

*the*  
**connection**  
*manifesto*

Connect with yourself.

Connect with others.

Connect with Spirit.

Change the world.



*The Connection Manifesto*

Text copyright © 2010 Pace and Kyeli Smith

Cover art copyright © 2010 Sparky Firepants Images

Other illustrations copyright © 2009 Martin Whitmore

Some rights reserved. This work is released under the **Creative Commons Attribution License (by)**. This license allows you to freely copy, distribute, transmit, modify, and adapt this work as long as you credit the creator(s), but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work.

See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/> for details.

Design by Ideaschema's Creative Team in a Box ([www.ideaschema.com](http://www.ideaschema.com))

*to Chris Guillebeau*

*Thank you for inspiring us and many others.*

## A CALL TO ~~ARM~~ HEART

A young boy gets called names by his classmates. His eyes fill up with tears, and they tease him for being a wimp. He wipes off the tears, narrows his eyes, and locks a part of himself away.

A teenager dies, beaten to death because she's gay.

A single mother picks her son and daughter up from day care. The kids screech and hit each other. She screams at them to stop, nearly wrecking the car.

A man tosses and turns, sleepless and terrified, in the

middle of the night. He wants to be a good husband but he doesn't really know what that is. His wife says she'll leave him if he doesn't start spending more time with the kids, and God knows, he wants to. But the whole of Western society tells him he's a failure if he doesn't work hard and bring home a paycheck, and he's scared he'll lose his job any day now even with the extra hours he's putting in. He wants his kids to be able to pick him out of a line-up, he wants his wife to actually want to have sex with him again, he wants his father to still be alive so he could get some advice and a hug. He gets out of bed and

goes downstairs, intending to answer some emails, but ends up weeping at the kitchen table, BlackBerry in one hand and scotch in the other.

When did we lose touch with each other? When did we lose touch with our hearts? When did we lose touch with the awe and beauty of life?

*When did we forget our souls?*

This is not the way we were meant to live.

# Listen to your heart.

## This is not the way we were meant to live.

The world could use a little work, don't you think? Doesn't it feel like muted streaks of grey, like all our drums are silent?

# Listen.

Those drums aren't silent. They beat. They strain to be heard.

You're not meant to live this way, in a virtual cage with clocks that demand your attention from birth to death and no time to breathe or dance or sing.

You're meant to be a rainbow in your very own color scheme. You're meant to be a raging river, a shining star, a perfect piece of the Universe, breathing in connection and breathing out harmony.

What happened? What's wrong? *What's missing?*

And even more importantly, how can we heal? How can we heal ourselves, heal each other, and heal the world?



**We've searched our hearts and our souls for the answers to those questions. In this manifesto, we'll share what we discovered with you.**

# ABOUT US

Hi! We're Pace and Kyeli.

Pace: I'm a friendly, overconfident, spiritual geek. I'm bi, poly, trans, and vegetarian. I love to play Boggle and Dance Dance Revolution. I've been known to knock over innocently bystander coffee cups with my wild hand-waving when I get excited, so stand back!

Kyeli: I'm a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend. I'm freaky, geeky, witchy, and gay; divinely human, learning how to have faith. I have a fondness for girl singers and piano, and I have many brightly colored tattoos. I'm a storyteller and a gatherer of stories.

Together, we're partners in business and in life. We live in Austin, Texas with our amazing son Dru, three cats, and lots of faeries. One afternoon, we were blindsided by the overwhelming desire to take what we love and find a way to make it into a living. Pace loves to explain things and Kyeli loves to tell stories, so together we created our business, started our blog, wrote a book, and got ridiculously excited about helping people.

Then we found an amazing thing: the more we grew, the more we learned, and the more we changed ourselves, the more we wanted to change the world. We took our knowledge and our passions, mashed everything together, and started the Connection Revolution. We're now helping people change the world by teaching connection, personal growth, communication, and empowerment.

**We hope you join us - we can't do it alone.**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I: WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

What's Wrong with the World?

This is Your Paradigm

The Control Paradigm

The Connection Paradigm

What's Wrong with the World, Reprise

Wish #3: A Paradigm Shift

## PART II: HOW WE CAN HEAL

A Revolution of Ideas

Connect with Yourself

Connect with Each Other

Connect with the World

Connect with Spirit

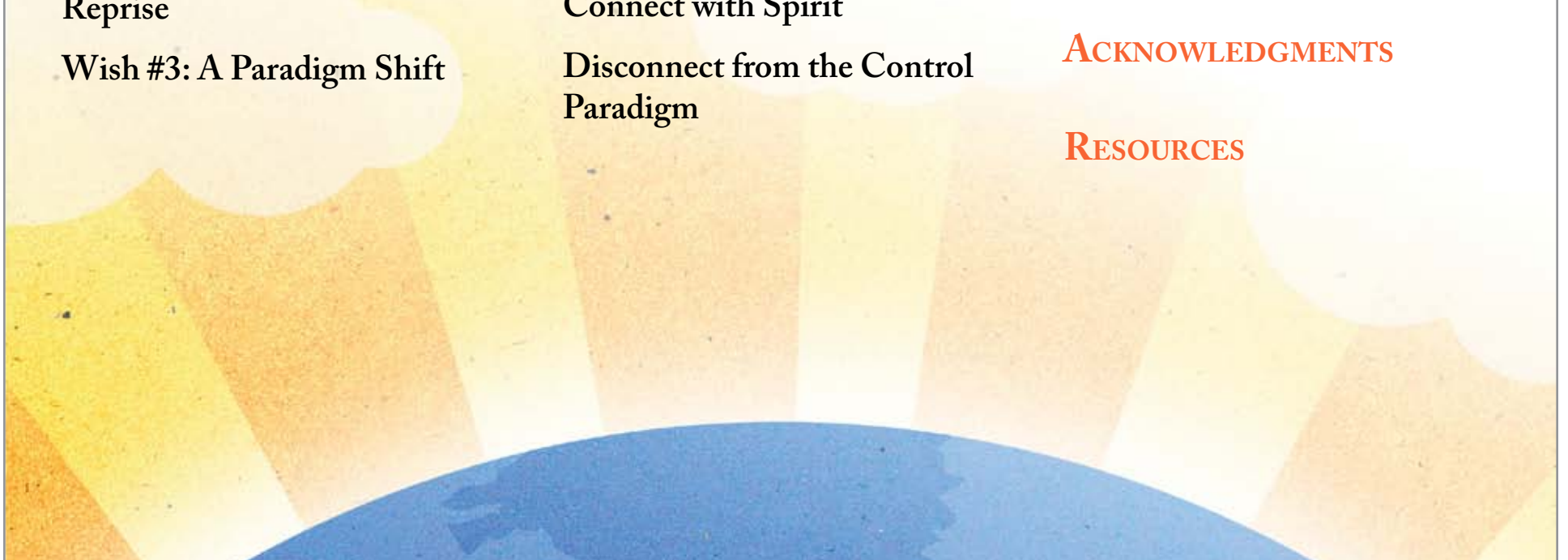
Disconnect from the Control Paradigm

## PART III: REAL LIFE WORLD-CHANGERS

World-Changers Come in All Sizes

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## RESOURCES



A stylized illustration of a sun with rays and clouds over a blue horizon. The sun is depicted with a yellow and orange gradient, and its rays are represented by vertical bands of yellow and orange. Three white, fluffy clouds are scattered across the sky. The horizon is a solid blue arc at the bottom. The entire scene is set against a white background.

