The Forest Through The Trees

Initial printing as an unpublished book February 1992

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This ebook is dedicated to all those people
who have taken the time and exerted the effort
to bestow upon humanity the trees of wisdom
without which there would be no forests.

They did all of the hard work. We had only to stand back and look.

Prologue

A sign on the way to the future says:

Socrates' Syllogism	***A Poet's Syllogism***
Men die.	***Men die.***
Socrates is a man.	***Grass dies.***
Socrates will die.	***Men are grass.***

Choose one or both of the above syllogisms. Warning: The forces of the cosmos have determined that the wrong choice may be hazardous to your health.
Now carefully consider these questions; answer them for people in general, and then answer them for just yourself:

Do our lives work?
Do they feel meaningful?
Are we loved and are we loving?
Are our family lives happy?
Are our kids well cared for?
Do we have wonderful friends with whom we're happy?
Are we part of the world's problems, or are we part of the world's solutions?

Oh, by the way, the best choice, above, would be if you chose **both** syllogisms.

There is a continuum. At one end of it is the old paradigm and at the other end is the new paradigm. The old paradigm has been dominant for centuries, and the new paradigm has only begun to transform life on earth. Old paradigm thinking is mechanistic, reductionistic, object-oriented, materialistic, and analytical. New paradigm thinking is intuitive, holistic, and ecological. As our society slowly moves away from the old paradigm end of the continuum and toward the new paradigm end, it's called a paradigm shift. Sometimes people have great insights and shift paradigms very quickly as the significance of the new paradigm is profoundly realized.

To deal with today's world, sometimes one needs to be at one end of this continuum and sometimes one needs to be at the other end. But, more and more, it is expected that making this delicate world of ours work is going to require a lot more of us being in what is called a BALANCED state, thinking and acting somewhere near the middle of the continuum. That's why the movement cited, above, was *toward* the new paradigm end rather than *to* it. We need to end up in the center of the continuum, halfway between the two ends, which will indicate a transformation to a balanced state. In other words, instead of abandoning the first syllogism (representing the analytical paradigm) in our frustration with materialism and the fact that *technology has far outpaced cultural evolution and that has created a very dangerous situation*, we will simply add the second syllogism (representing the ecological paradigm) to the first in our worldview.

For instance, the next time a car company designs a car, let them spend half of their efforts on what the consumer needs and the other half of their efforts on what the environment needs. The next time you vote, consider what the candidate will do for you, but then consider what the candidate's policies will do for ecology (see the bold sentence on the next page—the definition of this word can be broader than most people realize) and the biosphere. The next time you teach, once all the facts are clear, discuss the values that surround the issues and then the patterns that connect these issues with other aspects of the world—teach our young how to think, not how to remember things. The next time you have occasion to perform or contribute to a logical analysis, add a poetic or creative or intuitive context to the considerations, one which discovers how the

issue is metaphorically if not actually interrelated to the rest of life, placing special stress on ecological connections.

In order to find the unifying principles of the universe, Einstein dealt theoretically with the very small in order to understand the truths of the very large. He never succeeded in completing his Unified Field Theories.

Why not get yourself down there at the other end of a microscope (an instrument with which one reductionistically looks at a tiny part of some matter) and, standing on a glass slide, use the same instrument as a macroscope (where one holistically looks at all matter at once) with which one can see the interrelatedness and oneness in all things? (Things such as men and grass, perhaps?)

What a holistic thought the above was! A metaphor is holistic. Its uses in epistemology are profound. Which is why you can get something profound and enlightening from a poem, but logical, reductionistic dissection of the poem bears little fruit. Gregory Bateson called metaphor the language of nature. Nature's metaphors are "patterns which connect." A Bateson syllogism (like the Poet's Syllogism above), according to Fritjof Capra, identifies patterns.

At first you saw "Men are grass." as illogical, and the second syllogism, on the sign on the way to the future, as false. You are now rereading it, though, right? As it turns out, even though the first type of syllogistic thinking is an important basis of logic for analytical purposes, including some of the purposes of environmentalism, ecology, and world survival, the type of thinking required for "deep ecology" is usually the second type: holistic, intuitive, relational, and insightful. The prerequisite for deep ecology will be nothing less than—metaphorically speaking—the use of the macroscope, which will give users a new vision of reality, life, meaning, connectedness, spirituality, and oneness. Keep in mind here that **ecology refers not just to matters biological, but to the study of the relationship and adjustments of human groups to their social environments.** Okay? Since this is not generally recognized, it should be stressed: Ecology refers to organisms' relationships to their biological environment AND humans' relationships with and adjustment to their SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. This book is focused on the latter ecological context.

As mentioned above, we are currently in the midst of a paradigm shift. But it's not just any old paradigm shift. It happens to be the most important paradigm shift in history. The worldview is evolving from the adolescence of the mechanistic, reductionistic, materialistic perspective to the maturity of the holistic, ecological perspective. In all areas of life, a systems view is replacing an object view, caring is replacing having, communication and understanding are replacing fighting and arguing, the holistic health model is replacing the biomedical model, the systems models of psychology and economics and physics are replacing the object-oriented, mechanistic, analytical, reductionistic models. It's all happening slowly enough that you may have failed to notice it. It is part of the cultural evolution of the human race.
It may seem confusing because the new paradigm encompasses the old as it transcends it, and true balance involves transcending the paradigm continuum completely. (So thinking has gone beyond simply the middle position on the continuum to a transcendant metaposition that is above and beyond the boundaries of the continuum.) But it is essential that this shift from mechanistic worldview to the holistic worldview takes place if humans are to survive. If this sounds strange or unfamiliar, you haven't been paying attention to what's been going on in the world for the last few decades. Perhaps you were so engrossed in some small picture that you didn't see **the big picture.** Take a deep breath. Stand back. Take a really big macroscopic look around. These are very exciting times!

"At present time there is no well-established framework, either conceptual or institutional, that would accommodate the formulation of the new paradigm, but the outlines of such a framework are already being shaped by many individuals, communities

and networks that are developing new ways of thinking and organizing themselves according to new principles."
Fritjof Capra, from **The Turning Point**

The new paradigm is a threat to no one and a promise to everyone. Think of it as evolution in action. Perhaps the framework to accommodate the new paradigm is latent in your mind at this very moment, and if you merely write a poem about it, as opposed to analyzing it, it will come out and show itself. Those who confine their thinking to the cold light of analysis alone may soon find that:

"*Too much light often blinds gentlemen of this sort. They cannot see the forest for the trees*."
Christoph Martin Wieland

The Panacea

This book was written for every human being on planet Earth. Most people feel utterly powerless about the myriad problems surrounding them, whether world problems, national problems, local problems, or personal relationship problems. The purpose of this book is to empower all of us, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, to see what isn't working and to help turn it around, and to help launch and maintain the process of world cultural transformation that the people of Earth need not just for future survival, but for enjoying life on Earth, and avoiding hate, violence, war, oppression, and exploitation.

And if you're thinking to yourself: "The last thing this world needs is another wacko (e.g., Marx) with a bunch of social engineering theories that turn out to do more harm than good," then *that's absolutely perfect! That's exactly the point: The world did not in the past, does not in the present, and will not in the future ever need social engineering "experts" to get in our faces and mess with our brains and our lives. It needs exactly the* opposite *of this!* It needs wise, compassionate people who will figure out how to truly get ***their own*** lives totally together and then do so and then become examples to emulate for anyone else who happens to desire to live that way as well. NO governments or politics or agencies or bureaucracies should be involved. Each person should be responsible for himself or herself, and should make whatever lifestyle choices he or she thinks will make life work best for himself or herself and his or her family. But looking at the current media depiction of available lifestyle choices and the limits on potential lifestyle quality can only blind and limit one, not enlighten one, and to look to current media sources to inform you of ways to make your life work best will most certainly fail. You'll learn either what's happening or what some infotainment news anchor or Hollywood bozo thinks is happening, but little about what you can do to make life work really well.

However, if your mind is open, you'll learn from this book how individuals can responsibly take their lifestyles in hand, enhance them greatly, go from being at effect to being at cause, and—if they so desire—help others do the same. As a result, this perfect antidote for social engineering will allow the more independent types of people to learn that their lives and relationships could be much better and more fulfilling than they ever thought, and the more dependent types of people will be empowered to discontinue their need for social programs and begin their own personal lifestyle transformation. And at no time will anything outside each person's own personal lifestyle choices be involved.

People's answers are not in agencies, governments, shrinks, gurus or fads. They're in themselves. This book is to help empower people to look for, find, and develop the wonderful possibilities now laying dormant within themselves, their families and their relationships in general. And when some people do this, others will love what they see happening in these people and will emulate it, since how can you suddenly see how you could easily be much happier and more fulfilled without doing anything about it? Eventually, a chain reaction will occur, and our nation—which we all love dearly—will get it's lifestyle act together totally through the actions of millions of *individuals* fine-tuning their lives in simple ways that have profound results.

There has to be a starting point for the world cultural transformation mentioned earlier. And there is: the cultural transformation of the U.S.A. This country's communications to the rest of the world have a profound impact, but it's not always good. Some countries hate us for the not-so-good impact. But this will soon change! Once much of our media content is about the beauty of the American transformation sweeping our nation, other nations will be thrilled for us, and *individuals* (no collective forces need apply, thank you) whose lifewish leads them to want more out of life (like Americans are getting) will decide to emulate us. Terrorists will cease targeting American interests when the "Satans of the Western Hemisphere" quit influencing the world with such questionable values and begin happily spreading values they are proud of—values the world respects. Instead of MonicaGate scandals and movies that glorify sex and violence, we'll have movies that celebrate the human spirit and illustrate how life can be

much more than it now is for most people, and these will inspire the world, not titillate and disappoint it and—yes—embarrass it.

Today the U.S.A. is working very well in many ways. There are many aspects of life here that are satisfying, pleasurable, and even intriguing. The pace of change may admittedly be scary, but it is also challenging and exciting—life can be quite an adventure in the good old U.S.A. The computer revolution and the Internet revolution and the cell phone revolution are together instigating changes undreamed of in the 1970s. And what a context these changes have! The whole world seems to be changing in the direction of not just universal connectivity but also freedom and democracy (with the exception of a few hard-line holdouts), and the U.S.A. and the West in general are in the remarkable position of saying to these countries: "Hey guys, how can we help?"

But there's another side to life in the U.S.A. In spite of how good it looks compared to life in many other countries, there are some basic and serious problems (drugs, the educational crisis, alcoholism, crime, violence, suicide, the breakdown of the family, the abandonment of ethics, homelessness, unemployment, relationship ignorance resulting in relationship dysfunction, win/lose contexts in relationships and in conflict resolution, inadequate childcare, loneliness, unhappiness, etc.). The politicians throw rhetoric and money at these problems. The academicians throw words and ideas at them. Hollywood sensationalizes them. Corporations exploit them. The latter happens when the sadness and depression which are the results of some of these problems are either covered up, escaped from, or even denied by the use of various products whose main function is to distract people from the symptoms which are upsetting them. Notice that neither political approaches nor other approaches actually solve the majority of these problems, and the problems with their concomitant symptoms persist unchecked. What this country needs is much more than rhetoric or escapism. Or even blank checks. What's needed is, first, a serious and insightful analysis of the **root causes** of the problems pointed out above (this book and our website The Big Answer are that analysis), and then we need a plan (this book and the MC Articles have that plan) that contains solutions. Solutions that address all the problems and symptoms and that take proper preventative and ameliorative actions that center on individual actions and individual responsibility—and no social engineering.

The U.S.A., with all its advantages and opportunities, is only about half of what it could be. Parts of life are working. Parts of life are not working for the average citizen. Let's congratulate ourselves on the parts that work, but then move forward into the process of dealing with the parts that are floundering.

