



# Ending existential poverty

15 practices to live the way

**Jan Hurwitch**  
photographs by Luis Chacón



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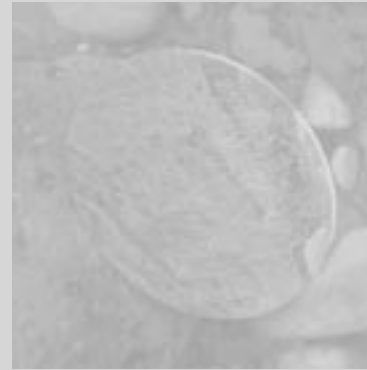
**For my daughter Sara  
And for my nieces  
Julia and Amanda**

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## **Preface**

This small volume was written to celebrate humanity's greatness.

It is a reminder of the direction we must take together to bring about the change we yearn for.

Sometimes we forget that, as humanity evolves, we develop the instruments required — the arms for peace— to assist us in arriving at a more enlightened existence.

As Franz Kafka says, “a book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.”

I hope that by living the following 15 practices, by dialoguing with the great thinkers in this book, your journey will be easier, your heart will be lighter and your soul remain at one.

Jan Hurwitch  
San José, Costa Rica  
April, 2009



## Prologue

The marvelous thoughts expressed in this beautiful work give a message of hope that poverty is not, in essence, external. Neither is it a condition in which people must remain indefinitely, because everything is possible for one who believes in and is willing to awaken ones internal strength, thus overcoming the barriers and obstacles which could limit us in life.

Giving is how we receive and the message in this beautiful work awakens in us profound yearnings, looking into ourselves, finding our compassion, mercy, tolerance and justice. This is how we can overcome poverty.

The entire world needs beings capable of forgiving one another, beings capable of feeling and giving love and happiness to each other, in the context of evermore complex environments and deepening human poverty, generated principally by violence, egoism and false pride.

The author challenges us to go beyond forgiveness, putting into practice the blessings taught by Jesus, which is another expression of love ... that love which

surpasses human understanding, which journeys towards the divine and touches the essence of another human being, enlightening them and giving them life. For when there are blessings, it is because forgiveness has been given and judgment transcended.

The world needs peace, and the author bids us to reflect upon how this begins within each person. And that, through prayer and meditation, we can awaken our internal selves, exercise our being more than our having, practice non-violence, live in the present and respect nature and all sentient beings. And, in the end, we celebrate the synchronicity of the universe and of all beings, dancing to the sound of love which unites us, which resides within us, and which we tend to push aside daily as we do to one another.

To generate our sane judgment, to distinguish by reflection what is just from what is unjust, and act accordingly, is a call by the great leaders of the world to stop existential poverty, planetary destruction and the spiral of violence and death which surround us.

Finally, the author asks us to live the values and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles of coexistence, that if respected, will foster a world of peace and harmony, so required in this stage of our evolution. Yet, once again, the transformation begins within the consciousness of each human being.

Therefore, if we respect ourselves enough, when we rise to the occasion, we will assume the responsibility to know, to practice and to attain the learning and social peace to which humanity aspires as a whole.

Miriam Hirezi and Florentín Meléndez  
El Salvador



## **Introduction**

The demands and consequently the needs, are the same, or very similar, wherever we are in the world.

In spite of everything, I believe that in the west in general, the needs are principally spiritual.

The material needs, in the majority of cases are resolved. However, there exists an enormous spiritual poverty.

**Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

This enormous spiritual poverty derives from a world-malaise called existential poverty.  
There is me and there is you, but there is no us.  
There is mine and there is yours, but there is no ours.  
I am here and you are there, but we are not together.  
Protect mine. Covet yours. Eliminate trust.

Poverty of soul  
poverty of spirit  
creator and maintainer  
of material poverty.



And to cure this world-malaise called existential poverty, we offer 15 practices to live the way.

