The Real World: Leadership Lessons from Disaster Relief and Terrorist Networks

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People often comment that the new leadership I propose couldn't possibly work in "the real world." I assume they are referring to their organization or government, a mechanistic world managed by bureaucracy, governed by policies and laws, filled with people who do what they're told, who surrender their freedom to leaders and sit passively waiting for instructions. This "real world" craves efficiency and obedience. It relies on standard operating procedures for every situation, even when chaos erupts and things are out of control.

This is not the real world. This world is a manmade, dangerous fiction that destroys our capacity to deal well with what's really going on. The real world, not this fake one, demands that we learn to cope with chaos, that we understand what motivates humans, that we adopt strategies and behaviors that lead to order, not more chaos.

In this historic moment, we live caught between a worldview that no longer works and a new one that seems too bizarre to contemplate. To expose this, I want to apply the lens of new science to two of society's most compelling, real world challenges: How well we deal with natural and manmade disasters. And how well we respond to global terror networks. Using this high resolution lens, we can see many dynamics that are crucial to understand, yet were obscured from view by our old sight.

Here is the real world described by new science. It is a world of interconnected networks, where slight disturbances in one part of the system create major impacts far from where they originate. In this highly sensitive system, the most minute actions clan blow up into massive disruptions and chaos. But it is also a world that seeks order. When chaos erupts, it not only disintegrates the current structure, it also creates the conditions for new order to emerge. Change always involves a dark night when everything falls apart. Yet if this period of dissolution is used to create new meaning, then chaos ends and new order emerges.

This is a world that knows how to organize itself without command and control or charisma. Everywhere, life self-organizes as networks of relationships. When individuals

discover a common interest or passion, they organize themselves and figure out how to make things happen. Self-organizing evokes creativity and results, creating strong, adaptive systems. Surprising new strengths and capacities emerge.

In this world, the 'basic building blocks' of life are relationships, not individuals. Nothing exists on its own or has a final, fixed identity. We are all 'bundles of potential.' Relationships evoke these potentials. We change as we meet different people or are in different circumstances.

And strangest of all, scientists cannot find any independent reality that exists without our observations. We create reality through our acts of observation. What we perceive becomes true for us and this version of reality becomes the lens through which we interpret events. This is why we can experience the same event or look at the same information and have very different descriptions of it.

This real world stands in stark and absolute contrast to the world invented by Western thought. We believe that people, organizations and the world are machines, and we organize massive systems to run like clockwork in a steady-state world. The leader's job is to create stability and control, because without human intervention, there is no hope for order. Without strong leadership, everything falls apart. It is assumed that most people are dull, not creative, that people need to be bossed around, that new skills only develop through training. People are motivated using fear and rewards; internal motivators such as compassion and generosity are discounted. These beliefs have created a world filled with disengaged workers who behave like robots, struggling in organizations that become more chaotic and ungovernable over time.

And most importantly, as we cling ever more desperately to these false beliefs, we destroy our ability to respond to the major challenges of these times.

Leadership in Disasters: Learning from Katrina

The world has experienced so many disasters and human tragedies in the past several years that some worry about 'compassion fatigue.' I don't believe that our compassion is finite and in danger of being exhausted. The source of our fatigue is that we don't have the organizational structures or the leadership that can respond quickly and well to these emergencies. We want to help, but our organizations fail to deliver our compassion to those most in need.   This is both frustrating and exhausting because, as humans, we are spontaneously generous and want to be of service.

Following any disaster, we see the best of human nature and the worst of bureaucracy. Headlines convey our frustration: "Poor Nations Say Much Charity Fails to Reach Victims," "System Failure: An investigation into what went so wrong in New Orleans," "Red Cross Under Investigation," "Congress probe examines what went wrong."

Other headlines speak to the valiancy of individuals and unofficial relief efforts : "Real-life

Heroes," "Organized Churches are not an oxymoron," "No Red Cross, No Salvation Army or Federal Funds...Just Friends."

Time Magazine relayed this story in September 2005 just weeks after hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast,. It illustrates the conflict between willing volunteers and government bureaucracy.
As flames blazed 400 miles away in New Orleans on Labor Day, about 600 firefighters from across the nation sat in an Atlanta hotel listening to a FEMA lecture on equal opportunity, sexual harassment and customer service. "Your job is going to be community relations," a FEMA official told them. . ."You'll be passing out FEMA pamphlets and our phone number."

