

Session 1 Transcript
Foreword and Introduction
A New Republic of the Heart: A Guide To "Being the Change" For Real, with Terry Patten

Terry: Okay. Hello, everybody. I guess I am now finally on screen. Sorry for that delay in the audio showing up. I'm so excited to be welcoming you to this first session of this journey. Thank you for deciding to make time in your lives and in your hearts and in your attention for this exploration. It's certainly been a journey for me. I've been aware that ... Well, it seems as though most of humanity is sleepwalking, and that there are some really important conversations that we need to begin to be able to have, and that that requires us to wake up in many different ways, all at once. In a sense, to get woke, but also to awaken spiritually.

It's about us being present to all that is free and wonderful and uplifting, and all that is upsetting and horrifying, and difficult to be with, all at once. This is a conversation that I hope will help you not feel alone in the midst of all of that. Help you to feel that you're being met in a deeper way about the things that really matter to you, and to all of us. Because in a way, the biggest challenges in each of our lives at this point are challenges that we share in common. It's kind of a crazy time.

I will be kind of introducing this with some general comments. First, about the course itself. This is a course in which we're gonna be reading and studying the ideas and insights in a book, so that we can understand them. In a sense, it's more academic than other things I've taught. But because of the nature, and the depth, and the ... Well, the transformational implications of everything this book addresses, it's going to be a personal growth exploration for every one of us, and for those of you reading this with a group, it'll also be an exploration in your relationships and your conversations. Its implications for our activism and practice, and I have already posted a link about an opportunity for appropriate activism. The Rising for Climate Day is September 8. Massive demonstrations are intended, in many cities across the world, all throughout North America, Europe, Africa, Australia, Asia. This is something many of us may want to do.

It's something we deal with later in the book, but right from the beginning, I want to offer some resources relative to the implications of the book, and that has probably even more direct applications for every one of us, whether or not we live near a September 8 opportunity, in terms of practice. I've taught integral practice now for 15 years, and one of the most direct and central implications of this book is its challenges to each of us to become a more mature human being, to develop, to awaken, to deepen, and so that life of practice is something I want to recommend, and which I want to bring to each of the sessions that we share.

We're gonna go into that in some depth in Chapter 6, but even from the beginning, I want to encourage you, if you have any kind of meditation or conscious movement practice, that you up your game and do that. In my courses on integral spiritual practice, I recommend that people practice every morning for some length of time, at least 20 minutes, maybe longer, and I encourage you to also practice in random moments throughout the day, to really let this time of reading this book also be a time of taking care of

yourself, and making of yourself a more healthy and whole vehicle for responsible participation in our common life, in a time when so much is reaching this critical tipping point.

Some practical announcements about the course: Hopefully you've already received the links, and you've come on to the course homepage. That's where all the resources can be found. I hope you have already visited it, and maybe you've accessed the PDF of the forward and introduction, and read that in preparation for today's session, or listened to the Mp3, or both. There's also a video where I introduce this first session. Now, at the time I made that video, we did make a change. As I saw how things were going, I realized that there would be some people who might join us last minute, and might not have that week in advance of this week to read the materials, and I didn't want to have a lot of you kind of rushing at the last minute to catch up and feeling like you're behind right from the beginning.

I wanted a more graceful entrance to the course for everyone, so instead of grouping the introduction with Chapter 1 in the first session, I decided to add a week to this course. Although when you signed up it may have been described as a 12-week journey, I added an extra session, so it's now 13. Because the extra week that needed to be added would have been on the day before Thanksgiving Day in the United States, which would be completely impractical for a sizeable number of the participants in this, I decided to make it a week after. So in some places, it's even referred to as a 14-week journey. But that's all that was.

Now, I want to also let you know that there are a couple other elements of the course that are gonna be mentioned on the course homepage soon. You'll also be receiving emails about them. One of them is a place where we can interact with each other online. That would be a Facebook group. At first it's going to be called a closed Facebook group. After a certain point, we're gonna change it to a secret Facebook group so that it will only contain participants in this course. Then you're also gonna get an email later this week with a link to a survey. Many of you joined as a group, and will be meeting together right from the beginning, and that's great. But for others taking the course, we offered to make introductions to others with compatible schedules, and as much as possible, similar backgrounds. We'll be gathering that information and doing the puzzle of trying to make the best groupings of people for book study groups, and we think we'll be able to make those introductions pretty soon after our next session, so that's what to expect there.