## **1. Show compassion**

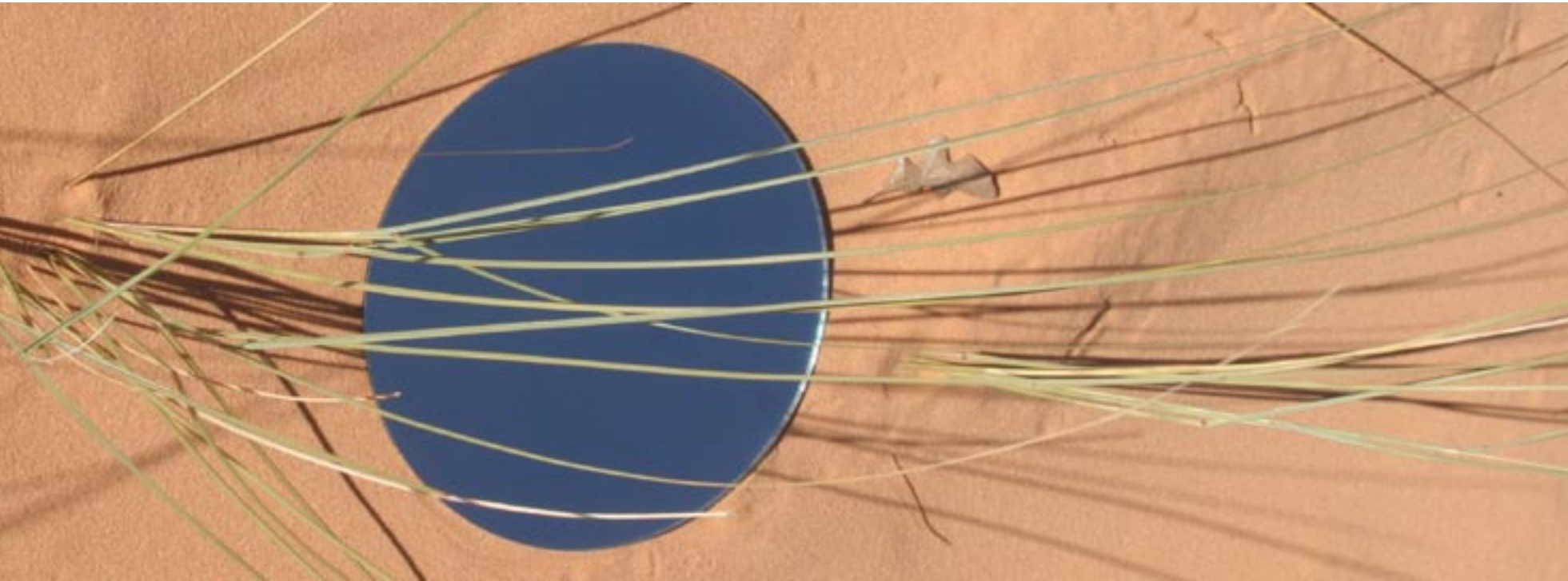




## 1. Show compassion

In Buddhism, the highest spiritual ideal is to cultivate compassion for all sentient beings and to work for their welfare to the maximum possible.

**The Dalai Lama**





**In this context, the simple life and basic human values are essential, as is the capacity to touch our own soul.**

I went to the woods  
because I wished to live  
deliberately, to front only  
the essential facts of life,  
and see if I could not  
learn what it had to teach,  
and not,  
when I came to die,  
discover that I  
had not lived.

**Henry David Thoreau**



**Which are the values that we most admire and that we try to strengthen?**

**The Dalai Lama says:**

For a Bodhisattva to be successful in accomplishing the practice of the six perfections—generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, joyous effort, concentration and wisdom—cooperation with and kindness toward fellow beings are extremely important.

**A Bodhisattva is, in Buddhism, a being who dedicates one's energy to others.**



## 2. Be merciful



## 2. Be merciful

To live a life filled with love, we must show one another mercy. We must fulfill our promises to each other.



**Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said:**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see god.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of god.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you, when people insult you, persecute you  
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven;  
for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Matthew 5:312**



### **3. Foster tolerance and justice**





### **3. Foster tolerance and justice**

Let us find 21st century peace through broader attitudes which permit us to live daily with tolerance and justice.

True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**



## **4. Practice forgiveness and blessing**



#### 4. Practice forgiveness and blessing

Be benign, one with the other, merciful, forgiving  
of one another, as God also forgivest thou in Christ.

**Ephesians 4:32**



Do I forgive easily?

Do I cherish this practice?

As a daily practice ... it rebuilds life

as a constant companion ...

society is renewed.

We should develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is without the power to forgive is without the power to love.

There is some good in the worst of us and some bad in the best of us.

When we discover this, we are less likely to hate our enemies.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**



One of the best examples of forgiveness in recent human history occurred when **Nelson Mandela** assumed the presidency of South Africa in 1994. The following words were the basic philosophy underlying the work of **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, headed by **Bishop Desmond Tutu**, 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate:

These can now be addressed on the basis that there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization. In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of conflicts of the past.

**Ubuntu is an ancient African word which means “humanity towards others”; it also means “I am what I am because we are what we are.”**

In order to complete the process of forgiveness, we suggest the act of blessing, which is a small and powerful act, as described by **Pierre Pradervand**:

To bless all without distinction is the ultimate form of giving, because those you bless will never know from whence came the sudden ray that burst through the clouds of their skies, and you will rarely be a witness to the sunlight in their lives ... it is impossible to bless and judge at the same time.