**PART I: WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?**

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

### What *is* wrong with the world?

Here are some common answers:

- **violence**
- **war**
- **crime**
- **poverty**
- **pollution**
- **greed**
- **hate**

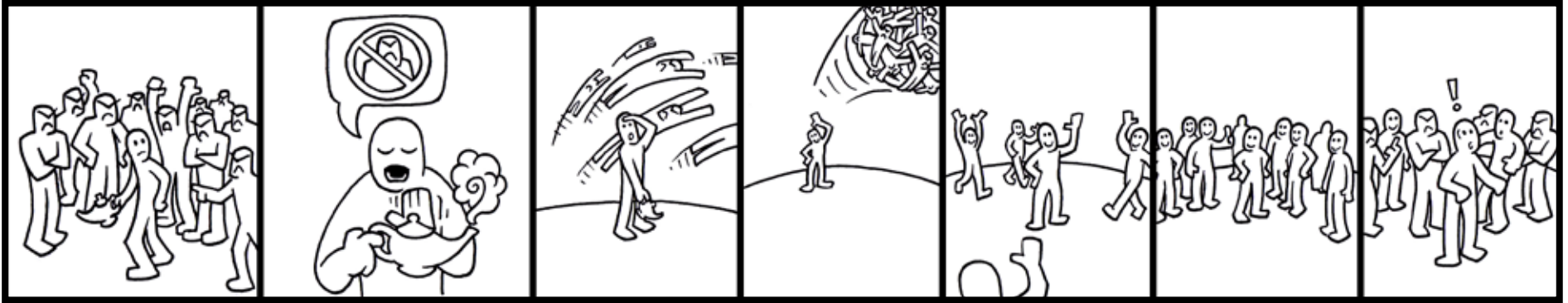
### Who is responsible for these things?

Here are some common answers to this question:

- “Greedy capitalists are responsible for pollution, because they’re the ones who build the smoke-belching factories that ruin the environment.”
- “Criminals are responsible for crime.”
- “Politicians are responsible for failing to make or enforce laws to control crime.”
- “Poor people are too lazy and deserve to be poverty-stricken.”
- “Poverty is caused by politicians and will be solved if we elect different politicians.”
- “The hate in the world comes from intolerant and prejudiced people.”

To break it down:

- **criminals** are responsible for *violence*
- **politicians** are responsible for *war*
- **criminals** or **politicians** are responsible for *crime*
- **politicians**, or **the poor themselves** are responsible for *poverty*
- **capitalists** are responsible for *pollution*
- **capitalists** or **politicians** are responsible for *greed*
- **intolerant and prejudiced people** are responsible for *hate*



### Wish #1: Get Rid of All the Jerks

Imagine that you have a magic lamp, and you've got three wishes to change the world. How about this for Wish #1: Just get rid of all the jerks who are messing it up for the rest of us! Get rid of all the criminals, all the bad politicians (not the good ones that you agree with, of course), all the lazy people, all the greedy people, all the prejudiced people, and all the intolerant people (well, at least the ones who disagree with you).

That'll fix the world's problems, right?

Let's imagine the world after our

magic wish comes true. All the bad people are magically rolled up in a katamari or something, and the world is now populated entirely with good people.

Everyone's happy! Yay! Everything is peaceful and happy and perfect! It worked!

But then... good people start turning bad.

Good people turn to crime.  
 Good people start to hate.  
 Good people become violent.  
 Good politicians become bad politicians.

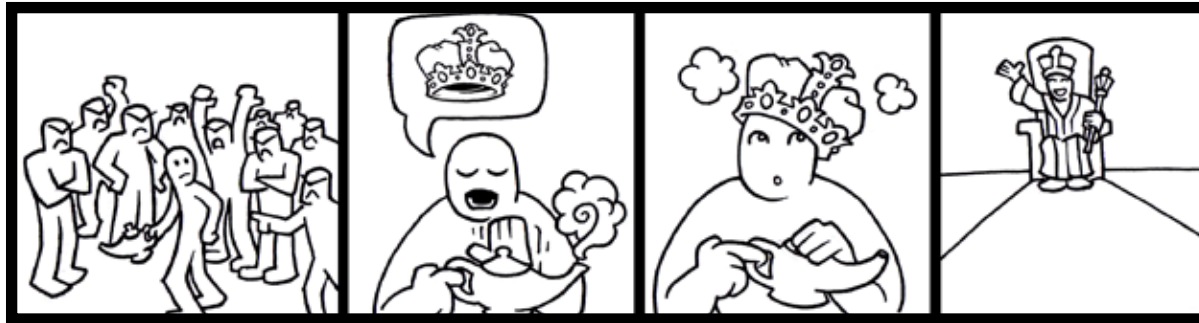
What's wrong? What happened

to our perfect world?

The world today is a giant bad-people-making factory, so taking out all the bad people doesn't solve the problem, because it'll just make more.

**The problem with getting rid of the jerks is that we're living in a giant jerk-creating factory.**





millions of people lose their jobs, but you fix that problem by taxing the rich to give to the poor, spreading wealth out more evenly. This increases greed, because the rich become resentful and the poor expect even more.

## Wish #2: Everybody Wants to Rule the World

What's left after you get rid of all the bad people? Well, there's our culture and our social systems. That's got to be where the Jerk Factory is. It's got to be our culture or our social systems that turn all these good people bad. So what if you get to be World Leader and reform all those broken systems? Then you'd be able to fix all the things that are wrong with the world, right?

Get out your magic lamp and make your second wish. Wish to

be World Leader, with a promise to end violence, war, crime, poverty, pollution, greed, and hate.

Okay, so poof! You're the World Leader. Not just *a* world leader, but The World Leader. The only one.

You make laws to protect the environment and shut down companies that disobey the laws. This increases poverty because

You fight crime and violence by creating a worldwide police force with ubiquitous surveillance. But that actually *increases* violence, because now the police force must use violence to subdue dangerous criminals and freedom fighters who oppose the new role of the police and their loss of privacy.

A country invades a bordering country; what do you do? How can you stop a war without



waging war yourself?

You've solved some of the *symptoms* of what was wrong with the world, but you haven't fixed the underlying problems. You set out to dismantle the Jerk Factory, but all you did was set up a bunch of Jerk Traps. You set out to reform the culture, but you created a culture of fear.

You became the problem. You turned into the very thing you're trying to prevent. You prevented war by waging war. You prevented poverty by taking from those with abundance. You made such heavy-handed laws to prevent crime that the laws themselves became crimes against your people. You couldn't allow freedom, because freedom begets the problems you're trying to solve. And you certainly failed to put an end to hate, because your people not only still hate each other, they now also hate *you*.

How do you maintain world peace? How do you maintain ethical business practices? How do you maintain any social system?

By control.

**But you can't fix the world by controlling it.**

The problem runs deeper than social systems. But where else could it be?



Wish #1 was "Get rid of all the jerks." That failed. Wish #2 was "Make me world dictator." That failed, too. You still have Wish #3 - what are you going to wish for now?