Every week, within a day of the session, not always on the day of the session, often on the day, we're gonna be sharing on the course homepage a handout with deepening practices and questions relating to that week's chapter. That is something that you can discuss in your groups, and it's also something if you're taking this on your own that you can just pay some attention to, consider, maybe journal about, or even talk to a friend who's not taking the course. They're deep questions and I think they'll help you engage with materials more richly. We'll also always be posting a PDF and an mp3 of that week's chapter ahead of time. You can find them already for Chapter 1, which we're gonna discuss next week.

With that, I want to respond to your questions. Instead of beginning each session with a teaching, sometimes I will have things to say, but if there are a lot of questions, in a way, what I want to mainly do is to discuss the reading for that week with you and respond to questions. But there are a few things I guess I'd like to say right here at the beginning of this course about the ... Well, about the disposition. In

a way, this course, it's all of us responding to something that's really hard to face. Facing in our civilizational predicament can be just disorienting, disheartening, and yet I'm suggesting, and I firmly believe that as we go through this journey, you're gonna find your way to a sense of joy, and inspiration, and gratitude for the life that you were given, and that we're able to live together no matter what happens, but also with a sense that there's an awful lot of opportunity for the miraculous to occur now, and that we can be part of that miracle. And the satisfying experience of actually doing the things, and beginning to become in ourselves, in a deeper and more substantial way, always, the kinds of human beings in our own inner life, but also in our relationships and conversations with each other, who can actually be that change.

This reminds me of something else I had meant to say in the introductory announcements part of this section, which is that understandably, there are people who are taking this course in a range of life circumstances. Some of you are very passionate about this. You're prioritizing it. You're making a lot of time for it. You're gonna meet, and have extensive meetings on each of these sessions, and you're gonna be taking this to heart and engaging very, very richly with the deepening questions and everything else. I think you'll have a tremendously rich experience doing that. On the other extreme, there are some of you who could just barely fit this into your busy life, and in that case, maybe what you're mainly gonna be doing is, you might say in a sense, auditing the course. You'll probably at least listen to the mp3s of the chapters and the sessions, and take in the content and benefit from it, but you might not be engaging deeply with the deepening questions or meeting with a group.

I want to bless all of that. All of these different ways of engaging are perfectly fine. I want to appreciate whatever time and attention you can bring to this process, and for those of us who aren't participating in a group, some participation in the Facebook group may be possible. I don't really regard this as just a book. One of the things that I have already done and am in the process of deepening is founding a nonprofit entity, through which the educational and community building implications of this can be brought more fully into the world. I have aspirations to create other organizations that will enact this whole systems change in other ways, both politically and in terms of innovation. But I'll tell you more about that later, especially when those aspects of things are a little bit more fully baked.

But what I most want you to get from my mentioning those is that, well, I'm all in. This is my life. I've come to feel that I can't stand idly by in the midst of this circumstance and simply tend to my own separate happiness, and in many ways, I've made choices that have made me uncomfortable. I've decided to be in some ways perhaps a less glowing specimen of integral life practice, in order to be a more effectively engaged person caring for our collective future, and the future of life on this planet.

Every one of us is going to be balancing the ... You might say our willingness and our capacity to meet what is challenging and difficult about all of this with our understanding that we have to put our own oxygen mask on first, and that only with our own wellbeing intact can we really be the change we want to see in the world. As I often say, it's kind of my favorite one line summary of my message. Things are far too serious for us to lose our sense of humor. By that, I also mean our innate appreciation and joy of being alive.

As Sherry indicated, you can raise your hand to ask live questions. Many people have written in, written questions, and I have several of those to address in this session already. But live interaction is fun, and if any of you ... I know a bunch of people raised your hands when we had that problem of the audio not broadcasting at first. Now that things are intact, I'm not sure if we have hands raised with questions that are current. I will attend to the written questions, but at any time that you want to ask a live question, please do raise your hand. I think interacting with your living engagement with this material, it's fun, and I think it brings out something in a different way than just responding to the written questions that have been answered already, or asked already, and that I have written out.

Okay. Ed asked a couple of rather long questions, and by the way, let me say, I will read out loud your questions and your names when it's appropriate. When a question is really, really long, it becomes a little cumbersome to read the whole question, and because Ed asked a couple of questions which are extended, I think some of them are more private, but I'll just quickly address them.

