



# THE ACTORS THEATRE WORKSHOP

A non-profit theatre, community center and educational institution

## OUR CREATIVE FOUNDATION:

Essays about the work of  
The Actors Theatre Workshop

by  
Thurman E. Scott

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# **Investing in Individuals at The Actors Theatre Workshop**

**by Thurman E. Scott**

Dear Friend,

In this period of great change in our country we reflect on the processes and programs, classes and productions we've presented at The Actors Theatre Workshop during our 20 years of service to the community, because this supports us to have a clear vision of the future. This expression to you is my attempt to examine not only some of the creative efforts we've made as an award-winning non-profit organization, but also to give light to some of the big ideas that we've shared together as a nation within our collective consciousness.

We've just witnessed an epic campaign and election where the masses struggled with the different visions that were put forth by the candidates - - and at the center of this great effort was the word '**change**'. I'd like to share with you **our concept and practice of change at the Actors Theatre Workshop**. For the last twenty years our mission has been to write and produce new works that examine the social issues of the day, teach creative process to people from all walks of life, and bring hope to individuals and children who experience hopelessness as their everyday norm.

## **We teach creative techniques to people from all walks of life**

**At ATW we teach adults and children from all walks of life our original techniques to develop the imagination**, to articulate and embrace their intention in life, and to take tangible steps to enhance their lives. We teach creative techniques in our **Builders of the New World program**, in which children living in temporary housing learn to make educational choices today to support their dreams to contribute to the community tomorrow; in our **Life Stories Program** in which senior citizens share their wisdom and experiences with both young and old; in **The Young People's Creative Workshop**, where teens from all socio-economic backgrounds come together and learn to bring forth their creative power so that they can be successful, contributing members of our shared community; in our **Six Session Intensive**, in which business professionals and people from all walks of life who wish to develop creatively study our original creative techniques; and in our **Master Class**, in which professional actors and actresses develop their craft and deepen their commitment as artists.

## **Creativity is the Great Equalizer**

As a person who has spent many years teaching and developing individuals, I often say that creativity is the great equalizer. For example, when we sit and listen to an individual play a great musical composition or listen as he recites a great expression of poetry or prose, we don't stop to say "did you know that he comes from a less fortunate background?" We just listen to the power, beauty and passion this expression stimulates in our souls. As we leave the collective assembly we feel inspired by this great demonstration of individual skill and power. We know that this person was not born into the elite class, but along the way someone cared to invest in him so that his great creative gifts could be developed.

So we see that creativity is the great equalizer. This is why we of The Actors Theatre Workshop have committed ourselves to teaching all individuals - - rich and poor, old and young, black, white and brown, Jew and Gentile, man and woman - - to develop their creativity because then we will all go a long way down the path towards change and helping the dream come true.

We know for example that when a child living in temporary housing looks out their window sometimes their dreams are limited. But if you can work with that child and teach her how to open and develop the imagination, this will inspire her to feel curious about life, to dream and to have hope. **At ATW we've worked with homeless children in our award-winning Builders of the New World theatre and education program for the last 14 years.** We often use words such as 'inspiration, 'hope', 'excitement', 'curiosity' and 'faith' when talking about how we support homeless children to travel on a path towards a successful and productive life. But it is important to understand the tangible process we teach to help them create a productive, contributing life - - what are the doable steps, and how do we give the children specific tools they can use to serve them on their journey of life?

### **Our Process of Creating Change**

**Our first step in all of our programs is to teach our students, both the adults and the children, to develop their imaginations which makes them feel power and inspires them to have curiosity.** The imagination is like a muscle. The more you exercise it the stronger it becomes. We teach the difference between imagination and something that seems like imagination, which is memory. Memory is recalling images, pictures and situations you've actually experienced in the past. You strengthen the imagination by creating a situation where you are literally forced to imagine new images and ideas that you have never experienced before. In order to do that you must place the child or the individual in a place where they have never been and can only imagine. For example, this is our first day as we land in our rocket ship on the planet Pluto. What do we see? What is the specificity of the colors, textures and shapes? Not just green, but a deep green with reddish, purplish streaks flowing through the rocks, midnight black with red jetted white and deep orange indentations running through it. Clean plaster-white sand with an undertone of deep blue streaks. It's the specificity of the description of each thing we see that enflames and activates the imagination.

**When they are able to have freedom within their imaginative expressions, we then teach our students that they must have an intention in life.** If you know where you are going, you will start to understand what's needed. For example, we ask the children in our Builders of the New World Program "what are the educational choices you must make today to accomplish your intention, not only for today but for tomorrow? You can't wait to make the decision because tomorrow is when you will have to execute your intention." With this clarity the children learn that their emotions and minds will work in concert with their vision. When it's not clear in our minds as to who we are and where we're going our priorities become misplaced. This applies to everything we do and everyone we know, whether we are experienced or inexperienced, professional or unprofessional, adult or child.

**If a child's dream is actively alive and he knows where he is going and what he wants to be, that child will be well armed for his journey of life.** But if his intention is not clear he can be sidetracked as he's walking to school by someone saying "Would you like to buy this good stuff? Look at this wad of money I'm making. Why you wasting your time when you could be working with me to service the hood? This stuff'll blow your mind and leave you floating like a feather." But if that young child has a dream and a disciplined intention, this will act as a powerful tool to keep him from going off course and protect him from being ensnared by that criminal.

So, you see that it's important we start by teaching the children that anything is possible when they develop their imaginations and have an intention in life. **Once we've established this foundation I take the next tangible step in our Builders of the New World program and lead the children in a process in which they create colorful, imaginative images and pictures and write monologues that they will present to an invited audience.** I ask them to "have the curiosity to look beyond today, and dream of where you want to be ten and twenty years from today. What do you want the institutions of the future to look like? What will your role in the future be?" With the curiosity and hope that comes from answering

these questions the children look beyond their present situation and see the possibility of the new horizon that is coming towards them. With their newly enkindled curiosity which inspires an aggressive spirit of action, excitement, hope and new possibilities, they create pictures, images and situations and write about the solutions to the great issues challenging our society.

**You can forevermore change a homeless child's life if you can teach the child that something new and original can come forth from their soul.** At the conclusion of every Builders of the New World semester the children present their creations to an invited audience of parents, friends, and business and government leaders. When we adults in the audience witness the children's creations, their new ideas or concepts, we say (usually with tears running down our cheeks) "ooh" and "ahhh" and "wonderful" and "yes" and "beautiful" and "Keep going - - your creation lifts my spirit! I need you to lead me!" We shake and reach out to embrace one another and express our joy and excitement.

**Visit our website at [www.actorsTheatreWorkshop.com](http://www.actorsTheatreWorkshop.com) so you can see for yourself a demonstration of the children's powerful work and its profound impact upon the audience in our *Graduation Video from the Builders of the New World Session in 2004*.** You'll see the children pick up the gauntlet, and with their open imaginations and belief in themselves create insightful and original images to answer the challenging questions of our time. Our Graduation Video features Peter Rodriguez, the 13- year old president of Criminal Peace and Mentor Centers, a new company that provides job training and community support and has brought an end to terrorism. And Ashley Rivera, who as the first woman president makes sure that all of our citizens have jobs so they can support and feed their families.

When the children see the adults at ATW from many different cultural and racial backgrounds responding with such acceptance and being moved by their creations, the children stop and think with great wonderment and excitement "these adults, this group of people are touched by me. There must be something inside of me that can touch someone. I have something to contribute. I have something the world responds to. I can be seen!" **These children who have been made to feel powerless and that they were throw-aways now remind us of the exciting beauty, uniqueness and power that is the essence of all humans.** Then the tears, sorrows and loneliness of homelessness all disappear because the raging human spirit is enkindled and the humiliation, fear and being forgotten are all washed away. At that point we have struck a tremendous blow against powerlessness. That is the core of what we teach the children in the Builders of the New World and how we change their lives.

### **The powerful results of our work**

In the non-profit world we always use the term "measured results". We plant something today hoping for its continued growth tomorrow and into the future. In our video ***Proven Results at The Actors Theatre Workshop***, graduates of our Young People's Creative Workshop return to ATW ten years after they completed the program to testify to its powerful impact on their lives, not only as children but as young adults. Listen to Sulma Arzu, who was a shy 12 year old, share her story as a senior in college of how "...through all of my interviews, through school, and through the jobs I'm holding now, it's The Actors Theatre Workshop and leaders like you who've helped mold me and helped me to be the person that I am and the person that I plan to be in the future." Hear and see for yourself Sulma and her other classmates tell the inspiring stories of how their work at ATW has changed their lives for the better and contributed to the attainment of their hopes and dreams.

### **Investing in individuals**

**At ATW adults and children from all walks of life learn our original techniques to develop the imagination, to articulate and embrace their intention in life, and to take tangible steps to enhance their lives.** Our students are touched by something that allows them to feel inspired, which creates hope.

Hope and inspiration enkindle a fire inside and give them a voracious curiosity. Curiosity blazes in their hearts and stimulates passion. As we feel this sense of power, whether we are adults or children, the world becomes alive and our outlook on everything we encounter changes. This is what William Shakespeare meant when he said “all the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players” in the wooden O - - the world.” So this is what we do. We know that creativity is the great equalizer - - so we invest in individuals by teaching them to develop their creativity and helping them to develop the gifts they were given at birth.

### **You are a part of this vision and this tangible accomplishment**

Come to our theatre and become an activated part of our organization. Study creative process and learn the tangible steps to develop your imagination. Volunteer and bring your leadership and involvement so that we can continue our children’s programs. And as we approach the celebration of our 20th anniversary in 2010, make a financial contribution so that we can expand our work in the community. Share that activism in your life. Be a leader and contribute to the Actors Theatre Workshop.

Hope, dreams and curiosity begin with tangible actions we can take. **All human beings can develop and be nurtured to achieve wondrous possibilities. Everyone has an imagination.** And everyone should be supported to feel their creative specialness and uniqueness - - not only the elite, but all individuals of every age, class, and creed, because all individuals live on this earth and walk amidst the mystery, abundance and miracle of creation. We can all engage this miracle planet and universe and embrace the possibility and the probability that we will be the generation to bring forth a new perspective and a new vision. We will be the generation to renew old things into a new possibility of hope. We will be the generation that will restore our faith in each other and our country and create.

## **The Necessity of Process and Potential Power in the Theatre and in American Society**

The American theatre and American society as a whole have tremendous potential to create. Within our society a multitude of cultures and races converge. This convergence creates harmonies and disharmonies. It creates drama within our daily lives, drama within the complexity of each of our consciousnesses. When we create, we must begin by accepting that drama and complexity already exist within each individual. This acceptance is essential. Without this acceptance creation cannot take place. Creation is a process of discovering and allowing to unravel the unique human complexity that already exists in every moment and situation of every life.