The room, filled with many fire fighters who, at FEMA's request had arrived equipped with rescue gear, erupted in anger. "This is ridiculous," one yelled back. "Our fire departments and mayors sent us down here to save people, and you've got us doing this?" The FEMA official climbed atop a chair. . .and tried to restore order. "You are now employees of FEMA, and you will follow orders and do what you're told," he said, sounding more like the leader of an invading army than a rescue squad. . . .

[The firefighters] got tired of hanging around their hotel and returned home (Time, 2005, 39).
Although this story is appalling, it happens all the time in disasters. The first response of people is to do anything they possibly can to help, rescue and save other people. They gather resources, invent solutions on the spot, and work tirelessly for days on end. They don't think about risk or reward—these are spontaneous outpourings of compassion focused creatively and purposefully. A group of mid-level managers for Southwest Bell described how they felt responding to the Oklahoma City bombing: "There was no risk. It was already a disaster."

Yet these self-organized efforts are often hindered by officials who refuse their offers or who cite regulations or who insist that protocols and procedures be followed. This is not a criticism of individual officials—they themselves are imprisoned by their role and can't act independently. As *Time* Magazine described what happened with Katrina: " . . . at every level of government there was uncertainty about who was in charge at crucial moments. Leaders were afraid to actually lead, reluctant to cost businesses money, break jurisdictional rules or spawn lawsuits. They were afraid, in other words, of ending up in an article just like this one" (2005, 36).

Concerns about who had legal and decision-making authority created many nightmares. Official requests for aid were given to the wrong person or to someone who didn't understand and denied the request. If requests made it to the right desk but were not worded correctly, they were ignored or denied. The Louisiana governor requested Federal help from the President. When asked what she needed, she replied: "Give me all you got." That plea was not deemed sufficient for the Federal government to step in, and days passed before Federal and state officials worked out who had jurisdictional authority (Time, 2005).

As people argued about their roles and authority, no one saw the pattern of destruction and chaos that was unfolding. Officials responded only to disconnected bits of information that related to their office. No one seemed to understand the information they were getting or to notice that they were only seeing a small portion of what was happening.   There were many instances when terrified, suffering people filled T.V. screens while on another screen government officials denied there were any serious problems. In some cases, their inability to comprehend what was happening was due to inexperience (from job turnover). In other cases, the problem was a new chain of command, with managers in the Department of Homeland Security focused on terrorism now responsible for FEMA, yet with no understanding of natural disasters.

Even before Katrina hit, key decision-makers at all levels of government displayed a curious blindness. Years of simulations and analyses had created clear descriptions of the damage that would result from a category 3 or 4 hurricane. The destruction of New Orleans was one of the top three potential catastrophes listed by FEMA for many years. How is it possible that officials were blindsided and failed to prepare adequately for this eventuality? And why were they so slow to respond even as the National Weather Service mapped Katrina's approach with unerring accuracy? It was as if government officials at all levels could not comprehend the reality of what was about to happen. Either they discounted the information, failed to interpret it correctly, or duped themselves into believing "it can't happen here." This is a familiar yet troubling example of paradigm blindness, where people are unable to see information that threatens and disconfirms their worldview.   No matter how much data is in front of them, their lens filters it out or distorts it to mean something else. And in some cases, people literally do not see the information, even if it's right in front of them (see Kuhn 1969).

In the days after Katrina, this blindness was coupled with bureaucratic conditioning and cumbersome chains of command. Missteps, misperceptions and inaction cascaded through organizations, only creating more chaos. An already devastating set of circumstances turned even more tragic because of the failure of leaders to accurately perceive what was going on and to risk taking actions that went beyond the bonds of bureaucracy.

However, all along the Gulf Coast, people self-organized with neighbors and strangers to help, save and rescue people. The efforts of ham radio operators created an immediate and effective communication network that saved many lives. In one case, a family desperate in New Orleans could not get any response from their local 911. They did, however, reach a relative a thousand miles away. He called *his* local 911, who then contacted a New Orleans ham operator, who then relayed the information to local people who then rescued the family (Sky, 2006).

Unlike official agencies, many of these operators prepared themselves ahead of time. They established themselves in safe, dry places before the storm struck. Acting independently, each with their own generator and transmitter, they wove a powerful network of communications. Their independence is what made them extremely resilient.

If one person could no longer transmit, another picked it up quickly. "Each one is a mobile, independent unit working in cooperation for a common goal" (Sky, 83). They acted freely but from a clear shared intent. These are always the conditions that make it possible to bring order out of chaos.