We'll tell you what we would wish for. But first, we'll need to look at something invisible.

The problem with the world

wasn't with the people themselves, and it wasn't with the culture or social systems. So what does that leave? Nothing? Or maybe an invisible something...

**Why Do We Have to Work?**

What's wrong with the world? It's something so subtle, something we take so much for granted, that it has become invisible to us. To see this invisible thing, we'll need to open our minds and question some very basic assumptions we've been making our entire lives. Let's pick one and start there. Take a deep breath; here we go.

People generally work 30-50 hours a week. *Why?*

Most people hate their jobs. Even if they claim to like their job, they'd still prefer to work less and spend more time with their families or with some other activity they enjoy. But we "have"

to work, so we force ourselves into job-boxes that don't fit our souls, with our every move watched, our freedoms revoked, and our personalities masked - and we muffle any internal voices that question whether this is the way it has to be.

*Is this the way it has to be?*

Well, we need money, right? We need money to buy food and shelter and other necessities, and money doesn't grow on trees.

But wait a second. Food *does* grow on trees. And trees *are* shelter. Why do we have to work so hard to *buy* things that grow freely out of the ground?

Imagine a world where food and shelter are freely available from the Earth, and work is an optional activity to earn money for luxuries. That would certainly cut down on rent and grocery bills, wouldn't it?

Even if this life isn't the life you would choose, *why don't we even see it as an option?*

## THIS IS YOUR PARADIGM

This is one example of the dominant paradigm. A paradigm is the set of basic assumptions people make about what's possible, what's allowed, and what's reasonable. Think of it as a worldview, or a set of ideas about how things are "supposed to be." You know the expression "thinking outside the box"? Paradigm is the biggest box you can imagine. It's the set of questions to which everyone would answer "Well, duh" or "Of course that's the way things are, what are you, stupid?" Questions like:

- Do you need to make money to live comfortably?

- Is progress good?
- Is it a good idea to build a fence around my farm to keep the predators out?
- If humanity had no overseeing authority, would there be lots of crime and violence?

Since you're reading this manifesto, you probably have a more open mind toward these questions. But if you asked a random Joe or Jane on the street, you'd get a bunch of "Well, duh"s and funny looks.

The thing about paradigms is that they're self-fulfilling prophecies. They reinforce and perpetuate themselves. In the dominant paradigm, the answer to these questions *is* yes. But the only reason the answer is yes is because of the dominant paradigm. If we lived in a different paradigm - if people believed differently - the answers might change. It's like a

big group of people all leaning on each other. They're stable, and they don't fall down, but they're not supported by anything but themselves. If a bunch of people stood straight up all at once, the structure would collapse and a new one would take its place. And anyone still leaning would fall down.

## THE CONTROL PARADIGM

The dominant paradigm in the world today is the **control paradigm**. All major cultures contain pervasive assumptions of control which affect all

aspects of life. Businesses seek to *dominate* the market and *crush* the competition. Farmers seek to *isolate* their crops from *outside* influences and *engineer* their genes for maximum yield. Governments seek *power* over their people. Jealous lovers seek to *control* their mates. Marketers seek to *convince* others to buy their products. Bosses seek to *manage* their *resources*, thereby keeping *control* of those *under* them. Parents *discipline* their

children. Political groups *fight* for their rights. Scientists seek to *harness* Nature. What is a harness? It's a device you put on an animal to better *control* it. All these words are control words. Many of these words have positive connotations, but if you take a closer look at them you'll see that they are all rooted in the control paradigm.

The control paradigm tells us what to do to survive.

But what if we want to *live*?

## THE CONNECTION PARADIGM

The control paradigm is so pervasive that it's hard to see around the blinders of its assumptions. But let's imagine for a while and see where we can go.

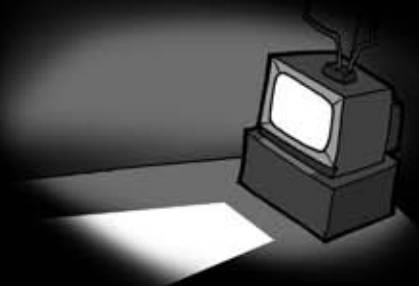
Imagine a world like this: Businesses *care* about their customers and want to *help* them. Farmers grow food in *harmony* with the ecosystem. Governments seek to *aid* their people. Lovers *love* their mates. Marketers seek *permission* to offer their products to those who might be *helped* by them. Workers seek to *support* their co-workers. Parents *nurture* their children. These words are connection words. This is what a connection paradigm world would look like.

To create this world, all we need to do is each take a few tiny steps toward it. Each step helps make the world a better place. Each step moves us further from the loneliness of control and closer to the warmth of connection.

The connection paradigm brings connection with others *and* connection with ourselves. Isolation is the whip of the control paradigm; we are more easily controlled when we are alone. But it's gone too far. We are lonely. Our hearts cry out for connection, but the control paradigm binds us too tightly. We have even disconnected from ourselves. We numb our minds with TV, video games, and drugs to drown out the cries of our starving hearts.

We've forgotten what it feels like to live in connection. We've lost touch with our hearts, with our souls, and with each other.

**We're stuck in the control paradigm  
because we don't know a better way to be.**



## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD, REPRISE

If we now look at things from a paradigm perspective, we end up with very different answers to the question “What’s wrong with the world?” Here are some answers from members of the Connection Revolution community:

“People seem to be living as though they are asleep...walking along the well-worn path of all the people who went before them, without taking the time to lift their heads, look around, and see that they have the power to change course.” - Victoria Brouhard ([www.victoriabrouhard.com](http://www.victoriabrouhard.com))

“A lack of love, honesty, and compassion due to overwhelming unfounded fear and terrible communication.” - Kate

“Lots of things are wrong with the world, but what is most wrong with it is that it is unfit for genius. The world default should be ‘Thou shalt kick ass and chew bubblegum’, instead of ‘Keep yer head down lest it be chopped off.’” - Jenny Berger

“Too many inflexible and damaging stories, too many people who believe that culture is some sort of monolithic entity that doesn’t include them and that they, therefore, have no ability or responsibility to change.” - KN Gier

“The illusion that we aren’t all in this together, the illusion that hides that we’re all human together.” - Richard Clark

“I think we just don’t know how to understand each other anymore, and a lot of us don’t even try. I think that we keep back far too much trust, because most people seem to be untrustworthy. I think that we keep our love back, and only love those we feel are acceptable. I think we have stopped seeing the world as beautiful, and can only see what’s bad and dirty and wrong, because that’s what gets all the focus.” - Rachael E. C. Acklin ([www.caffeinatedelf.com](http://www.caffeinatedelf.com))

“If I could drum one thing, just one thing, into the head of every person on earth, it would be this: **THERE IS NO ONE TRUE WAY.** No one true religion, no one true philosophy, no one true relationship style, body size, sexual technique, computer operating system, educational method, pepper-to-garlic ratio. There might be one true way for you, personally and individually, but that’s as subject to change as you are. To say and act otherwise is to cram yourself into a little box that doesn’t fit, making yourself and everyone around you miserable.” - Heather Freeman ([www.fireseastudios.com/livingartist](http://www.fireseastudios.com/livingartist))

“I think it largely boils down to too many people ‘needing’ to be right. All at the same time. (Another word for this is ‘control’.)” - Christy ([twitchinggreymatter.com](http://twitchinggreymatter.com))

## WISH #3: A PARADIGM SHIFT

Our third wish, if you haven't figured it out yet, would be to shift the paradigm from a control paradigm to a connection paradigm. But we didn't wait for a magic lamp.



