much easier to create coalitions against something than for something.
65. As a persona (identity), community plays a key role in our definition of self, since the self is inherently incomplete apart from others. The true and authentic “Self” (the Self as Thou, with a capital “s”) is communal. In fact, the beginning of justice is the reality of relatedness whereas the beginning of injustice is the illusion of separateness.
66. Community is also a sacred promise and an agreement (troth) about how we are going to live and work together in this place. Because we cannot possibly legislate for every single human contingency, a known community covenant is indispensable in holding us accountable to each other. Because of the possibility of multiple shadows in the commons, perhaps the first element of community building should be a stated ethical communal orientation towards justice and goodness as in the Hippocratic Oath (“First Do No Harm”). Additionally, because none of us has access to the whole truth, in authentic community we share our common humanity with uncommon humility.
67. Because of its complexity, community is essentially a contested term in our society, yet one thing remains quite clear: we cannot have an authentic community in the continuing and insidious presence of injustice, oppression, and exploitation. As a consequence, one critical measure of community vitality is how well a community approximates an ideal of a group of people who choose to live in a certain place and who are able to establish a process, a product, a persona, and a promise as free as possible from injustice, manipulation, domination, oppression, and exploitation. A vital community is aware of its tremendous power and uses it ethically to advance the common good. A vital community is ultimately liberating.

68. In authentic community people are empowered and protected against the shadows of power.
69. Tradition and continuous change are the hallmarks of a healthy community.
70. Community lives within the tension of the old and the new.
71. Leadership is exercised only within the context of community. An authentic community is a group of leaders who share equal responsibility and commitment for maintaining its spirit. In community a wide range of gifts, visions, talents, and skills are celebrated. Criticism is the prize we pay for involvement and leadership.
72. In a vibrant community rootedness (sense of place) and routedness (sense of journey) are simultaneously acknowledged, appreciated, and celebrated.
73. In community, how (process) things get done is as important as what (product) things get done.
74. In community relationships and tasks (process and product) are simultaneously attended to.
75. Reality and truth are always a mixture of fact and mystery revealed to us through the unique screen of our human experience. A healthy and vital community is staunchly realistic and deliberately pursues truth with enthusiasm. A thriving community deeply understands and embraces both its strengths as well as its limitations. A landlocked geographic community should never dream of becoming a saltwater port. Collective illusions and myths often contribute to the many shadows of community life.
76. Because uncertainty and randomness are inherent elements of community life, community change seldom follows an incremental, causal, and controlled path. Often, that is just one more illusory hope that needs to be surrendered to the ethereal mystery of community.
77. All the planning in the world will not determine how things ultimately turn out in community. In a myriad of ways, randomness and uncertainty assert themselves into the mundane details of our individual and collective efforts. Discoveries on the phenomenon of “Resiliency,” which can also be applied to communities, clearly follow this uncharted and discontinuous path.
78. Because community is paradoxical, mystery and grandeur thrive at the intersections of its multiple paradoxes, dichotomies, and polarities. At these crucial points, between the knowable and the unknowable, we are drawn into a landscape of both pain and possibility. This is precisely the place where the spirit of community blossoms and flourishes.

79. Our tragedies, failures, and misfortunes as much as our triumphs, accomplishments, and successes contribute to the building of a more authentic community.
80. Our visions, dreams, and longings to live in authentic community are universal. There is a common yearning in our hearts for establishing more meaningful, just, and authentic community with others.

The ultimate nature of reality is meaning and what does not have meaning is not real to us. These words perfectly define the central challenge for transformative work in community. In order to give meaning to creation, we humans attempt to give a name to everything and place it into some kind of order. To label, we must classify, but as an unavoidable consequence, continuity is torn--what is whole becomes fragmented. Evil has meaning only in its relation to good, the sacred to the profane, the left to the right. It is only in such a world of ordered opposition that we begin to discern what is real. We know what is up and what is down, what is worthy and what is not. We become comparing creatures par excellence who assign value and judgment to a fragmented creation. We bask in the illusion and security of an “either/or - we/they” reality. And this is precisely where the problems begin. The dichotomies and polarities upon which we build our sense of order are not necessarily always correct. Between left and right there is still a middle, between good and evil remains the morally neutral, between the masculine and feminine remains the bisexual or the homosexual. The concept of what resides at the confluence, at the intersection of our dichotomies, what makes-up the middle ground, intrudes into our wonderfully rational order and obscures the sacredness of our divisions. When this happens, our secure and orderly view of the world is replaced by an almost unacceptable dissonance.