This book, believe it or not, contains the basic plan by which we can leave the majority of the problems behind. This book and our website The Big Answer contain an outline of the process by which we can individually revamp and revitalize the parts of American life that are leading to all the symptoms and general—usually unacknowledged—unhappiness. The authors have spent decades analyzing and researching all the above, holistically and intuitively as well as analytically, and the result is an effective plan that is neither liberal nor conservative, right nor left, radical nor status quo, nor affiliated with any particular political, religious, or other organization. It is not targeted toward any particular group or class, but is targeted toward everyone in the country. However, it is the intent of the authors that once it takes a foothold in this country, it will begin a long-term process of spreading throughout the world.

You see, this book and our website The Big Answer are major tools for making the world work, so that every person on the planet lives a fulfilling, productive and happy life. This book is also a major tool for human and planetary survival, for good ecology in the broad sense of the word.

We realize that it sounds incredible to hear that a book will be such a major tool for making the world work—such a thing is unprecedented. However, if you carefully read every word in this book (The Forest Through The Trees), and do your *individual* part to see that the transformation outlined in the book is begun and effected, it won't be long before you'll realize that this book truly is what it claims to be: a handbook for, first,

United States cultural transformation, second, world cultural transformation, and finally, long-term human and planetary survival.

As you effect your individual lifestyle transformation, you'll help others immensely as they get hopeful and inspired by your example and begin giving their own lifestyle its needed boost as well. You may find out that you like helping others get their acts together and wish to become one of a "thousand points of light" that make it a point to teach others how to succeed at benevolent lifestyle revamping. You may even find out that the American individualism context works badly when it's about people who are into dog-eat-dog and having nothing to do with others just to show how "independent" they are (definitely **not** what the Founders of our country had in mind), and that it works wonderfully when it's about people getting their own acts, families, and lifestyles together, and experiencing the happiness not only of a life that works but one that they help work well in its relationship to others they're close to. "Having a great life in a vacuum" is, after all, an oxymoron.

Examples:

An insidious process has been happening since the 50s, in which people gradually have substituted the use of TV sets for human relationships. They use this and other forms of escape, like video games, instead of experiencing real relationships and their inherent risks, challenges, and commitments. For our young to experience over four hours of vicarious pseudo-existence daily—with its concomitant absorption of questionable values—is a national tragedy, and few have even begun to address the meaning of this phenomenon, much less what can be done about it. We claim that the cultural transformation process outlined in this book will solve this problem (and dozens of others, too; remember—this is just one example) and get average viewing times down to reasonable amounts for most people.

People no longer like real, live people. Why not? What's wrong with the real live people they know that makes them not want much to do with them? What can be done about it? What ever happened to the ideas of people finding the greatest joys of life in relationships and intimacy and solidarity with their fellow man? What made people look to escapism and cyber-relationships and sensationalism and conspicuous consumption and social status as replacements for the joys of human contact and friendship? You'll find out the answer in this book, and you'll find out what can be done about it.

The problems of pollution, acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer, toxic waste, energy shortages, food shortages, the spread of AIDS, crime, selfishness, hate, war, the weapons race, population control, low productivity, the national debt, the threat of terrorism and violence are all symptoms that can and will be dealt with by the plan contained in this book. Rather than dealing with them head-on, which is already the mandate of many existing organizations, the plan will deal with them through secondary effect. In other words, the individual-action-based cultural transformations will eventually lead to the solutions to these problems. Incredible as it seems, by dealing as the plan does with the root causes of human irresponsibility, ignorance, bigotry, hatred, and the unwillingness to cooperate, the plan will actually eradicate most tendencies toward environmental irresponsibility, war, hatred, violence, and exploitation of people and the planet. That is quite a statement, isn't it? We assume that you know that if any one of such major problems as hunger, drugs, or the educational crisis were dealt with 100% successfully, so that that area contained no more problems, that would not automatically cure the other two problems (although it would surely help!). But in spite of this fact, we're stating that *this book will outline a plan for curing the problems in one area of life, but the eventual secondary effect of the revamping of this one specific area will be the curing of most of the rest of the problems on Earth.*

Unlike other plans, this one doesn't include "getting anyone to do anything." Nor is there any of that "here's what you should do" stuff. It is not a plan for committees to chew over, agencies to adopt, governments to run or social services to administer. Those are collective action plans where responsibility for life working is vested in "others." This is positively NOT one of those types of plans! We've had too many of them already. This

is a plan in which individuals may choose to—or choose not to—enhance their lives. **The plan merely gives all individuals an opportunity by pointing out a path that they can choose if they want their lives to work better.** If you finish reading this book and decide—with heart and mind—that this sounds like the lifestyle you'd love to have, you'll know just what to do. If not, well, the book was a nice adventure for you, and that's that.

Helena Norberg-Hodge has said that "Under the surface, even such seemingly unconnected problems as ethnic violence, pollution of the air and water, broken families, and cultural disintegration are closely interlinked. . . . Understanding that the problems are interrelated can make them seem overwhelming, but finding the points at which they converge can, in fact, make our attempts to tackle them that much more effective. It is then just a question of **pulling the right threads to affect the entire fabric, rather than having to deal with each problem individually**. . . . This wider perspective is, I believe, an essential step in learning how to heal our society and ourselves."
That was new-paradigm, holistic thinking at work. And even though politicians can use such knowledge to design more efficient and effective policies, individuals can use the knowledge to encourage themselves that their individual actions are the path to the most important solutions of all, since once individuals get their acts together, they naturally cause the society to get its act together, and the fabric is restored, but even more than that: It is enhanced.

This book and our website The Big Answer, then, has detailed instructions—at the level of the individual and his/her family and neighborhood—about when, where and how to **PULL THE RIGHT THREADS TO AFFECT THE ENTIRE FABRIC**.

A social engineer would say: Here's a policy that represents how we can better cope with XYZ problem, and here's the tax money and votes and leaders needed to push it through. On the other hand, we American "individualists" love our country and want it to work at least as much as anyone else, and acknowledge the need for politicians, armies, taxes, and various organizations to preserve our precious democracy. But we look to others for our lives' solutions only when we find it's truly necessary (e.g., surgery, military defense, etc.). WE ARE STATING OUR INTENTION TO **BE** THE SOLUTION, not to look to politicians to engineer some solution for us. We cannot be your solution. We can be ours. You can be yours.

But what we CAN do for you is to show you how. American individualists who desire to *be* the solution have not often found the method which would allow them to follow up on and actualize this intention, especially in this century, but once they read this book and our website The Big Answer, that will all change. **Why hire a social engineer to apply bright colors to the unraveling fabric so we "cope" with XYZ better (because the colors pacify us) when, instead, we can learn to pull our own threads effectively in a way that slowly transforms our part of the fabric from unraveled to rewoven, enhanced, and beautiful? Other threads cannot help but follow suit (unintentional pun), so the entire fabric will eventually transform beautifully via a chain reaction of individual lifewish.** And this chain reaction will bless us with the best of all social and political consequences: benevolent cultural healing and transformation without money collected in taxes and money spent as coping mechanisms and in which people are at cause in their lives, not at effect of the manipulations of others, no matter how well-intentioned. Let tax money repair highways and bridges and empower armies for our protection, not try to patch defective fabric.

"Although we can still hear the old web shredding, we can also hear the sounds of mending, of strands being pulled across, new strands being created, the strands of time and trust returning." ---Richard Louv, from ***Childhood's Future***

Think, now. Think of patching defective fabric.
Think again, now. Think of transforming defective fabric into fabric that is even more beautiful than it was when it was brand new.
Folks—this is truly a no-brainer!

Read on.

Chapter 1

" . . . in such a night as this, when the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees, and they did make no noise . . ."
—Shakespeare

Robert and his dad looked around at the wonders of nature as they waded noisily through the carpet of leaves. It was late afternoon near the end of autumn and the leaves from the many oak trees had mostly been laid to rest on the forest floor. They'd seen some squirrels doing branch-hopping acrobatics, but now everything seemed quite still and quiet. Robert's attention was caught by an acorn; he picked it up.

"Look, Daddy, he's wearing a cap!" noticed four-year-old Robert, who was reminded of a character in a book of elves his father had been reading to him at bedtime. Noticing the resemblance at once, Sam Peterson asked Robert: "Would you like to take some home to make into elves?"

"Okay—here, Daddy!" said Robert, handing his father several more elf heads. Sam put them in his pocket. Robert looked as happy as a boy could be. He was obviously pleased about the walk in the forest with his father, but even more pleased as his father demonstrated just how in tune he was with Robert's feelings and ideas. They walked on for several minutes. Sam was thinking about the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy by Tolkien, as he looked at the huge pine trees growing to the left of the path. They seemed to continue into the distance as far as the eye could see. They were so thick and tall that they formed a ceiling high above them which let through little light. But this was only to the left; to the right were oaks, which let through plenty of light. They were nearly bare.

Sam took Robert's hand to get his attention and pointed to the left, saying: "What say we name that 'Mirkwood Forest,' pardner?"

"Name what, Daddy?"

"That forest."

"Where, Daddy?"

"Right *there*, kiddo," and Sam pointed to the left. Robert was looking where Sam was pointing, but all he saw were big trees.

"I don't see nothin'."

"There," said Sam, and he stooped down, put his arm around his son, and pointed, with his head next to Robert's so Robert could see what he was pointing at.

"I still can't see nothin' 'cept trees, Daddy," Robert whined, and he looked like he was very perplexed, and as if his dad were teasing him, which would not be like Sam at all.

Sam, on the other hand, had just realized what the problem was. He started laughing, but then considered his son's feelings and explained, still chuckling: "Oh, I'm sorry, honey, I didn't explain what I meant! I meant *all* the trees there; let's name all the trees there 'Mirkwood Forest,' including the ones right here." And with that he hugged his son and made him understand that he wasn't teasing him at all, but that there was just unclear communication. He was very careful with his son's feelings. Robert was soon cheered up again, and he took his dad's hand and they continued on their way.

"Did you know that there's an old expression about this type of situation?" Sam asked. "They say that a person 'can't see the forest through the trees' if he misses something obvious because *it's too obvious*. It was hard to see trees because there were trees in the way. You see why someone invented that expression? Sometimes lots of people can all have this problem at the same time. It's one of the reasons there are wars and stuff."

There was a short period of silence. The sun was starting to set and the sky was turning orange-red in the west. Some birds chirped high above.
Robert's mind was returning to more fun subjects. "Dad, will you help me make elf people with the acorns?"

"You bet, son; maybe we can even make them into finger-puppet elves. How's that sound?" asked Sam. They continued walking and talking, getting more and more ideas. They walked off into the sunset, kicking leaves as they went. Sam showed Robert the *Wizard of Oz* skipping step, and as they got farther down the trail you could hear them singing "We're off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of Oz . . . "

Chapter 2

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."
—Robert Frost

"Marriage is a great institution, but I'm not ready for an institution."
—Mae West

"Everything has been figured out except how to live."
—Jean-Paul Sartre

"The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win you're still a rat."
—Lily Tomlin

"The place of the father in the modern family is a very small one, particularly if he plays golf."
—Bertrand Russell

"Again, men in general desire the good, and not merely what their fathers had."
—Aristotle

"Seize the day, put no trust in the morrow!"
—Horace

"I care for nobody, not I,
If no one cares for me."
—Isaac Bickerstaffe

Fourteen years have elapsed since Robert's walk in the forest with his father.

A TV set was tuned in on a 1967 Dragnet rerun (© Dragnet Productions 1967):

[TV] Captain: Pierson's got an epidemic on his hands out in West Valley.