Everyone has the ability to create. Each person has a different level of development in his or her creative expression. A person can be helped to develop creatively if he or she can feel supported in the moment, supported to feel the core, unique expression that exists within them. Because most people are not given the time in life to experience the connection with their unique expression, they make decisions and life choices (or, in the case of the artist, attempt creative choices) based on economics or ego gratification.

Actors often say, "I don't frequently get a chance to exercise my unique qualities or essence. Rarely is there a moment in a performance or an audition I can look back upon and say, 'that was a moment I lived through with my full potential or, at least, the feeling of my full potential.'" The actor believes the opportunity for creative fulfillment so rarely exists that he makes choices to enhance his or her ego or control. He must make choices to be sustained by the outside, since he is not sustained by the security of a connection with the individuality that flows from the core of his being. He must be sustained by outside reassurance. He must maintain beliefs and philosophies which he can always change in order to please others in an attempt to fit in. The changeability of his beliefs and philosophies allows him to always fit in and therefore to receive the reassurance of a reaction from outside himself. Unfortunately, the dependence on an outside reaction creates false security. If the reaction is taken away, the individual is left feeling disconnected and isolated.

The strength of our society and the growth of our culture lie in the true support of the uniqueness of each individual. America has always been a country deeply committed to individual rights and freedoms. I love America. I am committed to America. I have fought for America. I have great feelings of sadness to think that America is facing an economic and cultural decline. I believe that the problems we face in the theatre today and the problems we face in the society come from the fact that we live in a time when the individual is not upheld. We live in a time of sameness. People think they must join in the sameness in order to survive. Corporations have not supported individuality. Traditional family structure has broken down. All of this has contributed to our need to gain security by aligning ourselves with those who look like ourselves. There is a fear of individuality and a fear of new ideas. This is damaging to the entire culture and to the country as a whole. We must turn away from our desire for sameness if we are to survive.

A whole segment of our society has been designated as an underclass. If one group is under, another must be above. Division is reinforced. Judgmentalism and fear abound as each side dehumanizes the other. By seeing each other as lesser, we justify the cruelties we vent on one another. We make way for violence, greed and suppression. The real crime is that the person society thinks is so different from itself, the person who has been delegated to the underclass, is not allowed his or her expression. These are our brothers and sisters who daily face issues of survival. Within their expression may lie the answers to the survival of our society, economy and aesthetics.

One of our great fears is that if individuals express unique points of view there is potential for upheaval. Our fear tells us that to uphold the power of an individual means to support the breakdown of society or create revolution. In fact, the opposite is true. When an individual feels supported, he or she feels worth. An individual who feels worth knows he or she has something to give, and is inspired to give back to society.

I founded my own theatre as a platform from which to make my creative contribution to society and the world. I needed a place in which I could allow creative process the time and space it must have in order to unravel. Within process something is always revealed because we are each endowed with uniqueness. Within process each person can give. Uniqueness of expression cannot exist without process. Uniqueness of expression cannot be preordained. One cannot decide to be unique; to do so is to be false. Uniqueness is discovered in the moment of creation. Through technique, the unique expressions within individuals and situations must be guided into a form which allows the intellect to accept, understand and appreciate those expressions. This is the process of creating drama.

A drama is entertaining when the unraveling of the human predicament is allowed to take place. Drama, today, has lost its ability to entertain because time has not been taken to discover the mystery of the dramatic moments. The mystery of how the human predicament will unravel is what makes drama fascinating to us: we are riveted by the mystery. We are entertained. Resolution of mystery creates enlightenment. Enlightenment awakens enthusiasm in the individual. The audience members feel the possibility of their individuality being expressed. The audience has an experience in the theatre. The audience leaves the theatre enlightened, inspired and strengthened as individuals.

The dramatic unraveling of the mystery of the human predicament provokes thought in the audience. The power to provoke thought is the great power of the theatre. The theatre is a platform upon which society must examine itself. This examination should not be threatening to anyone because thinking is natural. Thinking is the first step of the process of forward motion. The ability to be in motion is power. America has always been at its strongest when it is mobilized.

Our economy is sustained by new ideas. Without new ideas, the same old ideas keep being recycled, renamed, revalued. Repetition limits the infinite potential of an idea. Repetition dissipates the energy of an idea. Without new ideas, the energy of our economy dissipates itself. Without new ideas, capitalism grinds to a halt. Without new ideas, culture dies out. Without new ideas, human beings become complacent and potentially violent in their protection of the status quo.

Humans must be mobilized within their individuality. New ideas stimulate debate. Debate allows humans to define their beliefs. Beliefs give definition to the self. Beliefs mobilize individuality and generate energy throughout the society. The concept that individuality cannot fit within the whole stems from fear. Fear of individuality robs energy from the society, the theatre, the corporation and the country and causes us to seek and to assimilate that which is malleable. Things that are malleable are ultimately useless. We live in a time when things without use have become upheld.

We fear individuality because when individuality is expressed, change takes place. When change takes place, the primal fear of upheaval flashes across our consciousness. Nature accepts change. Nature moves with grace from winter to spring. Regardless of the beauty of the autumn leaves, nature accepts the change to winter. Fear of change causes humans to become fixated upon singular images of perfection. The unattainability of these images results in feelings of impotence, frustration and anger. Our society's fixation upon a few images of physical perfection supports the abuse and self-abuse of all those who do not conform to those images. By fixating upon a single image of human perfection, we have become a society that abuses ourselves, each other, our children and our elderly.

The truth is that the potential for perfection lies in all things. The spring blossoms as well as the dry leaves of fall, each have their own perfection. Change is movement from perfection to perfection. Always. Nature accepts this. But humans accept only a static image of perfection. That is what makes creation difficult for humans. One moment of creation reveals its perfection, and we want to hold it, rather than release it and discover the potential for perfection in the next moment.

The theatre must accept movement and change. The best theatre exists as perfected moments linked together to become a play. This understanding of the nature of theatre reveals the necessity of time and process in creation. It takes time to exhaust the full potential of a moment. It takes acceptance of process to allow mystery to unravel. It takes trust in process to know that enlightenment will be revealed.

America must return to the simplicity of process whether in making a good play, shoes, a car, a relationship or allowing a child to grow. The nature of creating, the true nature of making something, is to give it love, pride, patience, style, beauty; to have discipline, to commit yourself to your creation. This is what sustains us as individuals, gives us worth and inspires us to contribute to ourselves, to others, to the economy and to the culture.

When human expectation is desirous of material gratification to the exclusion of all else, it seeks only the finite. When human expectation is not fixated upon material gratification, humans look inside and seek creative and spiritual evolution. A society which seeks the finite is left vulnerable. It does not seek that which generates new expression and new power. It has removed itself from its natural connection with infinite possibility, its natural connection with spirit. This isolation from our natural connection with our spirit results in limitation of vision, fear that there is not enough to go around and a consciousness of desperation. Desperation justifies violence. We fight to maintain what we have. In heightened desperation, violence must come forth.

Today, the same problem exists in our society, within our theatre and within our psyches. We direct and control the moments of life, the moments of creation. We do not give the process of life the time it must have in order for the humanity of a moment to come forth. Humans truly are governed by their instincts toward humanity and grace, if given the time to have the process of debate in order to discover what they believe. We must not fear the process that leads us to articulate our beliefs. When we discover our beliefs, we have the opportunity to choose to act with grace. When we are ignorant in our beliefs, we are open to chaos and violence against the self or each other.

The simplicity of process allows the individual to accept his or her uniqueness of self. This heals emotional wounds and creates balance within the psyche. The simplicity of process allows the unique potential of the creative moment to unfold. This allows the culture to be vital and thrive. The simplicity of process restores dignity to the human task. This allows the economy to become strong as its participants feel a sense of worth and a desire to contribute. The individual must be upheld before all else.



## **The Creative Power Of The Word**

The creative process of our acting and writing technique was conceived, practiced and struggled through for many years of success and failure. It was born in a dimly lit studio where inspiration vibrated in the shadows and hollowness, where young minds hungered for this expression of new beginnings and where the instrument of expression awaited new forms and new enthusiasm. We worked and struggled until the wee hours of dawn. In time, there came bursting forth out of loneliness and isolation the gladness of new acceptance for the magnificent legacy of our struggle to find new expression.

Our experience has proven to us that the power of the written word is limitless. We have witnessed the courtship of the word and numerous expressions in the consciousness of an individual. The written word awakens dormant possibilities in the human consciousness. Within these possibilities live beginning stirrings of images, conflicts and interference of the accepted norm. We need words to invade the accepted consciousness of form. We need new expression in order to allow enthusiasm to have its full voice. Enthusiasm without a place to hear its vibration creates in individuals desolation and a stymied creative flow. New words and new ideas inspire in individuals the full range of inspiration that soars beyond the boundaries of limitation.

With this understanding of the power of words and images, we can see that the feelings of isolation and loneliness where creative spirit lies dormant are as dry as a well in the center of a desert. With the powerful creative images of our primal essence articulated in the written word we can create a well spring of new expression. Words are the tools that build trust, faith and spiritual development.

Our understanding of the power of the word was gained through many years of struggle and with the spiritual insight and wisdom one learns through failure. We dedicated ourselves to the creation of new images and words. The glowing ember of understanding this power is deeply and primally embedded into the consciousness of our group. It ignited within us the burning ambition to find a home for the new born babe that expressed itself in the images, words and actions of our play. We relentlessly searched for the space where we would take our creative stand in the world. We discovered our right place and we took our space. We constructed our theatre with the same enthusiastic revolutionary commitment that had brought the babe into the world. This is the energy, commitment, discipline and responsibility that is the foundation of The Actors Theatre Workshop, Inc.

## **Children's Contribution To Society, Creative Process And The Young Peoples Creative Workshop**

We live in a time of broken form. The tradition of family life is broken. Children frequently grow up in a broken family structure. I created The Young Peoples Creative Workshop to teach children some guidelines for living through the techniques of acting and writing.

There is no guarantee for success in our society today. Our school systems fail to educate. Reports on education routinely conclude that individual youths must commit to their own success. Society is not committed to the success of our young people. Role models give young people an image for them to strive to attain. More important than striving toward a role model, however, is the fact that each child today must make their own individual development their primary focus in life. A child that maintains this focus will go a long way toward creating a positive action for him or her self.

I believe that parents and teachers have the primary responsibility in the individual development of the children in their care. But here we must deal with the increasing demands and pressures of our economy, the breakdown and dysfunction of family life, and the difficulties and stresses in the daily lives of so many individuals today. In many households, divorce has fractured family life. In single-parent homes, a parent may not have the luxury of being present to counsel, give advice to, and develop discipline in his or her children. The resulting neglect is only one of the tragic outcomes of economic pressures felt at nearly all income levels. Pressure can create desperation. Desperation can create abuse of the self and of others. Today, painful evidence abounds of rising abuse in all forms.