## 5. Love the poor ... give ... serve ...





## **5. Love the poor ... give ... serve ...**

At the moment of our death, we will not be judged by the number of good deeds which we have done or by the diplomas which we have received in our lives. We will be judged by the love we have put into our work.

**Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

Vow to offer joy to one person  
in the morning,  
and to help relieve  
the grief of one person  
in the afternoon.

**Thich Nhat Hanh**

**Such are the acts of true giving.**

In his book, *Giving*, **Bill Clinton** tells the story of a young African woman who has turned her suffering into service:

Tsepang's gift of time is priceless, not only because of the work she does, but because of the power of her example: a person who chose not to be consumed by her misfortune but to stand on its shoulders and lift others up. We now have 650 people working against HIV/AIDS around

the world. None of them make much money. And more than a hundred of them from America, Europe and the host countries have worked for no salary, just transportation and room and board. Their gifts of time have helped save countless lives.



**One of Martin Luther King's most inspiring messages is:**

Every individual must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?

**For this is the true practice of love.**

**And this practice of love, of service and of giving, is beautifully summarized in Mother Teresa of Calcutta's prayer:**

The fruit of silence is prayer  
the fruit of prayer is faith  
the fruit of faith is love  
the fruit of love is service  
the fruit of service is peace.





**6. Meditate ... meditate ... meditate ...**



A large, textured, brownish surface, possibly a piece of wood or a large rock, with a curved line of small, colorful objects (blue, orange, yellow) along its top edge. The objects are arranged in a semi-circular pattern, with some blue objects at the top and orange/yellow objects below them. The surface has a grainy, fibrous texture.

## 6. Meditate ... meditate ... meditate ...

Close your eyes  
contemplate nothing  
emptiness  
feel the cosmos  
connect yourself  
with humanity  
no past.

No future  
sense your breathing  
taste your passion  
forget  
float  
embrace  
peace.

**The search for new levels of consciousness is facilitated by meditation. It can open the path to know more profound dimensions of our being.**

Meditation can give you what nothing else can.  
It can introduce you to yourself.

**Swami Rama**

**And Osho adds:**

During one hour, the meditator must disappear from the world and enter into himself. During one hour, he must be so isolated that nothing gets to him: not a memory, not a thought, not a fantasy. During one hour, there should not be any content in his consciousness. This will rejuvenate him, free new energy sources within him; and the man will return to this world, younger, fresher, with a greater capacity for learning, with more awe in his eyes and more respect in his interior. Newly a child.

## **7. Model non-violence**





## 7. Model non-violence

I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.

**Albert Einstein**

**In thought, in words and in action, let us model non-violence.**

**We listen to two former presidents of the United States of America:**

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

What are some of the other attributes of a superpower?

Once again, they might very well mirror those of a person. These would include a demonstrable commitment to truth, justice, peace, freedom, humility, human rights, generosity, and the upholding of other moral values.

**Jimmy Carter**





## 8. Change having for being



## 8. Change having for being

The way to do is to be.

**Lao Tse**



Let us refrain from judging ourselves and others based on material or power possession.

Let us know the being of others and our own being.

That being lives in terms of relationships, love and solidarity.

That being lives in the present and accepts human reality.

That being is true to one self.

**Eric Fromm in 1976 gave us some ideas of the new man he visualized then:**

- Willingness to give up all forms of having in order to fully *be*.
- Security, sense of identity, and confidence based on faith in what one *is*, on one's need for relatedness, interest, love, solidarity with the world around one, instead of on one's desire to have, to possess, to control the world, and thus become the slave of one's possessions.
- Acceptance of the fact that nobody and nothing outside oneself gives meaning to life, but that this radical independence and no-nothingness can become the condition for the fullest activity devoted to caring and sharing.
- Being fully present where one is.
- Joy that comes from giving and sharing, not from hoarding and exploiting.
- Love and respect for life in all its manifestations, in the knowledge that not things, power, all that is dead, but life and everything that pertains to its growth is sacred.
- Sensing one's oneness with all life, hence giving up the aim of conquering nature, subduing it, exploiting it, raping it, destroying it, but trying, rather, to understand and cooperate with nature.

## 9. Find meaning in life



## 9. Find meaning in life

Share consciousness  
protect energies  
feel emotions  
be more human  
give meaning to life.

