

## Purpose to the People!

### *A Rallying Cry for Global Change*

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It was a half of century ago when I declared myself an activist. I remember the day well. It was April 5, 1968. I was a sophomore in high school, doing a research project on marine biology over spring break on Sapelo Island, Georgia.

The day before had been a magical day of studying the homing instincts of fiddler crabs and sampling the culinary delights of quahog clams. But when I walked into the breakfast room that morning the atmosphere was anything but magical. A palpable sense of gloom hung in the air. The black women who worked in the kitchen were sobbing. In the background, a black and white TV was blaring out the news of the assassination of Martin Luther King.



I felt sick to my stomach. I wanted to cry too, and I did. Then I ran out the door and walked to the beach and watched the waves roll in. Sad, angry and defiant I remembered the words of Dr. King himself: *"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."* This was injustice at its worst, and it moved me to declare that I would become an activist. I would do whatever I could in my own way to fight for justice.

And here we are, over fifty years later, and how far have we come in the struggle for justice? It's one thing to come full circle, it is quite another to let a half century drift by while cultural evolution stagnates, the environment deteriorates to the point of possible no return, and the political dialogue becomes downright toxic.

### **An Urgent Call to Pursue Your Full Potential**

After fourteen billion years of cosmic evolution, we have come to the brink of our own extinction. We know that in the shared heart of humanity the values that connect us are spiritual, compassionate, altruistic and inclusive. But rather than being guided by the true spirit in our souls, we have become yes-people answering to the materialistic paradigm. The time is now to give purpose back to the people. But what does it mean to take ownership of our sense of purpose?

In today's world, expectations are high on reaching our full potential. In fact, over 40% of teens in the United States admit to feeling stressed about living up to high standards, such as doing well on academic tests, getting into the right university and going on to earn a good salary. Unfortunately, it seems our potential has become quantifiable, measurable and materialistic in its definition. We're

conditioned to judge our self-worth by our educational status and accumulation of wealth, but does it really have to be that way?

What about empowering ourselves and others to reach our full potential and harness those gifts to help make a positive impact on the world? As George and Michael write in *The Life We are Given*, “...all of us possess a vast, untapped potential to learn, to love, to feel deeply, to create, and that there are few tragedies so pervasive, so difficult to justify, as the waste of that human potential.”

The problem is, we are often duped into thinking that accumulating fame and fortune is our purpose, only to cheat ourselves out of our authentic potential in the process.

When we allow ourselves the freedom to explore our unique gifts and share them with the larger community, we simultaneously feel empowered by our emerging sense of purpose while also creating more creative and sustainable solutions. When we have a sense of purpose, we can take action in an energized and positive way.

### **Radical Action Through Integral Leadership**

What is needed from each of us, and strengthened through our ITP practice, is radical action and empowerment. However, “radical” doesn’t have to mean angrier, tougher or bigger than the “opposition.” Radical action can be an example of what can be accomplished with a community that is loving, creative and compassionate. What might it look like in a world where each of us stepped up as leaders in our own right, grounded and centered in our presence while acting from a balanced and vital mind, body, heart and soul?

This is the time when practicing integral leadership skills is more important than ever. Embodying a rational mind, a healthy and energized body, compassionate heart and soul-based purpose could be the revolutionary action needed to change the world for the good. At the very least, an integral leadership approach could contribute to a more sustainable way of activism, while bridging society’s differences rather than digging a deeper chasm of separatism and fear.

This is our singular moment in history, if not already fifty years too late. As “lasting transformation requires long-term practice,” we can no longer afford to ignore the call of our soul-based purpose. It’s time to embrace our full potential to be the change we wish to see.