

Excerpt from the Book: *Vision – We Are Re-Creating the World: A Resource Manual “tool-box” for Revitalization and Empowerment through Grass-roots Strategies and Environmental Awareness* by Andrew N. Skadberg, Ph.D.

## SECTION I

### Preface

### Creating the Solomon Source Regional Revitalization and Empowerment Strategy

The motivation for this book and the ideas and concepts that it contains has arisen from an undeniable compulsion. Also the validation, or support, has needed to come from some source other than outside of myself. That is because I have never seen or heard of any work like this. In all my life experience I have found no book, research process or academic program that teaches anything like what is contained herein. I cannot compare this work to any known profession. Yes, to an extent this work has been significantly influenced by science, academia, entrepreneurship, environmental sciences, tourism and recreation, etc. and various other terms that I have come across over the years like extension, or experiential learning. But none of these terms in any way comes close to defining or categorizing this book.

More than anything, this book is derived from a life of experiences. This includes not only the more “prestigious” or honored positions such as when I was a professor or “Chief Knowledge Officer”, but also the jobs that are considered below others. In my life I have had in the neighborhood of sixty jobs. These would include dishwashing, bus driving, janitorial, holding stop signs for highway road construction, to being a extension professor and research scientist working for one of the most powerful academicians in the world, Dr. Richard Ewing.

In many respects the less than prestigious positions gave me a greater perspective on things. They taught me that I am no better or worse than anyone else. I am not too good to pick up trash, or clean a toilet.

These diverse life experiences have given me a very eclectic perspective on life, and have also provided a rich set of experiences to draw from. And then as if finally discovering what my “gift” to the world is, in the last few years, even though I have been accumulating the ideas for my entire life, I am bringing the collection together here in this book for the first time. Put another way, my “art” or “music” are the scattered sets of concepts and ideas contained in this book. This is my life’s masterpiece, at least up until this point in time.

During my life I have now realized that I have had big questions, and insights that were creating a sort of trail of bread crumbs that I could follow during my life, looking for answers. And as I have kept a mental inventory of these questions, and now after getting

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more clarity on the “bigger picture”, I have been able to pull all of these seemingly disparate pieces of the puzzle together in one comprehensive work. Of course I am aware that a person could never claim the “ultimate answer”, and that is not what I am after with this work.

This is about doing the best that I can to contribute the best that I have to offer to try to help us all move to a better place. Some of the greatest books and people have insisted that making a contribution to the “whole world” is the only noble enterprise that one should attempt to achieve.

There is a significant assumption that I am making. That assumption is, that if we humans were given the choice, as a collective humanity, that we would choose to make a world with less suffering, less pain and more peace and love. I believe that we have, without really knowing what has happened, let ourselves become the unwitting participants in a sort of prison world. One that looks, and lives completely contrary to what at least 95% of us want it too be. I have come across increasing, and irrefutable evidence in the last two years of seeking answers to big questions that we have been living in a world where a few people, who have a really skewed vision of existence, have gained incredible power to subdue the masses of people into an existence that we could very easily change. How this could happen is if many of us made the decision and started working towards that world.

But this process only takes place one person at a time. Some ideas along those lines, that provide the basis of how we as individuals can get started are shared in the first section of the book, for example “how to live” and “how do we simplify this model”.

The one question that has nagged my consciousness for longer than any single other, and comes up every time I begin to work on this document, is “why did we make the world like this?” This question came to me many years ago, way before I had considered the deeper questions of what it is to be a human being. Long before I had studied obsessively for years and years to learn what is really meant by the statement “made in the image and likeness of God”. This question came to me, I guess, sometime during my teenage years, as I looked at “reality” as if I was greater than myself, knowing that we have created all of it. We created the wars, the disease, the pestilence and then all of the other things, the institutions, the concrete buildings, the cars, all that we live in in this world. And I understood that we could have just as easily created a completely different reality.

Of course, as I have learned the truth that there is really only One, this means that we have also created the beautiful backdrop of nature. But the “reality”, or the drama of the human condition is what we are all totally wrapped up in and “believe” is so real, is something that we have more direct impact upon, and then could alter much more readily and directly by changing our beliefs, and reactions to the experiences of life - in other

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words, changing our consciousness at a fundamental level. We truly are the total creators of our lives, and the world around us.

My understanding of how powerful of beings we really are has expanded a thousand-fold since that question first came to me. But some dozen years or so ago I realized that in regards to pain and suffering and war and disease, that we were the creators of these things and that they continue to exist because we believe in them. Have you ever proposed the possibility that we could end war to someone? I have. And their response has always been “war will always exist”. Well, guess what folks. As long as we continue to believe that, it will.