**Victor Frankl** says that there are three ways in which to find meaning in life:

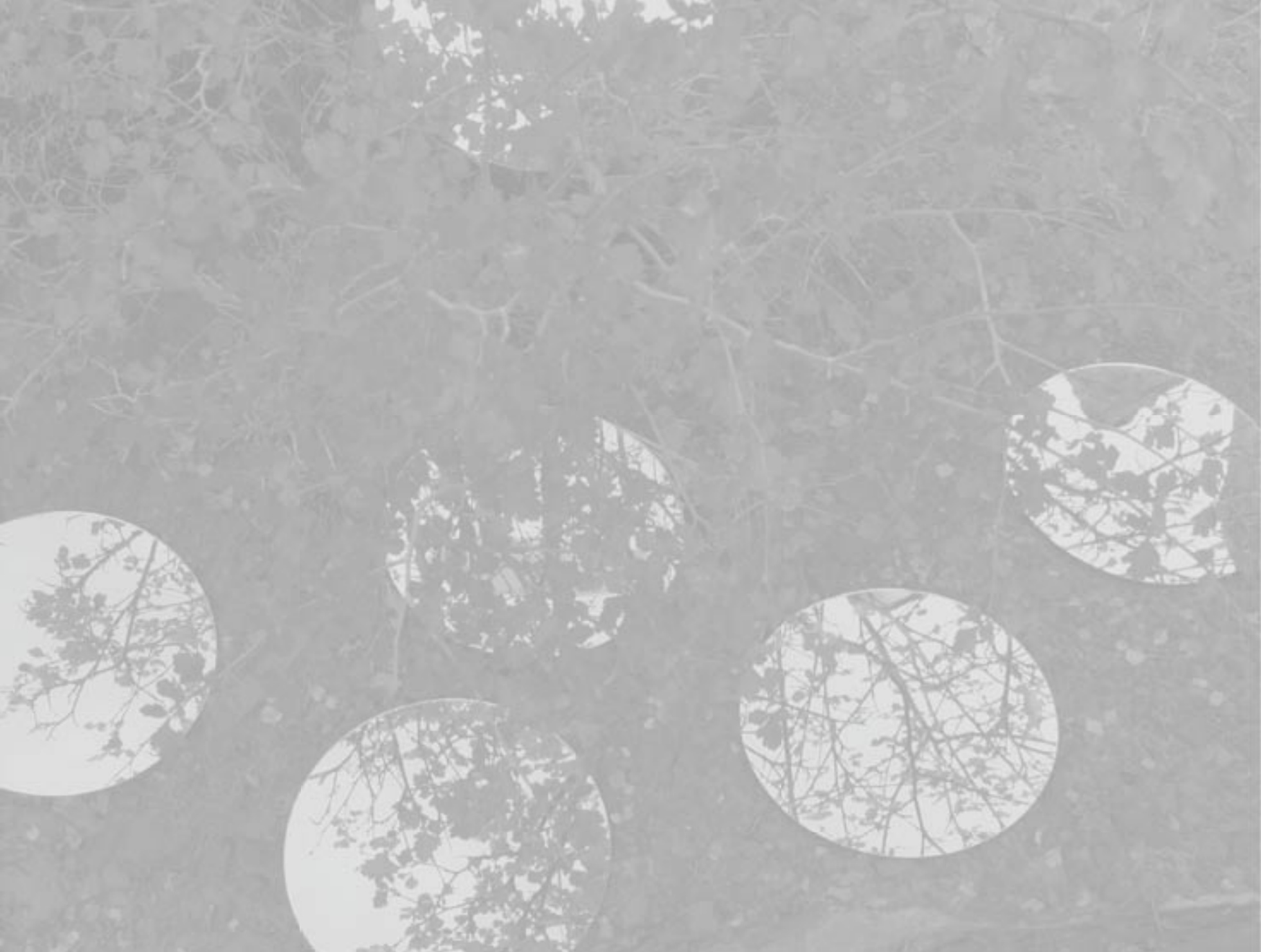
- by creating a work or doing a deed
- by experiencing something or encountering someone
- by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering

**Thich Nhat Hanh** remarks:

Our appointment with life  
is in the present moment.



## 10. Embrace chaos



10. Embrace chaos



Instead of trying to order  
and reorder our complex world  
I try to reside within its chaos  
and complexity ... for  
within chaos resides creativity  
within creativity resides innovation  
within innovation resides the future.

**Briggs and Peat challenge us:**

As we enter into this new perception, we needn't entirely reject our earlier post-renaissance understandings of ourselves as individuals and all the knowledge and technological advances that went with it. But in the light of chaos, each individual and collection of individuals may take on brand-new meaning as metaphors and fractals through which the whole is expressed.



### **Paths**

There's not one path when you've come this far  
if you think one's right, you haven't learned much  
if you think one's just, you haven't begun  
if you think one's wrong, you might be right.  
Yet you've not gone far, if you're not perplexed, by the more you know  
its clearly true,  
the more complex  
it will seem to you.