When I look around me today, I see a society with a prevailing sense of uncertainty about the future. This uncertainty produces fear which consciously or unconsciously justifies an atmosphere of neglect of our children. In the media I hear and see ongoing debates centered around the irresponsibility of children and, in the case of our black young men, presumed culpability.

I do not find children to be irresponsible today. I find them to be inquisitive. I find them to be intellectually and politically aware. Children today are very often faced with survival issues. They struggle alongside their mothers and fathers to make ends meet. They struggle to maintain the family home and to care for their siblings while parents are away at work. Children today very often find themselves in the position of trying to provide emotional support to a divorced, abandoned, over-stressed or addicted parent; support they have every right to expect but rarely receive from their parent. Children often tell me that they have to beg their teachers to teach them the things they need to know. In many of our communities they see friends, neighbors, and family struggle with joblessness, homelessness, abuse, crime and drugs.

These struggles have produced a high level of political, social, philosophic and spiritual awareness in children today. I know this because I regularly make contact with children, entering into creative process with them, discussing and investigating together the issues of racism, homelessness, crime, drugs and the images in which children are depicted in the media. I frequently witness children's awareness and their struggles because I make contact with them.

So, children today often must learn to survive at a very early age. Many times they are alone in their struggles. Their isolation often forces children to rely on their inner resources, which seems to have contributed to the spiritual awareness I frequently witness in children. Civic and business leaders, educators and the facilitators of progress must make a concerted effort to enter into a process with

children to discover the nature of their struggles and to see children's powerful awarenesses born of their struggles. Our leaders must see that children today have developed very strong instincts to survive and that children must be given the tools to enter into society. If they are not integrated into the society, their survival instinct will operate outside of the society.

Children watch officialdom in America corrupt the consciousness of our society. They see our leaders betray our trust. Children see massive stealing go on in the business world. They see light sentences for white collar criminals who have committed heinous crimes, manipulated billions of dollars and destroyed untold numbers of lives. Children see the cruelty and hypocrisy in the search for scapegoats to justify the illusion of shortages in a time of hoarding and greed. Leadership in our country has set a custom of lies and deceit as the way to hold on to power without accountability to the electorate. The order of the day is to get the job done with expediency in the quest for instant success, giving no understanding to the process that maintains integrity. As an electorate, we have lost hope in the image of the statesman.

Children follow the examples set by our leadership's betrayal of the collective consciousness. Children confront this betrayal with their instinct to survive. In some cases this leads our children to develop a consciousness that says, "the only place I can find employment is in the underworld. I'm not going to get a job and pay taxes. I'm not going to develop a skill. I'm going to join forces with the fraternity of individuals locked in the cycle of crime." It is a tragic reality of our society that the instinct to survive has sent many children into the drug trade. Joining the fraternity of crime provides children with a temporary short cut to financial success. Within the fraternity of crime, children can become wealthy without developing the discipline of mind to read and write. They do not have to seek the recognition of the pillars of our society. They do not have to contribute to the institutions that support our society to maintain its status quo. They only have to commit crimes against the society and themselves, and live in the illusion of security and power. This action of a child robs the society of that child's natural potential to contribute, to give back to society, and to build our world.

Our society was built by the people who had the strongest instinct to survive. Our society has developed through competition. The "old money" in America was created by such people. Survival instinct is the fuel of a competitive market economy. The children we neglect today have the same strong will as our founding fathers, who themselves were very often the socially disenfranchised. It is vital to all of our survival that we give our children the tools necessary to lift them and their communities out of an insecure, neglected life.

My fellow citizens, we have created a collective consciousness of neglect of our charge. We have done so by not participating in a united collective stewardship of our land. We do not vote in large numbers. We do not articulate a priority of direction. We isolate ourselves and react only to issues directly related to our immediate need without thought to the survival of our children and our future. We seek instant fulfillment, instant success. The pursuit of instant fulfillment removes us from involvement in creative process. To raise a child, to make contact with a child is to be involved in creative process.

Creative process built America. Creative process will solve the problems of America. When we practice creative process we create a norm of peaceful behavior, safety, and successful communication. We restore the blurred vision of our land, and the lost traditional values that uphold all of us as a collective whole. To practice creative process in rearing our children is to see the fulfillment of the vision that beckons all our dreams.

I am a student of history. I see that as a collective consciousness we must recognize our mistakes. We must not dwell in the past to create guilt or blame. However, we must objectively examine the past in order to move forward and develop our creative and spiritual potential. We must see the present struggle

of our society as part of an on-going process of spiritual and creative development. This recognition of our present allows us to see all of the opportunities that may attend the moment and to know that we will move forward. I have hope, faith, and trust in the inevitable continued development of our country.

My work with children confirms to me the validity of my vision and approach to teaching. In my early career as a teacher I intuitively tried to allow the child in each of my students to help me. I opened myself to letting the child show me what was unique in each of my students. The child showed me what was unique within each student, and I discovered how to guide each student in their individual creative development.

It is true that we all need to be taught form and that we all need to learn a wide range of ways to direct our energies. Children must be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, the sciences, the humanities. But every teacher of children must be aware we are dealing with individuals who are not yet old enough to have gained experience projecting ideas into the society, individuals with unformulated opinions. Individuals at such a level of vulnerability must be taught that they are precious and valued in and of themselves, because they do not yet have the experience of their ideas giving them power in the world. Children need to know that whatever they do not know now they can learn. They need to know that everyone can learn. Many educators today seem to have accepted a widely expressed distortion that certain children cannot learn.

To learn something new evokes a feeling of vulnerability in all of us. To help a child to be open to learn, a teacher must first help him to feel confident. A teacher must create situations wherein a child can feel confidence in himself. A teacher must help a child to see that if he feels good and confident dancing to a particular beat, that is the same way he should feel when he does a math problem. In order to support a child's confidence and help him to be open to learn, a teacher must first find out what that child does well. To do so, the teacher must make contact with the child. The teacher must help the child see that what he or she does is important; that they can do things of value with intelligence, and that they can be appreciated.

In order to make the crucial contact which makes learning, teaching and the exchange of ideas possible, the teacher or facilitator must understand the background of each child. He must understand that every member of society feels validated in some places and invalidated in others. The upper class child feels invalidated by the lower class child. The lower class child feels invalidated by the upper class child. The norm dictates that whoever is in the majority in a situation will feel validated and whoever is in the minority in a situation can feel invalidated. So, the teaching of children must always start from the premise that they all have something to offer, they are all capable of learning, and they all have had different experiences. Those differences represent their unique understandings of their surroundings. It is the teacher's role to see how those unique understandings relate to the larger whole of society. In this way the teacher can see the potential for each child to contribute in his own world and the larger world. Because all communities are inter-related, all people are inter-related. Each child must learn that they have an on-going process with the larger community. In doing so, we give each child a sense of the importance of their unique contribution, and the value of their involvement in the world.

So many children feel that they are throw-aways. They become adults with the same beliefs. Those beliefs perpetuate a consciousness that they have nothing to contribute. They become alienated, helpless and resentful. These feelings support a belief that they have no alternatives. This resentment makes people feel they have no investment in the ongoingness of their own life, their community, or society at large. Resentment creates the belief that they do not have to take care of themselves, that they have nothing to contribute, and they should be supported by society.

At no point do they have a reference for feeling that anything they have to contribute has been valued by the society. They feel they have nothing to offer and treat the society the way society treats them. They invalidate the norms by which society has come to define a valued contribution. Anger and helplessness allow for both passive and aggressive ways to invalidate accepted norms of what is considered successful. Many rebel against the norm. Many apply the tools of society in ways other than those that give greater meaning to life or support enlightenment. The tools of power can create and they can destroy. We can create our own path to our dreams and visions or we can destroy the path.

Learning must concern itself with the opening of consciousness, not the closing of minds. Teachers must be open to individuals different from themselves regardless of background or race. Learning begins with an awareness of the existence of people, places, ideas and beliefs different from oneself and one's own. Learning and teaching must be done with grace and trust as each action continuously encounters the unknown. To decipher the unknown, we must first treat it with grace and respect. This is civilized. This allows a trust to be established in which the unknown can reveal its mysteries. It is vital for children to feel respected so that they can learn. It is vital that children are taught respect by example; otherwise they learn to be elitists. As elitists they know not that other than oneself exists; other classes, races, religions, cultures and ideas. Teaching and learning do not coexist with exclusivity or alienation. Learning is expansion of the teacher and of the student.

## **My Process Of Teaching Children**

While we were still in construction, we opened our doors to the youth of our city and their critical need for creative guidance and outlet for expression. We started The Young Peoples Creative Workshop which is a free class in creative development for children. In one year's time, The Young Peoples Creative Workshop has developed serious and disciplined young artists who come to their theatre to tell their stories in voice, movement and writing. Their talents are boundless, their expressions are illuminating and their commitment to their own development is inspiring.

In founding the Young Peoples Creative Workshop, I have invested my many years of creative growth, experience and accomplishment to establish an environment where expansion of the child's creative expression can take place. I make a strong initial contact with each child. Each child is to know that he or she is accepted by me, the staff and the other children. Once this acceptance is established, we work through a series of exercises.

First we ask each child to speak about their week. We ask each child to tell what happened to them this week and what they did. This helps them to feel accepted in a group. It gives them the experience of adults listening to them. It allows a child to relax.

Then we work on an imagination exercise. This opens the child to powers and gifts inside them they often have no idea exist. Once we recognize that the possibility of such powers and gifts exist, each child soon after assumes the probability that there are gifts inside them. Powerful images and thoughts begin to emerge from the children effortlessly, with the ease of play. These expressions reveal the uniqueness in each of the children. When a child's expression of his or her uniqueness is upheld, valued and even celebrated in the world, as it is with consistency in the Young Peoples Creative Workshop, the child feels power and importance. He or she learns to say, I have something good.

With this feeling of validation the child is willing to have the discipline to listen and to learn because this young individual has been accepted and respected. Now a relationship of respect can grow between student and teacher. The student knows he or she has something to be nurtured. The teacher feels validated by seeing growth take place in the students. Creative exchange, responsibility and discipline take place.

Movement work is then introduced, which gets the body in tune with the imagination. These exercises are stimulating emotionally, intellectually, imaginatively and physically, meaning the physical limitations of armor that hold back expression start to drop away. We spend a number of weeks with imagination and movement work.

Then we express that free, spontaneous, imaginative energy in text work. The children work on contemporary and classical material. They also create their own original monologues through our original writing technique. This is a technique which I began formulating several years ago by applying the creative principles of my acting technique to the written word. I taught some of the steps of the writing technique during our International Youth Day and the young people from all over the world wrote expressions to one another and found connections between themselves that broke down barriers of race, class and nationality.