**We started a revolution.**



## **PART II: HOW WE CAN HEAL**

## A REVOLUTION OF IDEAS

When you hear the word “revolution”, what do you think of? Something bloody and violent? People standing on soapboxes and screaming at a crowd? A line of angry people with picket signs?

That’s not the kind of revolution we’re creating. We’re creating a revolution of *ideas*.

The Connection Revolution isn’t like the American Revolution or the French Revolution. The Connection Revolution is like the Industrial Revolution, like the Renaissance.

No guns.

No violent uprisings.

No protest rallies.



No bullshit.

Just ideas. *World-changing* ideas.

It has happened before, and it can happen again. Think about the Renaissance. When

the Renaissance swept Europe and then the world, was there a violent uprising? Were any governments overthrown? Were any anti-art monarchs assassinated? No. The creation and transmission of revolutionary ideas fueled the revolution. The ideas swept through the dominant paradigm, causing changes that continue to ripple through our lives.

A revolution of ideas has two steps: *practice* and *share*.

A world in which everyone *talks* about connection but doesn’t *practice* connection doesn’t sound like a great world to be in, does it?

**So let’s put it into practice:  
Connect with yourself, connect with others, connect with the world, connect with Spirit.**

## CONNECT WITH YOURSELF

### Ever Met a Miserable World-Changer?

Imagine someone who has changed the world for the better. It doesn't matter if they're real or made-up, just form a clear picture of what they look like and how they act. Imagine the two of you having lunch together. How would it feel?

Go on, it'll just take a few seconds. We'll wait.

Everyone we've ever asked to do this imagines a *happy* person. Not just surface-level happy, but deeply joyful and at peace with life, the universe, and everything.

Have you ever met a miserable world-changer?

It just doesn't happen. Unhappy people aren't effective. Miserable people don't achieve big goals. Gloomy people don't have the motivation to stick with anything long enough to make a real difference.

So if you want to change the world, first **get happy!**

Here are some great first steps  
to becoming happier...

**1. Dream big.** Listen. What would you do if you had no obstacles? What does your heart long for? What do you most want to experience before your time runs out?

Don't get bogged down by "can't"s or "shouldn't"s. Let your dreams fly free.

Now write it down right here:

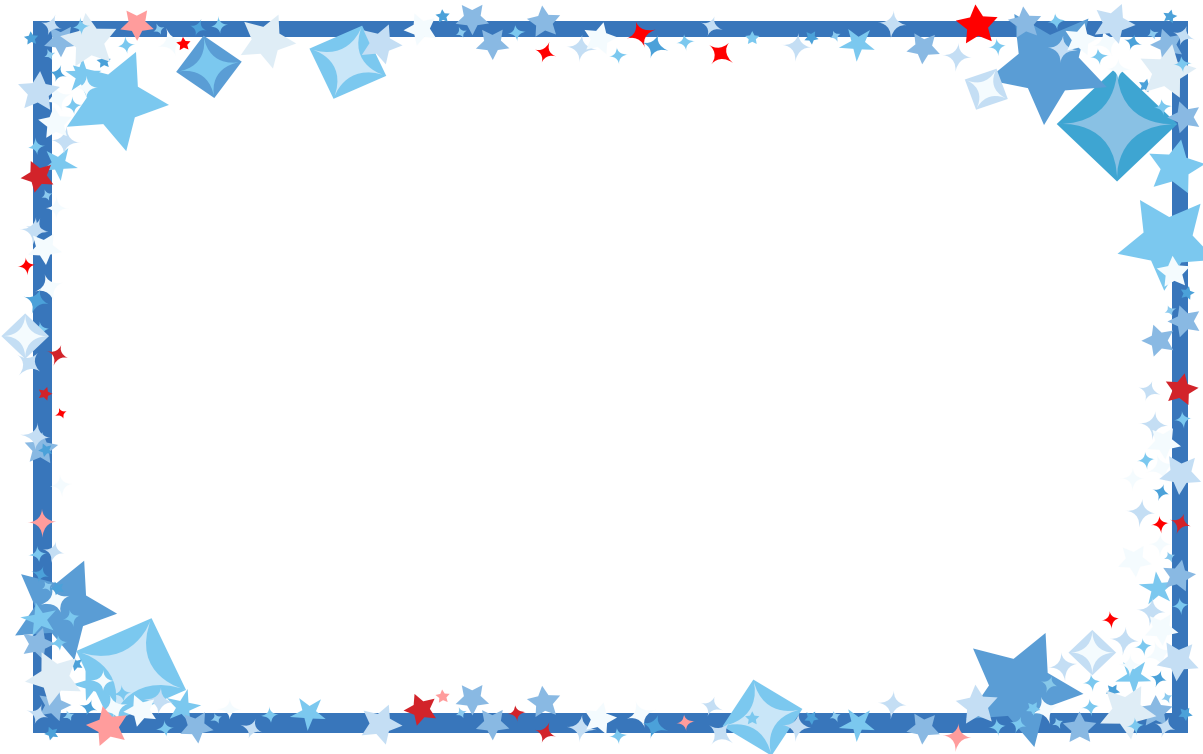


Or, if you're reading this in digital form, say it out loud. Writing things down and speaking them aloud gives them power. Writing something down focuses your subconscious mind on making it happen. You'll discover solutions and opportunities you would have otherwise missed.

Dream big. It will help you be happy by expanding your limits.

**2. Experiment.** Pay close attention to your mood at different times of the day, when you're doing various activities, and when different events happen. Try new things: try a different sleep schedule for a month or two, try different social activities, try different leisure activities, try a different soap, try different hobbies, try different diets, try different ways of dressing, try spending time with different groups of friends. Shake things up! Get out of the ruts you're in that you don't even see.

Keep a journal of how you feel, and write in it at least once a day. After you've experimented for a while, go back and look in your journal for patterns. When are you happy? When are you unhappy?



Then do more of what makes you happy and less of what makes you unhappy.

If you try this experiment, I guarantee you'll be surprised. People are surprisingly bad at predicting what will actually make them happy, but your journal won't lie.

**3. Read a book or a blog about happiness.** You can find some recommendations in the Resources section at the end.

**4. Make friends with more happy people and spend less time with unhappy people.** Happiness begets happiness, and the more happiness you surround yourself with, the happier you'll be, and the more happiness you'll have to share with others!

**5. Focus on the positive.** Make a nightly routine to reflect on your experiences of the day. Think of

ways to make the negative things more positive the next time they happen, and then spend some time focusing on the positive.

## Personal Empowerment

In addition to being happy, another trait that world-changers share is being *empowered*. People who change the world are movers and shakers. They stand in their own power, they face their fears, and they get things done.

People are not born empowered or unempowered. It's something that you can learn and practice. There is no gaping chasm between you and any world-changer you admire; you can do anything they have done. Begin with a bunch of little baby steps, and you'll get there.