## 11. Celebrate synchronicity





## 11. Celebrate synchronicity

Let us celebrate those moments of significant coincidence which create a bridge between mind and matter. Let us celebrate synchronicity.



### A three-way dialogue ...

Synchronicity has been singled out as expressing the *meaningful relationship between inner and outer events*.

**David Peat**

At the very moment when we are struggling to attain a sense of personal autonomy, we are also caught up in vital forces that are larger than ourselves, so that while we may be protagonists of our own lives, we are important participants in a larger drama.

**Joseph Jaworski**

The final stage of living synchrodestiny occurs when you become fully aware of the interrelatedness of all things, how each affects the next, how they all are *in sync* with one another.

**Deepak Chopra**

## **12. Connect with your spiritual intelligence**





## **12. Connect with your spiritual intelligence**

**Danah Zohar** has gifted us with the concept of **Spiritual Intelligence** — the intelligence of vision, of creativity and what we use to determine right from wrong— to ponder life, death and existence.

**Spiritual Intelligence** helps us to capture motivation and enables us to perceive situations and ourselves within them.

**Danah** says:

We are always partly strangers to ourselves because we are always more than our conscious selves.



## 13. Dialogue with integrity





## 13. Dialogue with integrity



A dance of words  
I pledge to thee  
sharing soul  
with integrity.

Pretend it not  
for we are one  
when dialogue  
begets union.

In constant flow  
companion thought  
constructive  
creative  
collective  
glow.

Forsake me naught  
this dialogue  
this dance of souls  
this harmonious thought  
this sweet exchange  
of perfect us.

I don't pretend  
to be sublime  
when dialogue  
can clear  
the mind.

So join with me  
to dialogue  
to make anew  
the world  
afog.

**David Bohm**, in his ground-breaking book, *On Dialogue*, tells us that:

Dialogue is really aimed at going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively. We haven't really paid much attention to thought as a process. We have engaged in thoughts, but we have only paid attention to the content, not to the process.

**And this new approach to dialogue is best addressed with an attitude of integrity, as defined by Stephen L. Carter** in his book of the same title, as having a definition requiring three steps:

- 1 discerning what is right and what is wrong
- 2 acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost
- 3 saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong

**Dialogue with integrity is best practiced with a focus on the present. A present with a duty, as conveyed by Gandhi:**

The present means our duty at this moment. If we put all of our strength into doing our duty, we shall have made the highest human effort. Sorrow springs from dreaming of the future and lamenting the past. Hence one who concerns himself with the present and does his duty has neither birth nor death.

**And Thich Nhat Hanh shares his secret:**

I am determined  
to speak truthfully,  
with words that  
inspire self-confidence,  
joy and hope.

### **The practice of dialogue: A reminder and a prayer**

Transformation is a natural outgrowth of the practice of dialogue and other forms of learning conversations. The experiences we've described were powerful and sometimes mysterious for those involved. They are also fragile and easily forgotten, particularly when you reenter a daily life based on competition and separation. Transformational experiences plant seeds. There may be drum rolls and brilliant flashes of light accompanying the planting of the seed—your first experiences with dialogue—but the fruits that tell us transformation has taken place are the result of ongoing attention. Planting is a beginning. It is the work of tending the garden, one day at a time, that allows the plants to mature and bear fruit. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of an ongoing practice of dialogue to the maturing conversations that will bear the fruits of learning and transformation. May we all start each day with an intention to tend the garden so that we may reap the fruits in our lifetime and create a world that will sustain our children's children for many generations to come.

**Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard**



## 14. Worship the Earth







## 14. Worship the Earth

Earth, we are one  
I know you as my breath  
when the wind blows  
I know you as my blood  
when I swim in your oceans.

I know you as my skeleton  
when I climb your trees  
I know your tears  
when it rains  
and when you cry, I cry.

We cry and grieve together.

**We have lost our sacred relationship with Mother Earth. The native peoples are the only ones who today continue with this essential connection.**

**As Tom Hayden expresses:**

But we divide the grace of nature and the spiritual from the material at our own risk. When we adore God above, earth suffers from negligence below. We develop a society in which everything from our human customs to the economic and the political exploit the environment with callous indifference. If the nature of the State does not harmonize with the state of nature, our avarice and ignorance will take us beyond the capacity of the ecosystems to sustain human existence.

**And Leonardo Boff, the great liberation theologian of Brazil continuously issues cries to liberate the earth as we liberate the poor:**

The earth also cries out. The logic which exploits the classes and dominates the poor for the benefit of the interests of a few wealthy nations is the same that disparages the earth and spoils its riches, showing little solidarity with the rest of humanity and with future generations.

