

“A Culture of Peace Requires a Language of Peace”

AWARENESS

Hi, I'm CONTACT _Con-3CB48BD41 \c \s \l Linda Redford founder and president of Honor Kids International, a non-profit organization whose vision is to prevent child abuse by creating a language of peace. My hope is that my passion is contagious and that it inspires you to see differently. After years of private practice as a counselor, I realized people suffer primarily from, what Indigenous people call, a *Spiritual Malady*: a disconnection from their inherent wisdom or the vital essence of life. When one is disconnected from this spontaneous and life giving source, the separation is experienced psychologically as death. A spiritual malady is a progressive dis-ease that often manifests in the forms of aggressive and compulsive behavior. Aggression, as in violence, or compulsion as in addiction, both serve as substitute forms of connection. Although these substitute, forms of connection de-power rather than empower a person, human beings are social animals and our need for connection is vital.

HOW DOES A SPIRITUAL MALADY DEVELOP?

What I have found as the origin of spiritual maladies, my daughter Anne coined as Infected Belief Systems (IBS). Infected belief systems are complex and personal reactions to overwhelming experiences that impair the mental, emotional, and physical functioning of a person. The mind experiences IBS as persistent harmful or threatening patterns of thought. The emotional experience is an internal state of anxiety fueled by unconscious fear and shame. And the physical experience is involuntary and reoccurring sensations in the body, the residue of unresolved trauma. If infected belief systems are left untreated, this attack on the self leaves one feeling powerless and disconnected.

IBS are passed down inter-generationally and they are shaped by family and cultural practices that are rooted in fear and shame. Some are passed down consciously and with intent, but often IBS are the result of unconscious internalization. Any system of belief that objectifies human value teaches patterns of separation and therefore imprints fear and shame. For instance, racism and sexism are IBS and wherever you find these infected beliefs, you will witness varying levels of aggression and compulsion. A child or an adult under attack by “infected belief systems” has no positive potential.

IBS are the antecedent conditions that give rise to the many forms of illness and destructive behavior existing in our society today. I am convinced that in order to stop child abuse, prevent violence, and heal addictions we must believe on an entirely different basis. We must become willing to see with different eyes ... this vision I hold out for you to consider.

History repeats itself because consciousness repeats itself. Before we can create a Culture of Peace, we have to have a Language of Peace ... and before we can create a Language of Peace, we have to understand that our current discourse supports a Culture of Violence.

According to a report in U.S. News & World Report, on April 9 2001, “child abuse costs this country upward of \$94 billion every year, or \$258 million a day ... this analysis only shows the bare minimum of what is happening out there.” This is an indictment against our current systems of belief taught in the arenas of education, medicine, psychology, justice and religion.

We are doing something dramatically wrong. This problem will progressively worsen unless we join together in a common goal to understand, reeducate and eliminate the culture of child abuse.

MAJOR SOURCES OF SPENDING*:

Hospitalization	\$17 million
Mental health / healthcare	\$12.7 million
Child welfare	\$39.5 million
Juvenile delinquency	\$24 million
Adult Criminality	\$152 million

**Source: Prevent Child Abuse America.*

It appears the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction are spiritual maladies.

A SOLUTION

Peace Village Sanctuary

The Cherokee B.C. (before Columbus) believed that the root cause of crime and mental disorders was a spiritual malady. They created a Peace Village Sanctuary where people could go and participate in spiritual practice to cultivate clarity of mind and heart. Reeducating the thought forms of separation and fear restored integrity to the broken spirit. As a result, prisons and mental hospitals were not needed B.C. in America. Peace Villages were outlawed in America in the 1800s.

Linda's Death: And the Rebirth Honor

December 15, 1982, 11:00 p.m.