Ed asks about something he's found value in, a system of having group conversations with people taking different perspectives, something that was innovated by Edward de Bono, called Six Thinking Hats. I had some familiarity with this, and it kind of is about bringing forth rationality and our positive energies, our judgemental energies, our feelings, our hunches, our creative insights, our ability to stay on track and so forth, all at once. It's a discussion tool. I think that it's actually good for certain kinds of discussions. I think that in a way, for this, I'd like to stick mostly with the approaches I've described in the book, but it's not that we can't augment them, or the groups who are engaging with this can't get some benefit from that. I do think it's a good system.

He also offered a lot of deep reflection- Ed, thank you for this- about the different dimensions of what I addressed in the introduction, and in a way, what you're saying that I'd like to presence is especially your response to the last section of the introduction. You wrote, "I can not count the number of times I have felt trapped in a ritual of happy talk, a circlejerk of anecdotes, polished and idealized from retellings about happenings with no cosmic effect. Perhaps I am being too harsh and lofty. Such exchanges can be valuable ways to build bonds of understanding. If they were interspersed with thoughtful exchanges relevant to our continued survival, I would welcome them, and participate with gusto. Most disappointing, these people are progressive and well-educated. Your description of the consensus trends helps me to understand these rituals. Perhaps I'm about to gain hints on how to segue into consequential topics without inducing a group effort to steer us back inside the guard rails."

Well, you know, I think it is, in a way ... First of all, I sympathize, empathize. I've been there so many times myself. We have to be able to make contact with people at a deeper level, and enlist their ... They have to notice and feel us, and come to respect our intelligence, and in a way have their unconscious momentum interrupted, if we're gonna be able to draw them into a deeper level of discourse. That's not always very easy. I often counsel people ... One of the questions that I've gotten so often in the last year is, "How do I talk to Trump supporters? They drive me crazy." I've come to point out that there are some, that unfortunately Trump has pretty much got 100% of the psychopath vote, and psychopathic people are not really available. So to some degree, we don't need to try, always. But there are a lot of good people who have been drawn into some of these things. There are complexities to the nature of

identity and tribe and so forth, that go deeper than the usual analysis. We'll explore that in some depth at the latter part of the book.

What I counsel people to do is to get curious about that human being, and about what in that human being they can honestly like, and what in that human being that they like has a connection to some value, or some activity. It can be something quite deep, or it can be something relatively superficial, but in the place where you can resonate with that other person, you can establish a bond, and you can reknit this connectedness across this tear in our social fabric. I think that very often we ought to be focusing on that, rather than trying to talk to them about the political issues themselves that have already been so politicized and [inaudible 00:23:53] in a way that doesn't really allow us to have the kinds of conversations that would be meaningful.

Okay. Annika says some very lovely things thanking me and appreciating the book, and she said, "A question only came to light for me last evening while re-listening to your audio, the introduction, and following along in your book. Earlier, I had trouble with your deepening questions for the boom or doom section of your introduction, especially the final one, paraphrasing, 'In what ways are you questioning and refining your reactions to these narratives?' I wasn't able to answer that question and I just realized it was because your discussion of them at this point in your book does not include mention of what becomes of the tens of thousands plus of our precious sentient lifeforms. Are they part of the deeper conversation of these narratives to follow further on in your book? I realize the answer most likely is different for each species, and therefore is too complex to fully address, and is, as so many of our questions are, impossible to pin down in a general sort of fashion, but this discussion feels like a crucial part of the boom or doom conversation for me. Upon waking this morning, I realize the following statement is not my whole truth on the matter, but the feeling in me keeps coming around and around that if I'm taking up arms for the human species alone, I simply do not feel as engaged or inspired into the journey. Help."

Thank you, Annika. I think that I probably speak about our collective human predicament especially strongly because it is what human beings do that are going to determine the fate of all, our whole human and nonhuman family, and this whole future of the living earth, even if the human species were to go extinct, what would then matter most is how much of this amazing evolutionary development and experiment could persist. What species will be able to make it through whatever hothouse version of earth humans don't survive, you know? That's a conversation that's being debated very actively among serious ecological thinkers. I find that in most environments, I'm with audiences who are pretty focused on the human level of things. I have a friend who's decided to devote her whole life to assisting the migration of tree species in anticipation of changed zones in which they can survive, such that as many tree species as possible make it through what she sees being ahead. She's very pessimistic.

