

THE SPIRITUAL WARRIOR FACES THE HIERARCHY

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT
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DAVID KARCHERE is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

Thirty-eight people just completed a four-day course—*Blessing and Understanding: Primal Spirituality 1*. We are now faced with this question: How do we sustain the deep experience of blessing and understanding? There are many people who have a deep experience in a course, or a deep immersion experience in whatever way. It's wonderful and it's needed. And yet the question becomes, how is that experience that you have had something more than a workshop high? How do you sustain? How do you make it real?

The way we make the things that we value and experience deeply real is by becoming a spiritual warrior. There is no other way. You have to be a spiritual warrior to sustain your deepest dreams and the depth of what's in your heart in the living of your everyday life.

Part of being a spiritual warrior is taking a long, hard look at what is happening in one's own life and in the world in which one is

living. You have to get real about where the manifestation of what you value is breaking down. For instance, you have to be willing to see where in your life you are not experiencing blessing and understanding. And *why* is it not happening? What are we believing that is taking us into something else?

Virtually all the issues that arise in the human experience constellate with respect to hierarchy. What is hierarchy? It could mean many things. But in the largest meaning of the word, hierarchy is simply the order and the design of Creation, including the human experience. And because we are living beings, and because the universe is alive and sentient, hierarchy is also the order and design of Being.

The hierarchy of Creation manifests in larger and larger systems, and relatively smaller systems are held within relatively larger ones. As we think of it scientifically, there is the atomic system, organized around a nucleus.

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The atomic system is organized into chemical systems, and then into larger and larger systems on the planet, like rocks, seas and sky.

In the plant and animal world, chemicals configure to form cells, and then cells form larger living structures. In the human body, cells form tissues, glands and organs that are organized into anatomical systems. If we use the word *life* to name the energy of all Creation, then life moves at all these levels, ultimately constituting itself as a human being, as us, and as a planet.

As a human being, we are held within the body of humanity and within the planet as a whole. The planetary system is held within a solar structure that's held within a galactic structure. That's hierarchy.

All of the systems, at whatever level, give of themselves naturally into the larger structure that they are a part of. They contribute to the thriving of that larger structure. In the cycle of life, microbes in the soil contribute to the life of plants. Plants offer oxygen into the planetary system. There is no withholding or bargaining in this process. All of Creation is offering itself into higher and higher structures.

While the organizational structures of Creation support and nourish the levels above them, the larger order of structures also support and nourish what is below. The sun gives its radiation freely to the earth and

powers the forms of life upon it. Animals nourish the plant world and plants nourish the microbes of the soil. This is nature's teaching to us as to how hierarchy is meant to work.

We as human beings are held within that whole structure. We find our place with the galactic and solar context in which we find ourselves, and within the natural systems of Planet Earth. Within our own physical body, this hierarchal pattern is present, embodied in our atoms, cells, tissues, glands and organs. And then, it is present in the social architecture of civilization. A hierarchal organization of the structures of culture seems unavoidable. There are larger and larger contexts of organization in human culture—from the family to the nation, and humankind as a whole. So what goes wrong in all of that?

This country, the United States of America, was initiated around issues of hierarchy. The slogan of the colonists was *Taxation without representation is tyranny*. Very wisely, the founding fathers of America did not identify the problem as hierarchy. They didn't say there should be no governance of America. They didn't even complain that there was governance from England. They rightly identified that the problem wasn't that there was a hierarchy. The problem was that the existing hierarchy wasn't serving all the lower levels of function within the hierarchy. Taxation without representation—giving into the higher organizational structure without

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attention to the interests and the needs of the colonists—was tyrannical. It was a tyrannical hierarchy that had lost touch in two ways, and hierarchy goes wrong on these two points.

The first one is what I just mentioned. In human terms, it is the lack of servant leadership. Real leadership is leadership in service to the people who are being led and the larger creative field they are stewarding. This is servant leadership. So hierarchy, when you look down in the system, is serving all the levels below. You as a human being ought to be serving your cells, and if you're ingesting things that are not serving your cells, you're not a good leader of your physical hierarchy.