The phone rang. My dear friend Bob thought he had AIDS and desperately wanted to see a specific doctor at UCLA who was an expert on the disease. The problem was that he had no insurance. After we talked and said goodbye, the thought came to me that I knew a colleague of this AIDS expert. With my newfound spiritual awareness, I got on my knees to pray: "Mother/Father Creator, I am willing for you to use me to help Bob get UCLA so he can talk with this doctor. Thank you." At this time I wasn't familiar with the phrase, "Be careful what you pray for because you might get it."

Just then I stood up and my jaw began to ache. I had had recurring pain in my temporomandibular (jaw) joint for years, the result of a childhood abuse. It was now 11:30 pm. I walked into the kitchen to take a Zomac pill. The doctor had given me samples in case I needed them for pain. He said they were non-addictive, non-narcotic, and a little stronger than an aspirin.

I put the pill in my mouth and took a sip of water. Before the pill could pass the back of my throat, I began to gasp for air. I couldn't breathe. My face was turning purple and my body was swelling up. My heart was racing to keep up with my thoughts. I was losing consciousness. From a distance I could see a faint light encircled by blackness. At that moment I knew I was surrendering to death.

As I stumbled toward my daughters' bedrooms the light was fading, as was my strength to stand. The last words that were uttered from my mouth, or perhaps it was my heart, were "Mother/Father Creator, if it is your will for me to die, I am willing. Please take of my Ladies" (this was an affectionate term for my daughters). Then, as my entire body exploded into a blinding crystalline light, so did the limitations of the physical world. I fell to the ground ...

December 16, 1982 12:00 midnight

My moments of death took me on a painless journey toward the Spiritual Realm. It felt like I was flying through the Universe without a body, yet I could hear and see and feel. I heard a question from a voice unfamiliar to me: "Are you willing to help create a way to return honor to Mother Earth and the human race?" Not having experience in the spiritual world, and having no idea what I was getting into,

I dutifully replied in the tiniest of voices: “Yes.” I didn’t know if I actually spoke with my mouth or felt the words with my heart. “Good,” said the voice, “for unless this is accomplished the human race will not survive.

At that moment I was rapidly shown images of my life from a different perspective. It was uncomfortable. No matter how much I struggled, I could not escape this way of seeing. The truth was very loud: I was responsible for every decision and every action, negative or positive. When I had harmed another I had wounded my own soul. I felt as if my brain was a computer and the Creator was downloading vital information that I would be responsible to pass on.

Then, suddenly, the images changed from my life to a vision of a world of peace. It was breathtaking. An overwhelming feeling of love engulfed my being. Here each soul was honored for it was known each was a manifestation of the Mother/Father Creator’s imagination. I was in awe of the magnitude of what I was experiencing. The brilliance of the Great Mystery was unthinkable. I could only experience this brilliance. As a matter of fact, I felt I had no body, no head, and therefore, no brain. The only thing necessary to see was the ability to feel the connection to every and everyone.

When I was shown this world, I thought, “Great, I wanna go there!” What I didn’t realize was that I was being asked to be a mentor of the way this world could be. Now, you may be entertaining the same question I have been asking for the past twenty plus years: How? “You will be shown,” I was told by that same voice, which now felt familiar, safe, and nurturing. “One breath at a time.”

December 16, 1982, 12:30 am

My spirit entered my body with the same lightning speed with which it had left. I felt that this had happened before, a different birth time, perhaps. This time I was sitting on the toilet, nude, my head resting against the wall, body fluids leaving me. I was shaking uncontrollably, in great physical pain. I had no idea how I had got into this position. I whispered my oldest daughter’s name, or did I feel it? She appeared in the bathroom door. Not knowing what to do, I asked her to call an ambulance and then my friend Bob. He arrived at UCLA shortly after I did.

The doctors were able to explain and address my physical emergency; they said I had had an abnormal allergic reaction to Zomax and had gone into anaphylactic shock. But they couldn’t comprehend what I had experienced as I shared my journey to a place beyond the physical world. I had taken Zomax many times before. Why such a dramatic reaction this time? Was it a coincidence? Did the prayer influence my experience?