Senior leaders find it difficult to act this spontaneously or independently. Any independent response is constrained by the need to maintain the power and policies of the organization. Paralyzed by formal operating procedures, it takes courage to forego these controls and do what you think might help. The Southwest Bell employees in Oklahoma leapt into action immediately after the bombing in large part because their leaders were out of town. When the leaders returned, their staff told them: "It's good you weren't here. We could just take action." Although this is never what a leader wants to hear, these leaders were wise enough to know this was true and that their absence had created value.

In Hurricane Katrina, the chain of command and the observance of protocol created even more disasters:
While people were dying in New Orleans, the U.S.S. *Bataan* steamed offshore, its six operating rooms, beds for 600 patients and most of its 1,200 sailors idle. Foreign nations...readied rescue supplies, then were told to stand by for days until FEMA could figure out what to do with them. Florida airboaters complained that they had an armada ready for rescue work but FEMA wouldn't let them into New Orleans. Brown defended his agency's measured steps, saying aid 'has to be coordinated in such a way that it's used most effectively (*Time*, 39-40).

Leaders that respond quickly ignore standard operating procedures. In the state of West Virginia, the governor didn't wait to be asked but immediately mobilized six C-130 cargo planes from the National Guard to go and pick up those needing evacuation. The planes were sent filled with supplies and were expected to return filled with people. The governor was there to welcome them when they arrived, but only three planes came back with people. FEMA had refused to let more people board the planes. About 400 evacuees benefited from this quickly mobilized relief effort. Although economically poor, West Virginia offered more assistance than their affluent neighboring states, all because they rallied around the Governor's call to help brothers and sisters whom they had never met. In contrast to the terrible failures of government, communities, individuals, and small groups responded immediately to Katrina. One commentator describes these responses as "acts of love in times of danger" (The Nation, 2005,13). The community of Ville Platte exemplified the generous self-organizing capacity that always appears in disasters (The Nation, 13-18). They organized their "home-made rescue and relief efforts" around the slogan "If not us, then who?"   A community of 11,000 people, with an average yearly income of only $5300 for the majority of its residents, was able to serve 5000 displaced and traumatized victims of Katrina, inviting them to share their homes and community not as refugees or evacuees, but as "company." Those with boats went to New Orleans to join "The Cajun Navy." They rescued people from rooftops, picked up the dead, transported the injured to trauma centers. They saw people from other communities doing the same thing. FEMA wasn't around, "That was it. Just us volunteers."

Ville Platte helped thousands of "company" without any Federal or Red Cross aid (they did try to reach the Red Cross, but gave up after 13 days of calling and no response.) Their success cannot be explained by the old mechanical paradigm, but is easily understood by the dynamics described in new science. We live in a world of relationships, where each event or person evokes new capacities. We live in a world where order emerges out of chaos if people are free to make their own decisions based on shared meaning and values. We live in a world where effective response doesn't require top-down leadership or an organization plan drawn up ahead of time. People self-organize in order to accomplish something that matters to them. As one community member said: "All of us know how to spontaneously cooperate. My God, we're always organizing christenings or family gatherings. So why do we need a lot of formal leadership?"

In a disaster, where quick response is demanded, formal organizations are incapacitated by the very means they normally use to get things done -- chains of command, designated leaders, policies, procedures, plans, regulations and laws. We *can* rely on human compassion, but we need to develop the means for official agencies to support, work with and not resist the self-organizing capacity of people that always emerges in a disaster. Leaders need to have the freedom to make intelligent decisions based on their comprehension of the situation, not their understanding of policies and procedures. The formal leader's job is to ensure that the resources they control get to local groups as fast as possible. Leaders need to trust that people will invent their own solutions, that they'll make good use of the resources they provide. And leaders need to expect and value the unique and inventive responses created in each community, rather than enforcing compliance to one-size-fits-all.

These radically different behaviors require that we free official leaders to act wisely and that they trust people to self-organize effective responses. How much more sad history do we have to repeat before we understand this? Let us hope we learn from Katrina that the only way to restore order out of chaos is to rely on people's intelligence, love, and capacity to self-organize to accomplish what they care about.

We also need to entrust local people with the official resources of money and materials for the rebuilding. When rebuilding is left to governments, outside contractors, and large non-profit organizations, progress gets mired down in regulations, time drags on, people's needs aren't served, and no one from the local community is satisfied with the results. Supporting initiatives where local people do the work sustains local cultures, recreates community cohesion, and is accomplished at amazing speed. The clean-up of Ground Zero was accomplished in record time, with no traditional New York and contractor politics; people worked overtime and risked their health to remove the debris of their shared tragedy.