[TV] Pierson: Friday, you remember the way it was in '57—four radio units covered the entire division. Things have changed a lot since then. About 130,000 more people have moved in.

[TV] Friday: How many more men did you get?

[TV] Pierson: Not enough.

[TV] Captain: Here are the statistics, Joe: John's division covers about 85 square miles; eight different communities; at the last count, 330,000 people, one half of them are juveniles. That's more people than the entire population of Savannah, Georgia.

[TV] Pierson: And I've got just ten officers to handle them. It's getting out of hand. First two months of last year we arrested 489 kids. First two months of this year we arrested 596.

[TV] Friday: What's your biggest problem, Pierson?

[TV] Pierson: All of 'em: narcotics, grand theft auto, drinking, shoplifting; we got 'em all.

[TV] Captain: It's not just a problem of law enforcement; it's a community problem.

[TV] Pierson: The trouble is, there *is* no community, Captain. These people come piling in here from everywhere. They don't know each other and don't want to. They come out here, make a down payment on a house and move in with a couple of kids. That doesn't mean they made a home no more than giving a name to a place makes it a community.

[TV] Friday: Yeah. And you get a little weary hearing every kid give the same excuse when you tag 'em. 'You don't understand. I just want to belong. That's why I did it.' Belong to what?

[TV] Captain: What it boils down to is the new morality, isn't it? A whole new sense of values. The kids see it on television, read it in magazines, even hear it from the pulpit: 'God is dead; drug addiction is mind-expanding; promiscuity is glamorous' . . .

A painfully normal scene of family discord was unfolding at the Andrews' house. It was June 10th and 19-year-old Glen had graduated from high school last week. It was 6:30 P.M. in California and Johnnie and Janie were fighting over which TV channel to watch. It got switched to "The Dating Game," then back to "Dragnet":

Several minutes went by . . .

[TV] Mother: He was never in any trouble before. It's like living in a big vacuum out here. Do you know that? Back home we used to have friends, neighbors. Out here all we have are people who happen to live next door. We've lived in the same house for two years and we still don't know anybody. Not really. Not like it was back home. Nobody's got any roots out here. My husband says it's like being in the army. The first thing you ask somebody is where they're from. You know what I mean? [Friday nods.] Nobody belongs to anybody or anything. We're all strangers. It makes it difficult, you know.

[TV] Friday: What's that, Mrs. Larson?

[TV] Mother: Raising a family . . .

Father was late for dinner, which had been served at 5:30. Mother finally began pressuring Janie to wash the dishes and quit making trouble, but Janie begged to watch her show, "The Dating Game," instead. Mother added the threat that if they were not done in ten minutes, when Father would be home, then she'd be in a "world of hurt."

Several minutes went by . . .

[TV] Vice Principal, Mr. David Carroll: Oh, I don't know. Maybe they need 'em.

[TV] Friday: How do you mean, Mr. Carroll?

[TV] Vice Principal, Mr. David Carroll: Belonging to a club or gang gives them a sense of security, a sense of belonging somewhere, gives them something they don't get at home; things we all need: love and affection, security, recognition, new adventure. [If] they don't get those things at home, they're gonna look for them somewhere else . . .

During this entire slice of chaos the baby had been crying, and Mother, looking exasperated, headed for the baby's bedroom with a nervous, frustrated sigh. On her way to the bedroom through the kitchen, Janie, not noticing Mother, hollered to the baby at the top of her lungs: "Will you shut up?!" Mother winced, held her ears, and hollered at Janie for hollering at Philip Andrews, Jr. Mother entered Junior's bedroom, put on a plastic smile, and picked him up, trying to act motherly. But Junior wasn't buying any

plastic nurturing today and her efforts were to no avail: he got even louder. "Be good and give Momma a break!" she pleaded, asking a nine-week-old to ignore his feelings for a bit and concentrate instead on helping her with hers. "What do you want? What do you need?" she asked, as she knew he was dry, full, burped, etc. Soon, she couldn't take any more and she put the screaming infant back in his crib and put her face in her hands. "No more," she pleaded, sobbing. The child cried on, too young to be guilty for driving his momma nuts.

During all the chaos, Glen was in his room using stereo music to drown out all the racket. But, as usual, it was not working. He'd found out in the past that if he played it loud enough to mask out all other noises, an angry caravan of chastisers would descend upon his room like a swarm of mad bees. Or if he used headphones and made it loud enough to drown out the din, he either ended up with a headache or he missed phone calls (when it was for him but family members trying to alert him failed to get through his attempt-to-stay-sane devices).

Father arrived, and while he was impatiently waiting for Mother to reheat his dinner (the hassles had "made her forget" to keep it warm, so it had gone into the refrigerator), he went into Glen's room, without knocking, and began pressuring for a "decent answer" about summer job plans, both where and when. Glen's face turned a little pink and he started feeling kind of sick. His only response was to shrug and look depressed. Later Mother would be telling him that his father's "encouragement" was for his own good, but she'd say it in a motherly, apologetic way, as if to soften Father's insensitivity. Finally Father left him alone, and Glen realized that he desperately needed to get out of there. He hurried out the front door, banging it in disgust as he exited.

Robert Peterson was one with the river. He had also just graduated and, like Glen, had just turned 19, and had summer and college plans to make (he'd been accepted at three schools, but he hadn't really chosen one). He didn't know Glen from school; they went to different high schools. At the moment he was all alone in Taylor Falls Park. He was sitting sideways on the arched wooden footbridge, which crossed the park's small but lively little river. It was dark (10:45), but the moonlight and the park lights kept the park safe for walking around and enjoying nature at night. Or one could just sit and *be*:

Robert was so open to the languorously flowing river beneath him that he and the river were unaware of where one left off and where the other began. The moon, stars, crickets and, occasionally, passionate little wind gusts completed the picture. He felt the river reach out to him and cradle his heart lovingly. He was touched. But since he was also the river, he experienced as well that he was reaching out to touch his own heart. Soon it no longer mattered where identities resided, as all beings seemed to merge, all barriers dissolved, and all polarities resolved into a transcendent oneness. Robert's eyes moistened and his heart melted with a love for the river, the night, and the world.

Robert didn't even notice Glen's approach. Glen had never been to the park before, but he chanced upon it now after hours of aimless wandering. Seeing how someone had obviously found a successful way of being alone without disturbances, he intuitively followed suit and sat down to enjoy the serenity of the river. He tried hard to still the turmoil in his mind, and the fire in his emotions. But the confusion, anger, resentment, and frustration would not cease. He took a deep breath and let it out in a rush. Then, trembling with what he took to be adolescent rebellion, he cursed and slammed an open palm into a rail post.

This brought Robert quickly back to the pragmatic and the mundane. Or was the visitor's visit really mundane? Perhaps . . .

"Would you like to talk about it?" he asked Glen.

"Don't bug me!" exploded Glen, surprised at his own spontaneous outburst.

"Sorry," offered Robert.

Glen was about to tell the guy to mind his own business, or worse, when something told him that he was disturbing this guy just as insensitively and rudely as he was constantly being disturbed at home. It made him feel like a coward. He was too afraid to confront his father at home, so he ended up out on a bridge, wrecking someone

else's peace and quiet. He suddenly became very sad and told Robert: "Look, I'm sorry I spoiled your peace here; I had no right; I—I—I'll leave now," his voice trembled. He got up to leave.

"No, stay, it's all right," Robert soothed, clearly feeling the other's pain.

Glen couldn't understand what made him do it, but he decided to spill his guts to the guy. He told Robert what his day had been like, what his home life was normally like (more of the same), and what his life had always been like (ditto). As he concluded, it occurred to him that Robert was probably in a similar situation. "You here to avoid the home-life insanity too?" he asked.

"Oh no, I'm here because this is my favorite spot," said Robert. He continued: "What possible courses of action have you considered to keep your act together in the midst of all those hassles you described?"

Glen didn't answer right at first; he was taken aback. This was not the style of communication he was used to with others his age. He didn't know what to make of it. As a matter of fact, the whole time he was spilling his guts, he was getting nothing but *active listening* from Robert, a way of communicating that helps life work better because communication of feelings as well as facts is facilitated. Glen didn't know what Robert's communication style was called, of course, but he did feel strangely respected and understood, and like someone valued him and his communications. This was totally new to Glen. Curiouser and curiouser . . .

"I don't get it—what do you mean? What can I do to keep people off my back and to make them knock off all the hassles and stuff—especially what can *anybody* do to keep that damned baby quiet? He could drive anyone nuts in a matter of minutes! My God!"

"So you feel it's hopeless?" active-listened Robert.

"We're talking major disaster, here," Glen said, lightening up slightly. Just the fact that he'd been truly heard and understood, especially his feelings, had helped him restore some confidence and even a bit of a sense of humor. "That kid could be sent against Iran as a secret weapon!"

"What have you tried thus far?" asked Robert.

"Loud music, holding my ears, and telling my dad whatever I think he wants to hear just to keep him off my back," Glen responded. "So what do you think I oughta do?"

"It's not what I think that counts," said Robert. He continued to get Glen to ask himself about his best solutions. When these solutions became silly (suicide, a bomb, poison them all) he asked Glen: "You don't enjoy life there much, do you?"

"Give the man a cupie doll!" exclaimed Glen. "You've got a great talent for the obvious!" He paused a few moments. "Okay, so what are you trying to say, then: I oughta run away?" Glen asked, with a dramatic flair punctuated by throwing up his hands.

"Heck no, Glen, I have little time for people who try to tell others what to do. It's the last thing on Earth you need. Tell me: Do you deserve to enjoy life?" asked Robert.

"Sure," stated Glen, unsurely.

"Then why don't you?"

"Damn it, can't you see that *they won't let me?"*

"So you think 'they' are ruining your life. 'They' are your problem. You're a victim of 'they.' A 'they' casualty. I'm just playing back what I'm hearing here. Does my recorder have it about right?" asked Robert.

"Are you making fun of me?"

"No, I'm just recording and playing back, with rephrasing."

"Look, if you have an answer here, please tell me. How in hell would *you* enjoy life in my situation? If you're so smart, how would *you* keep them from acting the way they do?"

"So if you could force 'them' to change, you'd be happy?" asked Robert.

Glen replied: "You see how dumb that sounds? No one's going to change anything. That's why my life is so lousy. I may as well move out; that scene is hopeless."

"Would you finally get a chance to stop being their victim and start being your own person? Or would your new next-door neighbors begin persecuting you then? Maybe the whole world is out to get you."

"All right, Robert, don't rub it in. I know it sounds pretty weak," said Glen, sadly.

"Sorry, I just wanted to be real clear about where this victim nonsense leads. It's a dead end, Glen."

"Well, I guess if I moved out, I'd be able to pull my act together. But my parents would kill me if I wasted some of my college money on a room somewhere. They'd also be sure to come by and pressure me."

"That all depends on how you play your cards," suggested Robert. "By the way, have you decided if you're going to college? Obviously you must have been accepted by now. But are you actually going to attend the one you're signed up for?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

"You guess so? Do you want to go?"

"I don't know, Robert."

"It's just taken for granted then?"

"Right."

"But you yourself never decided whether you wanted to go or not?"

"Not really. You can imagine how it all went down."

"Right. You can't hear yourself think there, so you avoid the hassle by letting others do your thinking for you. If you were out on your own, however, would you begin to do your own thinking? You're not a little boy anymore. But what's important is which you prefer: to have parents take care of you and make choices for you, or for you to take care of yourself, choose things for yourself, and be who you are."

"God, I really want to move out and take care of myself, and make my own decisions. I'm too old for any more of this crap. But when I think about moving out, like tomorrow I mean, I get this horrible feeling in my gut. I guess I'm scared."

