

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS

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**Spiritual Partnership**  
Gary Zukav

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## About the Book

In his first major book since the phenomenal bestseller *The Seat of the Soul*, Gary Zukav reveals a revolutionary new path for spiritual growth.

A great transformation is taking place. We are evolving beyond the limits of our five senses and increasingly able to access data that we could not previously detect. A new and surprising world is emerging, around us and within us. If we choose to realize its potential, we will forever alter our experiences of ourselves, our relationships and our surroundings.

Gary Zukav explains how a powerful new dynamic is at play in human relationships. By focusing attention on the interior rather than the outer causes of suffering or joy, we can reach our full potential and generate authentic power, co-creating rewarding partnerships of substance and depth for the purposes of our mutual spiritual growth.

Filled with fascinating examples as well as practical guidance, this remarkable book is the roadmap to profound change, pointing towards a fulfilling, joyful way of life for us all.

## About the Author

Gary Zukav is the author of *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*, *The Seat of the Soul*, *Soul Stories* and many other titles. His books have sold millions of copies and are published in twenty-four languages. He is a Harvard University graduate and a former U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Beret) officer with Vietnam service. He lives in America with his spiritual partner, Linda Francis.

ALSO BY GARY ZUKAV

*The Dancing Wu Li Masters:  
An Overview of the New Physics*

*The Seat of the Soul*

*Thoughts from the Seat of the Soul:  
Meditations for Souls in Process*

*Soul Stories*

*Soul to Soul:  
Communications from the Heart*

*Soul to Soul Meditations:  
Daily Reflections for Spiritual Growth*

WITH LINDA FRANCIS

*The Heart of the Soul:  
Emotional Awareness*

*Thoughts from the Heart of the Soul:  
Meditations on Emotional Awareness*

*The Mind of the Soul:  
Responsible Choice*

*Self-Empowerment Journal:  
A Companion to the Mind of the Soul*

# Guide to Gary Zukav's Books

Each book is a stand-alone experience. They are all perfect starting points, so use your intuition.

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# SPIRITUAL PARTNERSHIP

*The Journey to Authentic Power*

GARY ZUKAV



RIDER

LONDON · SYDNEY · AUCKLAND · JOHANNESBURG

This book is dedicated to spiritual partners and potential spiritual partners everywhere

## *Prologue*

### Change, Possibilities, Power

THIS IS A BOOK about change, the biggest change possible or imaginable—change bigger than the discovery of fire, bigger than the invention of the wheel, bigger than the origin of cultures, the birth of religions, the rise of nation-states, and the impacts of science. It is bigger than anything that has come before and so big that it is not possible to envision what could come after or when.

This is a book about possibilities. Experiences, insights, motivations, and creations beyond our ability to imagine only a few years ago now call to us, beckoning us to new destinations and yet more new possibilities. All is new and fresh, like a blank page awaiting words, a canvas inviting the first brushstroke. In the past others have glimpsed, and sometimes explored, these new possibilities, but now everyone is beginning to see or sense them. We have crossed a threshold and there is no turning back. There is no way to turn back.

This is a book about power. The old kind of power—the ability to manipulate and control—now produces only violence and destruction. This is a real surprise, because the old power enabled us and our ancestors to survive. Like good medicine suddenly turned bad, it is now poison. We used to take it to stay alive. Now we need to avoid it to stay healthy. A new kind of power—authentic power—has become the new good medicine, and we need it to become healthy, nurturing, and whole.

Change, possibilities, and power that we could not have imagined are reshaping the entire human experience. New values, goals, and intentions are everywhere appearing like

grass in the spring. This grass is growing quickly, and wherever it grows, beauty appears. With it come fields of flowers and vast forests. A new and surprising world is emerging in new and surprising ways. We are all students in a new school, explorers in new territory, and pioneers in a new human experience.