But I'm not that pessimistic, and it's very important to emphasize some things. As I said in my introduction to this session, the first chapters of this book are the veritable two by four across the forehead. We face the really terrifying realities of our ecological predicament pretty directly in this book, and I'll offer you some supplemental readings that underline that in a pretty fierce way. I think that it's hard, but that it's a kind of medicine that strengthens us. It's kind of like a tonic. In homeopathy, a small dose of something that would kill you will heal you. "Like cures like" is the homeopathic dictum. I think

that facing what would dishearten us is how we build the depth of our own being such that we can make that unreasonable choice- sometimes it's unreasonable, sometimes it's completely reasonable- for gratitude, and happiness, and enjoyment, and love, and enjoy this moment of life, regardless. It's in that condition that we're best able to affect the larger world most.

This, particularly this first part of the journey is one in which we're going to be challenged to be with grief, and fear, and all of the so-called negative emotions, as a part of a passage into a deeper, a depth of being that is capable of all of the range of feelings, including the happiest and most joyous, and a different level of relationship with one another. It's part of becoming another stage of the maturity of the human species, but we have to begin that in a very humble and authentic way, recognizing that each of us are individuals with personality quirks and capacities. One of the things that you'll ... If you haven't gotten to know me before, and by the way, hello to you, my friends who I know. Many of you are already friends or students who I've come to know and appreciate, and I'm delighted that we're here together in this circumstance again, and I hope I'll be engaging with some of you through live or written questions soon enough.

Annika, I feel pretty much like you do. That sense of an obligation to others unlike myself, and I include a lot of human beings, you know? Like my zeal for engaging in US politics comes partly as an appreciation for my obligation to all my friends in other countries. Well, my effort to affect our way of being human here right now is partly given extra strength because of my passion for life itself, and the more than human world. You know, we often make use of this inspiring example of women who are not very big having been seen to lift a car off their child. How did they get that superhuman strength? Well, it's because they loved that child so much that they somehow found a supernormal capacity, just everything in their being was mobilized. Well, our care for more than ourselves, I don't think merely for our own sakes we would have the strength for what we are facing, but it's really important that we remember that the whole history of cosmic and biological evolution has, again and again, been marked by evolutionary emergence. That's the term.

In religious language, what we would call evolutionary emergence is a miracle. Miracles, again and again and again, have happened. That's how we are here right now. We are the product of miracle after miracle after miracle. It is neither logical, nor I think moral for us to flatly assume that there can not be any miracles in the time ahead. It will take some miracles, perhaps. Miracles of the human spirit, in terms of the kind of work I hope many of us will be doing together in this course and beyond, but also perhaps technological breakthroughs. A whole variety of miracles may be a part of how life finds its way to keep living, and evolution finds its way to keep evolving. Life wants to live, and evolution wants to evolve, and consciousness wants to keep awakening. We are that, and those motives are surging through us, and they will achieve a kind of a force, and a seriousness, and a ground of a whole different kind by our facing what is hard to face, but we will only have the strength also if we see that we don't know enough to become discouraged and pessimistic. We don't know enough to give up. That draws us back to the aliveness of this moment. One of the great spiritual messages of all traditions is waking up to the miracle of life right here, right now.

Let's wake up to that miracle. In fact, one of the things I think I would like to begin doing as a practice in the future sessions is to begin these sessions with a little period of centering and guidance, drawing us

into a deeper state of mind, so that there's a kind of transition from profane space and time into sacred space and time. Because everything we love in form, everything but God, seems perhaps threatened. Therefore, this conversation is a sacred conversation, and the great resource that we have to deal with it is the unreasonable joy that comes from recognizing that which is never possible to be threatened. That spiritual inspiration is such a central part of my own engagement with all of these issues. I definitely want to be sharing that with you, and framing our conversations in a way that helps put you in touch with those precious resources.

Let's see. Eileen Devirtue asks, "Would you expand on how you understand and use the term 'Eros'? I've heard it referenced in so many different ways, including as a simple synonym for life force. Can we draw useful energy, motivation, and focus from a responsible activation of Eros, if balanced by a surrender of self to a higher purpose and good for all, including the earth? Sometimes it seems to me that Eros is a largely untapped resource of pure evolutionary love, if we learn how to better harness it."

