

## THE GREAT TRANSITION

### Humanity at the Tipping Point: Evolutionary Responses to Global Challenges

#### OVERVIEW



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently described the unprecedented changes facing the world today. He said: *"Throughout the ages, people have said that the world is in the midst of big change. But the level and degree of global change that we face today is far more profound than any other period in my adult lifetime. I call this period the Great Transition."* The Secretary-General's challenge to meet this Great Transition calls for change agents in every domain to step up to a new

level of creative engagement – an evolutionary leap for the entire human species.

Thirty members of the Evolutionary Leaders circle gathered in New York City from June 1-4 to build a unitive field and explore how various pathways to the emerging consciousness can help address the major challenges facing today's world. Beyond the sheer joy of simply coming together, the retreat/advance encompassed synergy-building exercises, deep sharing, fun and laughter, a fundraising salon, and a meeting with members of the United Nations departments and agencies. On the afternoon of June 4, several Evolutionary Leaders offered "Ted-style" presentations to the UN diplomatic and NGO community at the Permanent Mission of Nigeria, co-sponsored with the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (NY).



They parted with an enhanced feeling of community, treasuring the amazing creativity and vision of each member, and prepared to serve the Great Transition both individually and as a collective voice for next level change. They agreed to meet again the following year on the West Coast to address how to co-create a world that works for everyone.

#### In Attendance at the 2013 Retreat/Advance

Don Beck, Jeff Carreira, Andrew Cohen, Dale Colton, Stephen Dinan, Gordon Dveirin, Duane Elgin, Kathy Gardarian, David Gershon, Mark Gerzon, Joshua Gorman, Jean Houston, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Shilpa Jain, Margo King, Bruce Lipton, Lynnaea Lumbard, Elza Maalouf, Rod McGrew, Nina Meyerhof, Deborah Moldow, Terry Patten, Ocean Robbins, Gerard Senehi, John Steiner, Daniel Stone, Katherine Woodward Thomas, Jeff Vander Clute, Diane Williams, Claire Zammit

#### At The United Nations

At this Great Transition moment, humanity is being called to step into new ways of living that take into account the interconnected nature of our world, across all apparent divisions. The Evolutionary Leaders were drawn to the United Nations as hub of global consciousness that has been pushing the envelope of human process towards a just, sustainable and peaceful world for more than 70 years.

The Evolutionary Leaders met in deep dialogue with UN officials in such important fields as conflict resolution, communications, human development, protection of the environment and women's empowerment. Their sharing revealed both the frustrations of day-to-day operations within a large institution and also the great opportunities to make a difference across the widely diverse cultures of 193 member states.



The meeting was facilitated by Mark Gerzon and Deborah Moldow. After Deborah welcomed everyone and set the theme of the Great Transition, Diane Williams gave a brief overview of the purpose of the Evolutionary Leaders circle. She explained that we are united by a shared commitment to strategically engage our collective potential and address Humanity the Tipping Point through evolutionary responses that lead to a transformational paradigm shift in thinking, in processes, in systems, and/or in cultures.

Mark Gerzon explained that we came to the UN to listen deeply to our colleagues there, to serve as creative thinking partners, to form relationships and to offer support. Everyone had the opportunity to introduce him/herself around the table, bringing to light the Evolutionary Leaders' extensive professional experience in social and human development, conflict mediation, scientific inquiry and citizen action.

Deborah then led two minutes of silence for everyone to contemplate the question, "Where do you see the Great Transition in your work and what might be the greatest opportunities for significant or evolutionary change?" Margo King led the group into silence with a gentle bell. The UN guests were invited to speak first, to give the Evolutionary Leaders some insight into their world and the issues they confront daily.