This unprecedented transformation in human experience has two parts. We can call them Process A and Process B. Process A is happening automatically, so to speak. No one needs to do anything to make Process A happen. Process A is occurring in millions of individuals, and soon Process A will occur in all humans. Process B is a different story. It requires choice. Specifically, *you* must choose to make Process B happen or it will not happen in you. Even if others choose to make Process B happen in themselves, Process B will not happen in you until you choose to make it happen. In short, (1) Process A is happening to everyone, or soon will, and there is nothing that you or anyone else can do about it; (2) Process B is happening only to individuals who choose to make it happen in themselves; no one else can make it happen in them; and they cannot make it happen in anyone else.

Let's give Process A and Process B names. Process A is the expansion of human perception beyond what we can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. It is a very big deal. Process A is seeing for yourself that the world is larger than you thought—much larger—and also different than you could have imagined. Before Process A occurs, your perceptions of the world are confined to what your five senses tell you about it. After Process A occurs, your five senses continue to tell you about the world and, in addition, you experience more. The “more” is sometimes difficult to describe to individuals who have not yet experienced Process A, but actually, millions of individuals have already experienced Process A or are experiencing it and haven't realized it yet.

Process A allows you to know things about others that your five senses cannot tell you, for example, that someone is going to call you just before she calls, that your daughter in another city has been in an accident, that your grandparent is passing on, that you should avoid driving until you check the brakes on your car, and so on. In other words, Process A involves intuition in a big way. Process A also allows you to experience yourself in new ways, for example, as more than your mind and your body. It reveals your life as purposeful and calls you to your purpose like water calls a thirsty man. Process A allows you to encounter meaning in unexpected ways, for example, a brief experience that everything is perfect, or a feeling of connection with a stranger. Process A allows you to see from an impersonal perspective. From that perspective, all of your experiences—even the most painful—serve your spiritual development and the spiritual development of those around you. They provide exactly what you need to develop the strength, compassion, and wisdom to give the gifts that you were born to give.

Process A is an expanded awareness that includes not only the perceptual system of the five senses but also a second system that detects intelligence, compassion, and wisdom that are real but not physical. This system allows you to experience nonphysical reality in many ways, including those just mentioned. Process A is multisensory perception. This is the great transformation in human consciousness that is currently emerging throughout the human species. Within a few generations, all humans will be multisensory. They will experience not only the domain of space, time, matter, and duality that has been the totality of experience for most humans since the origin of humanity, but also nonphysical domains and dynamics that affect us and that we affect.

This brings us to Process B. Process B is bringing the new potential that comes with Process A into your life.

Multisensory perception (Process A) changes your perception, but it does not change you. It shows you things that you could not see before, but it does not make you use your new knowledge. It illuminates dynamics that you could not see—dynamics that you can apply to change your life and world permanently for the better—but it does not require you to apply them. It reveals your creative power, but it does not make you create wisely. On the contrary, you will continue to create as you have in the past until you choose otherwise. If you are angry, for example, Process A (multisensory perception) will not make you less angry. It also will not create different consequences for you than acting with anger has created in the past. People will still avoid you, still be intimidated by you, still refuse to be vulnerable with you, and you will still be isolated, lonely, longing for meaningful relationships, and angry.

Process B is experiencing and changing in yourself the interior sources of your painful emotions (such as anger, jealousy, vengefulness, and so on), obsessive thoughts (such as judging others or yourself, longing for someone or something to change your life, and so on), compulsive activities (such as workaholism, perfectionism, and so on), and addictive behaviors (such as overeating, smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs, watching pornography, gambling, and so on). It is also experiencing and cultivating in yourself the interior sources of your pleasing emotions (such as gratitude, contentment, appreciation, and awe of Life). In short, Process B is creating the fulfilling and joyful life that is calling to you.

This takes work, but choosing Process B can produce almost instantaneous results in your life. In other words, choosing Process B can fundamentally change your life in a very short time. This does not mean that you become a radically different person the first or second time you engage in Process B. Process B is not that simple or easy. However, each change that you make in yourself as you

engage in Process B is fundamentally transformative. The first change is fundamentally transformative, no matter how small it may appear. The second change is fundamentally transformative, and so forth. Process B is incremental. It happens choice by choice, and each choice that you make moves you in a new direction toward a new and healthy goal—a personality whose experiences are so dramatically different that you cannot always foresee what they will be.