Well, thank you. That's a very helpful question. I'm happy to answer it. Eros is usually brought into conversation ... There are several Greek words for love. "Philia," a variety of them. The two that are most often talked about in philosophical and spiritual contexts are Eros and Agape. Eros is kind of thought of as the upward reaching love. The love that breaks forward into new territory, and Agape, as the compassionate love that reaches down to what needs our care. Agape is more like care, and Eros is more like the love that bursts boundaries. Plato, and following Plato, Ken Wilbur, my friend and mentor, used the word Eros to kind of describe the intangible, "What is it that evolution wants to do? What does evolution want to do?" That's Eros. "What does the spirit of evolution, the impulse of evolution as it lives in me, want to do?"

Well, Eros, in some sense, if we look at the history of evolution, it wanted to express itself more completely, to become more conscious, to know itself, to connect with, and cooperate with, and enrich, and more fully express the possibilities of being, and here we are in the time when evolution itself is becoming aware of itself. It's kind of a crowning moment of Eros, but part of what has gone on has been this satisfaction of human needs, such that we have both the blessings and the curses of comfortable middle class lifestyles. In that comfort, we tend to go numb and unconscious, and something of that passionate core energy of our being tends to be deadened, and that reawakening of a self transcending, wanting for the good, the true, and the beautiful, whatever the attractors are of this evolutionary process, is maybe how we experience Eros in our lives.

Now, it's very connected to erotic, to sexual desire, and sexual desire is the procreative urge, right? It's the urge to make more life, to send our DNA into the future. Well, now we're in a time when the leading edge of evolution is cultural, so it's like our memetic DNA, our ideas, our creativity. Our love wants to have those kinds of expressions, too. The idea is that they're all connected. That's my understanding of Eros, and there is something about simply ...

In this work, as I kind of presenced to some degree, we just want to do the kind of practice that makes us a shinier, more conscious, more loving, more present, more awake, more shiny, more compassionate, more capable, joyous human being, and in some sense, what we really want to do is to make a difference for everything we love, if we're alive in a time where everything we love is threatened, and

we're willing to endure hardship, and we're willing to let ourselves shoulder a big burden and maybe endure things that diminish our shininess and our joyousness and all the rest. We're willing to ... Our care has a different directionality. To fully inhabit both of these really healthy expressions of all that's best in us is a theme that we're just going to continue to deepen and understand more and more throughout this course.

Now, I'm hoping that maybe some people have raised their hands. I'm not seeing an indication of any live questions yet, but I see a really good question that was asked live in the section. Oh. One of our students wants to network and maybe get a ride to one of the climate marches on September 8. I think the Facebook group is gonna be the place to network for rides, not the Q&A section here. Yeah.

I'm going to continue onto another unanswered question. I don't have the name here, but, "Ever since the 1970s, I have been aware of the tipping point of critical mass, energetic potential coming kinetic, resulting in a quantum leap in the mass mind." That's the positive tipping point. I guess there's also a negative tipping point in terms of extreme weather and climate. "How much longer will it be before we actually reach that tipping point?"

Well, in evolutionary time, how long is now? How long is eternal? And in another sense, now is instantaneous. The now I refer to when I speak is already gone by the time you hear it. This tipping point, in some sense, is already upon us, and yet aspects of its full extent are still not fully in evidence. I think that as we wake up to the fact that an aspect of the positive tipping point is our own clarity and self-responsibility, that tipping point in a sense is any moment in which you more clearly arrive, in a sense that you can ... Seems like there may have been an interruption in my internet connection. I hope you're hearing me. Yeah.

I think that in a sense, we each have a personal tipping point that we're constantly finding our way into, and so I hope that your experience is that in a sense, the tipping point is right now. In any moment in which you begin to get that the responsible, conscious transformation of our whole way of being, the bringing about of a community of conscious individuals, who could together be, as Thich Nhat Hanh has so famously said, "The next Buddha may be a sangha," or a community of practice. Well, as you begin to realize how important that is, and you begin to want to make of yourself someone who could be such a citizen of such a new republic of the heart, and you decide somehow to get right with God and be that in all the ways you know how, and all the peculiar brightness of spirit, of creativity, of whatever your qualities are, your unique way of being a human being, suddenly gets aligned in a simplicity, so that your personal intentions and your personal aspirations are aligned to this greater goodness that cares about all of life, you begin to live on the other side of this tipping point in the most positive way.