"Which is scarier, oppression and surrender and being controlled, or freedom, being alone sometimes, and controlling your own life?" asked Robert.

"I don't think I go along with the oppression bit. They're my parents and they care about me, and they're not trying to oppress me. They're not bad people."

"Of course they aren't bad! Of course they're not trying to be oppressive! But that doesn't change your experience. Your present experience of home life is one of oppression. Want me to play back my recordings? You didn't make this stuff up, did you?"

"I see your point. An extreme example is Hitler trying to better the world by getting rid of what (in his mind) was 'inferior' in the world. The intention of that lunatic wasn't oppression, but the effect was so oppressive it's incredible. So never mind what my parents' intentions are; for now, concentrate on my experience. Oppression."

"Actually, you could say that ignorance is a big part of this: No matter how smart they are in other ways, that doesn't mean your parents know how to raise kids. Much of what I've heard is how *not* to raise kids. Even with the best of intentions, your dad pressuring you about college and jobs and your mom supporting it—that's very poor judgment. My parents and relatives would never even consider doing a thing like that," Robert stated.

"You can't be serious!"

"Totally."

"You never get hassles or pressure or —"

"Never," Robert stated flatly.

"Okay, I'm going to roll up my pants legs, it's starting to get pretty deep —"

"I swear it with all my heart, Glen," Robert declared, quite seriously. "I realize that TV and movies are full of that type of disrespect for others, but that doesn't mean that real people are dumb enough to use those gross errors as models for behavior. Maybe your parents got confused somehow and thought they were supposed to do it like the way they saw it done on TV. Enough of speculation, though. What do you want to do about all this?"

"I gotta get out of there, before I flip," moaned Glen, "but I don't know how to go about it. And where will I go?"

"Wherever you want. The only vacancy I know of is the apartment next to mine in the Galaxy Apartments."

"How much?"

"I'll find out and get back to you. It just opened up. My gramps died there last week."

"Sorry."

"Thanks. So what's your phone number?" The two young men started walking home. They exchanged phone numbers and Robert gave Glen the Galaxy manager's address and phone number.

The moon came out from behind a cloud as they walked; the town was bathed in moonlight.

Chapter 3

"I want to be alone."
—Greta Garbo

"Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends."
—Yeats

"True happiness
Consists not in the multitude of friends,
But in the worth and choice."
—Ben Jonson

"Every day people are straying away from the church and going back to God."
—Lenny Bruce

"Religion is what keeps the poor from murdering the rich."
—Napoleon

"What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?"
—Abraham Lincoln

"An error is more dangerous the more truth it contains."
—Henri-Frederic Amiel

"Synergy means behavior of whole systems unpredicted by the behavior of their parts."
—Buckminster Fuller

"Thinking is a momentary dismissal of irrelevancies."
—Buckminster Fuller

"Change the environment; do not try to change man."
—Buckminster Fuller

"Either man is obsolete or war is."
—Buckminster Fuller

Robert answered the knock on his door; it was Glen, with a smile on his face and a CD player in his arms. "Well, Robert, it looks like one flew over the cuckoo's nest," Glen said. "Care to help?"

"No problem," replied Robert. For the next hour he helped Glen move his belongings from Glen's red '61 Chevy Impala to Glen's rented apartment, and then set things up. Once things were all put in their places and the bed was made, Robert asked: "Well, how'd you swing it?"

"It wasn't easy. At first I told him that unless I got some alone time with peace and quiet and had a chance to think and figure out what I'm doing, and even who I am, I'd simply continue to be a shiftless, depressed loser whose answer to everything is a wimpy shrug of the shoulders. Then I said that I knew darned well that one of the reasons he was gone or late so often was that he couldn't stand the hassles and stuff at home, and that I was claiming my right to also find an alternative place to be when things were too much for me. But I hadn't gotten through to him. I finally had to let him know that I knew about Cynthia Ford—I'd seen him with her last week when I was cruising in my Chevy—and that if I didn't get any hassle about moving out, I'd be likely

to get amnesia about Cynthia when I was around Mom. Now *that* seemed to do the trick!" Glen was smiling slyly.

"The end *does* sometimes justify the means," laughed Robert. "Welcome to the Galaxy Apartments, my home for many years." He shook Glen's hand to welcome him and then showed him around. He was introduced to Barbra (16), his sister; Bonnie (47), his stepmother; Mort (50), his uncle; Dora (51), his aunt; Sam (49), his father; Hazel (68), his grandma; Rita (69), his other grandma; Will (21), Cheryl (12), Bob (14), and Wendy (17), all cousins; Bert (60), the neighbor down the hall; and Joyce (45), another neighbor. That was who lived at Galaxy. Then he was shown the pool (outside) and patio, as well as the "creative space" and the "together space."

Next, Glen was told the unanimously agreed-upon rules of the Galaxy Apartments: no cigarettes, cigars, pipes, dope, or other abuses. No disturbing others with loud noises. No harming others or ordering others around. No disturbing anyone with an "Alone" sign on his or her door. Each person's room (or apartment, in the case of singles) is his or her castle and sanctuary. That person has the right to have it dirty or clean, full or empty, messy or neat, etc. To enter another's room is a privilege, to be granted only by the person whose room it is. This applies just as strongly to parents and their children, except in cases of fire or other emergencies. All bedrooms (or apartment doors) shall have locks, to be used whenever that room-dweller desires. Everyone will have "Alone" signs as well as hooks (to hang them on) outside their doors, to communicate whether or not it is permissible to knock or not. "Alone" means "do not disturb."

Upon hearing about all this, it could have sounded obsessively individualistic, antisocial, and uncooperative, at first, to a person moving there from the "outside world." But nothing could be further from the truth. The Galaxy people are the happiest, most social, most cooperative bunch of people anywhere; and the most compassionate, understanding, and aware people anywhere; as well as the most sensitive to other's feelings, the most nurturing, the most respectful, and the most responsible.

This was no coincidence. They were this way because their lifestyle was set up so well. It worked! It did what a truly successful lifestyle should do: nurture, inspire, promote growth, empower, and create the context for responsibility, self-respect, respect for others, and compassion to develop.

So how did this happen and who was responsible for it? It was partly good sense and partly an experiment that worked. Robert's father's parents, 48 years ago, had a few exceptionally insightful ideas about child raising. They felt that kids don't need orders, threats, and authoritarian powers telling them what to do, but rather encouragement, freedom, and a chance to find out for themselves. On the other hand, they needed to respect other's spaces and beings and accept the consequences for their actions. Their children, Sam and Dora, were taught the fundamentals of keeping their rooms clean and their clothes clean. They were taught good health, eating, sleeping, and grooming habits. But after they had the information, no one would try to make them use it. They were free to choose. No one would ever nag or threaten or punish. The parents set good examples in all areas. The kids tried dirtiness and cleanliness, being on time and being late, and good and bad eating and grooming habits. The information about the good habits was taught, as well as posted. Guess what? They ended up CHOOSING to go the clean, tidy, healthy way. Not a single word of nagging ever happened, as it was felt that that was the worst way in the world to teach anything; besides, they firmly believed that if parents set a good example in all areas, were happy, and treated the kids with unconditional love and understanding, so that the kids were happy and growing, their experiments with the negative choices would be short-lived. And such kids would have too much respect for themselves to harm themselves with bad habits, and too much respect for their environment to bring everyone down by stinking and looking like bums.

On the "respecting others' space" issue, the kids found that they were kings in their castles (rooms). People had to have their permission to enter. They were *in control* in those rooms. However, they could never enter their parents' room without knocking (it might be locked at times anyway). But even when not locked, they had to knock. An

"Alone" sign meant they shouldn't even do that. If they broke this rule, the parent would go out and explain the rule to the child, emphasizing the *fairness* of the Golden Rule where you "do onto others as you would have them do onto you," since the parents never violated the kid's privacy (room). After a few experiments the kids accepted the rules and all testing ceased. The same was true for respecting noise restrictions and personal property. The reason for prolonged or eternal testing of rules by kids in other types of families is that these kids have to endure the humility of (a) being ordered around at times, (b) being threatened at times, (c) being nagged often, and (d) seeing their parents as bad examples and hypocrites. It has been shown over and over that if parents don't do the above (a, b, c, d), the kids respect the rules after a few tests, and have no reason to break them.

All of this made for happy kids with self-respect and self-responsibility. And when Sam Peterson grew up and then married Virginia 20 years ago, he planned to do the same with the children he would have. Robert was born 19 years ago and Barbra 16 years ago. They received similar treatment, but with a plus: Sam discovered a P.E.T. book (*Parent Effectiveness Training*, by Dr. Thomas Gordon, 1970, published by Peter H. Wyden, Inc., and later by the New American Library, Inc.) at a bookstore. This helped him add many relationship principles to an already working set of lifestyle rules and practices. By this time the Galaxy Apartments contained Sam's family, Dora's family, and both Sam's and Mort's parents. Within a few years Mort's dad and Sam's wife died in separate car accidents. Sam married Bonnie a year later.

Within a few more years, Bert and Joyce (unrelated to anyone there or each other) came to live with them too. They easily adopted the Galaxy rules, as well as the Galaxy people, for that matter. Everyone was following those rules, and Galaxy people seemed so much nicer, less stressed-out, more cooperative and more responsible than most, so when a newcomer appeared, it took little convincing to get him or her to also reap the benefits of such benevolent rules.

The No Smoking rules were obviously there because this ugly habit had a bad effect on everyone in an environment, not just the smoker; and anything in that category was antithetical to what Galaxy was all about.

There was also less obsession with material possessions. People had what they needed. Galaxy people tended to be as ambitious as everyone else, but it didn't manifest as social climbing or conspicuous consumption, but instead as doing a good, responsible job where they were employed, doing community service, and improving the Galaxy Apartments for the benefit of all. This illustrated that when life is full and happy, one needn't attempt to fill up an inner emptiness, or divert an inner sadness, with possessions.

Over the next three days, Glen had occasion to see not only Robert, but Hazel, Cheryl, Bert, and Barbra relating with one another in their usual ways. There was no patronizing because of age, nor chauvinism because of sex, nor power trips because of being someone's parent. Everyone was treated like family.

There were no special political or religious leanings in the group, and certainly no one tried to force his or her beliefs on anyone else, and yet they all shared the highest level of ethical and moral behavior that Glen had ever seen. The young had been allowed to pursue whatever moral, ethical or religious paths they chose, regardless of whether that included church attendance or not, as such things were seen as personal and individual matters. *What was seen as utterly critical to the moral and ethical guidance of the young, however, was being a good example.* This didn't mean that elders expected youngsters to share their beliefs or join the same political, religious, or community service organizations as they did, although they welcomed them with open arms if they did. But it did mean that they were aware that the youngsters' experience of who the elders were, as defined by actions and attitudes, was vital. It was up to the elders to be themselves. It was not up to the elders to tell the youngsters how they should behave (the Galaxy rules were the exception here); it was merely up to them to be an example.

They felt that there's nothing worse than the hypocrisy of saying one thing and doing another. So, because of what the elder Galaxy people were like, younger Galaxy people got exquisite moral training. And the only words that had to be spoken in this area were informational, not threats, "should," or "bad." In other words, the Galaxy experience showed clearly that the finest moral training can result from the easiest possible method: being themselves. If that was moral, that is what the young would learn; if that was immoral, that too is what the young would learn. And no amount of words or beliefs from any source would change this. For example, many church-goers abuse alcohol, in spite of it violating their professed beliefs. Later they're appalled because their kids choose to abuse alcohol, drugs, or both. The kids and the adults both "hear" the church's views on the subject. But what the kids actually do is what the adult actually does: abuse of substances. There's no question about it: what parents DO is the real moral teacher. All this Glen learned both by experience, as he watched how people related, and in conversations with Robert, which confirmed what he was seeing.

