

*A Guide to Inner Work for Holistic Change*

# A NEW REPUBLIC OF THE HEART

AN ETHOS FOR  
REVOLUTIONARIES

TERRY PATTEN

Foreword by ANDREW HARVEY

# PRAISE FOR *A NEW REPUBLIC OF THE HEART*

*For the full text of these and other endorsements, see the book's website:  
anewrepublicoftheheart.org.*

“In a world of exploding crises, we are all called to contribute. But how do we find our unique contributions, make them most effectively, and bring out the best in all whose lives we touch? These are among the most crucial questions of our time, and Terry Patten beautifully elicits the wisdom with which we can find our answers.”

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“*A New Republic of the Heart* is THE manual for all who want to meet this moment as the historical call to action that it is. Combining brilliant social commentary with a step-by-step blueprint for catalyzing whole-system change from the inside out, it shows us the way to rise into our personal and collective destiny.”

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“With deep caring and illuminating insights, Patten unfolds an integrative analysis of our impending crisis of civilization, offering a valuable handbook for those trying to make sense of what’s happening and—most importantly—what they can do about it. Even those of us who don’t subscribe to integral theory can benefit greatly from his investigation of an ‘activist spirituality,’ his recognition of political engagement as love in action, and his astute explanation of how we can become effective agents of change through self-transforming communities.”

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Cultural History of Humanity’s Search for Meaning*

“*A New Republic of the Heart* provides practical imperatives for gathering our collective strength, intelligence, and spirit into powerful strategies that can change the course of our future. Each page is filled with insights and recommendations that have personal, community and global significance. A must-read for those who know that together we can be catalysts of change.”

—CONNIE BUFFALO, president of Renaissance  
Project International

“Confronting the myriad challenges facing us and our planet is a delicate endeavor. Terry Patten invites us to step with both feet into the center of this complex terrain and then hands us an empowering map for not only finding our way through it, but truly being part of the solution.”

—CRAIG HAMILTON, founder of Integral Enlightenment

“With extraordinary eloquence, Terry Patten integrates integral theory, social commentary, and true humanity, laying out a new path for how spiritual practice cannot just come fully online in our hearts but deeper into our world. May this groundbreaking book help you navigate changing times with grace.”

—MIRANDA MACPHERSON, author of *Boundless Love*

“Patten marries brilliant big-picture analysis and heartfelt soul practices to chart an evolutionary path forward for humanity that accelerates our spiritual growth and awakens our deepest service. Just the medicine we need!”

—STEPHEN DINAN, CEO of The Shift Network and  
author of *Sacred America, Sacred World*

“In a time when too many of us are closing our eyes and ears to reality, Terry Patten has braved the harrowing passage necessary to grapple deeply and authentically with our ecological predicament and why we keep making it worse. This book deserves a wide readership.”

—MICHAEL DOWD, author of *Thank God for Evolution*  
and host of “The Future Is Calling Us to Greatness”

“With a rare combination of spiritual depth and razor sharp intellect, Terry Patten weaves together social justice, environmentalism, and a sober look at today’s multifaceted crises into a true marriage of spirit and action. A lifetime’s worth of spiritual practice radiates through every paragraph.”

—DUSTIN DIPERNA, author of *Streams of Wisdom*

“*A New Republic of the Heart* is a potent revolutionary guide for twenty-first century activists. Expect to be inspired by a clear vision and a call to coalesce innovators, ecologists, and evolutionaries and awaken their heart intelligence.”

—MARILYN HAMILTON, PhD, founder of Integral City  
Meshworks and author of *Integral City*

“In *A New Republic of the Heart*, Terry Patten shares the fruit of his decades of intense inner work—a new toolkit for a whole-system change.”

—JOSH BARAN, author of *The Tao of Now*

“Like all true spiritual guides, Terry Patten shows us how to open our hearts and respond to this suffering world. His book is thoughtful, careful, and joyful.”

—DIANE MUSHO HAMILTON SENSEI, author of *The Zen of You and Me*

“Terry Patten has followed his deep inner calling as inseparable from the calling to contribute to the health of our burning world. *A New Republic of the Heart* communicates the evolutionary activism it takes to walk paths that lead to the answers we need.”

—THOMAS HÜBL, international teacher and founder of the Academy of Inner Science

“Without mincing words about what humanity is facing, this guide to spiritual activism gives direction for a sane and sustainable, heart-based paradigm.”