In the 1990s, almost 2 billion people were affected by disasters, 90% of them in the most impoverished nations. We will not succeed in responding effectively and in ways that satisfy our compassion until we change how we organize relief efforts. The basic shift

needs to be from control to order, from a reliance on formal authority and procedures to a reliance on the self-organizing capacities of local people, agency staffers, and those who volunteer to help. Some of the more progressive thinking on disaster relief focuses on how to mobilize and develop local people by engaging them in the work of rescue and rebuilding. If local people are engaged, they "move from object to subject, victim to actor, to the possibility of being." (Smillie, 2001)

This capacity to create solutions without traditional hierarchies or formal leadership is found in communities everywhere, not just those facing disasters. At The Berkana Institute, (which I co-founded in 1992) we work with the assumption that "the leaders we need are already here." We have discovered that even in the most economically poor communities in the world there is an abundance of leaders. These leaders work to strengthen their community's ability to be self-reliant by working with the wisdom and wealth already present in its people, traditions and environment (see page _ [Berkana page at end of book]). A 2002 Ford Foundation report on leadership notes the same thing. "There is a sense among some in our country today that we are lacking inspirational leaders….Yet a closer look reveals that all over the nation groups of concerned citizens are working together, often at the local level, to solve tough social problems. These are the new leaders in America today" (Louv, 2002).

We need to carefully consider what we are learning about leadership in these disaster-laden times. I hope we learn that we *can* rely on human caring, creativity, and compassion. We *can* rely on us 'bundles of potential' figuring out solutions, learning quickly, and surprising ourselves with new capacities. We *can* rely on people to self-organize quickly to achieve results important to them. Together, people act creatively, take risks, invent, console, inspire and produce. This is how life works. We can learn this from new science, or we can learn it from what happens everyday somewhere in the real world.

Leadership of Networks: Learning from Terrorist Groups

How is it possible that a few thousand enraged people can threaten the stability of the world? How is it possible that the most powerful governments on earth find themselves locked in a costly and fearsome struggle, diverting large amounts of resources and attention to suppress the actions of a small group of fanatics? It's hard to acknowledge the power and success of global terror networks, but they are among the most effective and powerful organizations in the world today, capable of changing the course of history. They do this without formal power, advanced technology, huge budgets, or large numbers of followers.

What are the criteria we use to judge effective leaders? They include the abilities to communicate a powerful vision, to motivate people to work hard for them, to achieve results, exceed plans, and implement change. We want their leadership to result in a resilient organization able to survive disruptions and crises, one that grows in capacity, that doesn't lose its way even after the leader retires. If we apply these criteria to the leaders of terrorist networks, they come out with high marks. It's difficult to acknowledge

them as our teachers, but we have much to learn from them about innovation, motivation, resiliency and the working of networks.

New science explains the behavior of networks in great detail because this is the only form of organization used by the planet. With the lens of science, we can peer into these terrorist organizations and explore the causes of their success. We can also see how to respond in ways that ensure we stop contributing to their success.

At present, we are dangerously blind to their strength because we use the wrong lens to evaluate their capacity. We use factors that apply to our world but not to theirs, to the behavior of hierarchical organizations, not to networks. Failing to use the right lens, we think we are winning the war on terror. We ask whether bin Laden is still a threat, whether Al-Qaeda is losing its strength, by evaluating his ability to give orders or to communicate using advanced technology. We assume that he is a weaker leader now that he is on the run and hiding in caves. We assume that if we prevent communication, terrorists won't be given orders and therefore won't launch attacks. We assume that if we kill the top leaders, if we decapitate their organization, that young terrorists will slink away from this anarchic, leaderless group.

U.S. military commanders frequently acknowledge they are fighting a new kind of enemy. They describe this enemy as one who learns, changes, adapts. As soon as U.S. soldiers figure out insurgents' strategy, they change it. Think about the vast resources nations spend on defending themselves against the *last* terrorist attack, even though experience teaches that they never repeat themselves.