Process B requires you to choose words and deeds, moment by moment, that will create joyful and constructive consequences *even when painful or violent emotions roar through you*. Process B is changing your life with the force of your own will, guided by your own awareness, with intentions that you consciously choose, assisted by the compassion and wisdom of the Universe experienced in personal and meaningful ways. This transformation is more than change toward a better or more healthy life. It is transformation toward the highest, most noble, healthy, and grounded part of you. That is your soul.

In other words, Process B is finding and changing all the parts of your personality that do not intend what your soul intends, and finding and cultivating all the parts of your personality that do intend what your soul intends. Your soul intends harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence for Life. Each time you create with one of these intentions, you create authentic power—a life of meaning, fulfillment, gratitude, vitality, creativity, and joy. Process B is creating authentic power.

Without Process A (multisensory perception) happening to everyone, Process B (creating authentic power) would not be possible for anyone. Process B is aligning your personality with your soul, but your five senses cannot detect your soul. The soul is an interesting idea to some five-sensory individuals, but it is not experientially meaningful to any of them. Now millions of individuals are

experiencing multisensory perception (Process A), and they are changing their lives because of it (Process B). You are experiencing multisensory perception or you would not find this book interesting or valuable. The ideas in it have no appeal to intellects that are informed by the five senses alone, but they call to all hearts that are informed by multisensory perception.

Multisensory perception and authentic power are the two defining characteristics of the transformation in human consciousness that is now under way. The first emerges without effort, affects all perception, and reveals new dimensions of experience. The second awaits your commitment, courage, compassion, and conscious communications and actions to bring it into your life. The first is a wondrous gift from the Universe. You must create the second.

Multisensory perception does not impair your choice. Multisensory individuals are as free to pursue external power (the old kind of power) as they are to create authentic power, but the choice to pursue external power now leads only to violence and destruction—emotional violence and destruction between individuals (at the least), and physical violence and destruction between religions, cultures, and nations. There are no redeeming benefits to the choice of external power. There are no benefits to it at all.

Five-sensory humans evolve by surviving. Multisensory humans evolve by growing spiritually. This dramatic difference requires dramatically different relationships. The new type of relationship for multisensory humans who are evolving through creating authentic power is spiritual partnership. A spiritual partnership is a partnership between equals for the purpose of spiritual growth. It attracts multisensory humans who are creating authentic power as much as old-type relationships attracted five-

sensory humans who were pursuing external power. The purpose, nature, and function of spiritual partnerships are different. The dynamics of spiritual partnerships and the experiences that spiritual partners cocreate are different. This new type of relationship is as inseparable from emerging multisensory humans who are creating authentic power as old-type relationships were from five-sensory humans who pursued external power.

Creating authentic power requires relationships of substance and depth. You cannot grow spiritually until you have the courage to enter into meaningful and significant relationships. In other words, spiritual partnerships are a necessary part of Process B. Every encounter provides you an opportunity to create authentic power, but when your encounters include others who are also using their experiences to create authentic power, the potential for a spiritual partnership comes into being. Potential spiritual partners recognize the commitment, courage, compassion, and conscious communications and actions of one another. They naturally strive to support one another in creating authentic power and to receive the support of one another in creating authentic power. They journey toward the same goal, recognize fellow travelers, and learn from one another. Evolution now requires you to create a fulfilling and joyful life—to give the gifts that you were born to give—and spiritual partnerships bring you into cocreative interactions with others who are doing the same.