I have found the process of teaching children is no different from the process of teaching adults. It is very exciting to teach children creative process because children are much more available to their instinctive

responses than adults. A child's natural instinct is to have a positive energy about life. They have not had the years of suppression and armoring which makes adults hold back in their creative expression. The children teach me. I open myself to be led by the children.

Over the years I have created many acting, writing and creative development exercises. Some of them are extremely sophisticated and I have found them to be difficult for some adults. However, for children, not only are these exercises easy to do, but the children often add whole new dimensions to these creative forms and structures. I feel blessed to be able to create together with these open and vulnerable beings. Often such young minds are capable of truly revolutionary creative insights.

With this understanding I look forward to continuing my work with young minds. Young minds are uniquely able to remain curious. We must keep an open and continuous dialogue between the young minds and those of longer experience in order to keep curiosity alive in the seniors among us. Curiosity is the power in all creative process. Without curiosity we are condemned to repetition. Only curiosity meets the unknown with hopeful expectation. From such hopeful expectation we can rebuild old, accepted, traditional forms and conceive of worlds with powerful new possibilities.

## **All Humans Are Creative Beings**

We of The Actors Theatre Workshop have always had to find a very creative way to run our business. For nearly twenty years, before we were located at 145 West 28th Street in New York City, we were creating new material and searching for new, alternative, original techniques with which to develop our expressions in the written word and in creative action. Our collective struggle kept us in an on-going creative process.

In order to create new techniques and new writing forms, we had to gain an in-depth understanding of the primal foundation of our society and of the many different elements that make up our society. We used those same insights to build our theatre complex, our organization and our programs. Because we had limited financial resources, we went back to our foundation which is our creative process to gather together the right insights, the right individuals, the right commitment, the right long term goals to sustain us in our work. Without our creative process, none of this would have been fulfilled.

With our experience, insights and findings, we look across the landscape of America and the world and we see that the larger society is in search of the best ways to maintain its organizations with integrity and deliver a product that is produced with quality and commitment. When we look within our own internal surroundings, we see that we have much to offer that is necessary to the larger community. We have spent years on the front lines of creative discoveries, working deep into the night in our creative laboratories. It is the nature of our job to test, to probe, and to struggle for new expressions, new forms and new ideas that hopefully will inspire and uplift the consciousness of our society. That is our charge; our actual charge and our philosophic, visionary charge. Because this is the nature of our job, we feel we must pass on these insights and information to the larger society, the society that is the backbone of America.

In reality, there is only process. Process is the ever-unfolding of the struggle of consciousness from one decade to another. The question we need to ask is: Is process being articulated in given situations and what is this process directed toward? Form and process support what already exists. Wisdom, vision and great complex ideas already exist in human beings.

The first steps to do anything in life are to liberate the limitless possibilities that exist in every human being. When you liberate a person's potential you open up great possibility. When a person's intuition, mind and imagination start to function together, which moves the mechanism of the mind and imagination into a process of intuitive probability, a person can respond imaginatively, emotionally and inspirationally. The person is no longer locked in the confines of the factual intellect, but instead has the full range of his or her creative intellect. This creates in the person, at a moment's notice, new insights, new possibilities to analyze a given situation and new world opportunities.

The creative process of liberation of the imagination, feelings, insights and intuition will always be the same regardless of who is going through the process. It will be the same for the young idyllic student with his heart and mind meeting drama for the first time in a conservatory, struggling and longing and voraciously working, being pulled by dreams of the past and day to day new awakenings toward his vision. This journey is the same process that every chairman, CEO, division head, business man or woman wishes to have, struggles to find and fights to implement with grace. This process is the dynamic that serves every person who ever starts out to do anything in life: to understand the steps, to understand how to apply the steps, to determine what is the most expedient and creative way to do any given thing, to always have a general understanding of every complex situation and to understand the complexity of specific situations.



Any technique, be it a technique to operate a computer, make a shoe, create an actor, or help a person learn to write, any technique is a house built around talent and expression. Talent and expression are illusionary. Talent and expression are like bashful children. All humans have talent. All humans have something to say. All humans have wisdom. All humans have great, complex possibility. What is needed is for humans to be shrouded in security so that they may have their natural expressions. Technique is a housing around talent which gives security. Where there is security, possibility and naturalness flow forth. Where there is not security, there is not an environment which allows belief to grow.

The way to build an actor is to give him the tools of technique. First, he must be made available to his creative, emotional, intuitive powers. After this person can feel a real feeling, have real imagination, speak with a connected voice, move with a flow in the body, have a creative understanding and knowledge of give dramatic literature, then this person possesses a creative instrument which is ready to be taught very specific techniques that will enable the instrument to respond creatively in an imaginary situation. After the actor has many years of study and practice, and the inner form and outer form have been molded together, we see a person who has the possibility of creating and bringing to life the written word, creative insights, and intuitive understandings of given situations. He is ready to practice his craft in the job market which, in this case, is the theatre of the world.

Similarly, the way to create a banker is to send him to school to learn the techniques of banking. These techniques teach the person how to analyze trends in the economy and specific industries, and then to apply this knowledge to specific situations. The techniques build a shroud of security which liberates and starts to unravel the person's natural and unique talent. Creative expression of unique talent strengthens belief and facilitates whatever is needed in specific situations.

There is something within an individual that eventually moves beyond the conscious practice of a technique and allows naturalness to take over completely. At this point we see only their individuality in their expression. But at one point this expression was a factual, mechanical practice of technique. Information that is not transferred into creative, intuitive, metaphysical, and psychological possibility remains cold, technological fact. But when this information is dissected and assimilated by a person, that person then moves into the creative, spiritual flow, and you no longer see technique at work. When a great violinist plays you do not see technique. You see intuition, you see spirit, you see inspiration. The violinist could not play without a technique housing his or her talent. Once they have that housing, then the mystery that only God knows unravels in the moment. That is the process with everything a human being does.

This individual will bring force to every situation he or she encounters whether it's sitting down with pen and paper to start the process of writing a new play, book or essay, writing a piece of music, scoring a song or creating an expression of poetry, or whether its going into a business enterprise to analyze the complex structures a business has set up to maintain its security, or sitting down in a board room meeting with your CEO and other executives to find out how best to approach the direction of the company or the direction of the day to day operations of any given thing or situation. This process allows the artist and the business person to come together as two powerful, fully armed creative beings in a relationship of enthusiasm, and expectancy of success with a common goal: to overcome whatever is asked of them and with a shared respect of one another's contribution to the uplifting and ongoing process of serving our institutions, our country, our world and our universe.

The process of creative exploration has been confined to the world of the artist. The artist has seen himself as an elitist because he is the sole member of society who is allowed his creative struggle. The artist is judged as irresponsible because his process of creative discovery cannot be socially quantified.

Members of the business community see themselves as the responsible members of society. This has resulted in the isolation of the world of the artist from the world of business.

We recognize that due to the nature of our work we are more apt to find new expressions than those who work in the business community because many times members of the business community are locked into a situation where they have to maintain the structure they have always had, a structure that upholds our collective status quo. This is because they have not been given opportunities to look for, probe and try new expressions. Nor have they had the opportunity to be the beneficiaries of new ideas.

The artist must be willing to reach out to find a larger world of expression. Traditionally, in his isolation, the artist produces a piece of work, be it articulated as a word, dance, painting or score. He then presents his work to the world for the world to see or hear. The world at large goes out for an evening to see a piece of work; and the experience of that work is confined within the space and time of a single event.

The artist has a greater responsibility to the society than this. The artist is charged with supporting the larger cause of existence which is to exist in a manner which reflects the spiritual and creative essence of all humans. The artist's struggle allows him to discover new insights and he must share this process with others to help them to find new ways to think, new ways to make choices and new ways to preserve the integrity of a product or idea. The artist cannot perpetuate isolation or elitism because all humans are part of creation. All humans are creative beings.

One of the problems humanity and the world suffer from today is that we do not accept that humans are natural, whole and deserving of forgiveness and redemption. For many centuries the collective and individual consciousness has been a belief in the inferiority or superiority of individuals or groups of individuals. The belief has long existed that there are those that are superior and those who are inferior morally, socially, ethically, creatively or spiritually. The result of this belief is that in everyday life we cannot look out across the landscape of humanity and see humans. We look across the landscape of life and see certain humans and certain other people we do not endow with inalienable humanity. This moment has created a belief in the collective consciousness that it is not our charge to support human potential. We have instead supported a few individuals' potentials. The overall result of this policy of support is the belief that only some individuals have power. Whereas the larger universal message is that all humans have power, as a collective consciousness we have power and each of us individually can make a contribution to our society.

We have not put out the larger universal message. One of the reasons we have not put out this message is that we do not believe we can be forgiven. If we do not believe we can be forgiven, then we cannot accept the fact that somewhere along the line we may have committed a crime. One of my earliest understandings was that life is not a process of moments to be judged as good or bad. Life is a process of moments that humans live through and ultimately we will all walk down the road to a higher consciousness. We will all do many things in our lives but we will eventually reach a level where we feel the inhumanities we have practiced toward another human being are wrong. Then we will find it within ourselves to say that that act was committed in my low consciousness and maybe that act was wrong, but I can see that I gained something from it. I gained insights into my ability to stoop that low. I have learned, I can forgive myself and I can go on. Now I can contribute. Through my struggle I have had insights into myself and the world.

If I do not accept that I can be forgiven, if I do not accept the possibility of redemption, I cannot look at our history. If we look at our history we will see the inhumanity we have visited upon one another. If we do not, we will say, those people are just bad or those people have nothing to offer. No. All humans have something to offer. Were they given opportunity? Did they develop themselves? These are the questions

to ask. All humans have something to offer. We can learn from all humans. We are a society that has a need for humiliation and punishment. Because we humiliate and punish we cannot connect ourselves with individuals to see if there is something to be given or to be gained. If we were to connect ourselves to a human being, about whom we maintained a belief that that human should be humiliated or punished, and through that connection we were to discover this is a human being with something to offer, then we would feel our guilt. And so by not accepting the possibility of forgiveness and redemption we cannot walk down the road of success and enlightenment. If we are willing to forgive ourselves for the past we will see all humans as those who have something to offer.

Will we do this? Or will we stay in our isolation with our elitism and our pre-conceived distortions of other individuals? If we drop our elitism, our isolation, and our distortion, we are afraid. We will say, oh my god, we have been controlling those people and we have hurt those people, we have killed those people, we have enslaved those people, we have put those people in prison camps, we burned those people, we gassed them, we said they were inhuman, we said they were like monkeys, we said they were lesser, we said many things. Maybe we need to get rid of that consciousness of elitism, isolation, and distortion. Maybe we need to not say, oh my god, black and white cannot be together, Jew and gentile cannot be in commonality, man and woman are so different from one another.