In the final analysis, however, when we as individuals begin to see the world simultaneously through the twin lenses of privilege and prejudice (and its close relatives, grace and injustice), we quickly realize that “earned privilege” is a contradiction in terms. Additionally, we begin to be profoundly challenged in our comfort zones, stretched in our mindsets, worldviews, and realities as well as inspired to personal and societal transformation.

Transformation is the inward and real formation of the essential nature of a person and a community. Transformation, like leadership, is our personal and collective liberation from fear. One of the noble counsels coming from the heart of every great spiritual tradition are the simple words: “be not afraid.” The words do not say that we are not supposed to have fear, rather that we can choose a different place to be from, a place of mystery, awe, surprise, and wonder. We can “be not afraid” even while we have fear. The transformative process invariably leads us to the realization that there is no longer the brokenness, separation, and fragmentation of “*either-or, us and them*”--only “*BOTH-AND, WE and OURS*.”

Through transformation we come to the sudden insight that reconciliation and resurrection can only happen when we are willing to confess our incompleteness apart from others, when we comprehend that outside of relationship, the human spirit cannot exist, when we understand that the true Self is inherently communal. Therefore, we slowly begin to realize the importance of authentic community and our individual and collective roles in creating and sustaining such a community. We begin to discover gradually that authentic community arises out of the sharing

of our common humanity with uncommon humility. We begin to understand anew the true meaning and importance of communication, commitment, commonality, and communion in the building of such an authentic community--one that is forged in the crucible of time, truth, trust, and troth (a new covenant). We begin to behold that it is only through authentic community that we can be accurate mirrors to one another--the kind of mirrors in whose reflection we can see glimpses of our souls. In this manner, not only is our collective reality expanded, but also and more importantly, we start to see ourselves as we truly are. We begin to comprehend, with some sadness and sorrow, that during times of plenty and prosperity, community is almost always bothersome; whereas during times of despair and tragedy, community is almost always welcomed. Most significantly though, we begin to discern that perhaps the greatest gift of authentic community resides in its capacity to exalt justice and, therefore, generate abundance; whereas the greatest gift of individualism resides in its capacity to exalt greed and, therefore, generate scarcity. In and through authentic community we can finally discover the glory of what it means to be human.

ADDITIONAL WISDOM

“And into that gate they shall enter, and in that house they shall dwell, where there shall be no cloud nor sun, no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no foes nor friends, but one equal communion and identity; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity.” --John Donne

“Heaven is not only above us. It is also under our feet.” --Henry D. Thoreau

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant...I still believe that we shall overcome.” --Martin L. King Jr.

“Always hold firmly to the thought that each one of us can do something to bring some portion of misery to an end.” --East Indian Saying

“Spirit counts for more than knowledge.” --Liberty Hide Bailey

“We live in a world lived in common with others.” --Maxine Green

“When in doubt, talk.” --Hubert H. Humphrey

“You don’t have to save the world. Just save your hometown. It will add up.” --Hubert H. Humphrey

“It seems to me that in the last analysis there are only two choices: Macbeth's contention that life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing and Pierre Teilhard's ‘something is afoot in the universe, something that looks like gestation and birth.’ Either there is a plan and purpose--and that plan and purpose can best expressed by the words “life” and “love”--or we live in a cruel, arbitrary, and deceptive cosmos in which our lives are a brief transition between two oblivions. The data are inconclusive as to these two choices, at least if we look at the data from a scientific, rational standpoint...I opt for hope, not as an irrational choice in the face of the facts, but as a leap of faith in the goodness I have experienced in my life.” --Andrew Greeley

“A global human society based on the poverty of many and the prosperity of few, characterized by islands of wealth in the midst of a sea of poverty, is unsustainable.” --Thabo Mbeki

“History provides no guarantees on the shape of things to come. The possibilities for good and evil remain essentially today, as they have always been, as numerous as the stars. Yet, if there is anything about which I am

absolutely certain, it is that within each of us lies the power to transform the world for the better. Let there be no doubt as to the ability of well-meaning individuals to change life's odds and to influence his or her own destiny along a positive course. I believe most passionately that in each one of you lies a Jefferson, a Lincoln, an Eleanor Roosevelt, a Mother Teresa, and a Martin Luther King, Jr. None of these great men and women accepted the failures and inequities of the world in which they were born, and neither should you! They believed in the perfectibility of the world in which they lived and would not be turned away from what they knew was good, what was right, and what was just." --Daniel K. Inouye, U.S. Senator from Hawaii

"Where there is room for mystery, there is room for hope." --Anonymous

"In the moment of our trial and our triumph, let me declare my faith. I believe in loving my enemies."
--Mohandas K. Gandhi

"On the one hand I must attempt to change the soul of individuals so their societies may be changed. On the other, I must attempt to change the societies so that the individual soul will have a chance." --Martin Luther King Jr.