"There's a very unusual thing going on around here," Glen was telling Robert. "On the one hand this place is full of good morals and ethics, such as would delight any conservative. As a matter of fact, conservatives would die for kids who act like this, and for families that relate like this. But on the other hand there's a sort of liberal permissiveness and freedom that, rather than creating the conservative's nightmare—spoiled, irresponsible kids—creates the most moral and responsible and respectful kids I've ever seen, precisely the opposite from anything that would be expected."

"Ahah, the man's hobby is politics!" exclaimed Robert, gleefully. "You want to talk conservative-liberal, huh? Well, I've put our scene here in that context a few times myself, and I'd say it like this: Take conservative as the thesis and liberal as the antithesis, and put them on the opposite ends of a continuum. Then use dialectical synthesis to take the most positive aspects of the thesis and antithesis, leaving behind all less positive aspects of either. This synthesis, which will contain the best of both conservatism and liberalism, but in a whole that is synergistically greater than the sum of its parts, will be a new entity, a synthesis of the two that transcends either and is therefore a direction not to the right or left, but *upwards*.

"Hence you have the paradox in which a scene is more moral, ethical, responsible and respectful than any conservative would ever hope for, since those are the relevant qualities that conservatives value most, *at the same time* as it is more creative, free, open, flexible, sensitive and compassionate than any liberal would ever hope for, since those are the relevant qualities that liberals value most. Now, how can this be true? It can't, unless our scene is a transcendent entity. Otherwise, a scene that was merely half way between liberal and conservative on the continuum would be a boring middle-of-the-road mixture indicating indecision, weakness, and compromise. But I submit that we have a case of going beyond and above the liberal-conservative continuum, representing quantum leap social evolution and transcending a tired political polarity. By the way, my hobbies are philosophy, psychology and logic." Robert smiled, glad to have found someone he could talk to on the level at which he thought about things when he was alone and doing serious thinking. Previously, only Sam and Bert showed much interest in discussing such things; Glen represented a new perspective.

Glen was smiling, delighted that he could now predict that he and Robert would have many challenging and enjoyable discussions in the future. He'd never even found one person whom he could really talk to, so all this seemed like the chance of a lifetime.

Chapter 4

"The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children."
—Clarence Darrow

"Never have children, only grandchildren."
—Gore Vidal

"Drink to me only with thine eyes."
—Ben Jonson

Glen, Robert, Barbra, and Wendy were swimming in Galaxy's outdoor pool. It was nothing fancy, but it did the trick. Glen was coming out of his shell. They'd been playing for over an hour. Robert happened to notice Glen admiring his sister's rear view as she walked along the edge of the pool to fetch some lotion.

"Vive la difference!" Robert teased Glen, who began to pinken. "Hey, I'm on your side, pal. It's the guys who *don't* look that I wonder about. If we weren't 'supposed' to appreciate them, they wouldn't have been made so damned irresistible!" Robert paid the price for his teasing, as Glen, still getting over his embarrassment, started up a splash fight against Robert. Soon both Wendy and Barbra joined in: Robert barely escaped with his life.

Later, Glen was asking Robert his opinion about how he should relate to people at Galaxy.

"Just be yourself, Glen. Anything else you could ever do, any facade or pretense, would simply fall flat on its face here. People are too sensitive to where others are at. On the other hand, you wouldn't be put down for your silliness if you laid an act on us. They would understand. The only limit you'll want to put on your actions is to make sure you don't clash with Galaxy rules. It would not be appreciated if you knocked on a door with an "Alone" sign on it or played music loud enough to disturb others. Use headphones if you want lots of volume. Um—were you also concerned about male-female stuff?"

"A little," admitted Glen. "What is Wendy like? Is she seeing someone or what?"

"She's seeing someone, but nonexclusively. I'm seeing three someones, all nonexclusively. My sister is seeing two someones, nonexclusively."

"So are you the town stud or what?" asked Glen.

"No, I haven't really had that much sexual experience, to be honest."

"You don't mind admitting that?"

"It doesn't feel like an admission, Glen. My values are very 'mine,' and they evolved as a result of my experience here, not my experience of seeing TV shows or movies where pushing sex on all females is supposed to be the manly thing to do. I'd call my type of values *intrinsic*, as opposed to *extrinsic*. The former means values whose source is internal, values that form as my being experiences the world directly and I find myself searching for the meaning of my experience and defining myself by my actions, all the while feeling happily responsible for the opportunity of choosing the kind of being I want to be. The latter—extrinsic—means values that society, peers, and mass media condition into poor unsuspecting little minds before they've become mature enough to evolve values on their own. Their source is external. Some of the values that society programs into us are for our protection, our health, and our well-being. Others are to keep us out of trouble and kids out of adults' way. But in all cases, they should be viewed as temporary stopgap measures, to be replaced by one's own intrinsic values as soon as we are able to take that responsibility. For instance, our young accept Galaxy rules on faith at first, but when they mature they reexamine these rules and decide whether they want to make them their own. At times they have wanted to improve them or refine them in some way at this stage. No one yet has wanted to dump any of the rules, however, as it's obvious how well things are working.

"Unfortunately, this vital reexamination of one's extrinsic value structures is a rare occurrence in the non-Galaxy world. It's too much trouble to think for oneself and

take charge of one's life. A key here, if you're a reading man, would be to contrast Erich Fromm's concepts: humanistic conscience and authoritarian conscience. Anyway, I'm autonomous, not inner-directed or other-directed, in the David Riesman sense. (Those who thought Riesman's ideal person was "inner-directed" failed to understand the book—he wanted people to strive for and achieve autonomy.) By my definition, this means I control me, rather than outside forces controlling me. Galaxy has been a perfect germination environment for this kind of autonomy. This in no way means isolationism or being unaware or unconnected with the outside world. The input from the outside world is part of the data from which I make decisions. However, I make my decisions alone, without help or interference. Not that I don't find others' values and attitudes interesting, or sometimes funny, but they're not much of an influence. If you define conformity and normalcy as the goals I'm supposed to be shooting for, and expectations relative to peer pressure and media conditioning as the social obligation I'm supposed to fulfill, them I'm a flop. But if you define instead that being sensitive, compassionate and understanding is the ideal behavioral model for a date or any other relationship, then I'm doing pretty good."

"Jeez, do you really think this way? It seems too much like a minister or something to be any fun. What about having fun, sexiness, passion, romance, and so on?"

"Well, Glen, I like sexiness or playfulness as much as the next person, and I'm all for it. As for passion and romance, I think most examples I've seen in movies are silly. Being spontaneous and real and 'here and now' is not the same as being run by sexual desires, peer pressures, power trips, or curiosity. I feel real passion for women sometimes, as well as strong sexual feelings, but stronger still is my knowledge of who I am. I don't wish to lose myself in relationship, but rather find myself and the other person. Remember how we met on the bridge. I considered that a wonderful opportunity to BE ME, to grow, to discover more about myself, and, as it turns out, meet a new friend. With male-female relationships, the sexual energies are kind of like an extra added spice to an already good relationship. It's not really 'frustrating.' It would only be frustrating if I chose to label all the energies that came up as 'sex.' I don't. I label them 'lifewish.' You know, you can't really do that much to keep the energies from arising, but you can do a lot to define them, and choose how to use them. And who'd want to hold them back anyway? They really do add a lot of intriguing and pleasurable elements to male-female relationships. So for me it's all whether these energies control me, or I control them. I always choose the latter, in relationships.

"Another part of this is *responsibility*. I was brought up in such a way as to feel responsible for my actions and how they affect others. It felt like a privilege, because I was given plenty of choices, and it felt like freedom and 'doing my own thing' to make those choices. But it made me feel responsible for my actions, since I was the one who'd made those choices. And that's not experienced as a burden, believe me. It's allowed me to develop a very strong sense of self, of who I am and how I'm one with the other people of the world. Look close at the logic of just who I am hurting if I feel one with someone and then I choose to be irresponsible with them. There's really no way to love someone and be irresponsible with them at the same time, since part of what love is IS responsibility. So responsibility is what I feel in all relationships, whether with you or Wilma, whom I go on dates with occasionally. The responsibility is for my actions, but also it's for you—or her."

"Why should you feel that way? *I'm* responsible for me," said Glen.

"True, but when I *choose* to be with you, I *choose* to be responsible for you. It's not in place of your responsibility for yourself, it's in addition to it. It would make both of us happy to see you get the opportunity to grow beyond the serious effects of the various home life hassles you've endured for years. You know, you're creative but blocked. You're smart, but not brilliant. Why is that? You think you were born the way you are? I say no. I say what Buckminster Fuller says on this subject: most people are born geniuses, but child-raising errors slowly de-genius them until they seem rather dull-witted. This is normal. But it's not unavoidable. I guess I'm telling you that I think that you're about

twice as smart as you've so far demonstrated, and that the other half of your 'smarts' are clogged up in your mind with the effects of being raised wrong. How do you feel about that?"

"That's the best approximation of how it feels to be me feeling what it feels like to be me that I've ever heard. The home life garbage—the effects of all that frustration and —I—I—I was *mad!* And a little bitter. And, as you've helped me notice, feeling like a victim being messed over by others who were controlling me. Ick! Ya know, I don't really hold it against them. They—they do their best. But a lot that I needed never happened and a lot that I needed to avoid wasn't avoided—and I seemed helpless to do anything about it. There was no way to choose an alternative to all this. So, Robert, I think you hit it right on the button! I've a brilliant mind half filled with mud from the past. This clogs up thinking, logic, and feelings, so that my relationships aren't great, my thinking is muddy, my feelings are often negative . . . oops."

"What is it?" asked Robert.

"Well, this started out with me wanting to get help with getting next to Wendy, but here I've just given a description of someone only a mother could love! Wendy has the sweetest personality in the universe—well—at least the Galaxy," (he smiled at himself over his joke) "so what in the world would she want with me?"

"Well, she relates a lot like me, so it should be obvious from what we've discussed that it all hinges upon whether or not you have the bravery and self-respect to concentrate on being yourself, regardless of all peer pressures, conditioned movie and TV values, and so on. Even be willing to find a new you, a hidden you, a more human you, one that may have been 'hiding under the bed' for many years. Anything that arises from sources like 'what my peers expect me to act like,' or 'what my definition of a real man demands that I do or try to do' will not be welcomed. You need that stuff like you need 'a mind half filled with mud from the past,'" said Robert.

"Okay, I know what to do. Is Mort going to frown at me if I ask her out?"

"Only if he's having a gas pain at the time."

"No, really, this scene means a lot to me. I'd rather play it careful than get kicked out."

"I don't blame you. But I promise you that both Mort and the rest of the Galaxy people will be totally confident that Wendy can and will take care of herself. The truth is, they'll be more concerned about you than about her."

"Come on, Robert! I'm 19—she's 17. Get real!"

"I'm serious!"

"What is this, the *Twilight Zone*? Why will they be worried about me?"

"She might give you terminal overwhelm. She's quite a person. In other words, don't bother to ask Mort about whether it's okay to see Wendy. He'd just wink and say 'fine.' He's not about to mess with her choices or tell her what to do. And you wouldn't get kicked out if you let your conditioning lead your actions so that you made a fool of yourself around Wendy. The problem would be what you'd think of yourself and how that would influence your growth. Worse yet, it might even scare you away. Here, let me explain: I know how much I mean to you, and how much you like me. I'm a great friend. I've had a dramatic effect on you —"

"This is getting mushy," Glen said, good-humoredly.