—ANODEA JUDITH, PhD, author of *The Global Heart Awakens* and *Eastern Body, Western Mind*

“As an evangelical Christian and social conservative, I am repeatedly surprised by the deeper truths here with which I agree. These include the belief that this is indeed a defining moment for humanity, and that the solution, while seemingly beyond reach, is in fact both close and personal; that we have within us the potential to be and to do far more than we ever previously imagined; that the necessary change begins within the very heart and soul of every person—from the bottom up, so to speak; that the times call for a kind of mindfulness and intentionality that humankind has never collectively achieved in the past; and that as we turn inwardly to tap our true human potential, we must also turn outward in a spirit of tireless and selfless servanthood.

We must urgently resume the great dialogue of civilization in a way that will lift us beyond the boundaries of our sectarian and political differences toward the embrace of a better future for our endangered world. Whatever your party or religion, read this book, and for the sake of everything that is true, good, and beautiful, let’s talk about it—together.”

—EMERSON ALLEN JOSLYN, MD, High Point,  
North Carolina

“The depth of this book is astounding. *A New Republic of the Heart* is for anyone drawn to thinking deeply, feeling fully, and acting boldly on behalf of the planet and all life.”

—J. MANUEL HERRERA, Silicon Valley elected official

“Piece by piece, Terry Patten dismantles our comfortable, well-trod positions on the global future. He invites us into a bigger space, one that includes all positions yet transcends position-holding. From here we have access to not just facts but wisdom; we are able to accommodate more of what wants to be seen and felt, and we can act in a way that brings into being a healthier, more sacred world.”

—JEFF SALZMAN, “The Daily Evolver”

“Terry Patten’s book unearths a practical wisdom that unites the causes of the world with the deeper causes of our being. *A New Republic of the Heart* extends both frontiers of activism and consciousness, serving humanity collectively with helpful insight into what is needed currently and in the years ahead.”

—OLEN GUNNLAUGSON, editor of *The Intersubjective Turn and Wisdom Learning*

“In *A New Republic of the Heart*, Terry Patten combines his brilliant mind and deeply compassionate heart to demonstrate a path to awakened activism. This important book connects pragmatic practices for individual activism with a visionary blueprint for a broad transformation of human civilization. It will show you how to become the change you want to see.”

—STEVE MCINTOSH, president of the Institute for Cultural Evolution and author of *The Presence of the Infinite*

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FOREWORD BY ANDREW HARVEY



North Atlantic Books  
Berkeley, California

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Published by  
North Atlantic Books  
Berkeley, California

Cover design by Howie Severson  
Book design by Happenstance Type-O-Rama  
Printed in the United States of America

*A New Republic of the Heart: An Ethos for Revolutionaries* is sponsored and published by the Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences (dba North Atlantic Books), an educational nonprofit based in Berkeley, California, that collaborates with partners to develop cross-cultural perspectives, nurture holistic views of art, science, the humanities, and healing, and seed personal and global transformation by publishing work on the relationship of body, spirit, and nature.

North Atlantic Books' publications are available through most bookstores. For further information, visit our website at [www.northatlanticbooks.com](http://www.northatlanticbooks.com) or call 800-733-3000.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Patten, Terry, author  
Title: A new republic of the heart : an ethos for revolutionaries / Terry Patten ; foreword by Andrew Harvey.  
Description: New York : North Atlantic Books, 2018.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2017036209 | ISBN 9781623170479 (paperback)  
Subjects: LCSH: New Thought. | Self-actualization (Psychology) | Spiritual life—New Age movement. | BISAC: BODY, MIND & SPIRIT / New Thought. | RELIGION / Spirituality.  
Classification: LCC BF639 .P148 2018 | DDC 158—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017036209>

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 United 22 21 20 19 18

Printed on recycled paper.

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# FOREWORD

*by Andrew Harvey*

**T**he book you hold in your hands will take you on a journey that will awaken and liberate you. And it will empower you to change the world.

I'm delighted to welcome you to a rare, sober, deep, spacious, seriously humorous conversation—a conversation many of us are longing for and trying to have. Terry Patten's passionate intelligence calmly cuts through our consensus trance and speaks directly to what really matters right now. The voice of this book penetrates our collective sleep and awakens us from the dream.

It comes just in time. This is a time when most of us are hypnotized by our screens, small and large, when our ears are closed to voices that challenge our refusal to feel our actual situation. There is an alarming tendency in spiritual circles to resort to easy answers to hard questions, to dwell in superficial compassion, cheerfulness, and premature forgiveness, but with no willingness to understand or confront our ecological and spiritual emergency, or the dire structural injustice that supports it. Thousands of well-meaning people have gone unconscious, entrained into habits they imagine are “spiritual” but that actually reinforce irresponsible bypassing and dissociation.