The Army's long-term strategy is to develop a fighting force that is as adaptive, nimble and smart as insurgents. (The ten year plan is to develop many more special forces.) The military has studied the behavior of networks and the emergence of 'netwars' for many years. Before 9/11, they warned of the proliferation of networks, not only transnational terrorist groups, but also black market sales of WMDs, drug and crime syndicates, fundamentalist and ethno-nationalist movements, immigration smugglers, urban gangs, back-country militias and militant single-issue groups (Arquilla, 2001, 6). As networks, these groups operate in small, dispersed units that can deploy nimbly—anywhere, anytime. They know how to penetrate and disrupt, as well as elude and evade. Many groups are leaderless (Arquilla, ix). They also attack by 'swarming,' suddenly appearing from multiple directions, coalescing quickly and secretly, then disintegrating as quickly as they appeared (Arquilla,12, also Rheingold).

Although these groups appear leaderless, they in fact are well-led by their passion, rage and conviction. They share an ideal or purpose that gives them a group identity and which compels them to act. They are geographically separate, but "all of one mind" (Arquilla, 9). They act free of constraints, encouraged to do "what they think is best" to further the cause. This combination of shared meaning with freedom to determine one's actions is how system's grow to be more effective and well-ordered. The science thus predicts why terrorist networks become more effective over time. If individuals are free to invent their own ways to demonstrate support of their cause, they will invent ever more

destructive actions, competing with one another for the most spectacular attack.

People who are deeply connected to a cause don't need directives, rewards, or leaders to tell them what to do. Inflamed, passionate, and working with like-minded others, they create increasingly extreme means to support their cause. Describing Al Qaeda's success, network analyst Albert-László Barabási notes: "Bin Laden and his lieutenants did not invent terrorist networks. They only rode the rage of Islamic militants, exploiting the laws of self-organization along their journey (2002, 224). An insurgency is not "as is often depicted, a coherent organization whose members dutifully carry out orders from above, but a far-flung collection of smaller groups that often act on their own or come together for a single attack" (NYT 12/2/05). In this way, movements that begin as reasonable most often migrate to more extremist measures, propelled there by their members' zealousness. And with passions inflamed, growth is assured. The dramatic acts of one small group inspire many copycat actions in places far distant.

Over time, a network is fueled more by passion than by information. Networks begin with the circulation of information. This is how members find each other, learn from each other and develop strategies and actions. Most attempts for disrupting network activities focus on how to interfere with their communications. But once the network has momentum, it is passion and individual creativity that propel it forward. Communication is still essential for large coordinated attacks, but the proliferation of small, disconnected, lethal attacks does not require information. It only requires passionate commitment and a willingness to martyr oneself. Therefore, as the anger of network members grows in intensity, information plays a lesser role and personal innovation takes over. When we succeed in disrupting network communications, we also incite more local rage. Individuals may not be able to communicate with each other but, in their isolation, they become more creative in designing their own deadly attacks. So we can never adequately measure our success in disrupting a network by only measuring how well we are disrupting their communications.

The essential structure of any network is horizontal, not hierarchical, and ad hoc, not unified. This broad dispersal makes it difficult to suppress any rebel group. "Attack any single part of it, and the rest carries on largely untouched. It cannot be decapitated because the insurgency, for the most part, has no head" (NYT, 12/2/05). What appears as atomized and fragmented is, in fact, far more lethal than an organized military force. Bruce Hoffman, a Rand Corporation terrorism expert states: "There is no center of gravity, no leadership, no hierarchy; they are more a constellation than an organization. . . .They have adopted a structure that ensures their longevity" (NYT, 12/2/05).

These descriptions and dynamics do not surprise anyone familiar with new science and its observations of networks. Networks possess amazing resiliency. They are filled with redundant nodes, so that one picks up if another goes down (as did ham radio operators in New Orleans.) And human networks always organize around shared meaning. Individuals respond to the same issue or cause and join together to advance that cause. For humans, meaning is a 'strange attractor'—a cohering force that holds seemingly random behaviors within a boundary. What emerges is coordinated behaviors without

control, leaderless organizations that are far more effective in accomplishing their goals.

When we think of organizations as machines, we are blind to the power of self-organized networks. We keep looking for the leader. We assess an insurgency by whether its leader is visible, available and able to communicate easily with the forces. This is a profound and dangerous misperception of the leader's role. In early 2006, I listened to interviews with U.S. analysts trying to assess whether bin Laden was still a threat. They were looking at traditional organizational attributes: visibility, technology, chain of command, ability to issue orders, communication channels. Against those criteria, it seemed that bin Laden's power had been severely reduced. But one network expert said: "It's the idea, not the organization. . . bin Laden is a person of influence" (NPR 1/25/06, Morning Edition). And Barabási warns that: "Because of its distributed self-organized topology, Al Qaeda is so scattered and self-sustaining that even the elimination of Osama bin Laden and his closest deputies might not eradicate the threat they created. It is a web without a true spider" (2002, 223).