Robert laughed, but soon continued: "What I'm leading up to is that a female that treats you like I do, but in addition is pretty, sexy, sweet, motherly, and so on, is logically going to be an overwhelm. On a scale of 1 to 10, she's going to clock in somewhere around 99. Within days, you'll have her pegged as the solution to all the problems, needs, and desires of Glen Andrews. You'll concentrate on her, forgetting yourself, hoping to run away from the question of who YOU are in the relationship. More logic now: you'll try not to, but you'll get possessive, jealous, overprotective, and become a general pain in the butt to her. You might feel that flattery, heroic deeds, clever conversations, gifts, marriage proposals, or vows of undying love will seem irresistible to her. They won't. She's 17 and you're 19 but she won't care about that either. She doesn't want to be possessed, owned, fought over, flattered, or whatever. More logic: she'll be

certain that you need her but you'll be certain that you *love* her. No matter what anyone says you'll be very sure of yourself because how could all the movies, books, and TV shows be wrong? You can see why I told you about the nonexclusive relationships of me, Wendy, and Barbra with 'outsiders.' The other way is usually pretty disastrous. Glen, you can't expect us to apologize for how we relate; or act phony and never be who we really are in relationships so as not to ruffle anyone's complacency or challenge anyone's normal beliefs."

"It'd be a crime. You all have so much to give, and those of us with mud-minds need all the help we can get. You know, at first I thought you were being a real downer and party pooper about Wendy, but now I see that you're actually trying to prevent me from goofing up my chances here and ending up an emotional derelict, all spazzed out with no place to go," said Glen.

"I'm really glad you're choosing to hear this. Wendy's very careful in her relationships with guys. She, too, feels responsible for whom she's with, and has for years. The last thing she wants is to hurt a guy's feelings and get him 'spazzed out,' as you say. So she's careful about whom she reveals herself to. But all this doesn't mean that you should stay away from Wendy. It means instead that it would be wise to get in contact with the nitroglycerine concealed inside you, and learn how to control your actions and thoughts enough so that you can prevent a violent shaking up. I'm going to the drive-in with Wilma tonight, for instance. You could ask Wendy, casually, and then make it a point to not get to know her too well. Concentrate on the movie and/or discussions and/or any playfulness that might come up, thinking of her like a sister. We all played at the pool. She was careful to soft-pedal herself, for your benefit. If she thinks you're worth being that careful about, I'd like to hope that you yourself think you're worth being careful about.

"The media and other conditioning has filled you with merciless booby traps ready to spring, traps that exploit your past deprivations and consequent present hang-ups in the areas of self-worth, security, need for a mother, and emptiness. They want you to consume products that you feel will make you more attractive to girls, because they're exploiting your fear that your mother didn't really love you, and these girls represent that mother. Just as the struggle to get girls 'who probably won't like you' is really the struggle to get your mother to love you more, a struggle that is now a big part of the mud in your mind, and that comes up because of your often less-than-nurturing home life. Sound crazy? This type of exploitation of people's hang-ups is actually the basis for the consumer economy in a lot of countries, especially ours. All the conditioning in this area makes you a GOOD 'mark' for such marketing strategies, but being somewhat deprived in the nurturing area makes you an EASY mark as well. Having not been deprived that way, I'm relatively invulnerable to media and marketing hype. Marketers have to target those—like you—with a giant nitroglycerine bottle full of unmet childhood needs, because these people will be driven, predictably, by these needs, to consume the product. The product might be a direct mother *symbol*, like a cigarette, which is a mother's nipple to the 'child-in-need' who 'needs a smoke' whenever he's nervous (feeling unloved and unnurtured). Or it might be a mother-symbol *person*, like a potential girlfriend, who is depicted in the ad, by some grand coincidence, as being as 'hard to get' as his mother used to be when he needed nurturing. The emphasis is always that if you buy the product, you'll be more acceptable to your mother and therefore she'll quit being evasive and nurture you. So you'll get mother's love if you 'be a good boy or girl and give us your money.' Not a pretty picture.

"This, Glen, is a good description of the goals of the mud in your mind. To illustrate: pretend that you're infected with a large, alien parasite, who lives in your head. Your goals are about Glen being happy and finding meaning in your life. But its goals are about keeping you consuming things you don't need in order to be more acceptable to a mother who's always waiting in the wings to reward you . . . IF. Notice how the desired acceptability is to someone else, not to yourself. They count on you having given up on liking and accepting yourself long ago. The alien's goals are also to keep 'pushing your buttons' about the pain you feel about needing someone who wasn't there for you or who

didn't really love you. Pushing your past-pain buttons is how you're manipulated and motivated by others to consume your way to 'acceptability.'

"So what I'm saying, then, forgetting the consumption angle, but staying with the hang-ups, is that if you put yourself in a position to have your buttons pushed, then your behavior will be very predictable and mechanical. In truth, *you'll do exactly what you've been programmed to do!* My aid with the Wendy thing is an attempt to warn you about your programming and its effects, so that rather than having the relationship push your RUN button and getting you to launch a totally preprogrammed, desperate attempt to get mother/Wendy to love you, you can act autonomously, run by your choices rather than your hang-ups, and choose to be who you are around her, as you do with me."

"Wow! My head is spinning! Robert, this is surely making life complex. So nothing is as it seems. How do you KNOW all this?" Glen asked.

"Clear thinking happens in minds not muddied up with the pain of deprivation. When all this seems to be 'as clear as mud,' remember your mud-mind. The logic doesn't pass through mud without distortion. And look how people take advantage of this: I'm for capitalism and free economy and I'm a patriotic American. But that doesn't mean that people have to be *tricked* out of their money for things they don't want, because of their vulnerability to being deceived into being led around by past pains surfacing as today's tension and needfulness.

"I feel we can have a dandy economic system based upon honest and above-board buying and selling of truly needed goods and services, and the faster we can wipe out the exploitation factor—which actually solidifies people's hang-ups so they're even more difficult to deal with or eradicate—the better. One doesn't need to read a lot (even though I do) to think clearly and know a lot; one needs only to have a successfully nurturing lifestyle. The rest is fairly automatic. Remember, we're all born geniuses. Messed up childhoods de-genius us.

"Buckminster Fuller said that. And he also said that giving children the opportunity to find out for themselves, through experience, rather than filling them up with unquestioned beliefs, is the most critical thing for our world. In other words, keep out the mud, but think of our kids' minds as unprogrammed computers. The hardware for a miracle is in place, but try to let THEM do the programming, as they find out what their world is like, and then let them make choices about how to respond to their experience. Give them a chance to think for themselves, making sure that you nurture well so that deprivation-mud doesn't form, and they'll begin computing and they'll fill their own minds with clear and logical thinking and their own truths based upon their own experiences.

"The trouble with today's educational and parental attitudes is that they feel their responsibility is to fill empty containers, because 'isn't it obvious that they'll need those facts, those morals, those ethics, and those rules?' The duty of parents is to nurture, but the duty of parents *and* schools is to provide a space to think, discuss, read, experience, and discover; to encourage and empower each child 'to find out for himself.' Plant such seeds as 'intriguing questions' and then jump back quick as the seeds germinate and grow. A kid who needs to be pushed to learn is a kid who has already been wrecked. Why do we do that to kids?

"Anyway, in reference to your 'How do I know all this?' question: *I* program *myself*. Because I was given the opportunity to. And that's because I've had constant choices, not pressures. (Some conservatives believe that this many choices will spoil, while discipline and authority will keep kids in line so they won't get spoiled. What they are forgetting is that it isn't choices, freedom, or gentleness that 'spoils.' It's the nagging and bad parental examples, in the case of liberal types; and threats, orders, and bad parental examples, in the case of conservative types. A wrecked kid is just as wrecked regardless of what method was chosen to accomplish it. P.E.T. methods are the best alternative here, in both cases.)

"Now, about choices: programming-wise, every time I select NO, I program a 0, and every time I select YES, I program a 1. All computers think in zeros and ones, basically. As you know from school. My environment is choice-rich; each choice becomes a decision point I'm responsible for, so no matter which way I go I win. If the choice

leads me in a negative direction, I loop back to that decision point and try the other direction. The end result of all this is self-programming in which mud is detected as 'irrelevant data' and discarded before it can become a permanent illogical circuit or programming loop.

"So it gets down to this: Will you be the programmed or the programmer? Will you be at cause or at effect? Will you be nurtured adequately to empower you to be a chooser, not a loser? I want you to find in the Galaxy, meant both ways, the nurturing sufficient to aid your transcendence from being programmed to being a programmer. I want you to find the courage to, like Superman, leap tall extrinsic programming loops at a single bound. I'd like to see you look all your preprogrammed predispositions in the eye and tell them 'sorry, but I canceled my subscription.' When you're with Wendy, I'd like you to not only have a good time, but also to see the experience as an opportunity to define yourself. You'll be feeling things from the mud, and the extrinsic programming that was inserted from the outside. As you experience the relationship, pin little M labels all over the mud so you never forget where that stuff is coming from. On the other hand, you're a person in there. If all the mud was tossed out, there'd be something left. Let's call that Glen. As you experience the relationship, pin little G labels on anything that comes from you, with no mud. Your identity is at stake here. The M forces will be trying incredibly hard to convince you that all the beliefs that have been programmed into you about what you should do, should want, should feel are G forces. But they're M forces. In Zen, the whisper of being that's left after all concepts have been transcended is you. In other words, expect the G to whisper, the M to shout.

"This still leaves one problem: in order to really be, and really experience the G forces, you need to feel secure and unneedful, accepting yourself, your environment, and the world. My past supports this; yours doesn't. So know that you're loved by me, and that other Galaxy people are starting to know and love you as well. Let this be a temporary crutch, while you're learning to know and love yourself better. Then, when you're ready, rely only on your self for your ontological security. Being doesn't happen 'because someone loves you,' but because it is. But the privilege of being, especially if it rises to the highest level, called oneness by some, is something that is made much more likely when the environment from which it springs is being-nurturing, choice-facilitating, and secure and happy."

Glen looked dizzy. He asked: "How do you know that Wendy will go? You've been saying 'when you're with Wendy.'"

"She'll go, if not tonight then later. I know her. If you're at Galaxy you're family. I hope you didn't think she'd base such choices on how much you resemble the latest hot male movie star! She'll choose to know you, to the degree it nurtures or inspires you. Or to stay away from you, to the degree it precipitates your defining yourself in negative ways. She's not only responsible for you if she's with you, but also with regards to whether or not she's with you. Okay, I know you're dizzy now, but let me just ask: Do you want to ask her to the drive-in tonight, in spite of the fact that life has turned out to be simultaneously much simpler and more complex than you thought?"

"Yeah—um—am I ready?"

"Yesterday's Glen, no. Today's Glen, no. Tonight's Glen: you'll define yourself according to your bravery in the face of M and G forces. I'll be there as a support crutch. Don't feel weird about that. I've had better environmental nurturing advantages than you. You're not about to get your parents to finish their incomplete nurturing job on you, so it is only fair that you get your needs filled like the next fellow. You deserve it as much as me or anyone else. Justice often prevails, even if it's delayed. *You'll* decide if you're ready. Want to go?"

Glen picked up the phone and called Wendy and asked her if she wanted to double-date to the drive-in with Wilma and Robert. She said: "Okay, Glen; now, how about you coming over to pop popcorn with me now to take there? I can't bring myself to eat the stuff they sell there: The junk they put on it—I think it might be Agent Orange!" That broke the tension, and he laughed, and then so did she, which made his nervousness dissipate. He'd created an internal crutch for himself so that he couldn't

start drowning in sudden unexpected M forces: she was his sister! He had fun blabbing away with her, as they popped enough corn for an army and buttered it. Her parents were out, and siblings Cheryl, Bob, and Will stayed politely off doing their own things. He almost got comfortable!