**And Guatemalan 1992 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Rigoberta Menchu, in a visit to Costa Rica for the graduation of students at the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), refers to it:**

To have a place where the identity of nature is preserved and protected is a great, titanic labor, because not everyone understands it, but it is a labor for the future.

**Al Gore in his 2007 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech:**

We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency—a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here. But there is hopeful news as well: we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst—though not all—of its consequences, if we act boldly, decisively and quickly.

We are what is wrong, and we must make it right. Now science is warning us that if we do not quickly reduce the global warming pollution that is trapping so much of the heat our planet normally radiates back out of the atmosphere, we are in danger of creating a permanent “carbon summer”.

As the American poet Robert Frost wrote, “some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice.” Either, he notes, “would suffice.”

The great Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen, wrote, “one of these days, the younger generation will come knocking at my door.”

The future is knocking at our door right now.

Make no mistake, the next generation will ask us one of two questions. Either they will ask: “What were you thinking; why didn’t you act?”

Or they will ask instead: “How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?”

We have everything we need to get started, save perhaps political will, but political will is a renewable resource.

So let us renew it, and say together: We have a purpose. We are many. For this purpose we will rise, and we will act.



## 15. Respect our human rights



## 15. Respect our human rights

In Germany, the Nazis first came for the communists and I did not speak up, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Catholic. Then they came for me ... And by that time, there was no one to speak up for anyone.

**Martin Niemoeller, Evangelical pastor**

Living the values and principles which are expressed and honored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the final practice.

This extraordinary declaration, was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

This brief document consists of 30 articles and it protects all human beings on the planet “without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

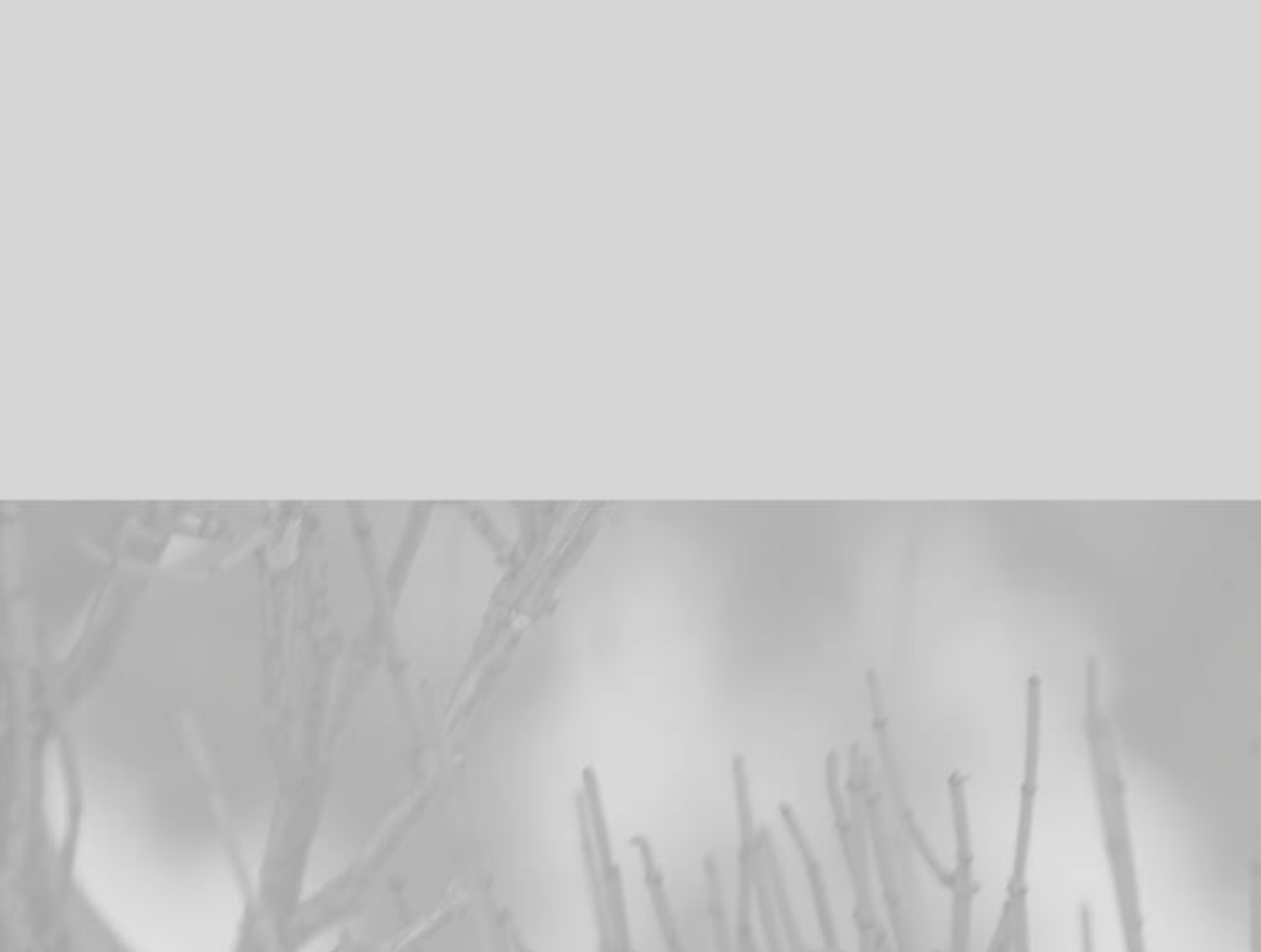
Our human rights provide us with the highest moral code for treating one another.