If we drop the barriers of separation and see that we all have that great, powerful potential, enthusiasm, possibility, probability and it all exists in everyone, then we will say: there is no separation, there is no separation at all. All you need is to have a housing around you to let your individuality develop. Then I will lose my fear of you. I will lose my fear and I will lose my guilt. I will feel free when I see that my enslavement of you has not killed you. Then I will be willing to forgive myself. I will be able to look at my life and say, yes, I have been capable of committing dastardly acts. And the process of looking at the truth of my existence will make it possible for me to see the larger process of life. I will be able to understand and accept more of the complexity of me and therefore I will be able to accept more of the complexity of the ever-unfolding world around me.

If we accept the possibility of forgiveness, we will be able to say maybe I was wrong, maybe I did not see the whole picture here. And maybe there was no reason I should have seen the whole picture. Because human beings are fragile. We are part of God but we are not God. Yet we think we are God in our interpretations of the complexities of life. Consequently we are not willing to forgive ourselves. If we start to look at this, maybe we will be able to make the next step.

The next step is to use your experiences and the insights you have gained through your past mistakes, acts of ignorance and sometimes acts of inhumanity, and start to have new beginnings, acceptance of new awakenings, and acceptance of the inspiration that comes as you start to understand your struggle. Within your struggle, do not be put off by old accepted generalities. Go back to your basic American past, which is to get up, dust yourself off and try again. Only this time, with this acceptance of all your past experiences, you will feel the knowledge, the insights and the intuitive belief in yourself that will generate great spirit and wisdom in your life. You will no longer question your own intuitive instincts or movement ahead.

The foundation of the unraveling of our complexities allows us to make mistakes. We must learn from ourselves and others before us. We must be willing to share the knowledge and wisdom and insights that come from our ongoing struggles. We must share the power with our neighbors because we will discover that the person or persons that live in or outside of our midst are also struggling with what seems to them to be the accepted bounds of their limited possibility. Through their struggles, they now see the wisdom that they gained from the pain, the spirit, and the intuitive feelings of limitless possibility.

This path through process and form gives us a foundation of security. To travel on the path through creative process inspires belief and trust that there is a way to solve problems, to create new opportunities and to overcome the fears, burdens and compulsions as we march into the ever-unfolding new horizons of potential triumphs. We are all members of a unified collective consciousness. The artist and the businessman are autonomous and inter-related. We all share a collective responsibility to one another, the world, and the universal spirit in each of us.

## **A Strategy for a Secure, Enlightened Tomorrow and Illuminating Vision**

Our society is in the midst of an ever present struggle to find a way out of the apathy and neglect in which we find ourselves as we tackle the unending tremendous need to find a way to train, nurture and support our children today so that we can ensure the future of this land that we hold so dear. Our country is now being confronted with many different needs. I agree with many of the leading thinkers and the citizens at large who can think of no greater need than the welfare of our children. This is one of the big ideas of today and if we do not meet this challenge, it will be an idea unfulfilled that will haunt us for generations to come. For our part, we have been searching for a way to expand our already proven, existing programs and create more opportunity to train a larger audience through the metaphor of the dramatic, creative expression. If we do not meet this challenge, we will only reap the unfulfilled potential of a mass consciousness, thereby creating a hopeless tomorrow, instead of a tomorrow embedded in the foundation of this splendor of the tradition of America.

Our President Clinton in his last State of the Union message gave voice and support to a policy articulating a new consciousness to support the next generation. Just as we Americans met the challenges to fight against the fascism in World War I, as we came to rescue the continent of Europe against the Nazi onslaught of World War II, as we threw up a bulwark to contain Communism in the Korean conflict, and searched to find meaning within the Vietnam war, we are now struggling, searching, plundering the depths of our minds and souls to awaken, articulate and frame a consciousness of support for the challenges of tomorrow. For it is today's committed actions that will ensure continuance of our tradition, our ideals, and the spirit of our way of life.

So my dear friends and fellow innovators who must meet the tasks that lie ahead, each of us must ask ourselves how we can support this big idea of today. We face a most challenging endeavor. I have worked with children for 20 years and have discovered that the greatest longing of any individual is to be able to help and to contribute to the fulfillment of an individual's potential. When we do this we seem to be aligning ourselves with God's intention. As we look across America in our journeys to and fro we are struck with the great demand of our time. There are very few great individuals but there is vast opportunity for individuals to achieve greatness through attaching themselves to the great work that must be done, thereby fulfilling their own individual, creative and spiritual potential and taking their rightful place as who it was he or she was meant to be. I can think of no better task than the great opportunity that awaits that will help individuals to reach this majestic and heightened state of being.

Because of the success of our past endeavors with children, we of The Actors Theatre Workshop seek to expand our programs to include a larger audience because we have seen and been witness to the phenomenal growth that takes place with a little care, love and commitment to the tutelage of those young minds that come our way. The Actors Theatre Workshop is a non-profit organization of trained theatre professionals who are using their techniques to help train children to achieve a positive life. Through the metaphor of theatrical expressions, we are showing the children how to avoid the pitfalls they will encounter as they confront the many diverse and challenging dynamics on their way to being fully autonomous and contributing members of society.

Our programs enable children and adults to create together in an ensemble developing new plays in which the children learn from mistakes of the adult characters. The children get a chance to relive the character's life, to refocus what could have been a negative lifestyle toward a positive lifestyle. Our plays are structured for the adult to perform the first act and the child to perform the second act where we will

examine the first act to see how we can create a different outcome. Within this structure, the children learn to analyze situations to see if the outcome will be negative or positive. The children learn to read and write in depth and gain presentational skills. It will be necessary for the children to study the sociological, ethical, religious, psychological and moral background of characters thereby learning tolerance of racial, ethnic, class and religious difference, which will help them to accept individuals today and deal with the diversity of tomorrow.

The third act will represent the encounter of the consciousnesses of the first and second acts. Through the examination and syntheses of positive and negative beliefs we will see played out in front of us a new positive result that will contribute to the rebuilding the family unit and strengthen ideals. This achievement will be a result of our new, revolutionary writing technique we use to create these creative, innovative and revolutionary structures or plays. A play, as was first set down by Aristotle, is the presentation, examination and the conclusion of an idea or particular situation in a given place and time. These plays will raise the educational, cultural and spiritual creative consciousness, thereby enabling an individual's imagination to see beyond the confines of fine reality, to confront the challenges and to think innovatively as we reach beyond the 90's deep into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to ensure our lifestyle and the sacred tenets of our land. We will feel the power within our minds and our imaginations to create jobs, new businesses, new philosophies of hope and prosperity to challenge the dormant questions that lie unanswered, to free ourselves of finite beliefs and to support each individual's limitless possibilities as we grasp for new heights of majestic beginnings. This, my fellow citizens, board members, innovators, facilitators, framers of our way of life, is what we owe our children and this is our challenge. Out of this challenge we will create safety and security and we will be able to look back on this day, just as we look on our past conflicts, and relive movements of he and she-roism, because we would have been fulfilling our own vision, supporting our own consciousness, and giving voice and support and aligning ourselves with God's vision.

These plays will be developed under the auspices of The Actors Theatre Workshop, overseen by its Artistic Director. The plays contributed by PEN (Poet's Essayists and Novelists, the international writing organization) prison play writing program will give those voiceless ones who are incarcerated the opportunity for hope by allowing them to reexamine their lives. Hopefully this will raise their consciousness by helping them support the youth of our day and use their experiences in a creative way to help make amends toward our society.

The many different levels of expression – emotional, creative and imaginative expression – that take place in our classes include original writings, examination of new revolutionary ideas, and support of the traditional values of our society leading the children's expression to the multiplicity of the every day issues they encounter. These issues include alcoholism, drug abuse and prevention, teenage pregnancy, anti-Semitism, racism and classicism, and the pain of seeing a young girl parenting a baby – a baby parenting a baby. We talk about these issues and create imaginary situations of these encounters. The children write about these situations seeking answers to the mystery of why individuals have such fear and intolerance, why children must be led away from the pitfalls of these social ills and why a new, creative understanding must be a part of all our consciousnesses.

Every generation has its challenges, and the people of every generation have had to ask themselves how must they confront the particular challenges of their day. Each generation has had to create specific programs and structures to answer the particular needs of that time. In World War II we had to examine and create a consciousness to frame and articulate what our response would be to the onslaught of Nazism. Once the force of the American consciousness was directed toward the force of the challenge that lay ahead, we pulled together and confronted the enemy. The German and Japanese conflict created in the American consciousness very specific responses to those very unique and specific challenges. We

awakened the American consciousness through films, documentaries and communications of many sorts, but most of all through the great questions, answers, and illuminations that were revealed through the ensemble creative form which we call the American theatre. It is out of this consciousness that I want to create specific plays that address specific issues tailored to the examination, the understanding, and the confrontation of those many dynamics playing upon the lives of our children.

Ladies and gentlemen, we of The Actors Theatre Workshop and many other institutions and individuals across our land are coming together to deal with this great challenge. We are creating out of the biblical consciousness and the noble struggles of the past, being practitioners in one of the noblest creative and powerful spiritual institutions, the world theatrical platform. This challenge can seem overwhelming to the untrained person, but to the professional theatre person, this challenge is the core of his or her life. His or her journey is to examine, embrace, confront, teach, reveal and advance society. With this training, an individual can choose whatever positive past to follow, whether it be a theatre professional or a doctor, lawyer, carpenter or scientist, business man, laborer; because they have been enlightened by the fact that questions were asked, ideas revealed, and their normal intelligence was awakened in its own capacity to learn and contribute.

I have proposed and we are in the process of creating ten two to four character plays with a mother, a father and two children, or an adult and child, which will show the struggle of the American family unit. We will examine all cultural, social, economic strata of the family structure, underclass, lower class, lower working class, working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class and aristocracy. We will show the ethical, sociological, philosophical and financial complexities of each class and structure the plays to reveal the child being given a foundation to ensure his or her survival as a constructive, educated, fully autonomous, committed individual. With our present theater, we can make a very meaningful contribution, but the needs and the challenge dictate to us that we must expand our facility to meet this great struggle. The programs that we started five years ago have been more than proven in their tangible realities and justify that we undertake this expansion. Our youth are articulate, respectful, committed individuals. And they have been given the tools to prepare and discipline themselves to actualize their dreams. By living out their dreams they support, give voice to and illuminate the collective, dormant vision of our society.