What started out to be a simple prayer for a dear friend ended up being a rite of passage for me: a transformative journey, a vision quest into a new consciousness that gave birth to a vision, and an unacknowledged truth. Adawee is a Cherokee word meaning Guardian of Wisdom, Realm of Beauty. I discovered that we are all Adawees of our inherent birth wisdom and we each need the freedom to express our sacred purpose. My vision and what has come to be my sacred purpose, is being expressed through the creation of the Honor Series of Edutainment Tools (See below).

The intention of this series is simple and practical and invites all religious communities, business and political worlds, educational systems, the entertainment industry, and families of all walks of life to unite under one common purpose – to establish a value system that watches over everyone. A value system that makes possible spiritual humility, which in turn allows others their freedom to manifest their sacred purpose and their dreams, without feeling threatened or judged. A common purpose creates a powerful collective consciousness that can, if the purpose is positive, transform humankind. The Honor Series of Edutainment Tools has the potential.

One day at a time, I have been shown and guided to the places, books and people needed to help

manifest this vision. Over 30 years ago I picked up a book published by the Myrin Institute For Adult Education in New York. This Institute sponsored week long conferences, where Indians from various tribes and members of the Institute, discussed how to bring about understanding and mutual help between people. Those individuals who represented the Institute concluded that combining the intellectual knowledge of modern America and the intuitive wisdom of the First Americans would help us overcome many of our social and educational problems. Two books were written which documented the conferences topics: *Respect for Life* and *Can The Red Man Help The White Man*. Published by Myrin Institute Books 1974.

Sylvester Morey, past Chairman of the Myrin Institute, teacher and school administrator for 25 years said: "If one could save the wonder still alive in the traditional Indian ways and translate it into modern concepts and practices, one could save the world.... The young today are looking for any kind of leadership that will make life livable." From the book *Respect for Life*, Edited by Sylvester Morey and Olivia Gilliam pp. 141 1974 Myrin Institute Books.

As for Bob...well, that night he was walking down the hospital corridor and happened to run into the AIDS specialist he had wanted to see. Was it a coincidence that at 2:00 am this specific doctor was walking down the same hall at the same moment as my friend Bob? Or is it, confirmation that words have great power and that we human beings are guardian angels in human form for one another?

Oh, by the way ... that recurring TMJ pain....hasn't bothered me since.

For the past 22 years I've been reeducating myself and those that I work with, about the power of infected belief systems and the language of violence. It takes more time, effort, and money, to reeducate the language of violence than it does to teach the language of peace.

To further illustrate what the language of violence looks like in America, I'll give you a brief summary of parts of my life. I was conceived through a rape. I experience physical and sexual abuses in my childhood. I endured a violent rape by a doctor in a hospital after a surgery; and then another surgery had to be performed to repair the damage from the rape. I lived through the cruelty and injustice of our judicial system that allowed this doctor to go free without any form of reprimand, punishment or healing. This doctor to this day is still rotating Chief of Staff of the hospital he raped me in. I learned how the Culture of Violence could manipulate our legal and medical systems. I experienced the ensuing terror of posttraumatic stress disorder and addictions as a result of violence and injustice; and, the ultimate horror, homelessness for a mother and her two daughters with a grandbaby on the way...the consequences of attempting to bring to justice to an unspeakable evil...the powerful guilty.

Amnesty International recently stated one out of three females with experience violence on a global level. For some women, the journey to reeducate and heal from the violence is too long and too cruel—suicide is the only answer.

It has taken about 50 years for me to fully reeducate and transform my mother's belief that she, and therefore I, was an ugly, no-good, dirty, damn Indian; to believe that I was valuable and my beauty and talents deserved acknowledgment and rewards not disregard and punishment. I had to learn that as a woman, I deserved to be honored. And more specifically today my daughters are aware that a pregnant woman, as my Cherokee ancestors believed, is the most important person in our village. Today I am sober 25+ years, am no longer homeless, enjoy a meaningful profession and have both spiritual and physical wellbeing. Both my daughters graduated from college with honors and I have four happy and healthy grandchildren.