In this din, amidst the babel of what some Native American traditions call “pretender voices,” it is very difficult to speak the truth in a way that can be heard and integrated. Because he actually *practices* the humility he advocates, Terry Patten dwells in the innocent “don't-know mind” of an undefended, intelligent heart, with the openness and curiosity that makes

possible endless learning and growth. This makes him a credible guide to the conversation we so desperately need, the one we keep inadvertently avoiding, the conversation that could catalyze us back into responsible adulthood in the greater human family.

Many people are just now waking up to the truly horrifying, even unbelievable severity of our ecological, social, economic, and cultural crisis. Please listen to what this book has to say, and let it bridge you into a powerful, dynamic relationship to the horror and wonder of our time. It will help you navigate the winds of fear and your desire to turn away from what is now before us. It won't stigmatize those reactions; after all, such feelings are entirely human. Instead, it will help you be shattered in all the ways that are appropriate, and also to rest in the deeper, more spacious container in which you can become strong enough to bear the stark news. It will help you be simply present as an intelligent heart, not overcome by the devouring madness of our time. And it invites you to discover your place in the ongoing conversations among people committed to inspired action.

This book defines a new genre—it is a work of social commentary and a deep practice book; it is a brilliant synthesis of evolutionary neuroscience, integral theory, deep ecology, and spiritual wisdom. And it is a compelling call to inspired social activism. This is a truly consequential conversation about what is really happening, and what most matters in our time.

It proceeds in four movements.

First, you are led through an unblinking tour of our holistic crisis and the obstacles to clear understanding, helping you recognize our seemingly insurmountable dilemma as a demand for growth, awakening, and activism. Terry Patten helps you to become activated as you fully apprehend exactly how our sacred, catalytic existential and spiritual challenges and opportunities require our service.

Second, you will explore the territory of paradox: of how wholeness expresses itself in every facet of not just the natural, more-than-human world, but of our hypercomplex, fast-changing human civilization. This book helps you to be transformed, by looking and seeing with

evolutionary eyes, noticing how a nuanced, integral perspective can reveal the hidden patterns behind our minds, our subcultures, our culture wars, and our inspiring evolutionary opportunities.

Third, Terry Patten unpacks how our radical urgency and wholeness imply a whole life of practice, and how every day and every moment are implicated. And he offers an integral view that unites transcendental spirituality with immanent earth-based spirituality, expressing itself in each soul's unique journey, and the stories that illuminate them. And he vividly illustrates this by sharing the details of his own soul journey and the archetypes that resonate in his personal experience.

Fourth, this book connects that practice to creative activism: both to "outward" activism—in-the-system, against-the-system, and around-the-system—and to "intimate" holistic activism, in our relationships and conversations. It offers a revelatory introduction to catalytic experiments in dialogue and "we-space" and the future of friendship—into becoming the kinds of spiritual friends, the kinds of sangha that might evolve the next Buddha. It even explores a series of very specific conversations that are needed if we are to transform the suicidal trajectory of industrial civilized culture.

This book concludes by addressing us very directly about the open-ended nature of its sacred call. It is an initiation into a never-ending commitment and a never-ending cooperative adventure in becoming "the ones we are waiting for." It acknowledges that many of us are already doing this work. And yet it also sees into and calls forth a future of integration that is still unrealized.

The intelligence of the heart cannot be asked to wait any longer. It must now reclaim the whole human world. This is what Patten calls an "integral revolution," a process of growing into a new structure and stage of human evolution. That's both necessary and unavoidable. Whether our future is a great hospice project or a great process of bringing wisdom to a new cycle of technological, social, and economic innovation, it needs our highest heart intelligence. That must be enacted in every heart, in every relationship, in every organization, in every fiber of our body politic.

This broad cultural awareness is emerging spontaneously, expressing a dawning universal intuition of what Charles Eisenstein evocatively calls “the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible.” This intuition is arriving in the hearts of millions of people all over the world. It expresses a new patriotism, a civic responsibility to bring into being “a new republic of the heart.”

This compelling prophecy rests upon an enormously significant reality. A new republic of the heart is already coming into being. It is happening in my heart-mind—and yours—through our committed activism, and in the hearts and minds and hands and feet of hundreds, and thousands, and millions of others. This book is important because it builds a bridge from our fragmented confusion to a happy recognition of what it will be to arrive, together, as novitiate citizens of our next evolutionary stage and structure, illumined by the transmissive intensity of higher, divinely inspired states of consciousness.

If you read this book, and feel it with an open mind and heart, you will be changed irrevocably. You’ll be drawn into brokenhearted, joyous commitment to the great work, the only thing that means anything after all our structures of human-created meaning are burned through.