## Looking Into The Future

One of the foundations of my life on earth, since I was a small child in the backfields of Cora Peak, North Carolina, was the time I spent at night gazing from the rooftops into the outer reaches of space, dreaming and wondering, hoping for the opportunity to put into a practical, visionary expression my faith, my dreams and my deep longing to contribute to the enlightenment and support of human expression.

Now as I look into the future, I give thanks that I was born to a people with a deep sense of the sacred, a wish to make contact with each individual and a longing to support individual humanity within the great complexity of human existence.

I give thanks to all that we as humans worship and to the many different expressions of that worship for the multitude of moments of possibility and probability I have been given. These moments of opportunity enabled me to direct the full force of all the power within me toward the fulfillment of the dreams and ambitions I so longed for as I looked up at the moon and the stars and the black night sky and my young, unformed mind tried to understand the complexities of human existence.

As there is a god in all humans, and as all humans express their grace and divinity in different forms and images, I, too, want to continue along the pathway of my quest which had such humble beginnings. I move with gladness and a profound sense of destiny as I work to fulfill some of the expressions and hopes I first spoke softly in my young child's voice to my great grandmother as we sat before the fire in our farmhouse deep in the woods alongside Dismal Swamp.

My great grandmother was a woman who had been a servant to the gentry. She had traveled the world on bended knee and served and born witness to many cruelties and inhumanities shown toward her and her people. My great grandmother imparted to me deep and profound images and visions of wonder from far away places. Her tales and her wisdom enkindled in me a flame that burned with a desire for knowledge and an inner rage of faith that was fanned by the winds of God's enthusiasm and man's longing.

The passion and spirit that play upon the dormant field of dreams, so natural in their inactiveness, were now activated in the natural flow of a young mind's longing for development. This is the universal moment to which I have committed my life. And I will continue to commit myself to support the awakening of the spirit that lies sleeping in the mind of human existence.

The knowledge and acceptance that I, Thurman, could lift myself out of an early life with some times of human despair, awakened in me an acceptance of the potential in humankind. With this belief and the tried, proven and insightful images of my completed experiences, I committed my being to uplifting the lost spirit in any place where there exists hope deferred.

Hope and spirit exist in the communion of all humans. To encourage, nurture and support what already exists in humankind is what I see my work to be, as a creative, spiritual, facilitator of individuals' unique visionary expressions. We live in a time when we are so often alienated from each other's unique expressions. The instant-ness of our mechanized, technological society has supported the dormant fear that lies in the collective consciousness: the fear of non-existence. As we move into the 21st century we must see technology as an expression of humankind reaching for its limitless expression. Yet, technology in action creates instant-ness which at times causes us to lose sight of the inter-related process of our human connection to things, events, and individuals. The loss of the connection to our inter-relatedness with the universe causes us to feel our fear of non-existence.



We must not allow the habit of instant-ness to overtake the moment when we come together for human exchange. Instant-ness betrays the longing and the cry of the human expression which is alive in each of us but denied when we do not accept the creative process of human relationships.

Human creation is the miracle of God's vision. We must be proud of our technological, scientific, and creative discoveries. We must not fear our achievements and their far-reaching powers; nor should we allow these achievements to devalue our human expression. All things start and all things end in the spirit of God's vision. As individuals each of us articulates this vision in our human existence. We must never allow ourselves to be betrayed by the instant-ness and touch and illusion of material things. Material things are simply a by-product of the expression, fulfillment and balance of creative process.

Creative process mobilizes the expression of our country, society, culture, and all situations where individuals are in communion with one another. This process creates a sense of safety and social harmony because it gives us the security of the continuous support of trust and faith as we encounter the mysteries of the unknown. The mysteries that await the unraveling of each human's fragile sense of destiny are often too powerful and too frightening for the human to accept with grace and trust. And so we must remain innocent and unknowing of what the next moment brings and allow ourselves to give vent to our natural expression as lost wanderers in the land of plenty. This land of plenty is the multiplicity and individualized expression of the unique imagination of God's individuals. To allow the instant-ness of life to remove oneself from the natural progression of this powerful force is to betray the legacy of the human's primary history of unfolding light.

The world's children are light that is covered by a veil of darkness. Within the child's mind, naturalness and imagination beckon toward dawn. Dawn awakens and casts light upon the celebration of guiltless acceptance of possibility and ultimate probability. As the child dances in the light of self-acceptance, we witness the birth of the safety and security that shall move us into the next century. We witness the celebration of the imagination, which creates with enthusiasm and reveals spirit, uniqueness, joy, power, possibility and the triumph of the natural essence of humankind. Imagination exists in the soul and loins of individuals who are in a process of acceptance of their natural essence. At once tangible and intangible, imagination waits to take its place in the communion of human relationships, expression, and discovery.

These images, expressions, philosophic insights, social investigations and spiritual guidelines form the foundation of truth within me. It is with these insights which have produced the foundation of my life that I, Thurman Edward Knight Scott, have dedicated myself to The Actors Theatre Workshop and to my small part in contributing to the advancement of human, spiritual, and creative insights in order to quench the primal thirst and longing born in me at an early, tender age, looking into the darkness of night.

I have struggled to find a truth and an awareness and sensitivity that will enable me to facilitate the growth of new images, insights, and hope so that I may break new ground in the advancement of the human expression that seeks to find new forms for the deep primal, poetic, and Biblical images flowing through the daily communication of humankind. For this reason, we of The Actors Theatre Workshop have struggled and discovered new forms, patterns, and foundations from which to express the written word. As theatre is born of the written word, so too are new worlds.

The written word is the most powerful tool in human history. It can carry us into the future with the magnificent expression of expectation and glee, without distrust or fear. It can carry us into the future with faith like a piercing beam of light searing through the limits of the accepted norm of fear and limitation.

Resistance to enlightenment produces complexity in a given situation. It is as if our moments of resistance were ghosts, haunts or apparitions from the past locked in the center of a rock, cowering in darkness, hiding from the natural progression of light. The consciousness of enlightenment have to bore through the rock of mystery to reveal the illusion and distortion and fear of unknown new possibilities. The struggle and ultimate discovery give us faith that something always exists on the other side of whatever moment we are in. Then opposition to enlightenment exposes itself as mere apparitions. For once we accept change, the illusion of fear is dissipated. Light reveals the ghostly, rock-bound inhabitants, their opposition to change, their accepted belief in illusion, and the distorted, chaotic energies this belief spawns. The chaotic energies break up and fly out to meet the light with an expression of gladness and glee, wildly embracing the mystery of the unknown and bringing forth a world of new opportunities.

The process through mystery and discovery keep us moving on the path of discovery with wonderment, curiosity, awe and expectation. This process, born of and supported by the unknown of our next moment, renews our human naturalness, articulates our trust and faith and hope, and burns in the center of the eternal flame of the collective consciousness of the universe.

This consciousness, which I hope to reflect in my tasks as I walk down the road of human and creative expectancy, keeps alive in me a burning trust and faith that the multiplicity of the struggles of humankind's journey is ultimately the path that leads us to our collective creative and spiritual completion and balance. There lies significance in every action that comes out of human expression. Action is but a metaphoric vibration that leads us to our own divinity. Our truth exists. Whether we accept it or not, it exists. Our pain is the violation of the betrayal of the primal, Biblical truth that lies dormant in the consciousness of humankind.

We as countries, we as the embodiment of the social structures of those lands, we as individuals already have the tools, wisdom and foundation within ourselves to lead us to the acceptance and completion of our longing that lies dormant beneath the accepted wall of fear and disillusionment. We must reach outside of our comfortableness with the old and find again the uneasiness of innocence with which to meet the mysteries of the unknown upon our divine eternal creative path of hope, truth and wisdom.

The mystery and the creative process of the young child in the night looking at the moon and dreaming and longing for explanations for existence, is the same process we practice to create great works of art. This process questions human existence and graces the hearts and minds of all humans along our eternal path.

Let us align ourselves with our natural truth. Let us allow ourselves the legacy of our naturalness and our eternalness. Let us recognize the power and divinity of each human being as sacred. Let us celebrate our gifts to one another as we reflect one another's immense human potential.

I was awakened by the fire popping and jumping. The light of the sparks seemed to reflect my imagination. The sparks awakened my dreams and curiosity and I longed for a place far beyond where I was. As I gazed deep into the red oak logs, I was transfixed. My imagination was enflamed by my great grandmother's tales of yonder years and the struggles of her journey as she fought to have moments of freedom and respite from the yoke of oppression. I felt a connection to my great grandmother's spirit, and this left me with a feeling of awe and expectation of the fulfillment of incompleteness. The possibility of completion of her deferred odyssey of magnificence generated in me a burning need to express her spirit through my child's unformulated potential into a vision of new possibility.

The sparks of the popping fire broke the moment of my silent longing. I looked into my great grandmother's eyes and saw the reflections of my dreams. Her intuitive acceptance of the fulfillment of

my dreams struck deep vibrations upon her heartstrings and unleashed an avalanche, unburdening her longing for the completion of her own deferred dreams. The recognition that her dreams had the possibility of fulfillment created in her an acceptance that her struggle and her deferred dreams had not been ended. Her images, her incompleteness, her great expectations, her glorious majestic moments of longing within silence awakened in me the faith and courage and glee that I had a path and a legacy of continuing possibility. To reach for the unfulfilled dreams of a woman born in a time of state sponsored collective oppression gave me a charge and vision on the path to complete and express the wisdom and insights of a grand lady's odyssey still unfolding, buried deep and lying dormant in the magnificent arc of existence.

The tradition of enthusiasm within oppression which allowed this woman to reach beyond the accepted norms of accomplishment is the foundation that led me as a young child to have dreams and longings for places and things, ideas and questions that seemed beyond of the limits of my possibilities. This tradition was passed down to me and buried deep in my soul while I stood in the shadows of a blazing red oak log, silently I pulling the comb through my great grandmother's long white hair.

I had dreams of leaving the farm, walking out under the sky, the same sky under which I so often longed and tried to understand the dimensions of the universe. I was leaving the corn, potato, and peanut fields, the memories of playing in the vegetable garden, wading in Dismal Swamp and nestling under the trees that overshadowed the graveyard and finding snail shells hidden under the pine needles there which to my child's eyes were the tiny skulls of my forgotten ancestors.

I would take with me the memories of my old brown mule, Bob, and the pain I had to overcome seeing him lying on the hill. That hill was both the pathway and nemesis of freedom that challenged the courage of the inhabitants of the farm. Having not quite reached the top, the cart unchained from his body, Bob lay on the side of the hill in the last moments of his life, his job unfinished, suffering in his incompleteness, in the cold of the wet morning dew.