# Here are some of those baby steps to increase your personal power...

**1. Treat yourself at least as well as you'd treat anyone else.** If you catch yourself thinking things about yourself like “I can't do anything right”, “I'm just a waste of oxygen”, “I'm ugly”, “I'll never accomplish that”, or “I suck”, go to a mirror. Imagine that your reflection is another person, and imagine saying each of these things to the other person. “You never do anything right.” “You're just a waste of oxygen.” “You're ugly.” “You'll never accomplish that.” “You suck.” If these statements would be mean and abusive if you said them to someone else, and if you wouldn't be okay with someone else saying them to you, then why are you okay with *you* saying them to you?

Each time you say mean or negative things about yourself, you decrease your personal power, because some part of you believes what you say. Treating yourself at least as well as you'd treat anyone

else is a good first step toward reclaiming that power.

**2. Practice saying no.** For just one week, say “no” to every request for a personal favor, unless it's of life-threatening importance. When anyone asks you for a favor (other than, of course, “Could you please save my life?”), say no. This will prove to you that the world won't end if you say no, and will teach you on a visceral level that your personal power belongs to you and not others. If this sounds terrifying, it's probably the right thing for you to try. You can do it - it's just one week!

**3. Read a book about productivity.** “Productivity” sounds boring and dull, and many books on productivity are in fact boring and dull, but some are really about understanding yourself, your patterns, and your motivations. You can find some recommendations in the

Resources section at the end.

**4. Take yourself out on a date.** Most of us spend lots of time with everyone but ourselves. Even when we're alone, we're not spending *quality* time with ourselves; we're working, watching TV, reading - absorbing instead of *being*. Taking yourself out on a date - just you, no one else, is a two-fold blessing. It gives you the chance to spend good quality time with yourself, as well as giving you a chance to do exactly what you want to do, just for yourself. Spending quality time with yourself gives you the opportunity to get to know yourself better - and self-knowledge empowers you.

**5. Eliminate the word “should” from your vocabulary.** This will help you become keenly aware of each time you give up your personal power. Here's an example: one day, you might say to

yourself,

“I want to sleep in, but I should get up because I have to go to work today.”

That sneaky “should” is actually robbing you of your personal power! How would it feel if instead you said this:

“I want to sleep in, but I also want to keep my job, so I’ll choose to go to work today because I want that more than I want to sleep in.”

Doesn’t that feel far more empowering? Instead of presenting yourself as a hapless victim of fate, you’re acting as the captain of your own destiny. *You* are the one making the choices, *you* are the one choosing to do what makes you most happy.

It’s easier to eliminate “should” if you have a partner to catch you when you slip, but you can do it

on your own, too. Soon you won’t even miss it - we didn’t use the word “should” anywhere in this manifesto except in quotes, and we bet you didn’t miss it, eh?

**6. Practice having a strong opinion.** When you find yourself about to say, “Oh, I don’t care, we can do whatever you want,” instead pick something - randomly if you have to - and say “I’d like to do *this*.” Practice this for just one week and you’ll be amazed at what happens. It may seem silly and pointless, especially if you’re just choosing randomly instead of actually expressing a real opinion, but it makes a huge, even transformative difference.

When we say that we don’t have an opinion, we’re telling ourselves that our opinions don’t matter, which in turn tells us that *we* don’t matter. When we state a strong opinion, even if it’s random, we’re telling ourselves, “I’m important.

I do matter.” And when those opinions are honored by others, we get the message that others value us and respect us.

Much of this happens under the surface, which is why it works even if you think it’s silly.

## CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

### Diversify Your Monkeysphere

One of the most powerful tools for changing the world is the **monkeysphere**. Robin Dunbar, an anthropologist, found that the size of primates’ brains is directly related to the size of the social groups they form (their “monkeysphere”). Based on the size of a human’s brain, our number is about **150**. This means that, though we might meet thousands of people over

the course of our lives, we're hard-wired to connect with only 150 people at a time. Those 150 are the people in our monkeysphere. Anyone outside of our monkeysphere is an abstract concept, not a real live human we can empathize with or care about.

This can heal war, racism, and prejudice. You won't want to bomb someone who's in your monkeysphere.

You won't want to take away someone's rights if they're someone you care about. You won't hurt someone for being who they are if they're your friend.

Look at the gay rights movement. A paradigm shift is happening as more and more people can say, "My



brother is gay" or "I have a friend who is a lesbian." As soon as a gay person is *inside* your monkeysphere, the issue of gay rights becomes personal rather than political - and that's when real change begins.

If you *diversify your monkeysphere* and encourage others to do the same, we can heal these control-paradigm ills and create a connection paradigm.

Make friends with people from different cultures, connect with people who live differently. Be kind to people you disagree with. Be yourself, and as others get to know you, they'll be diversifying their monkeyspheres, too.

**Be yourself.**  
**Connect with others.**  
**Change the world.**

## Communicate Openly and Honestly

Miscommunication muddies our connections. Learning to clear the waters of communication helps you connect more smoothly and easily. We don't often think about communication - we usually take it for granted - but you can improve it like any other skill. And here's a secret: learning communication also helps you learn personal growth, so you get extra bonus connection with yourself as you practice connecting with others!

We could write an entire book about communication (and in fact, **we did**), but for now let's focus on the two most important things: *openness* and *honesty*. The control paradigm teaches us to keep our hearts in locked boxes. We learn that our souls and our dreams aren't important - that we're naïve idealist dreamers who need to

buckle down and get a reality check.

But if you can push past that fear (of being hurt, of ridicule, of being seen, of losing friends) to open up and share your authentic self, you'll find that connection will flow. Everyone hungers for connection. Our culture encourages isolation, which leads us to buy in to systems of control. To escape control, we must connect. If we unlock the boxes that hide our hearts and share ourselves openly and truly, we'll find that we're not alone at all. We'll find heartsisters and heartbrothers everywhere we turn.

### Make Personal Growth a Group Project

People often compliment one another, saying "I love how you are so optimistic (or happy, or courageous)," and yet in the same breath say "I could never be like

that." We take away our own power by focusing on the qualities of others instead of focusing on our own gifts.

Reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses. Look at the people in your life and look for their strengths and weaknesses. Watch how they incorporate their strengths into their lives. See how they deal with their weaknesses. Some of them will be strong in areas where you have difficulties, and others will have weaknesses where you feel capable. This gives you opportunities to learn and to teach, to communicate and to connect.

"You always talk about having difficulties keeping track of time, but you're never late for anything! How do you do that?"

"You talk about your terrible temper, but you're the sweetest girl I know. May I ask how you

manage your anger?”

“You always make room to help me when I need it; how can I help you?”

Help others grow and learn, and seek out new ways to learn from them.

### **Find Fabulous Friends**

While you're engaged with the long, challenging, and rewarding work of changing the world, you'll need some good friends sharing the journey with you.

You'll need friends who will lift you up (and whom you can lift up in return), not people who will bring you down. Imagine telling each of your friends about your lifelong goals and dreams. How would each of them respond? Would they say “That's sounds nice, but it's pretty impractical”? Or would they say “That's

amazing! I can't wait to see you achieve all these wonderful things!”

Since you're still reading, you're probably passionate about making the world a better place. Imagine sharing this manifesto with each of your friends. Would they roll their eyes and say “Those are some pretty big ideas, but it'll never work”? Or would they be moved to tears, jump up and down excitedly, and ask “Where can I sign up?”