But beyond knowing that we actually created these things, I realized that there was a much more powerful lesson embedded in this. As I have observed nature, I do not see things that are as “ugly” or “evil” as what we have created like war, pestilence, garbage dumps, toxic waste sites, etc. And, if there is any truth to the statements that God is everything, and “God is Love” then these things are actually contrary to our preferred experience. I make this conclusion because so many people are complaining about these, including myself. They are not really contrary to God, because how can One be contrary to One? Although, there is a basic understanding that pain and suffering are contrary to Love, so we assume that God would prefer that we make the decision to let these things go.

My realization, which is clarifying more as I write this, is that, in a way I think that we are actually making all of these experiences to prove, or teach ourselves, that we are very, very powerful. We collectively, whether through just plain ignorance, or through manipulation of outside forces created all of the things that exist and that we experience whether they are positive or negative. And we can just as easily re-create them and make a new world. But before we can do that we have to believe in the possibilities, and also come to recognize what we really are. This, in many respects, has been the story of my life.

Through all of these varied, and sometimes incredible experiences, I have come to a much greater understanding that I have truly been the creator of my life. This includes not only the internal experiences, and the choices that I have made that resulted in apparent external circumstances, which I used to think just happened to me, but actually I have also created the external too. This is a very big topic, and not the point of the book, but these ideas must be introduced in order for the context of this work to have a better grounding. That context is, **that if we want our lives and the world to change, we are going to have to take actions—each of as individuals and as a collective humanity.**

This process or revitalization and empowerment can be initiated through individual transformation and through the a process of designing and implementing regional

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initiatives that can be replicated. As these models prove themselves successful they can ultimately be adopted and diffused to all places. This process of “adoption and diffusion” has been taking place throughout human history. The problem has been we didn’t have more holistic and sustainable models that we were Sharing.

This book proposes that we can recreate the world. Together we can “be the change we want to see in the world”. We can totally alter “reality” and make it in a new way, and dispose of those things which we would be better off without.

## **A validation from a voice of the past**

This work, without my prior knowledge, is a construct best characterized as a response, or call to action from Albert Schweitzer:

*“It is our duty then to rouse ourselves to fresh reflection about the world and life.”*

In 2008, I was invited by my dear friend Desmond Green to write a proposal for Jamaica to create a new institution for learning (included as the case study Reverence for Life University). At the time that I wrote this proposal I was not aware of Albert Schweitzer to any great extent, or his philosophies for life. In the past four years I had only one obscure recollection of a reference to his writing (of course I had heard of him previously but never read his books). This was a reference from Jerry Hicks on an Abraham Hicks tape where Jerry was telling of an experience with an Ouija Board. The board, as he relates the experience “spelled out” that he should read any and all books by Albert Schwietzer if he wanted to expand his spiritual life and understanding. For some reason this story caught my attention, although I did not go out to get Albert’s books at the time.

Interestingly, about six months later I received Desmond’s invite to assist with Reverence for Life University. To my surprise six months later my wife checked two of Albert’s books from the Colombian national library, but I hadn’t asked her to get these books. And an online acquaintance, a representative of the United Nations who knew Albert personally, informed me that Albert Schwietzer’s life philosophy was Reverence for Life.

The “Reverence for Life University” proposal was written prior to my knowledge of Albert’s philosophy. The proposal pre-supposes that education is the foundation for turning the tides of the human condition around, from an alarming level of suffering, injustice, lack of harmony, and environmental ignorance to a world where our best efforts demonstrate our embracing a philosophy or creed of “Reverence for Life”.

Being an educator I have inherently believed that education is a key pillar of any grand endeavor, especially one to remake the world. This idea was further validated by a quote

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of Dr. John Haglin from the movie “The Secret”, *“One hundred percent of human potential is the result of proper education”*.

I am not making any allegations that one can, or cannot find an example of this type of “proper education” in the world today, nor do I claim that I have figured out what that might be, and hence put forward here. The point is that , Albert provided a theoretical/ philosophical “ethical underpinning” that he called Reverence for Life, which, when couched in an understanding that life is continually expanding and evolving, and that new knowledge is constantly bombarding us, we must utilize the best of this expanding “knowing” which will allow us to contextualize and measure the voracity of our approaches. In other words, via education and learning we can continually expand our understanding to improve our experiences on the planet. And, in my study and life experience, that we can all tap into a source of new, and expanding knowledge that is available from many sources, both historical, but more importantly from some unseen source(s). The personal philosophy that I have had since 1981 that best encapsulates this is “continue to believe in ever expanding possibilities”. This idea can be analogized to how our TVs or radios receive signals via the ether. As I have opened myself to the possibilities of expanding knowledge and improved experiences, some unseen harbinger delivered what I needed, and often times way beyond my wildest dreams.