You will arrive in the dawning awareness that at a deep level you are already growing in loyalty to an emergent new republic of the heart. It already exists. Paradoxically, it also needs us to bring it into being. This new republic may become our homeland, and there the divisive battles of our current politics may become unnecessary. But in the meantime, this great undertaking asks everything of us—a whole life of practice and growth and friendship and service and courageous creativity.

So read on, and receive an initiatory vision. In this stunning marriage of wild heart and cool mind, Terry Patten turns the black diamond of our global darkness to illuminate our hearts, hone our capacity for selfless service, and resplendently deepen our commitment to enact our divine identity and its joy, whatever happens.

This is a major work of pioneering originality, accomplished with great intellectual grace and profound sacred passion. Enjoy it and be changed.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It took a village to write this book; I would like to express my deepest gratitude to a few of the many people who provided support and encouragement from its inception to completion.

Thanks especially to Larry Boggs, my primary final editor, cocreator, and sounding board, whose tireless dedication to clarity of understanding and impeccability I will forever be grateful for; Elizabeth Debold, a brilliant and incisive coconspirator in clarifying the structure that has brought the ideas of this book into fruition; and several dear friends who have provided crucial reflection and editorial help at various stages in this project—including Deborah Boyar, Rebecca Baum, and my longtime collaborator Marco Morelli, with whom I brainstormed and refined these ideas and how to communicate them from 2011 to 2016. Thanks also to Brad Reynolds, who expertly created the Four Quadrants figure.

Profound gratitude to Andrew Harvey for his encouragement and for championing this project and to Jim Willems for being my companion in the vision and passion that birthed it. Deep thanks to Rafael Cushnir, Gene Dunaway, Roger Walsh, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Dustin DiPerna, Jeremy Lent, Bill Kauth, and Andrew Gaines, who have read drafts or sections and were excited enough by the book's vision to help me improve it.

Deep appreciation to Frank Marrero, Grant Hunter, Lisa McKay, JoAnn Lovascio, Tom Steininger, Ellen Daly, Carter Phipps, Michael Dowd, Connie Barlow, Jean Houston, Jeff Salzman, Diane Hamilton, Ken Wilber, and Adi Da Samraj, who have gracefully influenced me with their original ideas and/or inspired (or shared) this vision in various, sometimes profound, ways. And a broad thank you (and apology) to the many people

*not* named here who have supported, inspired and accompanied me and contributed over the years.

This book has evolved the thinking I embodied in an unpublished manuscript from 2004: *The Terrible Truth and the Wonderful Secret: Answering the Call of Our Evolutionary Emergency*. I am grateful to everyone who helped that early work come into being, especially Deborah Boyar and Frank Marrero and also Larry Boggs and Julia Gilden. I also benefited from the thoughtful reflections I received from Raphael Cushnir, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Geoff Fitch, Terri O'Fallon, Ken Wilber, and Steve McIntosh.

Sincere thanks to everyone at North Atlantic Books, particularly Tim McKee for his wise, gracious patience, counsel and faith; Alison Knowles for her enthusiastic support and guidance; Ebonie Ledbetter for her careful dedication; and Bevin Donohue and Doug Reil for their energetic belief in a new republic of the heart.

# INTRODUCTION

## What's Really Happening?

Our times are strange and wondrous—so strange and so wondrous that they far outstrip our comprehension! Even as we are verging on world-changing breakthroughs in science, technology, consciousness, cooperation, and leadership, we're also verging on catastrophic breakdowns of our planetary ecology, as well as our cultural cohesion, economic and social order, and, of course, our politics. It is wild, significant, inspiring, and terrifying that this is all happening *simultaneously*. We are clearly approaching a moment of truth.

We need the guidance of higher wisdom. Fortunately, all of humanity's highest wisdom traditions are in conversation as never before. And yet the circumstances that have sometimes enabled wisdom to guide the human future seem to be eroding underneath our feet. Our collective nervous system is surging with adrenaline, jolted again and again by breaking news and visions of apocalypse as well as technological utopias and dystopias.

What's really happening? Where are we headed? Is human civilization really coming apart? Will we all come together as never before? What does that mean for us personally? What can we do? How can we “be the change we want to see in the world”?



In 2016, while I was writing early drafts of this book, the average planet-wide surface air and ocean temperatures were the warmest ever recorded for sixteen consecutive months—and extreme weather events continued to increase in size and frequency. At the same time, a backlash against liberal democracy, immigration, and globalization spawned a worldwide political crisis, and our planetary ecology and climate were (to put it mildly) not the dominant popular priorities.

Although I feel chilled to the bone by some of what we might be facing, I am also uplifted and inspired to behold our most dramatically positive possibilities. It is becoming a cliché to state that we're in a race between consciousness and catastrophe. So my focus is not on laying odds. It is on the inner work that can enable us to do the outer work of navigating this time of transition in the best ways possible.