All of the books that I have written, or coauthored with my spiritual partner Linda Francis, are about authentic power. The first was *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*, although I did not know it at the time. This book is about quantum physics, relativity, and quantum logic for people with no interest in science, but writing it introduced me for the first time to some experiences of authentic power. I did not know how to identify or articulate them, but I recognized these

experiences as remarkable and wonderful, and I opened myself wide to them. The book won many awards and much praise as a popularization of science, but I believe that many of the people who read it (and still read it) are drawn to the connections between physical reality and consciousness that are unavoidable in some of the interpretations of the quantum theory, including the one that is used by most physicists. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* was my first attempt at writing and my first inquiry into science, but more than that, it was my first gift to Life, and I am still receiving gifts in return.

The second book was about authentic power but without any vehicle, such as science. It shares all that I discovered about authentic power while and since writing *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*. It began as a three-volume product of the intellect called *Physics and Consciousness*, but ten years later it had become another gift of the heart, *The Seat of the Soul*. Some readers expected me to write a sequel to *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* about another pioneering field of science, such as genetics. I had reservations about disappointing them, but I could not remain in integrity without sharing this wonderful book. Like *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, it changed my life, but in ways that I could not have imagined.

At the time I thought that I understood authentic power, but I had not yet realized that my understanding was not as deep as it would become and that understanding authentic power and creating an authentically powerful life are not identical. Eventually, Linda, whom I met after *The Seat of the Soul* was published, and I coauthored books on two of the tools for creating authentic power (*The Heart of the Soul: Emotional Awareness* and *The Mind of the Soul: Responsible Choice*). I also wrote two light-reading books with vignettes and examples of multisensory perception and authentic power (*Soul Stories* and *Soul to Soul: Communications from the Heart*), but in my heart I

continued to long for another book to explain the creation of authentic power in clearer and clearer ways, to illustrate it, and to give readers concrete as well as conceptual examples of multisensory perception and how to create authentic power.

This is that book. *The Seat of the Soul* and *Spiritual Partnership* are both about Process A and Process B. *The Seat of the Soul* is about evolution, cause and effect, intuition, intention, responsibility, and trust, among other things, but it emphasizes Process A. It focuses on the electric experiences of becoming multisensory, cocreating with always-present nonphysical Teachers and guides, and partnering consciously with the compassionate and wise Universe. *Spiritual Partnership* is also about multisensory perception and authentic power, but it emphasizes Process B. It shows the Why, What, How, and Who of spiritual partnership and, therefore, of creating authentic power. Spiritual partnerships and creating authentic power are as inseparable as wisdom and patience. Without creating authentic power you cannot have spiritual partners, and without spiritual partners you cannot grow spiritually.

Creating authentic power is a process, not an event. It is the purpose of your life and the opportunity of your interactions. Authentic power is a journey, not a destination. It is a journey that few have taken before and that all of us are now required to complete as humanity transits from a five-sensory species that evolved by surviving into a multisensory species that evolves by growing spiritually. This book is a road map to creating authentic power. Refer to it at any point along the way. Read it to prepare for what lies ahead, and review it to understand what lies behind. Practice it to live joyfully wherever you are at this moment on the journey.

I am grateful to be on the journey with you.

# *Introduction*

## Relationships

A NEW TYPE of relationship is emerging in the human experience. It is replacing all other forms of relationship, and this is good news. Previous types of relationships were designed for a human species that is dying. A new human species is being born, and we are part of it. It has its own requirements for relationships, its own values, and its own goals. Its potential is greater than the potential of the species that is disappearing, and its ability to contribute constructively to the human experience is far greater.

Millions of individuals are part of this new species, and millions more are becoming part of it. It expands daily because babies with new capabilities are born daily and also because millions of individuals are becoming aware of these same capabilities within themselves. You are one of those individuals or you would not be drawn to this book. *Spiritual* would be a concept to you, or a religion, or a belief system. You would think of *spirituality* in religious, poetic, or philosophical terms, or imagine it in terms of heavens, ascending to higher levels of experience (or being condemned to lower levels of experience). You would put a cross, a statue of the Buddha, an image of Krishna, a crystal, or a painting of radiant inspiration on your altar or mantel. You would recite mantras or prayers, chant or sing hymns, and take comfort in the companionship of colleagues who have discovered the same truth as you.