But there is another point at which human hierarchy goes wrong. The leadership of a social system can lack relationship with the larger system of which it is a part. Looking again at the United States today, our current government is showing reckless disregard for the relationship that our American culture has to humankind as a whole, and the planetary system in which we exist. For humankind, the planetary system is the next level of hierarchal structure. Wisdom requires that humankind attune to the intelligence of that design and listen to the direction that comes to us out of that higher level of the hierarchy of life on this planet. Instead, our government is denying global warming and encouraging fracking. So our human hierarchy becomes disconnected to the wisdom inherent in the larger hierarchy of Creation.

So these are the two points at which hierarchy goes wrong: 1) a lack of serving what is below in the hierarchy and 2) a lack of creative function within what is above in the hierarchy. Both of these lacks, at an individual or a collective level, are evidence of immature and unevolved human function. Only immature human beings do those things. The individual involved may be the head of a human hierarchy, but that doesn't make them mature.

The founding fathers of the United States saw the dysfunction of the hierarchy and sought to put in place a democracy that would ensure a functional hierarchy. Today the function of that democracy is in question. The right to vote hasn't provided the assurance that the hierarchy would be functioning properly, which we hoped it would. And so people are suspicious that their vote is not ensuring that their gift into the culture is serving a system that is serving the world in which they are living. The power of disconnected corporate hierarchies and financial hierarchies is overwhelming the political hierarchy, so the U.S. Congress is awash with corporate money, and financial interests are overwhelming our democracy.

All of this has a personal impact. The function of the human hierarchies in which we live—the hierarchies of family, community, corporations and nations, etc.—has an immediate practical impact. It affects our healthcare, our housing, our jobs, our money and more. However, the dysfunction of all

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those structures becomes internalized in the individual, and that has an even more profound impact. For me as a young man, that was the great shock. As I was railing at the injustice of the world around me, I realized that all the disconnection and dysfunction I saw around me was in me.

So who has healed the disease of dysfunctional hierarchy in themselves? And *how* do you do it? My experience in leading intentional community for seventeen years is that if you are trying to create a healthy social structure among human beings who have unhealed issues about hierarchy, you are on a fool's errand. The only path to a functional community requires people who are healing the disease of dysfunctional hierarchy within themselves.

On that path, a person realizes that we are all in exactly the same position. No matter where you think you are in a given hierarchy, you're in the same position as everybody else. We've all got something above us in the hierarchy and we've all got something below us. There is a larger order of things above us, to which we rightly relate and offer our gifts. We have the opportunity to find ourselves in the context of that higher order if that is where we belong. There is also what is below us in the hierarchy. We are responsible to nourish, to feed, to guide and make a place for all that is below us, in that sense. We are all in that position, and in that sense we're all equal. We are all dealing with the same thing, wherever you think you are in that picture.

The question becomes this: *Can you be yourself, wherever you are? Can you acknowledge what's above you, whether it's a human being or a star? And can you see what's below you and be a responsible steward and leader for what's below you in the hierarchy of Creation?* I believe that's the actual question. And have you healed all the human wounds around these things, and all the human dysfunction in yourself, so that you, as a human being, are free?

The compelling image in my mind of this freedom is of Nelson Mandela, who walked into prison in conflict with the injustice of the hierarchy of apartheid, and who walked out twenty-seven years later as a free man, ready to lead a nation. He had healed apartheid in himself, and then he healed it in South Africa, at least as much as he could.

If you are free in yourself with respect to these things, and I am free with respect to these things, then together we begin to create a social structure that is free. That was the dream of America—the freedom to know *Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*, and to have a government that is in service to that experience. Of course, the reality of the American story has only partially fulfilled that dream.

Just as the American dream that inspired the Revolution was a dream that took place in a hierarchal context, our desire to let blessing and understanding be sustained and proliferated in our life is taking place within the hierarchal context of our life today. It

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takes a spiritual warrior to face the issues of hierarchy in their life and offer a truthful solution. It takes a spiritual warrior to live that solution. Here are five keys to let that happen:

- Notice your place in the hierarchy of life. Accept it. Honor it. Offer your blessing and understanding from there.
- However dysfunctional they may seem to be, honor the place that people above you in the hierarchy of your life occupy, and the function they perform.
- However dysfunctional they may seem to be, honor the place that people below you in the hierarchy of

your life occupy, and the function they perform.

- Regardless of what the people in your life are doing, find your own place within the pattern of Creation and be true to yourself in that place.
- Find people who are on a path of healing hierarchal dysfunction in themselves. Allow the pattern of your relationships to form a true hierarchy in which love can live, held within the hierarchy of all life.

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