Many times I watched my great grandmother march up the hill, her brow knotted like her hard oak walking stick as she climbed with determination and courage. At nearly one hundred years of age she still possessed a rage of faith against the challenges of life. Standing at the top, looking back down the hill and out over the pines, her flinty eyes were aflame and her white hair blew against the red winds of sunrise. She stood defiant and rooted with a passion that set the wind on fire igniting the spirits of the ancestors, the spirits of the ones who had been dropped into the sea and the ones who had made it to the land, the land where their gods were taken from them.

As she stood in the light of the rising sun all earthly afflictions were seared away and she stood in splendor and glory under God's heaven, a queen in her full majesty. And the ancestors jumped and leaped upon the air like flames dancing in glad celebration to the clanking sounds of their shackles and chains breaking, the stinking rags dropping away from their skins, their limbs now outstretched beyond the imposed deformity of years bent down, broken voices arising in ever-strengthening howls and yelps and wails and laughter in harmony with the wind, a wind whose wild twisting pounding whooshing dancing rhythm now connected the present and the past in glorious triumph. And the lost gods were awakened by the sounds of the voices that had been silenced by the oppressors' fears singing now in a clamorous symphony of spirits. The voices of the gods in silence and in her ear were ringing. And her face shown with grace and beauty and light and there was acceptance and peace in the land.

When I left the farm, I walked down the hill and through the swamp, and over the furrows of the back fields, through the yard of the white Knights, a name descended from a lineage and history of oppression and freedom that left two families living on the same land and with the same name. Helen Knight, with

her white face and blond hair, had been a woman who had loved me as her own child, a person who I saw as a protector against the frightening, howling sounds of the night. I rounded the bend in the path through the woods and the far off bleating of a goat caused the memory of my lost goat to fleet across my mind, the mystery of his disappearance never to be solved. I listened to the chirping of the birds and bellowing of the frogs and heard in their music the charms and primal sounds of the ground and trees and animals that come together on the wind to create a symphony of beauty and longing and hope. This was the celebration of my farewell and I knew I was on my path to find a way to reveal and unravel my commitment to dreams deferred and awakening of new possibilities.

Pain, and rage and a dream of light are all enkindled by oppression's essence and give us the charge to accept the as yet undiscovered force of enlightenment, possibility, and Biblical rightness of our journey. Hope is reborn along our journey through helplessness. Hope breeds faith through the process of our steps as we fall and rise up and overcome within the mystery. With the light of this faith we become fearless, we have courage in our struggles, we challenge accepted beliefs, we awaken new possibilities.

The full understanding of my great-grandmother's life generated in me an intolerance of the highest order for oppression in any shape, form or situation. It created in me as a child the belief that to allow oneself to be stifled by the hideous oppression of prejudice against any individual, individuals or classes, was a betrayal of the essence, legacy, consciousness, and insights gained by the struggles she had survived and passed on to me in the tales she told me without bitterness or remorse, in the great tradition of enthusiasm born of oppression.

Oppression created a burning fire of insight in the child to transform the false legacy of helplessness, bitterness, fear and hopelessness and to reveal the true message and truth of the odyssey of this majestic person. Her message that was transported to me at this tender age was one of hope, great possibility, inspiration, a voracious curiosity to discover the full potential of power that was enkindled within me, the burning desire to be what I was meant to be.

This consciousness was born of oppression and crystalized by the fire of relentless hope. The bitterness of oppression had been seared away by the fire and with unbending faith, she handed me her essence so that I might live the completion of her dreams. As a young child, I embraced this massive gift of love with bounteous acceptance of new worlds, of great possibilities of vision, hope, curiosity, the fulfillment of deferred expectation and ever-longing new dreams. As I look back in life, this was an epic moment of one generation handing hope to another generation with the faith that within this new generation lies the fulfillment of hope. this new generation here lies hope's fulfillment.

I came to commit myself to the charge that wherever helplessness exists I would work to uphold the possibility of hope because I heard with my young child's ears, the sounds that arose from the dungeon of deep, psychological and physical abuse to her spirit and vibrated in the world as an expression which was like a phoenix ascending, gleaming with power, truth, hope, wisdom and vision before a young child. These are my memories of the deep hours of night, standing before burning oak logs with the beautiful patterns of her quilt cover her tic and the silent rocking of her chair, occasionally hearing faraway sounds. There was peace, there was a sense of destiny in the child and there was acceptance.

## **The Necessity of Creative Process in Our New Century and Beyond**

In our present time, from all around the globe, there is a cry, a demand, an intensity, searching for creative spiritual growth. People from all walks of life are sounding a clarion call to discover and build new pathways leading to the development of all the tools our Creator gave us. The opposing energy to this searching cry appears to be a nihilist violence, a conscienceless, destructive force that has embedded itself within the fabric of our society. Our inclusive, democratic society and culture challenge each and every one of us to arm ourselves with creative, new ideas so that our technological capacity will never be more powerful than one single individual voice. We face a future in which our humanity, compassion, spiritual and creative courage will be challenged to rise up in new ways, for we are being tested now as never before. In the days to come and beyond, how will creativity and technology work together for the good of all people? How can the artist of today inform the creative processes that will lift us into tomorrow?

The worldwide consumer market demands that American businesses challenge their people to seek the power of creativity to generate new ideas, promote efficiency and productivity, and create better, more competitive products. As cultures converge within the world's interconnectedness, our nation is working overtime to serve the multiplicity of needs of our new, emerging society. Patients challenge the medical profession to study unorthodox ideas and combine new insights with traditional, accepted approaches, hoping medical practitioners will discover new ways to help those suffering with presently incurable diseases. The cry for a more compassionate judiciary is gaining the attention of our highest courts, challenging them to interpret the law in ways to best align it with the peoples' needs. With more knowledge of the human brain's capacity and the complex ways we learn and dissect information, the educational system is challenged daily to experiment with new ways of teaching that will enhance intuitiveness and find the keys to open up the wellspring of creative intellect that is born in every human being.

In the process of this innovation, celebration and acceptance of new directions, we are making great discoveries about ourselves. Technology is a wonderful expression of the power of human ingenuity. All ideas exist in the universal atmosphere in which we are now living. The creative, intuitive pioneers who bring forth new technology are able to feel the essence and vibration of these ideas and calibrate them into a formalized expression and physical manifestation. Each new innovation reflects the hereditary, eternal, fundamental nature of human existence which is to create. This is wonderful.

Our natural response to progress is to feel happiness and a sense of achievement, but we can also respond with complexity. Technological advancements have also triggered in humans a deep insidious fear that technology far exceeds their own individual capacity to think, analyze or create. Increasingly we are a nation of people who are driven and fragmented, suffering from depression and clamoring for self-examination, spiritual renewal and creative expression. The initial promise of technology was to provide seemingly limitless options, choices and constant possibilities for change. This was the ideal. The reality is very different.

The technological systems we employ in specific environments are based on the analysis of what will best serve our needs. Once a new technological advancement has been put in place, its function remains static. Computers do not change after they are designed and assembled; they only repeat the same movements over and over and over again. There is an element of danger when we work within a given system, regardless of the degree to which it serves us.

Technological systems are finite sets of options contained by formulas. In order to learn and apply a system, one must follow a formula. It may be a highly sophisticated, complex formula, but when all is said and done our primary responsibility is to follow the rules. Our increasing dependence on these systems reinforces behaviors that operate most efficiently within specific, defined limitations. Our acceptance and relaxation with technological systems blunt our curiosity and the "muscles" that are exercised during creative processes do not develop. In this process our creative, intuitive self is weakened and patterns of submissive, rote behavior are strengthened.

No one has been truly liberated by technology to further experience and develop their intuitive selves. If anything, today people are racing against time harder and faster than ever. Stress induced disorders and illnesses are at an all-time high. The power of technology continues to grow, but at the same time we are not taking effective, tangible steps to enhance individual growth. Instead, technological advancement and individual growth are moving in opposite directions. Technology now breeds apathy and cynicism in our young, at a time in their life when they need inspiration and vision. Pornographic violence fills the airwaves and art lacks beauty. At times, it feels as if the human spirit is under siege.

History teaches us that non-participation creates stagnation. Recent history poignantly reveals to us the problems that arise when individuals passively abdicate to others their ability to reason, to be curious and to question. When we conform and practice patterns of submissive, rote behavior, whether by refusing to question a political system's brutality, by remaining silent as atrocities are visited upon the populace, or by negating individual expression, conforming and giving over our power to a machine, we are in danger as a society of civilized people.

Human beings cannot have unique expression if we rely solely upon structures and processes allowed us by our mechanical, technological systems to complete our actions. The advancement of technology and the devaluation of process are directly related. America is a consumer nation and, increasingly, the products we use come from other countries. The skills that were formulated and honed here in the United States to produce great products no longer have a place to be exercised. The way we use technology has undermined the creative development process of individuals.

Great power for good will be released in the world when technology and individuals grow in unison. This will happen when technology operates as an extension of individuals' creative impulses. We will recognize that the computer is there to interpret the individual genius that lies untapped in every human being. Individual creative development will be a top priority and technology will provide the tools to interpret and calibrate the complex, unique, creative ideas that exist in human potential. A national consciousness will quickly develop that will demand that an effort be made for our citizens to have access to the creative development processes that can evolve into the world-wide expansion of global fulfillment.

Creatively developed human beings will provide leadership in concert with technology, as they do now. The degree of our collective creative development will determine our successes, as technology enables more and more collaboration through impulses, intuition, and intellectual creative expressions. Machines that are able to pick up the impulses, vibrations and wavelengths of an individual's intuitive, developed mind can then calibrate human intention into tangible manifestations of ideas, objects, products and situations. In this process individuals will not relinquish the originality of their thinking to technology; instead, technology will enable from individuals' creative impulses and intuitive expressions.

Our growth and expansion, supply and demand will reveal the degree to which we have invested in individuals' creative development. All humans have the potential to create. Our schools and academies now place a powerful emphasis on finding methods, techniques and processes to enhance individual thoughts, ideas and concepts because they recognize that the success of our technological expansion is

directly related to institutional investment in the support and development of human beings. There is a powerful incentive for individuals to grow, and a national consensus for individual, creative spiritual growth will put the essence of individual growth at the core of educational and economic structures and processes.

A creative process is a path and series of the steps of discovery: investigative expressions, realizations and acceptances that lead to the implementation of these discoveries into tangibility. Our need for instant gratification makes us want to jump to the end of the process and experience the discovery without taking any of the steps along the path. But the process of taking steps is what gives us the confidence and creative courage to value our unique accomplishments. The steps of a process enable a physicalized expression of our efforts. Individuals can stand back and look at their creations and say, "I did that." Existentially we feel supported because the thing we created exists apart from us. It validates us and we validate it. Creating fulfills one of our most profound human needs, which is to make a contribution. When we build something with our hands, our creative intellect, spirit and soul, we admire it and others join in and proclaim it's a job well done because something came out of us that has the potential to foster the well-being of our ongoing civilization. This connects us creatively and spiritually to the original Creator of us all.