Chapter 5

"A woman especially, if she has the misfortune of knowing any thing, should conceal it as well as she can."
—Jane Austen

"The nakedness of woman is the work of God."
—Blake

"But the main thing is, does it hold good measure? Heaven soon gets right all other matters!"
—Robert Browning

"It was a blonde, a blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window."
—Raymond Chandler

"I knew a woman, lovely in her bones,
When small birds sighed, she would sigh back at them;
Ah, when she moved, she moved more ways than one:
The shapes a bright container can contain!"
—Theodore Roethke

"He who hesitates is not only lost, but miles from the next exit."
—Unknown

"To see you naked is to recall the Earth."
—Frederico Garcia Lorca

"God, if this were enough,
That I see things bare to the buff."
—Robert Louis Stevenson

"A man who is always ready to believe what is told him will never do well."
—Gaius Petronius

"Beauty and wisdom are rarely cojoined."
—Gaius Petronius

"The dead govern the living."
—Auguste Comte

"Nothing is so firmly believed as what is least known."
—Montaigne

"A man must not swallow more beliefs than he can digest."
—Havelock Ellis

"Too much light often blinds gentlemen of this sort. They cannot see the forest for the trees."
—Christoph Martin Wieland

"Minds are like parachutes. They only function when they are open."
—Sir James Dewar

"Genius . . . means little more than the faculty for perceiving in an unhabitual way."
—William James

"The greater the ignorance the greater the dogmatism."
—Sir William Osler

"A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Eureka! (I have found it!)"
—Archimedes

"Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness."
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"Your maiden modesty would float face down,
And men would weep upon your hinder parts."
—Aldous Huxley

"Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee!"
—Shakespeare

"'The woman had a bottom of good sense.'
The word 'bottom' thus introduced, was so
ludicrous, that most of us could not forbear tittering . . .
'Where's the merriment? . . . I say the woman was
fundamentally sensible.'"
—Samuel Johnson

"We are ashamed of everything that is real about us;
ashamed of ourselves, of our relatives, of our incomes, of
our accents, of our opinions, of our experience, just as
we are ashamed of our naked skins."
—George Bernard Shaw

"I have had a good many uplifting thoughts, creative and expansive visions—while soaking in comfortable baths . . . "
—Edmund Wilson

"And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare."
—P.B. Shelley

"A mere tale of a tub, my words are idle."
—John Webster

They arrived a half hour early at the Hollywood Drive-in. Glen had been introduced to Wilma. Wendy already knew her. For a second, Glen had been surprised to learn that she was 22 years old and had just graduated from college. But only for a second. Then he remembered what Robert was like and it occurred to him that she might run into the same danger with Robert ('terminal overwhelm,' as Robert put it) that he was in danger of running into with Wendy. It was an incredible thing to think this about a lovely college graduate in relation to a slender young "brat" who'd just finished high school. From everything he'd ever seen or heard about, it 'should' be the other way around, age-wise. So much for the value of 'should's!

Glen asked her: "I'm curious. What kind of reactions do you get from your parents or other friends relative to your friendship with Robert?"

"I got a little kidding at first. They thought it was some impulsive thing that I'd tire of soon and that'd be the end of it. That was two years ago. We met when Robert was still a sophomore. I imagine that I don't need to explain why, within a few weeks of meeting him, it no longer mattered to me *what* anyone thought of my being with him. So everyone accepted it. My dad took the longest. But I learned so much about relationships and stuff with Robert that it began to rub off on the way I related, and before you knew it, my dad was pleased with my attitudes about responsibility, respect, and communication so he abandoned all efforts to influence me about such things. I know that on one level he realized that Robert was doing a better job of nurturing me than he ever did, and he was glad to have someone 'taking care of me,' so to speak, especially since I've bloomed so nicely under Robert's care. Even if he was a kid of 15, going on 16, at the time."

"Does Robert feel like a dad to you?" asked Glen.

"He feels as much like a mom as a dad. His love is unconditional. It's funny, because when he met me I thought I had it all together; I had a boyfriend, and I was doing okay at school. I thought I was in love with Joe. But in truth I was merely stagnating in a bed of indirect self-acceptance. Robert never tried to influence my relationships or anything. All he really did was kind of hold a mirror up for me and let me see myself more clearly. This was a bit uncomfortable at first. But my own lifewish was strong enough to motivate me to continue regardless of discomfort. Mirrors don't necessarily produce discomfort: If someone was together and liked himself, a mirror would be nothing but a status check. But mirrors always see truth. If the truth isn't what we want it to be, we can either deceive ourselves forever, or make life choices. I'd been using Joe as a way to escape myself. I felt that I was rather empty and worthless. So I used Joe's devotion to me to run away from my feelings about myself. *I didn't really accept myself, so I used his acceptance of me in place of direct self-acceptance.* That's called indirect self-acceptance and it's the theme of *The Adjusted American*, by Putney and Putney. Have you read that?"

"No, I haven't," replied Glen.

"I have a copy for you," inserted Robert.

"Thanks," said Glen.

Wilma went on: "Anyway, I've since abandoned the delusion that it's possible to love someone else if you don't first love and accept yourself. Both Erich Fromm and Maslow, among others, have been saying that for years, by the way. I wasn't loving Joe. I was *feeling* that he was loving me and taking care of me when he'd aid me in my conspiracy to not face myself. He helped me escape the discomfort of the truth. He might as well have been alcohol or drugs, in a way. The same principle is involved. Anyway, with Robert's help I spent months looking at myself. The truth may have been a bit painful, but it was so much more alive than the zombie-bimbo existence I had been leading, in which pretty smiles and artificial sweetness were enough to get me accepted and 'loved.' The trouble was, I myself wasn't really getting accepted or loved. It was my act. Underneath I was a scared, depressed little girl. Joe never even met the real me. I've gone through a lot in two years. I've learned to know myself and I've learned to love myself. And this means that I'll be able to love and be loved. As it turned out, Joe ran off into the sunset when he encountered the new me. He was so convinced that he wanted a phony plastic bimbo to show off to his friends that the real me was a bit much for him. I have no hard feelings in his direction. I do feel a bit sorry for him though.

"So anyway, I've had a little trouble finding anyone, male or female, who would let me be me with them and love me for that, and let me love them. Except for Robert, that is. I've been finding out that there are a lot of people out there terrified of themselves and others. They hide, pretend, and escape. So much fear, so much running away; you just *know* that there's got to be a lot of pain and unpleasant realities that they're running from. It's like the wiser and more aware I get, the more I see misery out there and the more separate from those people I feel. And the thing is, I don't *want* to

ignore them or avoid them. But I'm not sure what to do, either. What would you do if you were me, Glen?"

"Wow. Me, she asks. The original mud-mind and victim. I've been depressed about life a lot in the last few years. I kept thinking 'when am I going to get a break?' I used to think that it was my 'love life' that needed help the most. But now I'm not so sure. As a matter of fact, since meeting Robert, I'm not so sure of much of anything. I think you could say that what I was previously 'sure' of was stuff that had been planted in my mind by others. I thought what they wanted me to think. I thought that meant that I knew what was going on. I'm beginning to let all that go. Let me see now: you don't want to run away from people who are running away from themselves. But you also don't know what to do with them. The only thing that comes to mind is to try to do what Robert would do."

"I'm not sure I could be that good at it, Glen," said Wilma.

"I can only speak for myself, Wilma. What you're doing now is *very* good for me. Maybe if you did that and then asked Robert for help with the hard parts—"

"I like you, Glen," said Wilma.

"Me too," said Wendy. Glen could feel a lot going on in Wendy. And yet she wasn't making any effort to make it visible or to express herself. Glen still had his conversations with Robert running through his mind. Based upon the gist of those talks, he knew that Wendy was holding back as an expression of wisdom and compassion. It sounded abstract, but she was simply being responsible. Glen asked himself: Would this slender blonde teenager "shake his nitro bottle" and "spaz him out" if she miscalculated her approach to him? It seemed incredible. This was only a belief, right now, and not something that he knew. Robert knew it, however, and his trust in Robert allowed him to accept this idea.

He was sitting next to Wendy, and yet he'd so far been talking only with Wilma. Wendy was more than a mere enigma to Glen. She was a contradiction of his past. Little 17-year-old high school girls (she'd be a Senior next year) were not serious, responsible, mature, and at peace with themselves. They were irresponsible, overdramatizing, superficial, dumb little motor-mouths always yakking about men or clothes. And what they most *certainly* were not is scary, dangerous, powerful enigmas that could blow his mind. With this in mind he looked over at her, sitting there at peace with the world, as happy when she was alone with herself as when she was with others. She looked at Glen. She was complete. Not looking for others to complete her. Not seeking Prince Charming to be her lover, caregiver, protector, and meal ticket. Not seeking answers from others outside herself. She made no effort to impress him. She was simply *being* with him. And liking him—she'd said so. But he had a feeling that she'd have said that about anyone whom she was with and who communicated in such a way that they showed that they had lifewish, spirit, and a desire to learn and grow. Didn't that mean that Wendy thought of Glen as just another person, but nothing special?

This disturbing thought must have showed on Glen's face, because she suddenly changed the subject and began discussing the movie *Nuts* with him, the one with Barbra Streisand and Richard Dreyfuss. To her the movie's significance hinged on the fact that Barbra's character, as a child, had no alternatives, no choices, nowhere to go to avoid being abused, no one to tell who would listen, and in general no alternative sources of nurturing. This gave Glen a whole new interesting slant on the flick, and he enjoyed thinking about the film in this new context, with Wendy's contributions. This continued until the movie began.

It was called *How E=mc2 Changed The World,* and yet it had no relation at all to the splitting of the atom, mass, or the speed of light. It did have something to do with how we get energy from things, however. From the word go they knew it was an avant-garde, tongue-in-cheek concoction; they were here because they'd heard it was good. Its setting was apparently an alternate or parallel universe to our own, because people were behaving very normally in all ways but one. And in this one way they were behaving very strangely indeed! It was as if in this one area, everyone had fallen down a rabbit hole,

was pursuing time-obsessed white rabbits, was talking in circles with mad hatters and door mice, was having to run twice as fast as usual just to stay even, and was thinking that it was now time to speak of cabbages and kings. But, whereas in *Alice in Wonderland* which way you should go all depended upon where you wanted to get to, in this crazy film it depended even more on where in the world you could expect to find the next gas station!

You couldn't really detect any lead characters, and if there was a plot, it was hard to detect it. It seems that the otherwise normal world had an energy problem. But it wasn't because there was an oil/gas shortage. There was plenty. It had to do with tanks, gallons, and cans. Somedamnhow they'd so screwed up their thinking that they'd equated all three of these concepts. You drove into a station and asked for a tank or can or gallon of gas. It didn't matter which. The words meant the same thing. There were no pumps. You gave the attendant a buck, and s/he gave you a can of gas. You poured it into your car's tank, and that was it. The can and the tank were one-gallon containers. One always filled the other. The attendant had shelves full of one-gallon cans full of gasoline. You had no business at a gas station unless you were OUT OF GAS, so people: (a) ran out of gas on a road somewhere and walked or hitched to the next station and bought a can of gas and then returned to their cars, or they (b) ran out of gas right when they pulled into a station, which was admired as good planning, or they (c) pulled up and parked near a busy gas station or in an empty gas station and waited for their tank, which was on E, to finally run out, so they kept their motor running. You had no business there unless you needed gas, and you couldn't NEED gas if your engine HAD gas, as testified to by the fact that your engine was still running. Besides, the can of gas that you bought would overflow when you filled your tank if your tank wasn't empty.