The new type of human relationship separates *spiritual* and *religious*. Spirituality is not a matter of conforming to tradition, complying with commandments, implementing instructions, or accepting the authority of others. It also

does not have to do with buildings, ways of dressing, scriptures, and holy writings, although it does have to do with appreciating the holy in everything and striving to live accordingly. Last, spirituality does not have to do with judgment of others or yourself, but with discovering within yourself and transforming within yourself the interior causes of your painful experiences and destructive behaviors, and discovering within yourself and cultivating within yourself the interior causes of your joyful experiences and constructive behaviors.

The new type of relationship, the new understanding of spirituality, and the new human species are being born together and are designed for one another. The distinction between spirituality and religion is not apparent to the old human being, but it is becoming obvious to millions of individuals. Nevertheless, some confusion remains not only because the transformation from the old humanity to the new humanity is in progress and not yet complete, but also because many people who are religious are also spiritual, and the other way around, many people who are spiritual are also religious. This is a time of great transition when the old is falling away, the new is emerging, and for several generations the two will overlap as the influences of the old humanity and its values and goals wane and the influences of the new humanity with its different values and goals increase.

This process is irreversible, so attachments to the old humanity and its goals have no usefulness and, on the contrary, can create only painful experiences and consequences. How anguishing would it be to grieve the rising of the sun each morning, or the tide coming in or going out? What could that accomplish other than personal misery? The biggest occurrence in human history outside of the origin of humanity is under way, and we are part of it whether we accept it or reject it, welcome it or push it away, embrace it or resist it. A new human relationship

dynamic is integral to that occurrence, and therefore, we can also accept or reject it, welcome or spurn it, but we cannot ignore it without consequences. Relationships are the most difficult human endeavors, and now that the nature of human relationships is changing, they are becoming even more difficult for those who ignore the change.

There are as many different relationships of the old type as there are shared goals. Business relationships are different from romantic relationships, which are different from relationships between classmates, relationships between neighbors, and relationships between parents and children. The relationship between you and your mechanic is different from the relationship between your physician and his office manager, although that relationship is more like your relationship with your accountant or mechanic. Property owners have relationships with renters; employees have relationships with coworkers and employers; and teachers have relationships with students.

The individuals within these relationships work to accomplish a shared goal. The relationships allow the individuals involved to accomplish goals that they could not accomplish by themselves. For example, election campaigns, corporations, and barn raisings are all products of this type of relationship. Some relationships are so impersonal that the connection between individuals within them is irrelevant, such as the relationship between a policeman directing traffic and the drivers he directs. Yet the participants together create what none can accomplish alone—a smooth flow of traffic. Some are mostly impersonal yet allow for mutual appreciation, such as a relationship between you and a clerk. In others, the connection between individuals becomes much more important, such as your relationships with your in-laws, although those relationships may or may not be intimate or substantive.

The goal of raising a healthy family or living together in mutually supportive ways requires much more focus on the connection between the individuals involved, because if that connection is missing or superficial, the goal cannot be attained. Board members can despise one another, which happens frequently; employees can compete with one another, which is common; and political allies can exploit one another, which they usually do, and still accomplish their shared goals. These relationships are difficult and painful, but they are functional. In fact, most relationships fall into this category. Countless marriages and domestic partnerships are painfully difficult, yet the individuals involved remain in them because they provide a sense of safety or at least familiarity that each partner fears losing, and in this way the partners accomplish a shared goal. Relationships in which partners focus on creating positive connections between themselves as well as on accomplishing their shared goal are the most challenging.

The function of all old-type relationships, from those in which connection between the participants is negligible to those in which it is central, is to manipulate or control circumstances (including other people) to attain a goal that the participants share—in other words, to change the external world, for example, to elect a mayor, organize a movement, or build a business. This type of relationship enables partners to buy a house together, have children, raise a family, keep each other from loneliness, or satisfy their emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual needs with each other. Their shared goal is always the reason for their relationship. When the goal is accomplished, or they fail to accomplish it, the relationship breaks apart. For example, an election campaign ends when an opponent wins and the campaigners separate; a business fails and the partners go their separate ways, or it succeeds and they sell the business and go their separate ways.