Some colleagues and I have discovered some crucially helpful insights and practices. I believe they can lead us to a grounded, positive, authentic way of relating to our predicament and our opportunities. These insights and practices might help get us through the years ahead. More important, they might even help us take giant steps into a collective transformational process that can actually change the human game in the ways many of us have sought to all our lives.

Such a game-changing transformation would be something like what was, in ancient times, symbolized by a precious jewel. Buddhists have called it a “wish-fulfilling gem.” Such a diamond cannot be formed except under titanic pressures. Sudden, dramatic evolutionary progress often takes place under conditions of extreme tension, when pressures require rapid and dramatic adaptation. When new conditions disrupt ecological balance, other crucial environmental factors change, and they force new faculties and behaviors to emerge.

We are seeing this happen to the planet—but the same thing is happening to us. As the planet is pushed to its limits, so too are we. While the changes being triggered ecologically are threatening in many ways, their effects on us, even when they do harm, may well also produce the evolutionary pressures that will form something like a diamond, a qualitative

structural transformation of the elements of our very character. It will demand everything of us. That means we must accept responsibility for human evolution itself—and that this evolutionary transformation must take place not over eons, but rather as an accelerated “punctuated” socio-cultural transformation.

Evolution has shown its ability to find astonishing expressions under the right circumstances. It has always proceeded against overwhelming life-and-death odds, but right now we are in the midst of a collection of interconnected challenges and opportunities of unprecedented scope and intensity. If evolution proceeds in fits and starts, with long periods of relative “equilibrium” punctuated by turbulent periods of rapid evolutionary innovation, those of us alive today are right in the center of the action.

## BOOM OR DOOM?

Two compelling and mutually conflicting metanarratives, each with conflicting views of our predicament, are in competition among intelligent observers. The first is optimistic. It is a narrative of continual survival, adaptation, transcendence, and progression. In this view, our technological and cultural advances are entering a period of game-changing exponential acceleration. Our increasing collisions with planetary limits, and the unfolding catastrophic consequences of our unsustainable behaviors, though very real, will finally sober us and force us to change our collective habits, and we will have new means to ease the transition. Circumstances will teach us wisdom and set us firmly back on a positive evolutionary path into a marvelous unchartable future.

An evolutionary version of this narrative sees our precarious global predicament as an important transition but a temporary bottleneck in our upward evolutionary trajectory. It sees a powerful creative drive, native to every morsel of reality, driving our evolution. This dominant creative factor will be key to ensuring our continued survival and progress in ecology, science, culture, ethics, technology, politics, economics, and consciousness.

In the version of this narrative that inspires me, humankind will eventually establish a metacommunity, or *metasangha*, of “communities of practice,” expressing our highest ethics and values. And this future civilization will eventually manifest a new stage in the evolution of the human race—a new adulthood for the species—perhaps even a unified and transcendent super-organism that some see as the next Buddha, or as the true meaning of the second coming of Christ.

The second, equally influential metanarrative is pessimistic and socio-ecological. It sees a more primitive and instinctual power as the dominant force driving both our development and our degeneration, and ultimately determining our fate. This darker side of that raw evolutionary energy or *Eros* manifests as an unquenchable and compulsive drive for survival, dominance, adventure, acquisition, conquest, consumption, and control. We have long been in the grip of this power-Eros, and look at what has happened. We’ve nearly exhausted Earth’s resources, enormously overshot its carrying capacity, and are now on the verge of an age of contraction, scarcity, environmental degradation, social upheaval, and economic collapse—and these dangers appear more likely with every passing year.

In this narrative, humankind’s unbridled drives will inexorably lead to the collapse of civilization and the planetary biosphere, resulting in mass species extinctions—and, in time, scenarios that may well lead to a dystopian, nearly uninhabitable planet and perhaps the end of the human race. Many deep ecologists say we have already entered the early stages of the collapse of human civilization.

My life and work have been fueled and inspired by the optimistic evolutionary metanarrative. But I’ve been shaken, sobered, and educated by my intensive study of the science and journalism supporting the pessimistic metanarrative, which more realistically accounts for the latest current data. The history and evolution of humankind, and even of each individual life, reveals a struggle between the forces and effects of the evolutionary-creative Eros and the instinctual-power Eros. And while we may place our hopes in the first narrative, we cannot dismiss the mounting evidence that supports the second. No one can know for sure

which of these metanarratives will shape our future. We are suspended between two antithetical possibilities, as well as a spectrum of possibilities between the two extremes. I believe that even though certainty is beyond our grasp, we are the prime actors in the drama. And even without any certainty, we can greatly influence the outcomes.