I think in some sense, because the enormity of an individual human consciousness, cognizing, understanding, and metabolizing the enormity of the moment that we're all together in, it's a stretch. It's a real stretch, and so we're gonna have to come upon moments that can be like a tipping point moment more than once, you know? It's not like this is something that you can just do. In some sense it's like a lifetime of spiritual practice, you know? A lifetime of becoming a more conscious, and more healthy, and more integrated human being is what we each bring to this. That's what your sincerity and your seriousness are.

I hope this gives you a sense that the possibilities for transformation are kind of the neighborhood that we're hanging out in together as we do this course, that we're entering into a territory that may have overwhelmed us in the past. Very often, the conversation about the human future is a very intellectual, as if we could be with what all of this implies analytically, and our analytical intelligence is certainly hugely important, but that whole mode of discourse falsifies our whole relationship to everything we're talking about, because we're not an objective, disembodied intelligence. We are living, breathing human beings who have love, and who care, and who can be hurt, and who therefore know fear, and sorrow, and anger, and who therefore know joy and fulfillment, and it's an embodied engagement with our real situation that we're trying to break through into, even though we're members of a larger series of societies, even those of us from different countries around the world, are all of us participating in cultural hallucinations, in this consensus trance that's described in the next, the first chapter of the book, our next week's reading.

This process of coming to grips with what really matters in the midst of all of that is a profound, profound journey. And there are many insights that, if we understand them and clarify our ... Through discussion, through exploration of these deepening questions that I'm offering, can help us to bring ourselves to this, but in many ways, I think it's an existential confrontation, because for this to break out of just being a disembodied, abstract, mentalized thing, for us to come into an embodied relationship, this is necessary. If we're to be friends who are in this together, we're in this lifeboat together with a whole bunch of unconscious people, but there's a metaphor I sometimes use.

If we imagine that we're all in the lifeboat together with all these human beings, it's as if we're kind of in this circumstance with all of these children, all these immature beings, many of whom have terrifying weapons, and are doing terrible destruction to the life raft itself, and threatening to sink us all. In the midst of that circumstance, just kind of waking up and seeing what's going on, we look around for another pair of eyes that are adult, and awake, and that see what we see. It's enormously powerful if at first you're only seeing these crazy children, to see another pair of eyes that are awake and adult. Because if you recognize those eyes, seeing what you see, and seeing you see them see you, seeing what you see, that is if you're witnessed in your awareness, somehow now you have an accountability. You and this other adult, you and these other adults begin to have a different relationship to that madness.

I hope that your experience of reading this book gives you that experience, and helps you then to discover another trajectory of maturation and growth as a human being, and a new sense of possibility of our friendships with each other, our conversations with each other, our communities of practice with one another. Because that's what I see as our greatest opportunity.

Now, because I mentioned the climate march a couple of times, I want to ... This book is a bit of a holographic communication. It was a lot of work to write this book, partly because in many ways, it almost felt arbitrary as to where I would begin and where I would end. In some sense, this whole journey began with awakening, and the whole thing could be taught as the next stage of processes of awakening. I was lucky enough to find my way into a genuine spiritual path relatively early in life, and to have been a pretty serious practitioner for 45 years or so now. That, in a way, everything I'm talking about now is, for me, what happens after a certain awakening.

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You know, at the 10th ox herding picture, you return to the marketplace with helping hands. In some sense, you get lighter and lighter and lighter and lighter, and then you inherit responsibility for the whole shooting match, and you, in a sense ... Now it's not just a matter of your own personal bliss on the cushion. It's a matter of responsibility for all the suffering in the world, the Bodhisattva's disposition. Yet, you can take that a little too far, and carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders can just exhaust you and make you useless to everyone. Your own personal practice does need to restore your wellbeing, set your breathing free, make you capable of being a source of sanity and joy, in relationship to others.

Well, the book could have been written about that in that way, but in the end, I decided I needed to begin with this two by four across the forehead, and so we begin by looking at our civilizational predicament. But those of you who have already read the whole book, great. I think in a way, this is a book that many readers have told me that they've begun reading it again immediately after having read it the first time, because it is quite a bit that ... There are a lot of insights, you know? Many that you might already have noticed, some maybe not fully cognized as clearly, but this knitting together of this hundreds of insights in this book, I think something comes into view that draws us into a different, an opportunity for a different level of practice and maturation.