"A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of society, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind." --Daisaku Ikeda

"The hazards of life are such that any eventuality is possible." --Andre Maurois

"Appreciation is a wonderful thing; it makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well." --Voltaire

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is sort of a splendid torch which I have a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it over to future generations." --George Bernard Shaw

"Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is blessing. Where there is blessing, there is God. Where there is God, there is no want." --Common Prayer

"Only when the last tree has died, and the last river has been poisoned, and the last fish has been caught, will we realize that we cannot eat money." --Cree Indian Saying

"Perhaps only those people who are capable of real togetherness have that look of being alone in the world."
--D. H. Lawrence

"Collecting data is only the first step toward wisdom. But sharing data is the first step toward community."
--Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

"Together, all things are possible." --Cesar Chavez

*"Ubuntu is very difficult to translate into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human.... You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'A person is a person through other persons.' It is not, 'I think therefore I am.' It says rather: 'I am human because I belong, I participate, I share.' A person with **ubuntu** is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured and oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are."* --Desmond Tutu

"Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by

faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.” --Reinhold Niebuhr

“In systems such as contemporary society, evolution is always a promise and devolution is always a threat. No system comes with a guarantee of ongoing evolution. The challenge is real. To ignore it is to play dice with all we have. To accept it is not to play God—it is to become an instrument of whatever divine purpose infuses the universe.” --Ervin Laszlo

“Affluence separates people. Poverty knits them together. You’ve got some sugar and I don’t; I borrow some of yours. Next month you might not have any flour; well, I’ll give you some of mine.” --Ray Charles

“When we survey our lives and endeavors, we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires is bound up with the existence of other human beings. We eat food that others have produced, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built...The individual is what he is and has the significance that he has not so much in virtue of his individuality, but rather a member of a great human community, which directs his material and spiritual existence from the cradle to the grave.” --Albert Einstein

“Although we generally think of community in terms of what binds participants together—shared norms, beliefs, and values—communities of difference are based not on homogeneity but on respect for difference and on the absolute regard for the intrinsic worth of every individual. Members of such communities do not begin with a dominant set of established norms but develop these norms together, with openness and respect, as they share their diverse perspectives.” --Carolyn Fields

“The smallest unit in which humanity can be divided is two.” --Karl Marx

“Duct tape is like the Force. It has a light side, a dark side, and it holds the universe together.” --Carl Zwanzig

“The Gross National Product (GNP) does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It allows neither for the justice in our courts, nor for the justice of our dealings with each other. The Gross National Product measures our wit not our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.” --Robert Kennedy

“The sign of a truly educated person is to be deeply moved by statistics.” --George Bernard Shaw

“At the simplest level, only people who know they do not know everything will be curious enough to find things out.” --Virginia Postrel

“What should our shared values be? Everybody counts. Everybody deserves a chance. Everybody has a responsibility to fulfill. We all do better when we work together. Our differences do matter, but our common humanity matters more.” --Bill Clinton

“A little patience and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolve, and the people, recovering their true sight, restore their government to its true principles. It is true that in the mean time we are suffering deeply in spirit, and incurring the horrors of a war and long oppressions of enormous public debt . . . If the game runs sometimes against us at home we must have patience till luck turns, and then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the principles we have lost, for this is a game where principles are the stake. Better luck, therefore, to us all; and health, happiness, and friendly salutations to yourself.” --Excerpts from a letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, Philadelphia 1798

“Let us take care of the children for they have a long way to go. Let us take care of the elders for they have come a long way. Let us take care of those in between for they are doing the work.” --Nelson Mandela

“I am really not an optimist because not all is right in the world. I am really not a pessimist because not all is wrong in the world. I do, however, cultivate hope in my heart as an antidote for cynicism, apathy, malaise, and hopelessness.” --Vaclav Havel

“We have wasted Paradox and Mystery on you, when all you wanted was Cause and Effect.” --Christopher Fry

“Righteousness is slow because it goes uphill. Evil is fast because it goes downhill.” --Alexandre Dumas

“I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” --Albert Einstein

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” --Mark Twain

“Give me a place to stand, and I will move the Earth.” --Archimedes, Greek Philosopher

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final analysis, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.” --Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), from a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 16, 1963

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” --Henry David Thoreau

“From the cowardice that dare not face new truths, from the laziness that is contented with half truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, good Lord, deliver me.” --Kenyan prayer.

“The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.” --Martin Luther King, Jr.