Mark Gerzon, Gay Rosenblum-Kumar, Chetan Kumar

Gay Rosenblum-Kumar, who heads the UN Inter-Agency Framework Team on Preventive Action, spoke about the need for new models of communication to get people in conflict talking to one another across

cultural and political divides that make people think and behave differently. She discussed such pressing UN issues as the Millennium Development Goals and reform of the Security Council, as well as leadership and organizational development within the UN structure. She welcomes input from outside the UN, to help the UN to be more effective in its urgent work to end hunger and war.

Chetan Kumar, who works for the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in the areas of resilience and developing national peace infrastructures, also warmly welcomed the support and insights of the Evolutionary Leaders. He pondered how we can build the collaborative capacity for people to deal with crisis, identifying the change-makers and empowering them within their communities. Mr. Kumar expressed the need for sustainable human development – including greater empowerment of women and youth.

Azza Karam, Senior Advisor on Culture for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), echoed this theme as she addressed the three areas of her greatest concern: culture, gender and human rights. She said the UN, whose own culture is government-oriented must respect its donor countries, which tend to stress certain issues over others. For instance, religion is a key aspect of the culture of many people, even many countries, and can no longer be excluded from the conversation.



Ramu Damodaran, who serves as Deputy Director for Partnerships and Public Engagement in the Outreach Division of the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), spoke eloquently about the growing need for the people to lead. He told a touching story about Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stopping a motorcade because he forgot to turn the bedroom light off. This example of humble leadership and individual action is key to the future. He noted that the UN addresses crises every day, and is seen as slow in some areas and agile in others. As democracy becomes more and more common across the world, how do we translate evolution into change?

The Evolutionary Leaders gained a deep understanding from their UN guests about what it is like to attempt to effect positive change on a day-to-day basis within a large institution. Their responses were rich and varied as the ELs themselves. Jean Houston stressed the importance of culture, both in the positive influences of song, food, and religion, as well as the darker mythic structures that can be found. Chetan Kumar agreed, noticing where cultures in conflict were “recycling old behavior patterns.” Don Beck talked about Spiral Dynamics as a tool for measuring culture to test the openness of the system. This was successful in South Africa, where a program was developed to move beyond divisions of race, ethnicity, and class. Elza Maalouf touched on the issue of resistance within cultures. Stephen Dinan suggested a regular inter-cultural program at the UN, offering a weaving of practices, mythic exchanges, dance, etc. to affect consciousness on a subtle level. Deborah mentioned the “culture of peace” as a UN contribution to languaging the present transformation of human consciousness.

Bruce Lipton talked about the importance of what is taught to children in the first seven years when you can educate their conscious minds. Nina Meyerhof discussed triggering the memory of young people that they were born with a purpose and mission. Shilpa Jain suggested that the youth voice was not being heard, and that an innovative format like the YES “jams” would bring a fresh energy as well as perspective. Azza Karam mentioned the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development that coordinated the activities of the UN system for the International Year of Youth, as an example of the promising efforts to unite the work of various agencies and departments. Rod McGrew spoke of the Young Global Leaders Network at the World Economic Forum to teach 250,000 kids the principles of dignity. Gordon Dveirin stressed the need for education that balances the social, emotional, and spiritual learning that is vital to full human development and a future that reflects our best human selves.

Katherine Woodward Thomas appreciated the sense that life is wanting something to emerge from the complexities, and pointed out that, “Art is the language of the soul.” She told how the network of

women she and Claire Zammit developed learned to come into their power through a process of co-creation – with as many as 100,000 women joining empowerment calls.

The Evolutionary Leaders had provocative questions as well. Ocean Robbins asked what would happen if we shifted our focus from influencing the elite to the real people in the emergent world. What possibilities would this have on the planet? Daniel Stone asked how to set up the conditions to have the right kind of conversations in a culture that tends toward set speeches. John Steiner asked about the role of philanthropy. David Gershon offered the view that the mega-trend of the next 30 years is empowerment. How do you empower people to create vision? How do we change behavior? What kind of methodology of empowerment and behavioral change would help the UN where it is underperforming? Who are the potential champions?