My more recent realization is that “Light” is one of the most powerful messengers, that it is intelligent and carrying vast amounts of information and guidance for how to live our lives more successfully and harmoniously. The problem is whether we are, or can, tune into the “channels or stations”. This realization about the light came about as a sort of an epiphany as I was working with an amazing technology called the hyperspectral sensor which will be described in detail in later sections of this book. But to get back to Reverence for Life as a primary or foundational principle upon which to build a theory, or ethic for life, this philosophy must be cognized, or experienced, on an individual level. Then, as the effects of the experience create a sort of resonance, it creates a “ripples in a pond” (e.g. Butterfly Effect) effect as the experience can then move through the collective experience. As this occurs, and we allow ourselves to align with the, apparent, driving force behind all life the changes will come “in the twinkle of an eye”. I believe the time for this “awakening” or realignment is now! There are a great many discussions going on in various circles about “ascension” and 2012. I believe that these occurrences are real and coming.

Nonetheless, this book is more pragmatic, and aligned with trying to relay a message that will build a bridge from our existing reality which, for the majority of people that I meet each day, is a long ways away from an “awakened” state of being. I believe this concept described as “ripples in the pond” is a sort of unseen channel for communication for the “collective of humanity” on this world. Carl Jung discovered and wrote extensively about

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what he referred to as the “collective unconscious”. Another possible connection can be made to a phenomenon that is well documented in biology called “the hundred monkey effect”. Essentially it was discovered that once a “critical mass” of monkeys learned how to eat a certain kind of nut, even from an isolated island environment, that all the monkeys in the world had access to the knowledge.

But I would suggest it is important to point out that we likely have much greater potentials for creative connections and spiritual transformations than do monkeys.

In this book, and how I believe that Albert envisioned the reverence for life is not about one religion or another, or about right or wrong, or this philosophy or another, but about having a foundational principle that recognizes one organizing principle for all of life. Upon which a successful reversal can be accomplished from our current individual and collective conundrum. Albert describes in simple terms how this experience, or recognition of the universal principle can come about:

*“The theory of the universe characterized by reverence for life is a type of mysticism arrived at by self-consistent thought when persisted in to its ultimate conclusion. Surrendering himself to the guidance of this mysticism, man finds a meaning for his life in that he strives to accomplish his own spiritual and ethical self-fulfillment, and simultaneously and in the same act helps forward all the processes of spiritual and material progress which have to be actualized in the world.”*

Finally, Albert presents the crux of the matter, which unbeknownst to me, I have found my life’s work an attempt to fit within as it relates to the idea presented above “to actualize [my work] in the world”:

*“What I desire above all things—and this is the crux of the whole affair—is that we should all recognize fully that our present entire lack of any theory of the universe is the ultimate source of all of the catastrophes and misery of our times, and that we should work together for a theory of the universe and of life, in order that thus we may arrive at a mental disposition which shall make us really and truly civilized men.”*

I will present more from Albert later, but here it is appropriate to include a quote from another of the greatest thinkers of all time. It both presents the grim state of our current “reality”, but also invites a powerful and compelling challenge for each of us, and for all of us together.

#### *Afraid to Reflect*

*“What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs; this destiny announces itself everywhere...For some time now, our whole*  
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*European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.<sup>1</sup>*

**Frederick Nietzsche, 1888**

### *An analogy of Nature*

What we find co-joining these two powerful philosophies or observations of Schweitzer and Nietzsche is that what I have been compelled to do myself, and I believe it is an invitation to every human-Being on this planet, is to be like the salmon who returns to the source in order to sustain it's life. But we are not like the salmon that is urged through instinct, but we must summon the will and make a conscious decision to move against convention, or the river, to create ways to address the problems being faced in the world. The river as I see it is the whole of the human condition. We find ourselves in a world where there is great suffering and pain. But this is not necessary. But we are the ones who must bring change about. Yes, I believe that we can tap into unknown divine powers, and that maybe we have access to extraterrestrial assistance. But I do not know the second for sure. What I do know, is that if we want our reality to change, we are going to have to build the bridge to that new reality. That is what this book is about.

Some time after writing the Reverence for Life University proposal I began communicating with a high school friend Tom Dooley. He was curious what I had done with my work for the last thirty plus years. Through many emails I was trying to show Tom what I actually did for my work. I had been sending him bits and pieces of various projects from over the years, but he just couldn't pull the pieces together, nor could I have expected him to. At one point, and I think he was somewhat frustrated, he said "what the hell do you actually do". This challenge was the catalyst for the writing of the executive summary of the "Vision to Transform the World", which is included in Chapter 5. This document was the most complete, although brief, compilation of concepts that I have been developing over the past years.

After completing the first summary document, I realized that there was considerably more materials, and specific applications that needed more elaboration than could be provided in forty some pages. This book is the first attempt to compile these ideas, and my vision in one place.

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