You need more of the up-and-down-jumpers in your life, and fewer of the eye-rollers. The eye-rollers are poisonous and will sap your energy and motivation. The up-and-down-jumpers will share their enthusiasm with you, you'll share yours with them, and you'll both help each other.

If you feel you're helping and inspiring your eye-roller friends by connecting with them, that's awesome! Keep up the good work! But if you continually feel demotivated and drained when interacting with them, it's time to let them go.

You can help much more effectively when you're buoyed up by encouragement than when you're drained by cynicism. It's difficult and painful to cut ties with friends who drain you, and it's also scary to reach out and make new friends who support you, but it's worth it.

Powerful world-changers surround themselves with other powerful world-changers, either by seeking them out or lifting others up.

## CONNECT WITH THE WORLD

That's all there is to it. Connect with yourself and share your true heart with others, and the world will change. The control paradigm will shatter in the face of our combined authentic connection, and our future will be up to us.

Some of us, however, are called to connect with more than 150 people. We can't do that by making thousands of friends because they won't all fit inside our monkeyspheres, so we find other ways.

We teach. We paint. We act. We become public speakers. We make movies. We sculpt. We make music. We write books, we write blogs, and we write manifestos.

We create art that awakens the mind, moves the heart, and stirs the soul.

In today's world, anyone can be famous! Anyone can create something great that moves millions of people. Take a book, for instance. How long would it take you to write 400 words? (That's

about one page of this manifesto.) Maybe an hour for a first draft? Then do that a hundred times and you have 40,000 words - the first draft of your first novel. If you spent just one hour a day working on your book, you could be finished with the first draft in three and a half months, edit it for a few months, then self-publish using print-on-demand technology. You could write, edit, and publish your book in less than a year from today!

What's stopping you?  
What else could you do?

## CONNECT WITH SPIRIT

Bring yourself to stillness. Listen. Be calm. Open your heart, connect with your soul.

There's a deeper call, underneath the outer drive to connect with others. There's a reason our souls hunger for connection, why we balk and chafe under such heavy chains of control.

We are connected.

We are all one.

We close ourselves off. We shut ourselves down and disconnect. We're raised in a turbulent sea of fear and control, and our tiny little soul boats can't even see each other's sails for the storm.

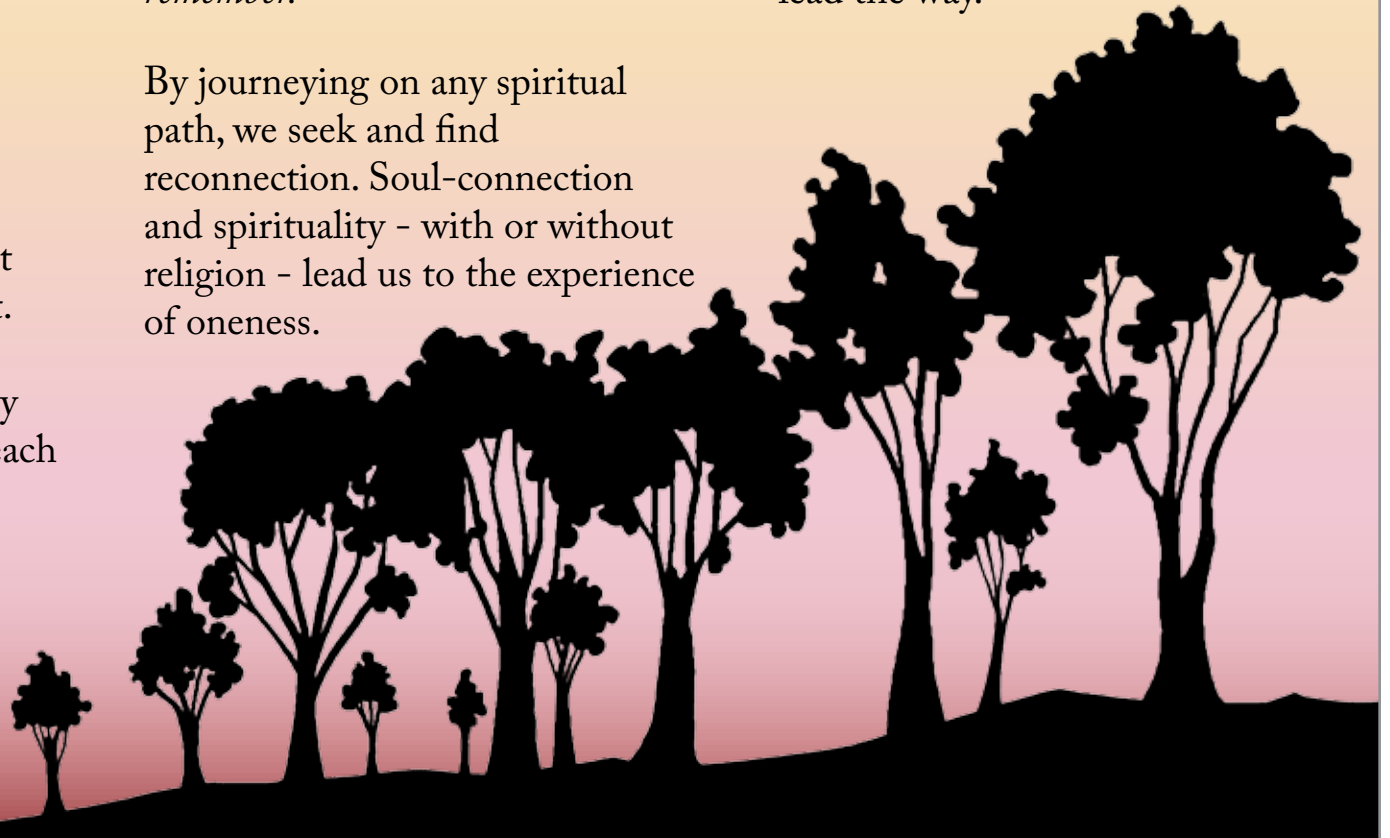
But even then, even in the darkest nights and the heaviest rains, we *feel* it.

We're deeply connected on a spiritual level, underneath the noise of control, the blanket of fear, and the illusion of isolation. We may have lost the ability to sense it directly, but deep down, in our hearts and in our souls, we *remember*.

By journeying on any spiritual path, we seek and find reconnection. Soul-connection and spirituality - with or without religion - lead us to the experience of oneness.

And in experiencing oneness, we've come full circle, back to connecting with yourself. It's an upward spiral. Connect with yourself, connect with others, connect with the world, connect with Spirit, connect with yourself...

Embark on the journey with love and openness, and let your heart lead the way.



## DISCONNECT FROM THE CONTROL PARADIGM

We talk a lot about connection, and since we want to shift into a connection paradigm, that's unsurprising. But there's also power in *disconnection*, and you have the power to disconnect from the control paradigm.

We're taught that the world works in certain ways, and that to be part of the "real world", we have no choice but to participate, to play the same games everyone else plays.

This is a lie. You can choose to *opt out*.