The UN guests offered their gratitude to the Evolutionary Leaders for an engaging conversation that opened many intriguing possibilities for future collaboration and support. Moving on to share a lovely luncheon together in the UN Delegates Dining Room, they were joined by Khalid Malik of UNDP, who heads the publication of the annual Human Development Report, which he made available to the Evolutionary Leaders. He was delighted to meet the group and declared his commitment working together in whatever ways would help to balance the economy, society and environment – regionally and globally – to improve the lives of people living in the developing world.



The Evolutionary Leaders had an in-depth experience of the inner workings of the United Nations. Follow-up will include a regular UN Corner in The Edge, the newsletter of the Evolutionary Leaders circle, and plans for future Evolutionary Round Tables where Evolutionary Leaders can meet with UN staff members to exchange ideas and visions through dialogue. The goal will be to help anchor a new consciousness within the UN system that can ripple out across the globe as the UN continues to lead the edge of human development and unify human consciousness in this time of Great Transition.

#### **SALON/PRIVATE RECEPTION FOR EVOLUTIONARY LEADERS** Cosmopolitan Club, 122 East 66th Street, East of Park Avenue

The Evolutionary Leaders gathered in New York came together for a special evening honoring the late Emily Squires on June 3rd. There were touching tributes from her husband, Len Belzer, and friends, as well as an opportunity for the public to meet the Evolutionary Leaders as a fundraiser for the Source of Synergy Foundation.



*Emily Squires with her husband, Len Belzer*

The private benefit salon, hosted by Payne Middleton, was held at the historic Cosmopolitan Club in Manhattan, where Jean Houston recalled meeting Helen Keller as a child. Other Evolutionary Leaders who spoke were Duane Elgin, Bruce Lipton, Katherine Woodward Thomas, Gerard Senehi, Rod McGrew, and Diane Williams.

Emily was remembered at this special evening as a woman of great heart, filled with exceptional integrity, humility, kindness, great talent and pure goodness. She was deeply loved and respected by all those who were fortunate enough to have known her. The Evolutionary Leaders remembered how much they enjoyed the way she balanced warmth and professionalism when she directed the group on stage during an inspiring and successful event held at UCLA in 2010.

Emily dedicated her life to ushering in a more loving and conscious humanity, exemplified by the projects, organizations and foundations she supported, Emily's life and work will be honored through a fund in Emily's name to honor her life and work by continuing the salons she initiated and other projects she cared about. The first salon took place in June 2012 at Emily and Len's home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan with Barbara Marx Hubbard as the featured guest. The next salon will be held in New York City on Monday evening, October 28<sup>th</sup> with Gregg Braden and Bruce Lipton.

### **SPECIAL EVENT IN HONOR OF UN WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

#### **The Great Transition: Humanity at the Tipping Point: Evolutionary Responses to Global Challenges**

The afternoon program was organized in honor of World Environment Day by the Source of Synergy Foundation/Evolutionary Leaders project and the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns (NY). Other partners who helped to convene the program were the Institute of International Social Development, World Peace Prayer Society, International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges (IAAI), United Religions Initiative, and Forum 21 Institute. The event also had the cooperation of the United Nations Environment Programme New York Office.



The program was entitled "The Great Transition," expressing the theme of the Evolutionary Leaders retreat exploring *Humanity at the Tipping Point: Evolutionary Responses to Global Challenges*



The event opened with a warm greeting by Sharon Hamilton Getz, Chair of the UN NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (NY). Sharon introduced Diane Williams, co-director of the Evolutionary Leaders project and then welcomed His Excellency Mr. Usman Sarki, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations. Amb. Sarki gave an informative talk on the importance of sustainable development to the future of our planet.



The next speaker was Mr. James Sniffen, Senior Programme Officer at the United Nations Environment Programme and longtime champion of the NGO community at the UN. He discussed World Environment Day with the 2013 theme, Think, Eat, Save: Reduce Your “Foodprint.” Addressing current UNEP initiatives and such pressing issues as climate change and economic justice, Mr. Sniffen said, “Let us consider carefully the actions each one of us must take in our common task of preserving the Earth’s life support systems – systems upon which all species, including the one we represent, are so dependent.”