It is best put by my dear friend **Florentín Meléndez** of El Salvador, a known defender of human rights:

They should be in force at all times and places to achieve mutual respect among all human beings, peaceful coexistence and social peace. These are the values of a democratic, humanistic, civilized society which is based on solidarity, one in which it is worthwhile living in and fighting for.



## Conclusion



## **Conclusion**

Why end existential poverty?

What happens when we overflow with existential poverty?

When does existential poverty reach extreme proportions?



**The answer comes from Elie Wiesel, 1986 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, a man who survived the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, and who wrote poignantly about his experience:**

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp,  
which has turned my life into one long night,  
seven times cursed and seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies  
I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my Faith forever.

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me,  
for all eternity, of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments which murdered  
my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.

Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned  
to live as long as God Himself. Never.



**The answer comes from Monseñor Oscar Romero of El Salvador, as remembered by Leonardo Boff:**

I remember very well, he told me with a serene and soft voice:

“In my country they kill cruelly. The poor are being assassinated, peasants tortured, day after day with the most extreme violence. It is necessary to defend the minimum which is the maximum gift of God: life itself. Father Boff, help us to construct a theology of life. God is the creator of life; he sent his son so we would have life in abundance.”

After a pause, as if reliving the bodies that he had buried, almost with resignation, he concluded:

“It is necessary to give life in order to defend life: that was the path of He who was crucified.”

And so we,  
humanity evolving,  
move forward to develop  
our human civilization.



We must take a step forward every day,  
to reduce existential poverty  
to eliminate existential poverty (the poverty that truly threatens our existence)  
and to continue to build a world  
where no human being  
will say ever again:



Have any of you ever looked into the eyes of another person, on the floor of a cell, who knows that he's about to die though no one has told him so? He knows that he's about to die but clings to his biological desire to live, as a single hope, since no one has told him that he's to be executed.

I have many such gazes imprinted upon me.