There are countless variations of this theme: A marriage partner realizes that her spouse cannot or is not willing to satisfy her psychological, physical, emotional, or sexual needs and divorces. An individual becomes a vegetarian, is “born again,” begins to meditate, or adopts another religion and no longer seeks or accepts relationships with individuals who have not similarly changed. Any transition that makes an individual different in belief or appearance, or that creates a difference of values or goals, will end an old-type relationship, because the shared goal that underlies it is no longer there. Whether the shared goal is the security of sameness—such as skin color, belief, or language—or increased market share, a new board of supervisors, or a happy family, it is the reason for the relationship and the glue that holds it together. Without the shared goal, the relationship ceases to have meaning, mutual attraction among the participants diminishes, and the relationship disintegrates or is replaced with others that are more relevant.

Whatever the goal is, it determines who will be attractive as a potential partner and who will not, who will be welcome and who will be pushed away. Homogeneity is accepted, diversity is rejected. If the shared goal is acceptance, for example, individuals who do not speak, dress, act, or believe in the way that the relationship requires are not eligible for membership. An individual who wants a partner to support a future family will not consider someone who is unemployable or refuses to work. The director of a play will not consider individuals who cannot act, a business owner who needs a marketing director will not consider individuals who do not have that ability or aptitude, and so on.

The shared goal determines the participants in the relationship, and those participants are replaceable. One carpenter can be replaced with another, one campaign manager can be replaced with another, one volunteer can

be replaced with another, and as many individuals have discovered, one spouse can be replaced with another.

Relationships of this type are familiar because we see them everywhere and experience them continually. They served the survival of the human species that is dying out, but they cannot support us now because the new species has perceptions and values that are very different from those of the old species. As more and more of us experience the new perceptions and values of the new human species, we begin to see ourselves and one another differently, our world differently, and the purpose of our lives differently. Our reason for being together changes, and therefore, the type of relationship that we create with one another changes. Old-type relationships are the means by which our species has survived and expanded to cover the Earth. However, they prevent spiritual growth.

This is significant, because we now evolve by growing spiritually. Spiritual growth is as necessary for us as sunshine is for a plant. We seek partners with whom we can grow spiritually rather than with whom we can accomplish common goals. Survival is not our only objective, or sufficient for us. We long for more, and as we strive for fulfillment we are redefining spirituality, relationship, and evolution.

The old humanity, evolution through survival, relationships designed to change circumstances, and religions are woven of the same fabric. They emerged together, and they are being replaced together by another fabric through which is woven the new humanity, evolution through spiritual growth, relationships designed for spiritual growth, and spirituality. The old fabric is unraveling. The new fabric is already out of the loom and becoming visible to more and more individuals.

Spirituality has to do with the soul and requires alignment with the most noble impulses of the human experience—harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence

for Life. This goal cannot be brought into being for one person by another, or even by a collective of others. The spiritual development of an individual is not a barn raising made possible by helpful neighbors. Each individual is responsible for his or her own spiritual growth. Spirituality is a journey into self-awareness and self-responsibility. The old type of relationship helped the old humanity survive by focusing the attention of participants outward onto circumstances and people in order to change them. The new type of relationship enables us to grow spiritually by focusing our attention inward onto the interior causes of our painful experiences and destructive actions in order to change them, and onto the interior causes of our blissful experiences and constructive actions in order to cultivate them.

Old humans in search of spiritual growth escaped the distractions of circumstances and people by retreating into monasteries and nunneries, and from there into hermitages. The solitary meditator in a cell or cave became the icon of commitment to spiritual growth—expansion beyond the limitations of the five senses and the confines of culture and custom into the freedom of a life unbounded by fear. With the emergence of the new humanity, isolation has become counterproductive. It prevents the very interactions that are necessary for our spiritual development. Before, few individuals were interested in growing spiritually, and every relationship formed around a common goal. Now, millions of us are attracted to harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence for Life; within a few generations all humans will strive for spiritual growth; and we are already creating relationships that are quite different from the old type in order to support our spiritual development.