The science of how networks emerge out of chaos, organize around shared meaning and grow more effective provides new and more accurate measures for assessing the strength of Al Qaeda and other insurgencies. These measures focus not on size, structure or chain of command, but on meaning and emotions. They are startlingly different to the traditional ones we use.

1. Instead of counting the number of insurgents, how can we assess their passion and rage? A rise in attacks and demonstrations indicates increasing rage.

2. Is there a predictable pattern to attacks? Or are they becoming more varied? Greater variety of attacks indicates local initiative. This indicates increased dedication to the cause and less reliance on a central authority.

3. Where are attacks occurring? More attacks in surprising places is evidence of the network's strength, that it is growing.

4. What is the impact of our actions in fueling the passion of network members? Is what we're doing fanning the flames or working to pacify the situation?

5. To determine the leader's influence, look at the popularity of his ideas and interpretations. Do people accept his interpretations without question or do they debate them? How does the leader's appearance (in any form) affect the behavior of his followers? Is there any correspondence between the number of attacks and these announcements? Or do attacks continue to escalate independent of his presence? If attacks increase without his visibility, this indicates the network's momentum, "a web without a spider."

6. To determine the network's resiliency, what happens when a node or cell is destroyed? Have the number of attacks decreased or just shifted to a new location?

These and other measures would lead to a very different assessment of who is winning the war on terror. If networks grow from passion, if Al Qaeda "rides the rage" of angry Islamic militants, then the best strategy for immobilizing terrorist networks is not to kill their leaders, but to defuse the sources of their anger and not to incite them further. Many analysts arrive at a similar conclusion—we can only win the war on terror by eliminating the causes of rage. As long as our actions provoke their anger, we can expect more terrorists, more extreme attacks, and the continuing destablilization of the world by a small group of people. Barabisi states: "If we ever want to win the war, our only hope is to tackle the underlying social, economic, and political roots that fuel the network's growth. We must help eliminate the need and desire. .. to form links to terrorist organizations by offering them a chance to belong to more constructive and meaningful webs." We might win small and discrete battles, we might break up different cell groups, but if we do nothing to eliminate their rage, people will continue to form these deadly networks and "the netwar will never end" (224).

Similar clarity pervades the work of military strategist and advisor Thomas Barnett, who links economic progress to national security. Barnett notes that one-third of humanity lives outside the global economy in "the Gap." Their economic poverty has serious consequences because, since the end of the Cold War, " all the wars and civil wars and genocide have occurred within the Gap." To achieve true security, we must ensure that these populations benefit from economic advantages, thus "eradicating the disconnectedness that defines danger in the world today" (2005, xii).

This is the real world that we resist seeing at our own imminent peril. If we continue to seek to control it by exerting ever more pressure on those who hate us, those who feel disconnected, those who are impoverished, we only create a future of increasing disorder and terror. But to see a new way out of this terrifying future, we must learn to understand and see the world differently. Einstein's wonderful counsel that no problem is ever solved by the same thinking that created it defines what we must do. We must understand the behavior of networks in this densely interconnected world. We must understand human motivation and our astonishing capacity to self-organize when we care about something. We must understand that we lose capacity and in fact create more chaos when we insist on hierarchy, roles, and command and control leadership.

There is no more time to think about whether we need to make this shift. We can't afford to continue wandering blindly in the real world, oblivious to what's going on. But if we can become curious and willing students of Life's dynamics, I know we will discover surprising new capacities and insights. Whenever we humans see clearly and understand the true dimensions of any problem, we become brave and intelligent actors in the world.   It is time to open our eyes, change our lens, and step forward into actions that will restore sanity and possibility to the real world.

ABOUT MARGARET (MEG) WHEATLEY, Ed.D.

Margaret Wheatley writes, speaks, and teaches how we can accomplish our work, sustain our relationships, and willingly step forward to serve in this troubled time. She is co-founder and President emerita of The Berkana Institute, an organizational consultant since 1973, a global citizen since her youth, and a prolific writer. She has authored eight books. Her numerous articles may be downloaded free at her web site: *margaretwheatley.com*. For more biographical information, see *margaretwheatley.com/bio*