Television that numbs our minds, news that tells us to live in fear, the 9-to-5 job culture that stifles us, politics that disempower us, religions that put chains on

spirituality, public school that teaches kids to conform and obey, the food industry that disconnects us from nature, control-based copyright laws, the societal norms that tell us who we can and can't be. Say no. Opt out. Opting out of *even one* of these systems changes the world by showing others that they have a choice, too.

**Choose to live your life differently, and you start a revolution simply by being yourself.**

### Opt Out of the News

You turn the news on. Murder in your neighborhood, theft in your city, crime all around you - all of which you are powerless to do anything about. People objectified, developing complexes that will haunt them for the rest of their lives, passing them on to you at no additional charge. Officials full of lies spouting through the

screen, poisoning your heart. The media focuses on tragedy, glorifies disaster, and encourages us to live in terror. Fear your neighbors, fear your officials, fear your family, fear your life.

Being pummeled with bad news all the time damages us, even when we don't notice it. How can we live with hope, how can we dance through life with joyous steps when we're bombarded with fear? Steeping ourselves in this negativity keeps us from focusing on the positive.

What can you do? You can opt out of the news; there's no requirement to watch or listen. You'll be far better off without it - and when something actually important happens, you'll still know. People will talk about it and it will seep through, and then you can choose to either take heed or ignore.

Sloughing off the news enables you to take control of your life and your emotions on a level unknown to most people. Once the constant bombardment of negativity is muted, you'll be empowered to focus on the things that really matter to you.

### Opt Out of TV

What could you do with an extra hour a week? An extra hour a day? What could change in your life?

TV bombards us with negativity - and not just the news. Commercials create needs we didn't previously have. The media sets physical and emotional standards most of us can't ever reach, creating a rift between who we are and who we feel we have to be. Unable to meet these impossible standards, we end up spiraling into depression and hopelessness. We wind up sitting in front of the TV hoping to

forget the pain in our lives for just a little while, flipping channels as a form of self-medication and tuning out.

But what if, instead, you filled that time with activities that enriched you, educated you - things that genuinely entertained you and nourished you?

How would you fill the empty hours?

Writing that elusive novel. Starting a business. Singing. Playing with your children. Spending time with your lover or your friends. Spending time with yourself. Having deep conversations that spur epiphanies and growth. Long-neglected hobbies. That project you never seem to have time for, that relative you keep wishing you knew better. Those dusty books on the shelf. Your soul.

Turn off the TV and connect with your life. You only get the one.

### Opt Out of the Job Culture

Before you know how to read or tie your shoes, you're off to school. You spend 13 years, day in and day out, doing what others tell you to do, being shoved into boxes and molds. You get out of school, get a job, and spend the next fifty years,



day in and day out, doing what others tell you to do, being shoved into boxes and molds. Eventually you retire, and *then and only then* can you enjoy life. When you're 65.

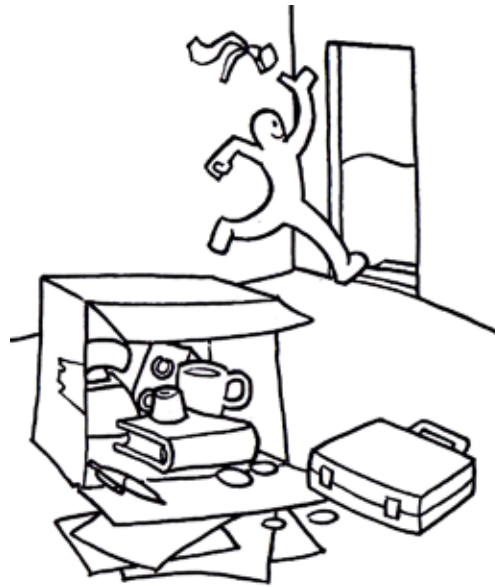
**Fuck that.**

You can follow your dreams and listen to your heart - starting now. You can start your own company, own your own business, do what you love and love what you do. You can travel the world with only a backpack. You don't need higher education, formal education, or a degree. You don't need huge start-up capital or years of experience or thousands of followers or anyone's approval but your own. You can find a way to make it work on your own terms.

Think outside the box. The box is getting full, anyway.

### Opt Out of Politics

Politics is a game within a game, all within the current paradigm. It's not the only way to get things done, but it is the only way most people know. We get stuck in the familiarity of what we know, even if it's broken.



Why do a bunch of old men get to dictate my life from on high? They don't know me and I don't know them. They don't have my best interests at heart - they can't! They aren't in my generation or my social group; we have nothing in common. Why are they authorized to kill or wage war on my behalf? I don't want that.

Imagine a total stranger running up to you and asking if they could take care of your baby, your mother, your sibling. Would you

allow that? No, of course not. So why would you let a total stranger write the laws that rule your life?

What if we could change the world into a world that doesn't *need* politics?

If we all lived in community and connection with one another and with ourselves, we could certainly come up with a better solution than this.

If everyone opted out of politics, who would run the country? Who would run the world?

We would. Together.



## Opt Out of Religion

At the heart of religion, we find spirituality. If religion blocks you from spirituality, it's possible to sneak past religion to reach the sacred treasure that it guards.

Spirituality is your personal, individual experience with Spirit. Step-by-step instructions are not available. No one can dictate your spirituality to you. No one can tell you what you will find when you look inside your heart.

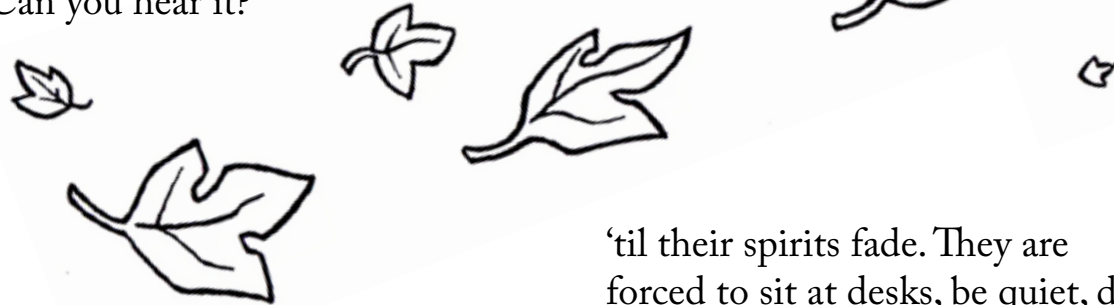
When religious leaders teach you that the only way to connect with the Divine is through their religion, they're lying. That's control. They're trying to take away your power, your birthright to be connected with the Divine. They're telling you that you aren't qualified to listen to your own heart.

They're wrong.

Sit down in a quiet place, close

your eyes, and look inward. Breathe. Feel your connection to Spirit. It's there, waiting for you to pay attention to it, to open your heart and your soul.

Can you hear it?



## Opt Out of Public School

We're born full of joy and wonder. As babies, we seek learning as our highest form of pleasure; we delight in everything we take in. We devour the world with our senses, tasting and touching, inhaling and poking and prodding. But before we know it, our babies are school-aged. Enter public school.

Public school takes our bright, creative children and slowly encloses them in ill-fitting molds

'til their spirits fade. They are forced to sit at desks, be quiet, do as they're told regardless of personal boundaries, learn as they're taught regardless of abilities or learning styles, 8-10 hours a day for at least 13 years. They're medicated if they have trouble sitting still all day. They're subjected to cult-like behavior and dog-eat-dog groups, cutthroat competitiveness, teachers who abuse power, peers who abuse each other, unrealistic expectations, and demented role models. There's no tolerance for difference, no room for personal expression.