When we don't go through the steps of the creative process, we don't experience discovery. If we are looking for instantaneous achievement and we do not want to suffer the rigors of investigation, if we don't study ideas and concepts or involve ourselves in the ongoing growth of our own communities, if we are so turned off, bored and uninterested in everything we encounter that we are left in a state of apathy, it's no surprise that we would be willing to push a button and not be curious about what takes place when we push that button.

We know that we must exercise in order to strengthen and tone the body. Why don't we feel there is equal necessity to exercise the muscle of the imagination? Is it possible that the lack of emphasis on individual, unique expression has made people feel that imagination is not a natural part of every day human expression? Or is it that only the so-called special and elite artists have the luxury of using their imaginations? No. We all have imaginations. We are all influenced by the many dimensions of our experiences and these experiences play upon our consciousness. Whether or not we acknowledge it, we all share a part of the vast, timeless collective consciousness of the human race that lives within our subconscious mind. That is why it is so important for us to make intellectual, conscious choices based upon clarity, responsibility, examination and selection of the best of the limitless possibilities of choices available to us in each and every moment.

Originality must be "coaxed" out of the human imagination. It is delicate, shy, vulnerable and fears humiliation. Originality can embarrass those around itself when it first appears, for it stumbles and blunders and fumbles before it gains its stride. Like a wet little chick hatched from its shell, a long-legged colt wobbly standing up, or the toddler we all were once, the new comes into the world with fragility. New ideas and expressions need to be received with gentle, measured receptivity and encouragement.

Originality needs the freedom and safety to falter. With these simple elements of nurture, unique originality will unfold itself, glistening and glimmering in the air, as a brilliant thought, poetic expression or breathtaking image. Once given voice in a disciplined creative process that challenges, liberates, formulates and refines, the uniquely original expression quickly draws great power to itself. Originality then gains force and moves forward with apparent effortlessness, making moments flow and pieces fit together as if by magic. As it emerges into the world, originality has the power to realign old ideas, concepts, structures and habits into rejuvenated energies and vibrant, revitalized inspiration and movement. This is the extraordinary power of creative process in action.

Eternal, creative, spiritual imagination exists in every human being. The uniqueness of each person's DNA bears witness to the potential originality lying dormant in each of us. Each individual has both creative and destructive powers that far exceed all of global technology in the capacity to enhance or limit the human experience and exercise of the life force upon this earth. Creativity, like nature, constructs or destructs. Technology, like all structures of order and repetition produces results that can free us or oppress us. Within the realms of the creative and the technological, each process of art and science must be greatly strengthened and refined in its multitude of applications.

This is the true challenge of the future. There is a deep, insidious fear that human creativity leads recklessly toward chaos and a growing fear that technology will ultimately control human life. Technology must serve human creation and not human's hunger to control one another. Creativity and technology must become integrated processes. We have been enticed and seduced by the notion that technology would somehow liberate our creativity, that would somehow makes us more creative. No. Our Creator endowed us with creativity. Our true power does not lie behind the screen of a computer monitor or with the infrared rays of micro systems. Our greatest power is already inside us when we come to this earth.

We start out as a single cell and we develop into a multiplicity of cells that make up a whole human being. The actual process of creation itself endows us with imagination. This is because the eternal memory of the process of creation is locked in our cells. We don't see it. If we experience our eternal memory, it is unintentional and we don't know how to interpret it. But the unintentional and profound nature of the thoughts, images and feelings it evokes make a deep impression upon us. We can appreciate the essence. Because there is something about it, we don't quite know what, that we feel some kind of connection to. And the connection we feel comes from what we call our creative, intuitive, spiritual self.

At birth we are awakened by a complex consciousness that plays upon every dimension of our being. The individuals around us support us; this helps to galvanize the potential that already exists within our life form to develop into a cohesive presence. The journey we experience deepens our profound creative, intuitive essence that is lying in wait and hoping to be touched upon so it can reveal itself in physical action and unique expression. During the process of a child's journey from birth to the age at which it starts to feel validated by its own person, millions of impressions play upon the human consciousness, enriching us with profound, intuitive, creative essence. Not to develop, investigate and affirm this magnificent, dormant essence may truly be the greatest sin we could ever commit.

Young people in our new world of global technology often feel driven, desperate and at the breaking point. The trappings of privilege have become jails of isolation for our young while the underprivileged have been swept aside by technology's advancement. The disenfranchised are regularly incarcerated and we designated whole communities of our children as "throw-aways". What must our Creator think of us as more and more people in the world's most powerful and wealthiest nation appear to be seeking simultaneous secular and religious supremacy as childhood poverty rises and school shootings explode with alarming regularity?

If we do not teach our children that their creative, spiritual power is greater than technology, they grow up deformed and violent in their response to their own hopelessness and seeming powerlessness. Adolescent nihilism is now a true internal threat to national security. Children kill other children and themselves as a desperate response to the inhumanity of our culture of neglect, overwork, divorce, and obsessive competition and consumption. Technology inserted into the natural human encounter with life can never be a replacement for the patient nurturing of the human spirit.



Human evolution, both individual and societal takes place on God's time. Technology executes on man's time. Our children are hung between the will that drives our present culture and the purpose that pulls at their souls. They feel the painful split of the post-modern world in their deepest intimacies of mind, body and spirit. They are frequently fear-filled, festering, fragmented and enraged. The further they are driven for their true nature, the more they will lash out. Will we become a society that incarcerates or liberates our hope for the future?

History teaches us the consequences of our actions. Technology provides us with vast and extensive data and information and increasingly wide-ranging communication systems. Art illuminates and informs our choices for the future. The artist is like a phantom. He moves in and out of different circles and ideologies. The artist's mission is to articulate and bring forth the core truth and essence of any given situation, to express ideas that are acceptable, and most importantly to express ideas that are not acceptable. The artist's non-alignment with any particular ideology or political philosophy allows him to have the eyes, ears, consciousness, commitment and courage to commit himself to ideas and concepts that are not necessarily acceptable. His allegiance is to bring ideas and concepts into the society that can serve as a foundation for a path toward a better and more profound understanding of his or her society as it was, is now and will be for generations to come. The artist is a leader.

The artist's allegiance is to himself and the God he worships. He has developed his God-given essence and his efforts give him the supreme right and commitment to be an illuminator of all things without necessarily being identifiable with any given thing. We must not be fooled into thinking that the artist capitulates; he simply lives through moments in order to understand and interpret them. The artist's tradition is that he survives the revolution and then perhaps joins the counter-revolution, for he is not aligned with the individuals who head the movements or their philosophies. He is simply there as a chronicler, a chorus, a bystander, a reporter, a voice with consciousness to awaken the dormant, unrealized ideas that live deep in the primal essence of human kind. He has some expertise in all things because all things are part of the make-up of his creative ensemble.

Today there is a mistaken belief that technology unleashes originality. This is not true. It is the artist who creates a path and a way to see and experience new beginnings. This is the historical legacy that has been passed down from Biblical times, through the classical period, to modern times. Although the artist may attain a level of comfortableness and acceptance by others, in reality his soul is always enflamed by his voracious and potentially rageful, uncompromising pursuit of being a trailblazer in his own time, in thought, word or action. The artist is not necessarily seeking to build or to destroy, but he uses the actions of creation or destruction to accomplish his desired end: to cut through society's facade to find a deeper truth that will hopefully serve human existence.

At the height of his investigations and research, Sigmund Freud conducted a renowned study into the behavior and essence of society's archetypes. He came to great and far reaching conclusions which were further advanced by other great thinkers who followed Freud, including Karl Jung who developed theories about archetypes as reflected in dreams and symbols. When Freud was asked to analyze the archetype of the artist he said, "Take him away. I have no need to involve myself with the artist. It is a waste of our time to try to study him or predict his behavior with any certainty. Because the artist can live without anything. He does not need society's ethical, political, social or religious institutions to define his existence. He is able to create in the moment. The great Picasso, for example, created something in every moment. The artist in his true essence is not determined by the primal essence of any particular society. The artist's primal essence is universal."

We've all been confronted with the pressure of being asked, directly or indirectly, "Who do you think you are? You have these highfalutin' ideas that have never been tried or proven and have no basis in reality.

Don't bring those risky questions into this conversation! It's dangerous to go down that path. Those ideas are potentially detrimental to us all and I'm going to remember that you brought them into this discussion. So please, just don't say anything more." When we dare to dream, we inspire opposition as well as commitment in others, and moments of contempt may await us on our path and mission.

In these moments, when people are critical of your daring to speak with a new voice, have compassion for yourself and know that you are not wrong for speaking. Because if you do not speak up when you hear worn out ideas being spoken and old patterns expressed over and over and over again, you experience deep and profound creative implosion that will make you feel stifled, tired, dull, uninspired, and eventually you can even become ill or diseased in body, mind or spirit. You must say to yourself, "not only is this boring and unintelligent but we are not using the vast power of our mind, our most powerful gift, to summon a new direction." Over time, your pent-up unexpressed creative energy and your longing and need for a new voice can vibrate powerfully in you. An encounter with the new can trigger an explosion, like a rocket engine that lifts the payload up and up, moving out of the gravitational pull of the old, the so-called safe land of has-been and yesteryear. As you leave the past behind, and with it this old thing, this carcass, this tightly-fitted imprint on your being, you are propelled forward. Without reservation or hesitation, the inspiration and intuitiveness that you start to feel as you approach the power and awareness of your new beginning touches upon your excitement and gives you the permission, courage and power to have a new voice.

In this process, as you begin to express your original thoughts, you will experience the fear of the unknown. Sometimes undiscovered ideas, images and expressions create deep and profound feelings of terror in us. This terror stops us from investigating undiscovered lands of opportunity. But if you have trust, faith and a commitment to your voice, it is as if you're riding a rocket. As it boosts you high up in the sky, what was so reassuring, familiar and safe becomes a dim, tiny image that you are almost unable to see in the face of this matchless frontier of beauty and power. Your longing to embrace the unknown and eternal is a natural dimension of human destiny. At the same time, we fight to hold onto the past and fear embracing new thoughts and expressions. This struggle between the future and the past is a natural part of the process of development. Perhaps understanding the essence of this struggle is the path to enlightenment. The glaring, vibrant vastness of the universe's inviting, open frontier makes that comfortable place you've been locked into for so long seem like a distant, unimportant memory as you embrace the power, insight and illumination of new possibilities. We stand within the possibility of global harmony and world-wide peace, informed and humbled by our past transgressions, inspired by a multitude of new opportunities and able at last to reach out to one another as never before, wherever one of us may be, at any time, anywhere on this earth. What glories await us all.