Relationships were necessary to the evolution of the old human species, and they are equally necessary to our evolution, but for significantly different reasons.

Relationships helped the old species survive. They help us grow spiritually. As the values and perceptions of the new species emerge in millions of humans, relationships of the old type are becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. We are becoming increasingly interested in self-exploration, self-awareness, and self-mastery. Fulfillment, contentment, meaning, purpose, love, and the joy of contributing to Life are taking precedence over issues such as career, lifestyle, and money.

We are finding it less and less satisfying to blame others for our painful experiences (no matter how much we still want to) than to discover within ourselves the causes of our painful experiences and change them. We are beginning to recognize the importance of our emotions and intentions, of what we do, what we say, and why. We are looking for connections between our choices and our experiences so that we can change our choices and, therefore, change our experiences. We are striving to be the kind of person we want others to be rather than to change others, and we are transforming our relationships at home, at work, and at play into relationships of the new type.

The terrain of human interaction is changing dramatically. Old-type relationships have no future, while relationships of the new type are appearing everywhere and in surprising ways. The scale of this change in the function, nature, and experience of relationship is enormous, but the reason behind it is even larger.

**WHY**

# 1

## New Land, New Explorers

WHEN THE VIKINGS came to North America they were looking for plunder. Columbus was looking for a trade route. European colonialists sought land and riches. As they moved across this continent they took by force what they desired and impoverished the people they encountered. They accomplished what they intended, but none foresaw that their drive to dominate would destroy not only Native cultures but also the environment that supports us all.

The American settlers—originally oppressed people who won their freedom with blood and valor—became oppressors themselves, foraging as they forced themselves across North America, sometimes allying with colonialists and sometimes battling them. Their impact on the environment at first was small. They felled trees, cultivated fields, and built cities, but endless forests, clean water, and virgin prairies continually appeared before them.

That soon changed. The industrial revolution transformed the cultural and terrestrial landscape of the continent. Telegraph, railroads, automobiles, aircraft, computers, and spacecraft followed one another in close order, all appearing within two centuries. The population grew and then expanded exponentially as more settlers, slaves from Africa, and workers from Europe, Asia, and later, Latin America merged into a large, and then huge, consuming collective that threatened the ability of the continent to support its survival. That is where we are today, the inheritors of an expanding devastation that reflects the consciousness of the original settlers of North America.

This is the story of my land, the history of my parents and their ancestors who came to it and contributed to its transformation in ways that they could not have anticipated. They did not consider the consequences of their decisions, individual and collective, as they strove to achieve countless goals with the same consciousness that the original immigrants brought to this continent—the intention to control it and dominate it.

This is also the story of my Earth and the larger collective of cultures and individuals that, long before the Vikings came to North America, were creating the same consequences with the same consciousness. Nations, religions, industrialization, and militarization appeared on the pages of human history, transforming it into a chronicle of conflict and exploitation. Today the destructive impact on North America of its expanding population mirrors the larger destructive impact on the Earth of the expanding human population. In other words, this story is not one of place and time, but of *consciousness*.

A consciousness is the way that we experience ourselves and each other. It includes much more than emotions and thoughts. For example, we see some people as friends and others as enemies. The five senses cannot tell you whether a person is a friend or an enemy. They show you what your mother looks like to you, sounds like to you, and how her touch feels to you, but your experiences with your mother tell you that she is a friend, and your emotions reflect your experiences. When you see enemies, or think about them, you feel painful emotions, and when you see or think about friends, you feel pleasing emotions. When you encounter someone you do not know, what you think about that person creates your experiences. If you assume that she is a friend you will have different experiences than if you assume that she is an enemy. All of this is part of a consciousness, and yet there is even more.