I take this to heart, and I suggest we all do, because we're each partially in charge. The locus of control of human civilization—this vast and hypercomplex system—is distributed, nonlinear, and unpredictable. It is no more conscious, no more able to choose its direction, anywhere else than it is right here, right now. That implicates me, and you, at least in some small but potentially significant way. If humanity is to wake up to its predicament and choose a sustainable future, millions of people will necessarily participate. And where might that awakening and participation begin? When? I can't expect it to be the exclusive responsibility of someone else—of some political or spiritual leader or expert or philanthropist or celebrity. It must also depend on me, if I am aware enough to sense and feel that I can make some small difference—and the same goes for you.

That means that I must remain “in conversation with” the leading edges of the dark ecological narrative, *and* with the leading edges of the humanistic technological narrative of progress. At the same time, I do well to stay close to the insight that even though I care deeply about the future of life, I can trust reality itself (however much death and loss it may contain) never to really be a “problem.” Regardless of its nature, the future is not a dilemma, and it doesn't need to be solved. And this does not change another truth: I want to pay attention when what I love is threatened.

I am honor-bound to remember that I don't know what will happen, and that no one else knows either. Wisdom requires being *epistemically humble* enough (“knowing that you don't know,” rather than epistemically closed, or “thinking you know”) to learn what is revealed by a wide range of perspectives. The interaction between us and these perspectives and the scenarios they imply will create the future into which we all will live. I can hold the question much better

if I don't close myself off to any part of what human intelligence sees. And so I become a multiperspectival participant in the affair of our common life, fully aware that we must act decisively and effectively in the midst of great uncertainties. After all, we do know the dire consequences of not acting.

## WHAT WE CAN DO

We know that both the worst and the best in human beings, and our potential for rapid radical change, all emerge in times of crisis.

This crisis will require very different tools than anything we've relied on in the past to dig ourselves out of holes and harrowing emergencies. This is a new kind of challenge. Technological and scientific breakthroughs will create openings for fundamental change. They will be a necessary part of the path forward, *but they are not sufficient*. The same is true of the wisdom born of high states of consciousness. And it is true of enlightened organizational practices. Leadership in any of the ways we have understood it until now will be crucial, but it too will not be enough.

What will be required is "whole system change"—a broad transformation of all human civilization. That's enormous and unprecedented, so of course it will take a while. It implies *constant* transformation and aliveness, inner and outer. To take this seriously on a personal level is to confront an impossibly grand imperative. In effect, our predicament is calling on us to simultaneously volunteer for the supreme commando raid behind enemy lines and to join a metaphorical monastery and give up our lives to the wholeness that sustains us. And we are asked to renew these commitments again and again, in every new moment. We are called to a robust and dynamic new form of spiritual activism—or activist spirituality—that fuses the "inner work" of personal transformation and awakening with the "outer work" of service, social entrepreneurship, and activism.

Our relationships, our communities, our connectedness to others, our ability to be resourceful and resilient—these are likely to be our most meaningful security under the extreme circumstances that are increasingly

likely. And our psychological and spiritual resilience will become our most essential capital. Our thriving may depend most of all on our courage and generosity, our ability to defy our fear, to be happy for no reason at all, to cooperate with others locally in our community, and to bounce back creatively after traumatic setbacks. These are the kinds of virtues—and the kinds of bonds—that will probably really matter.

The balance could quite possibly tip toward survival and evolution. A large part of me—the greater part—still believes it will. But no one knows the future. In the process of writing this book I have faced the futures I feared facing, and it took me through a disorienting, months-long plunge into a “dark night of the soul.” I wouldn’t have been true to myself if I had refused to consider the darker possibilities—and their transformative gift of a different kind of hope, and gravitas, on the far side of despair. Even if global catastrophes and planetary extinction are our inescapable fate, how our souls respond, transform, and reveal their character are matters of utmost significance. And besides, every day is a gift.

No matter what lies ahead, it is tremendously important that we participate in ways that express our highest character and values. We can choose to act on the basis of what is best in ourselves. We can try to engineer and serve a comparatively “soft landing” to our overheated, turbulent trajectory, a benign transition from gross unsustainability to a sustainable human presence on our planet. And we can care for one another, even under the worst-case scenarios. In any event, we can wake up together into responsibility instead of sleepwalking into apocalypse.

## LET S TALK

In this pivotal moment of truth for our species, a whole wave of radical conversations is inevitable. For these conversations to really make a difference, we must break through our personas and our inauthentic poses. This is a deeper level of discourse than has hitherto seemed thinkable in public—disarming, tender, and authentic. To my knowledge, we have

never had such public conversations. Any such conversation requires an extraordinary degree of intelligence, freedom, clarity, and intimacy—and perhaps it can only take place in a moment of supreme urgency like this one. But now the stakes for humankind are our collective fate—a life-and-death choice. As Samuel Johnson noted, “Nothing clarifies a man’s mind so much as the knowledge that he shall be hanged in the morning.”