So I'm inviting you into a close reading of all the particulars that are expressed in this book, but ultimately what I hope you're feeling is an invitation into another stage of your whole life and of your relationship to experience, and one that challenges you and takes you into new territory, and there's some discomfort involved in that, but ultimately that really heartens you, gives you a sense of possibility, and joy, and inspiration, and clarity, and that in a sense dispels a certain amount of confusion and doubt. That's my vision and that's what I really wanted to introduce you to most solidly.

I'm noticing a comment that I'd like to comment on. Therese wrote in, "The competency of being able to see the divine and wholeness in every single person." That's beautiful. Yeah. That's one of the competencies I hope we're going to be naturally growing in. Being able to see the divine in every person is a new capacity.

Oh, I see that Basil has raised his hand. Yes. Let's see. Michael, can you unmute Basil for me? I think ... Yeah. Brad is not here anymore. Can you do that? Let's see. Oh, Thomas has his hand up, too.

Go ahead, Basil.

Basil: Well, first off I'd like to tell you how delighted I am to be part of what I consider to be a historic moment in the new republic of the heart. This is really rich, to be here. I'd like to ask a question about iconography on the book cover. I joined into the tribe of seeing the earth rise when I was 12 years old. It's really been an icon for my entire generation.

Terry: Yes.

Basil: And I feel that this most recent solar eclipse has become a sort of an icon of alignment of solar and lunar energies, as opposed to just having the sun blocked out. I was really intrigued to see it on the cover of your book, and I was wondering if you might elaborate around your choice there, or since we're just launching this conversation right now, and it's looking at all of us back over your left shoulder, I'm seeing this for the past hour here, and I was just wondering if you could give me some of your thoughts around that.

Terry: Well, the image came into being. It was just totally serendipitous. Quite honestly, the task of revising the book at the end, I'd already turned in a nearly final version, but of course it goes through some last minute edits and so forth, and I was very consumed with trying to make the book as much as possible the book I wanted it to be, so the publisher hired somebody to create the cover for it, and they just offered this as one of their comps, you know? They came up with three possible designs for the cover, and I just loved this one. That's how it happened, just in time and space.

What I felt that it meant, it's ... They call it the "diamond ring." It's the moment when, in a total solar eclipse, the moon just begins ... The moon has completely blocked the sun, and then it moves enough so that there's this burst of light at one edge of the circumference, and so it's very like a dawn. It's when that experience of sudden night and the strange noises of the creatures, and the enchanted, amazing feeling of the eclipse begins to open back into day, and it's a very special moment. It's probably the high point of the awestruck experience of the eclipse watcher.

Therefore, for me, what I felt its connotation was was, "We have faced the darkness, and now we can see the light coming through." That's what I wanted this book to communicate, and I felt it was a beautiful, simple way of kind of subliminally communicating the spirit of what I wanted to communicate.

Basil: Thank you.

Terry: Yeah. Thank you.

Terry: Okay. Well, Thomas. Hey, man. Welcome. Michael, please unmute Tomas.

Tomas: Hey, Terry. Good to be with you.

Terry: Good to hear your voice again. It's been a while.

Tomas: I've always been interested in history and culture as a young kid growing up in Philadelphia, going to the Liberty Bell, and the Betsy Ross house, all that. Reading the foreword, the introduction, and Chapter 1, a lot of the changes that you envision or point to are massive. You know, economics, politics, cultural, and my experience in those areas is that generally cultures change very slowly, although there are exceptions. Like you mentioned, World War II. But I can't believe that ... Or I'm curious if you can respond to how these massive changes could take place, because I'm puzzled how realistic it is.

Terry: Sure. No. I have the same grounded skepticism myself. I mean, my god. Well, here's how I see it, man. We're dealing with a systemic crisis of unprecedented proportions, and the likelihood that it's going to create disasters of unprecedented proportions is high enough that nothing is off the table. You know, in I think it was September or October of 2008 when the liquidity crisis hit, and there was the tarp and all that. There was a period of time in which the crisis was so extreme that if Hank Paulson, and Ben Bernanke, and George Bush had felt that it was necessary, they could have nationalized all the major banks in the United States. There could have been radical, radical, fundamental systems redesign.