IMPRINTING THE SOLUTION

Creating a Language of Peace

Psychological Law 1: “Images, mental pictures, and idea tend to create the physical conditions and the external acts which correspond to them.” Act of Will pp. 51 Dr. Roberto Assagioli, 1973 The Viking Press.

Entertainment is the most powerful tool to educate. We need to begin to use the power of entertainment with great responsibility and creativity. Instead of feeding and promoting our shortcomings, and passing on infected belief systems that support a culture of violence, we need to enrich and nourish the higher aspects of human nature and create a culture of peace. Our children are in great need of edutainment that will support healthy and whole development. The Honor Series of Edutainment Tools include the Imagine and Create Your Own World Book Series.

These storybooks take place in diverse lands and various cultures and their traditions. In each book the central character is faced with an emotional challenge and undergoes a unique transformation. As characters meet each other in successive stories, a common goal is developed that promotes social harmony as well as supports each character’s personal lessons.

These unique storybooks invite readers ages 9 to 99 to embrace their own creativity and illustrate their versions of the stories. By inviting readers to imagine and create what is in their minds eyes, valuable metaphors and lessons are explored. In the classroom or in the home, the Imagine and Create Your Own World books are rewarding, interactive educational experience that nurtures emotional intelligence and prosocial values. I developed these stories because there is a void in children’s entertainment” a lack of myth and tradition that can heal and unite our children. The Imagine and Create Your Own World Book series fills this void.

After 22 years devoted to creating ways children could experience a peaceful, loving childhood, in November of 2003, I was honored with an invitation to go to Rome, Italy to attend the Fourth World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates. During the Summit I had a few moments with the Dalai Lama. I shared with him about Honor Kids International and the Peace programs I am developing for school, work, and play. Mahatma Gandhi taught: “it is worthless to study the scriptures if we cannot use them in our daily living.” One of my goals is to submit the International Honor Pledge and Honor Code as a beginning common goal for all nations to adopt (HYPERLINK “<http://www.honorkids.org/com>” www.honorkids.org/com).

Currently I’m preparing to go back to the Fifth World Peace Summit to move the Language of Peace further across our Globe. Donations are welcome and appreciated to help support this vision. Please send your tax deductible donation to Honor Kids International, (a non-profit 501 © (3) organization) at 11672 Rochester Avenue #302, Los Angeles, CA 90025. If you are interested in our program and/or other merchandise or you’d like to help develop the entertainment phase of the project, please contact me at 310.392.1200. To learn more about Honor Kids International, visit our website or email me at HYPERLINK “mailto:Honorkids7@aol.com” Honorkids7@aol.com.

A portion of the profit from the sale of the Imagine and Create Your Own World Book series goes to Honor Kids International. These books can be purchased through HYPERLINK “<http://www.honorkids.org>” www.honorkids.org beginning in April/May 2004. My Right of Passage Journal is the text for the school pilot program described on our website. It is now being created on the website so schools, families, prisons, and businesses can subscribe for the entire year.

Therapists have shared with me that they use the journal for both individual and group therapy. There are many ways to participate in our Language of Peace movement. Please join us – a collective consciousness is a powerful force.

I send you bundles of courage on your journey to connect with your inherent wisdom.

Linda Redford, a mixed-blood Cherokee, was ordained by AIWP in 1990 as a psycho-spiritual family counselor and minister specializing in healing spiritual maladies (addictions). She is author of: *Imagine and Create Your Own World Book Series: Humility Pew, Seven-Five, Honesty Ostrich, Spiritual Warrior* storybooks, and co-author of *My Right of Passage, An Adventure in Self Discovery Journal*. She is currently working on a guidebook called *A Language of Peace*, for those living and working with children.