We are in territory that can clarify our minds—perhaps the calm before the storm. This historical moment may be the last window when we can initiate such a conversation in an environment of relative tranquility. Such a conversation requires a level of trust, vulnerability, and truthfulness that our culture seems to preclude, and we tend to shy away from it. It isn’t easy to examine and feel our deepest fears, or to acknowledge our unsustainable, addictive way of life. In a way, it is like a twelve-step “moment of clarity,” out of which unexpected changes of habit and character become mysteriously possible through “a power greater than ourselves.” That power may be the pressure of evolution itself.

Important conversations will refine practical solutions to our current social, political, economic, and environmental crises. Some among us have already been having those conversations for years. But they haven’t yet produced the urgently needed outcomes. Those conversations will deepen, extend, and continue.

A new, soul-level conversation is called for. It can only occur in a very different state of consciousness. It also requires new, more spacious and holistic and dimensional and nuanced structures of mind. It requires integral consciousness and the integrated intelligence of our whole being—what I call *integral heart intelligence* (which integrates mental intelligence and a powerful will with intuitive wisdom).

These collective evolutionary capacities emerge when individuals consistently practice transformative inner disciplines, individually and with each other, with the united intention to serve a greater good.

We are going to be drawn out of our comfort zones, but perhaps into something deeper and more real, meaningful, and rewarding. Periods

of great adversity often produce exciting and satisfying lives. There is a kind of love possible during times of war or natural disasters, a kind of vivacity and authenticity.

In this way, we might actually do something even better than surviving the coming crises and catastrophes that might await us. We might learn to thrive in a way that perhaps we were not before our runaway planetary emergency began to threaten every comfortable structure of existence.

We might become something so far beyond what we are, who we have been, and how we have thought and lived and loved and spoken and treated one another and our planet, that we might for all practical purposes be a new species.

This is a grand idea, and yet it is reasoned from evidence. And it is simple. It is the basis for the vision, motivation, and practices presented in this book.

When we emerge from the isolating trance of our fragmented subcultures and begin to act with others with the understanding that we really are all in this together, something important happens. We enter together into a profound shared experience. We enter into a new consciousness and creativity that are not available to lone individuals. No one, regardless of their enlightenment, can be what many of us can be when we are awake together, united in consciousness, vision, fellowship, care, and purpose.

Intimate, candid, catalytic soul conversation can open a doorway out of our collective trance, our conditioned alienation, our collective bad dream. It is a cluster of conversations that lead into an integral culture and consciousness: the next stage in our evolution. And in that consciousness, all our other necessary conversations about practical and political solutions to urgent problems can be fruitful in a way they have never been until now.

Writing this book has been profoundly humbling. I don't imagine I stand on some superior moral or spiritual ground. I am a student of this process and these ideas a teacher who teaches what he most needs to learn. I need this soul conversation as much as you do. And this book



is my attempt to begin the conversation with you, and with as many people as possible.

This book represents my attempt to complete the enormous unfinished work of my generation. We may not be able to leave behind as healthy a planet as we were given. But I wish to bequeath to my son, and all our daughters and sons, a supremely valuable legacy. I hope this book can be a catalyst—one of many—to help us grow into the new version of humankind that is envisioned here.

My hope is that, having read this far, you will choose to enter this conversation. For me it is a first step in a process of building connections, conversations, relationships, and communities that both nourish and embody the higher potentials of our species—one that will provide a solid integral foundation on which we may begin to build together, in the clear, pure words of Charles Eisenstein, “the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible.”

## A BRIEF TOUR THROUGH THE BOOK

This book reflects my own process of coming to terms with our current planetary crisis in all its complexity and uncertainty, exploring the nature and implications of global citizenship, and clarifying a radical new understanding of practice and activism. It addresses not only the external crisis but all the internal processes by which we understand—or fall short of understanding—what is truly going on, and by which we become the change we want to see in the world.

*Part One* establishes the multidimensional context. It summarizes our cataclysmic ecological predicament, the wholeness underlying our interconnected, more-than-human world, and the evolutionary and integral visions that establish a basis for a more integrated consideration of how we live meaningful lives in a time of crisis. It synthesizes important insights and ideas that readers can also find in other contexts.

