

## Global Transformation and the Power of Practice

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In our contemporary time of unprecedented global crisis, how do we proceed towards a future that is sustainable, loving, and just? How do we make sense of our democratic values when their truest, spiritual form is yet to be realized?

These are big and important questions to ask ourselves, but perhaps the answer doesn't lie in one or a handful of perfect solutions. What if global transformation is inspired simply by our collective ability to respond to life's challenges? To do so, each of us needs to utilize the tools provided by an intentional and integral practice and put them to use with a sense of purpose.



Paralympic athlete Aimee Mullins believes *"Adversity isn't an obstacle that we need to get around in order to resume living our life. It's part of our life."* If our aim is to avoid all that makes us uncomfortable, we are denying ourselves the opportunity for growth. Committing to our practice allows us to *"take the hit"* and use challenges, both personal and social, to grow and transform in positive ways. Over time, it's not that we have figured out how to avoid the bumps and bruises of life, but instead are able to return again and again to a balanced and centered state. The power found in our practice is that we are then able to lean into life's challenges and respond with solutions inspired by agapic love rather than the ego.

A long-term practice is also critical in helping us *"play the edge"* of our resistance to transformation. Understanding how to negotiate these uncomfortable growing pains in our personal practice can offer us experience in facilitating community and global change as well. We'd all be wiser if we heeded the words of George Leonard; *"When and if you should run into resistance, don't back off but don't bull your way through. Negotiation is the ticket to successful long-term change."*

Just as our personal transformation isn't a quick fix and requires awareness and practice, our global transformation must be approached as a similar journey. Embracing the plateaus of progress and being mindful of homeostasis at work are critical components in successfully co-creating a conscious and compassionate planet.

This dance in negotiating our growth spurts and plateaus is energized by a support network. Transformation can't happen in a vacuum, and finding a community in which we belong is necessary to foster evolution at a personal and global scale. And just as we all need multiple mentors and teachers, so, too, do we need intentional communities that are passionate about solving the diverse set

of challenges before us. From environmentalism and anti-racism, to economic democratization and gender and sexual equality, a new wave of conscious activism has sprung into motion.

Global change, however, first comes from our ongoing personal evolution. The power in our daily practice, in connecting with a mindful community and in striving for our full potential in body, mind, heart and soul will help us to find creative solutions that are balanced, vital and healthy. Our practice opens us up to the infinite capacity within our selves and the wonders of nature and the cosmos, and that is a powerful anecdote to the fear and resistance spreading throughout the world. As George Leonard and Michael Murphy articulate in *The Life We Are Given*:

*“There are many powerful forces in the world, and some of them - cynicism, greed, ethnic hatred, heedless ambition, armies and huge, impersonal organizations, to name a few - have a particular power to destroy. But a love that asks nothing in return is perhaps even more powerful, for it seeks to create, not destroy. ...Are we willing to consider the possibility of a society in which love prevails?”*

Perhaps this is one of the most important lessons we can learn. Global transformation begins with a grounded and centered state of compassion, is energized by our sense of purpose and inspired by a community who believes positive change can be achieved. All it takes is practice.