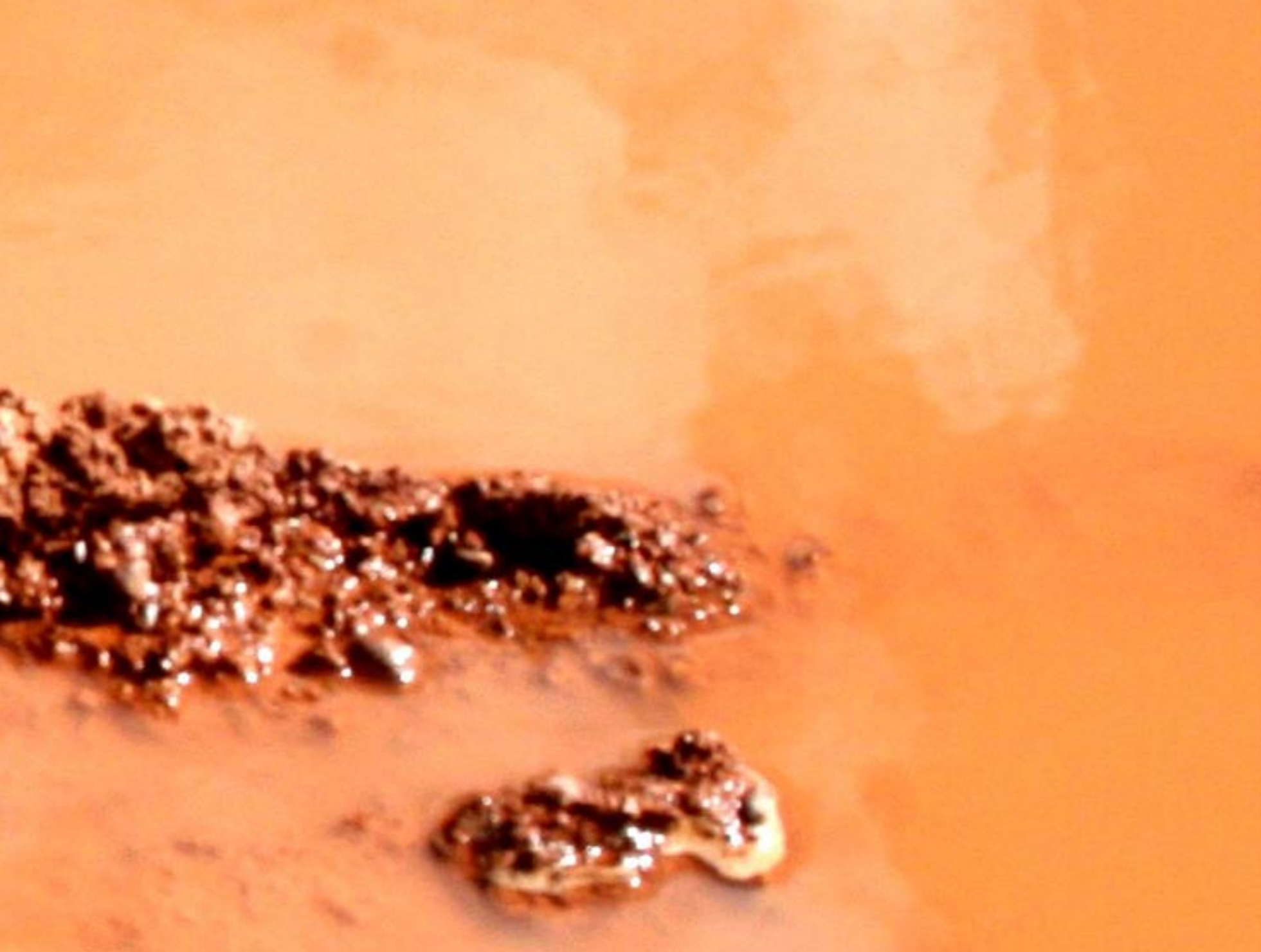
Each time I write or utter words of hope, words of confidence in the definitive triumph of man, I'm fearful —fearful of losing sight of one of those gazes. At night, I recount them, recall them, re-see them, cleanse them, illumine them.

Those gazes, which I encountered in the clandestine prisons of Argentina and which I've retained one by one, were the culminating point, the purest moment of my tragedy. They are here with me today. And although I might wish to do so, I could not and would not know how to share them with you.

**Jacobo Timerman**







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These are some of the beautiful people who have inspired and contributed to this project. We are all the authors, for we share a common mission: ending existential poverty.

## The author: Jan Hurwitch

Jan Hurwitch has devoted her life efforts to issues of poverty and injustice. Her fields of specialty include rural micro-credit for poor families, micro-business management, new paradigm leadership, creative and strategic thinking and visionary ethics.

Her work in Haiti, Jamaica, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic is well-known to those living there.

She is the founder of the Visionary Ethics Foundation and currently resides in San Jose, Costa Rica, where she writes, consults, trains and manages the Iriria-Samye Meditation Center for Peace.

*Ending Existential Poverty: 15 practices to live the way* is the first in a series of short publications on the ethical bases of poverty worldwide today. Others in the series include:

- Soul Leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation
- Poverty, Ecology, Economy and Conscience: The Case of Haiti
- Soul Therapies and Melodies

## The artist: Luis Chacón

Luis Chacón, over the last three decades, has been one of the most prominent figures on Costa Rica's cultural scene. As both artist and international cultural promoter, he has been one of the most notable artistic personalities in Central America today.

Costa Rica owes Luis Chacón the creation of the National Gallery of Contemporary Art (Galeria Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo). This Gallery opened its doors with a collection of more than five hundred pieces of international art donated by his colleagues. He has established the Museum of Art and Contemporary Design (Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo); the Art in Public Spaces Project (Arte en Espacios Públicos) by City Hall that is the very first open air museum in San José; and founded one of the best known groups of Central American painters: BOCARACA.

As an artist, his strong academic formation has led to one success after another. He holds a Doctorate degree in Fine Arts from the Sorbonne University. He is a generous mentor and teacher to many budding artists who often visit him in his extraordinary home gallery.

## The Desert Series photographs:

Taken in the deserts of North America in the Fall of 2005, the Chacón Desert Series brings to life the strong, silent energies of the desert world. These are the energies which capture our soul and move us towards existential growth. The photographs selected for this volume by the artist are especially apt as they reveal both an inner strength and a tranquility of spirit — appropriate to embracing the end of existential poverty.

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**Ashley Eberhart, age 16, United States, winner of the  
IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute)  
International Youth Writing Contest 2007:**

I am not here to make you feel guilty,  
I am not here to make your conscience weep,  
but you are just as much to blame  
as me.