Deborah Moldow, co-director of the Evolutionary Leaders project, introduced the various talks, many of which were recorded by Alan Steinfeld of New Realities. Each talk offered a fascinating window on an aspect of our evolving consciousness, each in the unique style of its passionate presenter.

The following talks were presented by Evolutionary Leaders. Many of them can be

viewed on the EL website at [www.evolutionaryleaders.net/UNTalks](http://www.evolutionaryleaders.net/UNTalks).

### **Duane Elgin: The Great Transition**

“We are moving toward a systemic crisis that will either produce breakdown or breakthrough. [...] What this circle of Evolutionary Leaders has been doing is exploring prospects for a more promising future of

sustainable prosperity.”



**Jean Houston: The Trim Tab Effect and the Evolution of Communities**

“We have barely begun to use the human potential!”



**Ocean Robbins: The Food Revolution**

“It’s a revolution we fight not with guns but with our knives and forks.”



**Lynnaea Lumbard, Duane Elgin and Jeff Vander Clute: Great Transition Stories**

“It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble right now because we don’t have a good story: we’re in between stories. The old story – the account of how the world came to be and how we fit in it – is no longer functioning properly, and we have not yet learned the new story.” — Thomas Berry



**Clare Zammit and Katherine Woodward Thomas: The Role of Feminine Power at the Great Transition**

“There is something huge happening in the culture of women, particularly women in the West, who are just leaning in and leaping forward to participate in the creation of the world that is possible.”



**Bruce Lipton: Evolution Beyond Darwin**

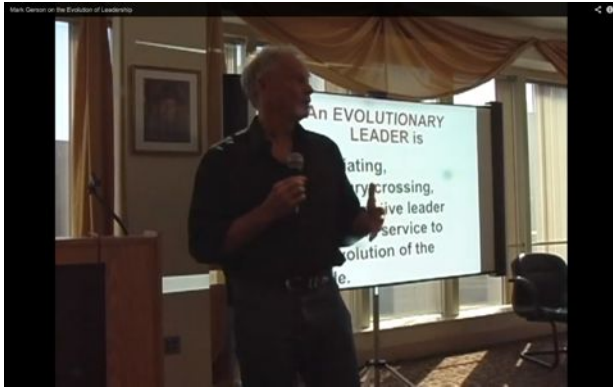
“The most overwhelming crisis of all is that science has recognized that we are now deep into the sixth mass extinction of life on this planet.” “When the human maximizes its intelligence...it comes together in a multi-cellular community called humanity. We are at the turning point.”



**Mark Gerzon: The Evolution of Leadership**

“All of us have this precious thing we’re leading – it’s called our life!” “An evolutionary leader is a mediating, boundary-crossing, transformative leader working in service to the evolution of the whole.”





**Elza S. Maalouf: The Post Revolution Middle East: How MEMEtocracy™ can Design a Functional Model for Governance**

"I work in different parts of the Middle East. It just happens that I work with women, because in every project I go into, women rise to the occasion – and especially the millennial generation."



**Don Beck: The Momentous Leap: From the League of Nations to the United Nations to the Global Meshworks: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation**

"The growing tensions and conflicts that we are facing daily are signs of progress, not decay. [...] We have the kind of brain that thrives on finding new solutions." — Clare Graves



**Terry Patten: 'You Must Change Your Life,' by Peter Sloterdijk (meditative reading)**

"Change your life – otherwise [the global catastrophe's] complete disclosure will demonstrate to you sooner or later what you failed to do in the time of its portent."



Brief presentations were also offered by guests of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY: Ken Kitatani of Forum 21 Institute and Brian Kaufman, Paul Affana and Miro Polzer of the International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges (IAAI).

The retreat ended with many hugs, fond farewells and renewed hope for the future.