Crises create opportunities for more fundamental systems redesign. It's also the case that evolutionary emergence doesn't always follow a negative crisis. If tomorrow's news contained an amazing news flash about free, clean energy that was gonna make fossil fuels completely obsolete, and the holders of the patents on this new technology were dedicating all of the enormous wealth that was gonna flow from its deployment to cultural transformation, the world could radically change. It's not impossible to imagine the scenarios.

Some of them are things will either get bad enough that more fundamental change is possible, or miracles will happen that will make the impossible suddenly possible. I think being up against the seeming impossibility of whole systems change is ... I mean, I respect the grounded sense of, "How would that ever happen?" But you can prepare the ground, and I think that if we prepare the ground in terms of our own practice, and if we prepare the ground in terms of our relationships with one another, we begin a certain process.

It's also true, Tom, that I don't conclude that we are going to work these miracles and have the whole systems change I'm talking about. I basically say that we have to face a future very unlike the past or the present. It could be that your skepticism will prove to have been accurate and that what we're going to be dealing with is more of a great hospice project, with a lot of us dying off, and there being terrific disasters. But if that's so, everything that we would have done that would have turned it around will prove to be the really important thing to do, even under the worst of circumstances.

I think that if you continue to go through the book in an open-minded way, that the key thing ... I sometimes say that 90% of us are in total denial. Of the rest of us, 90% of us are sure we're going to hell in a hand basket and there's nothing we can do to avert it. Very few of us recognize that we don't know enough to be certain about our pessimistic conclusions, and we've got the heart and balls to face reality. Those are the ones who are in a position to be a vehicle for emergence, for miracles. This is really more of an invitation for you to be growing in that capacity, and doing it intelligently, and certainly not leaving behind your skepticism, but yeah. Does that help?

Tomas: Yeah. Thanks, Terry.

Terry: All right. Thank you, Tom.

Tomas: I appreciate it.

Terry: Okay. I'm gonna take one last live caller. We have a question that's typed in. We're getting close to the end of our session. I'll take the live person, Marilyn. Welcome. Marilyn?

Marilyn: Okay. I'm bringing this up, well, because it's a really fresh experience today, rather than it's entirely relevant to the particular discussion. I woke up sobbing today. It was one of those occasions where my heart had really broken, which doesn't happen very much. I'm in Florida. We just had a primary yesterday, and I had dedicated whatever I had with my being to this candidate who I found really brilliant in his ideas, really had ideas about how to change what he's gonna do the day he steps in Congress, not just empty promises. He's a physics researcher. He's really smart, and he has a good heart, but what everybody says about him, it's clear. He just doesn't have the persona. He doesn't have the spiritual energy. They'd all call it that, just "the goddess behind him." I said, "I can bring him that." Because I'd recently been through a big transformation in my life.

I tried to meet with him, and do what I could with affirmations, trying to see his past, whatever, and he took me in. He trusted me, and I sort of was behind him. I went with him places. I just want ... The feeling that someone has your back. I felt his campaign beginning to gain some momentum, but come the primary, he really got clobbered badly, and I was just kind of heartbroken about that. I had this insight, though, that maybe what I'm beginning to want to do is to bring the spiritual and healing spiritual and therapeutic community to our candidates, so that their hearts do open more, and therefore their legislation will reflect that. I wondered if ... I know it sounds a little ridiculous, if anything like that is happening there.

Terry: Well, I think that's something we'll want to talk about more as time goes on. That's probably ... It is off-topic for this session, but I love what you're thinking about. I think it's something that deserves a richer conversation, and we were to end this session a minute ago, and we kind of have to end it pretty soon, so I'm not gonna be able to offer a very full response, but I really appreciate that you asked the question, and I appreciate what you did, and I appreciate the care, and the vulnerability, and the commitment that are expressed in the whole story.

I'm really happy that you're part of this community, and I hope we can have a richer conversation on exactly that topic. That's great.

Marilyn: Okay. Thank you.

Terry: Yeah. Thank you, Marilyn.

Everybody, the video that I offered to prepare for this session was created before I decided to separate the forward and introduction from Chapter 1. So I introduced what I mainly wanted to say about Chapter 1 already. I hope you'll enjoy it and engage with it. You'll be getting your deepening questions either tonight or tomorrow. I'm so glad you're with me on this journey, and I think we can have a whole series of increasingly rich conversations along these lines.

Thanks so much. Blessings. We are complete.