*Chapter One* surveys our critical evolutionary predicament and crisis, including both its perils and promises—from the state of Earth itself to the trickiness of understanding our situation clearly, including

the wickedness of the problems themselves as well as how our own brains and psyches make it maddeningly hard to fully understand and effectively respond to them.

*Chapter Two* faces the sober facts, and responds with activism. Appreciating the gift of life, and loving life, we allow our hearts to be pierced by the maddening situation we find ourselves in; we consider how we can ground ourselves in an unconditional happiness that doesn't depend on "reasons" to be happy; and, finally, we consider the esoteric anatomy of activism—the absolutely complementary nature of inner and outer work.

*Chapter Three* considers reality's undivided wholeness—the most basic, obvious, and elusive truth about ourselves and our environment—and how our usual approach (especially in "civilized" societies) is to bypass this perspective in favor of endless fragmentation and analysis, which contributes to the pathology by which we have wrought ecological havoc on our whole planet.

*Chapter Four* views humans in the context of our sweeping evolutionary story and sees into this pivotal moment when we shift into a much accelerated evolutionary future.

*Chapter Five* introduces an integral way of understanding our multi-dimensional reality, appreciating how all human perspectives are partial views of a larger truth. Beyond the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual limitations of our typical fragmented thinking are more holistic perspectives that offer a basis for a "radical integral ecology."

My original thinking is largely concentrated in *Part Two*, which explores an integral understanding of the nature of individual and collective spiritual practice, purpose, social responsibility, and evolutionary activism. These explorations point the way toward an integrated practice that is both personal and social and that enacts *whole-system change*—a process that is profound, radical, and all-inclusive. I explore how we can begin right where we are, in our relationships with one another—and in our conversations—to seed a broad-based cultural transformation.

*Chapter Six* describes integral practice grounded in the awakening of free consciousness and love. It unpacks the holistic understanding of life, the humble, curious, joyous disposition, and the flexible improvisational

disciplines of a comprehensive, integral spiritual practice—and how it becomes a creative relationship to life’s unfolding that can inform every new moment.

*Chapter Seven* explores the unique adventure of practice that unfolds for each individual soul, and how it can enable us to live our deepest purpose, which we can often best understand through old stories, archetypes, and metaphors.

*Chapter Eight* shows how such holistic inner work expresses itself creatively in all kinds of outer work that creatively address the need for whole-system change and the multidimensional nature of culture and society. Evolutionary activism can take a multitude of forms, including in-the-system political activism, protest against the system, and activism that obviates government, going around the system. We look at four specific examples, and consider a broad range of integral approaches to political change.

*Chapter Nine* looks at the powerful synergies activated by communities of practice, as a source of hope for the future, and describes the tender, fierce, passionate nature of authentic communication, as well as the lessons learned through the integral community’s experiments with “we-space.” Here we begin to speculate about how this new tribalism will shape our near future.

*Chapter Ten* explores the nature and effectiveness of conversations, and the structures and boundaries that attend to them. It considers what it takes to engage deep, generative mutual exchanges, and explores significant conversations about the human future that are taking place within three groups of leading-edge thinkers—but that need to be happening *between* the groups.

*Chapter Eleven* is about our unique role in this place and time for transforming civilization and planetary life. We are “it,” whether we like it or not, and it is up to us—through our inner and outer work—to enact all necessary changes for creating a living, sustainable, exciting future. This work expresses who we truly are and it will go on forever, even “after it’s too late”—which it never is.

"A *New Republic of the Heart* should be required reading for all humans over the age of sixteen." —Stanley Krippner, PhD, coauthor of *Personal Mythology*

**A VISION TO ADDRESS OUR ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY,  
POLITICS, CULTURE, AND TO CATALYZE THE  
RADICAL WHOLE-SYSTEM CHANGE WE NEED NOW**

"What we have here is possibly the finest example of the making of the possible human, and with this, the development of a possible world."

—Jean Houston, PhD, author of *A Passion for the Possible*

"Terry Patten has woven together strands from evolutionary neuroscience, deep ecology, integral theory, and spiritual wisdom to offer a practical path forward out of humanity's current morass. Fascinating, fast-moving, and heartfelt, this book is a gem."

—Rick Hanson, PhD, author of *Buddha's Brain and Hardwiring Happiness*

"Patten clarifies how our wicked problems require us to grow beyond debate, one-upmanship, and other non-communication, to talk and listen in new ways. He's right on the mark—we must reknit our social fabric—our collective future requires it."

—Joan Blades, cofounder of MoveOn.org and Living Room Conversations

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North Atlantic Books  
Berkeley, California

[www.northatlanticbooks.com](http://www.northatlanticbooks.com)

Printed on recycled paper

US \$17.95 / \$23.95 CAN

ISBN 978-1-62317-047-9



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