Is it any wonder our kids suffer from depression, addiction, and suicidal tendencies?

You don't need a degree or higher education to do a better job schooling your own kids than the public schools. Kids are eager to learn, easy to teach, and usually desperate to spend more time with their parents. We have options; we don't have to ever send our kids to public schools. We can take them out if they're already in. They're our children. It's our responsibility to protect them and guide them to the best of our ability.



### **Opt Out of the Food Industry**

When we're little, we eat what we're fed. Few of us have any say in our diets 'til we're pre-teens or older. Often, if we stray too far from the diets of our families,

we're ridiculed and our choices are disrespected.

Many of us have "hereditary" diseases, conditions passed on through our parents from their parents on up. But if we look at our diets, we might see something interesting. If I eat what my parents eat, the chances of me having the same health issues my parents have is considerably higher - and even higher still if my lifestyle is similar. We often don't even think about the food we eat. We eat by default, we eat for emotional reasons, we eat as a social activity. We eat without considering our choices.

The food industry is a control paradigm system. We are far removed, in physical distance and emotional distance, from the food we eat. We lose our connection to the earth; we have no connection with the plants and animals that were processed, packaged, and

shipped to us.

You can opt out of the food industry. You can be an omnivore, vegetarian, vegan, macrobiotic, or raw. You can slow down. You can prepare your own food. You can take time to think about what you put into your body and how it affects you. You can drive down the street, passing by restaurant after restaurant, thinking to yourself, "That one's not for me. That one's not for me."

### **Other Opt-Out Options**

#### *Opt Out of the Economy*

You can opt out of the economy. You can barter. You can participate in a gift economy. You can join or create a close-knit community that takes care of its members without the need for money.

#### *Opt Out of the Grid*

You can opt out of your country's

electrical power grid. You can reduce or eliminate your dependence on electricity. You can use more solar or wind power.

### *Opt Out of Copyright*

Copyright laws are restrictive and control-based. You can choose to share your work more freely by putting your work in the public domain or by using a Creative Commons license. For example, this manifesto is released under the Creative Commons “by” license, which means that everyone can distribute it freely, modify it, create derivative works based on it (e.g. translations), even sell copies of it, as long as they credit the original authors.

### **Be creative!**

What other control paradigm systems do you see around you?  
What can you do to opt out?

### *Opt Out of Societal Norms*

Society tells you to fit in and not rock the boat.

Society tells you to be heterosexual.

Society tells you that you can be either male or female. There is no third option and you cannot change from one to the other.

Society tells you to have only one romantic or sexual partner at a time.

Society tells you there’s something wrong with you if you’re an adult who doesn’t experience romantic feelings or sexual desire.

Society tells you to speak when you’re spoken to, go out of your way to avoid offending others, and dress appropriately.

Society tells you to put your head down, be quiet, and obey the rules.

Society tells you there is only one way to live.

What does  
**your heart**  
tell you?

A stylized illustration of a sun with rays and clouds over a blue horizon. The sun is represented by a series of vertical rays in shades of yellow and orange, with three white, fluffy clouds scattered across the sky. The bottom of the image shows a blue arc representing the horizon or the top of the Earth.

**PART III: REAL LIFE WORLD-CHANGERS**

## WORLD-CHANGERS COME IN ALL SIZES

For this revolution to succeed, we need two types of world-changers:

- *A few people* spreading revolutionary ideas to *large* groups
- *A lot of people* spreading revolutionary ideas to *small* groups

Take a deep breath. Take a moment to think about the events that have changed your life or your worldview in a big way. What caused them? A conversation you had? A book you read? An experience you shared with a friend? A speaker who moved you? A class you attended?

The events that change our lives are either *personal* or *indirect*. A long, intense conversation with a friend creates a two-way personal connection. A deeply

moving book or a life-changing presentation creates a one-way indirect connection. With these indirect experiences, you feel a connection between yourself and the author, speaker, or teacher, but they don't have a deep connection with you in return.

Personal experiences create a small number of deep connections. Indirect experiences create a large number of one-way connections.

The control paradigm tells us that we are tiny insignificant cogs in a big whirring machine where no one cares and no one will ever notice us. That is a *terrible lie*. We are brightly shining stars caught in a murky fog. All we need is the courage to shine and the knowledge that **we can**.

If you feel called to shine,  
**SHINE!**

If you feel called to reach a large

number of people - thousands, millions, even billions - **you can do it**.

The professor who stands at a podium in front of hundreds of students and talks about her decision to pull her own children out of public school, the blogger who blogs openly about never watching TV or the news, the author who writes about her abusive past and her journey to recovery, the singer who comes out as a lesbian, the actor who talks about being vegan - all of these people are world-changers. They're opting out of control paradigm systems. They're living their lives openly, authentically, and in alignment with their hearts. They share by connecting with others, loudly and indirectly. In so doing, they spread the revolutionary idea that *you can choose to live your own way*.

If you feel called to reach a

small number of people more personally, **you can do it.**

The mom who stays home to unschool her kids, the man who loves bowling with his friends and is openly gay, the raw foodist who has a home garden and invites her friends over for dinner, the former priest who tells his friends about his journey away from religion and toward spirituality - all of these people are world-changers. They're opting out of control paradigm systems. They're living their lives openly, authentically, and in alignment with their hearts. They share by

connecting with others, quietly and personally. In so doing, they spread the revolutionary idea that *you can choose to live your own way.*

Gandhi had it half right when he said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." The second half is "*connect with others.*" If you go off and live on a mountaintop and never talk to anyone - even if you're being the change you want to see in the world - you're not changing the world. But if you come down from time to time and connect with people so they know you're living your perfect life on a mountaintop, and if you tell them

that they can follow their own dreams and live their own perfect lives, too? *That's revolutionary.*

When you *live* the change you want to see, when you follow your dreams, you don't need to pass pamphlets around or shout on soapboxes or march around with signs. Those are control paradigm tactics - yelling at people to try to *force* them to change.

All you need to do is be your authentic self and connect with others. That's the kind of revolution we can get behind, the kind of revolution we're building.

# Welcome.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These are the people who helped us along the tumultuous path of writing this manifesto.

We are deeply grateful!

- **Megan Elizabeth Morris** for this delicious design, and **Martin Whitmore** for this amazing artwork
- **Kira, Amanda Braman-Ray, Tanya Martin-McClellan, and Ratha Grimes** for editing
- **Nathalie Lussier, Kate, Naomi Dunford, and Marissa Bracke** for their contributions to the first draft
- **Victoria, Kate, Jenny, KN, Richard, Rachael, Heather, and Christy** for graciously allowing us to quote them and for saying such inspiring things in the first place
- **Everyone helping to co-create the Connection Revolution** for being awesome and for being yourselves

# RESOURCES

We maintain a list of recommended books, blogs, links, and what-to-do-next steps at

[www.connection-revolution.com/resources/](http://www.connection-revolution.com/resources/)

If this manifesto has touched you or inspired you, please leave us a comment there.  
It would mean a lot to us.

With love,

Pace & Kyeli



Pace & Kyeli