All maps, by law, showed where every station was located. No one, by law, could stock up on extra canfuls of gas in their trunks or back seats; this was a fire hazard, especially during collisions. There was no such thing as a container that held over or under a gallon, as a container was *defined* as a gallon holder, and a gallon was *defined* as a containerful. So food, cups of coffee, and everything else came in gallon containers. It was a world so full of ridiculous delays, with people pushing cars and walking all over the place with gas cans in their frustrated little hands, and idling, polluting motors at stations, that it was a wonder anything got accomplished. (Did anyone else but me read the folk tale *The Three Sillies?* Glen thought to himself.)

As kids were growing up, they invariably asked how come people couldn't have bigger tanks so they didn't have to hassle with gas so much, and the adults invariably patted them on the head in a very patronizing manner and told them how silly they were: Since a tank IS a gallon, how can a gallon be more than a gallon? Or a can: How can it be more than a gallon? It IS a gallon. The kids were made to feel stupid, so they never asked again. They'd been made to realize how naïve they were.

Oil tankers had thousands of shelves in dozens of holds to hold all the cans of oil. A gallon WAS the unit of measurement WAS the unit of dispersal. Planes were exempt from the can storing laws, so they had six full-time people in giant holds pouring cans of jet fuel into the plane's in-hold, one-gallon fuel tank. The tanks's opening, of course, had to have the same diameter as the tank itself.

And there were more JUG busts than there were drug busts because people would occasionally try to conceal jugs (one-gallon, of course) in their trunks. Everywhere there were signs, posters, billboards, and bumper stickers, all warning people to SAY NO TO JUGS. The movie showed lots of large-breasted women wearing T-shirts with that message on them. There was a gas can silhouette with a circle around it and a line through the circle. There were also 10 gpw (gallons per week) signs all over. These were called greed-limit signs, not speed-limit signs, and it was felt that anyone using over 10 gallons per week would cause too much ppp (pollution per person).

The mood of the movie varied between Woody Allen's *Take The Money and Run* wackiness and Benny Hill slapstick. But then half way through the flick the scene and mood changed to a nude scene. Alberta Einstein stripped and then got into her bathtub, and sighed as she laid back. She was one of those women who had such pulchritudinous,

voluptuously exaggerated breasts and bottom that your mind immediately said "dumb bimbo" the second you saw her. At least, this is what the movie's audience was manipulated into thinking. And the jiggling—my God!—that merciless jiggling! And yet we must bear in mind that: *the girl can't help it*! We must remember our Newtonian physics, and recall that if the magnitude of protuberance exceeds reasonable parameters, and yet without the aid of any interior skeletal support, then the result of locomotion is likely to be a hypnotic oscillation of the fleshly protuberances in question; it is the inescapable consequence of the struggle between the forces of gait and the forces of gravity, each victorious in turn, one after the irresistible other. (Is this a good movie or WHAT?) And this particular woman's divine oscillations would have no chance of being quelled by any means shy of rendering her brittle in a vat of liquid air. Even then one fears the irrepressible vamp would find a way to jiggle as she crystallized, solidified, and shattered. Alas! Perhaps we've overstated her case. It is only to accurately depict the focus of this part of the movie. IS THERE NO SHAME?

Anyway, Alberta had two side-by-side tubs. This is because she couldn't decide between a red one and a green one, so she purchased both. And she often (like now) used both at once, as well, going back and forth to her heart's content. And the director's heart's content. And the producer's heart's content. And the cameraman's heart's content. And the audience's hearts' content, if the truth be known. But suddenly our wiggling wanton opened her eyes wide, with a lusty intake of breath, and shouted "Eureka! Ahah! I have it!" And since the audience was well aware of the veracity of the latter exclamation, they immediately set themselves to the task of discovering the meaning of the former exclamation. The woman excitedly jumped back and forth between tubs, lying down quick and then springing up again, heedless of the flooding she was causing, and going back to the other tub. Then she hopped out altogether and grabbed a pencil and paper out of her top dresser drawer and bent over it and made a quick side-view sketch of the green tub. Then she found a colored pencil and superimposed a side-view sketch of the red tub on the green tub sketch. They were identical except the red tub had a sloped back, while the green tub had a straight back.

The tubs were unequal! (A tub wasn't considered a container; it wasn't a gallon-holder and didn't have a top and couldn't be used to transport materials. However, she got the insight by temporarily thinking of the tubs as water containers, which was true, technically.)

This superimposition inequality meant that one container doesn't necessarily equal another container since one of her tubfuls wasn't equal to the other of her tubfuls. The red one had less room for water. And if a tubful or containerful doesn't necessarily equal another tubful or containerful, then, inductively, a tankful could disequal a tankful and a gas can could disequal a gas can. So therefore THE CONTAINER OF STORAGE, SALES, AND UTILIZATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUAL IN SIZE OR CAPACITY THE UNIT OF MEASUREMENT. Therefore:

$$E=mc2$$

where E = every possible amount, m = the measurement, and c2 = container capacity (c used 2 times), or *every possible amount equals the measurement of container capacity.*

So E=mc2 will now change the world as we know it. The rest of the movie was about how Alberta Einstein's sudden insight revolutionized the transportation industry, the container industry, travel in general, dispersal strategies, and so on. Pumps replaced shelves full of gas cans in stations almost immediately.

During this part of the movie, since the Galaxy part of the drive-in audience felt that the movie had already done overkill on the punch line, they found a different way to entertain themselves. No one knew who started it, but a popcorn fight broke out. Remember, they'd made enough for an army. They were laughing pretty hard. Robert and Wilma, in the back seat, ended up in a wrestling match for the popcorn bag, while the front seat combatants took a different path. Wendy, watching the back seat tussle and laughing until she was ready to wet her pants, suddenly pounced on Glen and

jammed a large handful of popcorn down the front of his pants. This led to wrestling between these two as well, with Glen stuffing handfuls of popcorn down Wendy's pants to return fire. Before you knew it, the back seat warriors were doing the same thing, and the whole car full was shrieking and squealing with laughter, as the battlers' pants all became pregnant with popcorn bulges. Some of the shrieking was because handfuls of popcorn thrust down one's pants was a ticklish business. The cars on either side of them shushed them, so they returned to sanity ASAP. Even after the truce was called, however, one or another of them would occasionally burst into laughter during the final portion of the film.

As their attention wandered back to the screen, they were confronted with Alberta Einstein being given a ticker-tape parade down Fifth Avenue in the Big Apple. She was on a float in a transparent bathtub, nude as usual. There were gas cans of every size and shape, all over the float, and there were three-story helium-filled balloons as well, also shaped like gas cans.

The final scene found our cutie-pie in the office of the President of the United States, President Sludge. And naturally, he was noticing that his office wasn't the only intriguing oval around—at least she was wearing something this time! He tried to do a bit more than just notice: He edged his way over to her, drooling, eyes wide with lascivious intent. She avoided his fond little pats, however, by retreating around his desk. The chase was on. Luckily the chief executive was too dignified to actually run after anyone (he was only walking), even if she was a delicious female whose assets just wouldn't quit; in fact they jiggled wonderfully as she rounded the desk for the seventh time.

The audience thought they had the whole scene pegged by this time: The old "lecher and the bimbo" cliché. It turned out they only had it *half* pegged. Recall that Alberta hadn't spoken at all in the movie, except for punctuating the bathtub insight with "Eureka! Ahah! I have it!" So here's what happened next:

Alberta, in a very mature and pleasant voice, even with the unwanted desk-circling aerobics, began telling him about her insight and how it came about, and how she applied it to the gasoline, oil, container, and transportation industries, and so on. What was so incredibly unusual about the way she was acting is that she was exactly the opposite of a "bimbo." As a matter of fact, she was simply brilliant and there hadn't been one bimbo-ish smile or sexy squeal or phony expression or gesture of any kind, by Alberta, during the whole movie. But it was only during her confrontation with Mr. Sludge that this fact was becoming glaringly obvious. It made the audience remember back to her tub and parade scenes and recall what had been strange about them. Regardless of how she looked or what she wore (or didn't), she didn't have a phony bone in her body. She was totally natural and at peace. No bathing beauty smiles or poses happened at all. The audience could either figure that the director was too lazy to teach her how stereotyped bimbos were supposed to act, or that he was too stupid to even know how they were supposed to act, or that it was a total coincidence that the woman happened to look like an exaggerated version of a sexy bimbo, so he just let her be herself. But then the audience had to ask themselves: Why did she get chosen for the role, if the role wasn't written as bimbo-ish? Perhaps she read her lines better than anyone else—that must be it! The director had found a very natural-acting woman whose obvious intelligence and awareness fit the part of a woman whose insight changed the world. And he considered her looks irrelevant, a factor that would simply add further interest or controversy to the film. Her brilliance continued, in spite of her looks, and in spite of continuing to circle the president's desk, changing directions only when he did. She seemed not the slightest bit perturbed by his actions, and acted as if she were in an executive conference with a business associate she had known for years.

At the moment, she was saying: "So then, here is the context in which I like to view my sudden seeing of the forest through the trees with regards to our worldwide confusion about the limitations of containers, tanks, cans, and so on: It's a quote from Putney and Putney's *The Adjusted American:* 'So long as the individual takes for granted the assumptions that prevail in his society, he is limited to those thoughts and actions which are conceivable in terms of these assumptions. To perceive other alternatives he must

first break free of the preconceptions which limit his imagination. The prerequisite to such a breakthrough is to become fully conscious of those beliefs which are so familiar that they are seldom remarked. The best chance of recognizing and questioning such basic preconceptions occurs when some fortuitous exception to the "obvious" draws attention to a hitherto unchallenged belief. The person who is able to resist the temptation to ignore such evidence is rewarded with sudden insight and a new perspective.' In other words, you become conscious of your preconceptions only in the moment an exception makes you realize that they are false preconceptions."

Sludge finally quit pursuing and took a deep breath and let it out. He was looking out the window. He held his chin. With the other hand he raised a finger as if asking a question in a class: "Wait a minute, then, does this mean that you're not actually a bimbo at all, in spite of your looks? Are you saying that I'm simply relating to a belief in my own mind, when I chase you around the desk, and it's not even relevant to how to relate to you?"

"Mr. President, since you've asked about that subject, let me answer with two questions: Do you think that a woman with coexisting brains and beauty is impossible? And do you think that the brains of a beautiful woman are relatively without any value because beauty in a woman is so much more important than brains?"

"Of course not," he replied.

"Me either. Great! We're in perfect agreement! I can't help it if I look like I do. As a matter of fact there isn't much I can do to quit having a sexy walk. However, I've only myself to blame if I *act* the way people normally expect. We only get one chance at life, and once we're gone, that's it. I just feel that I want to live a full and happy life being me. And I'd like to do all I can to help make the world work, as a way of expressing me being me. It's really what I'm all about. Now, I was wondering, would you mind if I ate dinner with you and the First Lady tonight? I have a lot of ideas I'd like to share with both of you about the world—if you like them maybe you'll want to create a new cabinet post, such as Secretary of Understanding. I can assure you I'd work hard —"

"You mean you're brilliant about a lot of things?" he asked, looking surprised and impressed.

"Oh yeah, I feel I've got a lot to give," she said.

"God, I guess so," Sludge said, looking her over.

"Since you're back on that again: My hobby is dancing. I wouldn't mind if you and other political bigwigs or cabinet officials watched me during my practice sessions, which I do from 6-7 P.M. daily, before I eat. I could do my practicing here or wherever. It's another way I express being me. I'm not blind to the fact that others enjoy my dancing, which is kind of like in that *Flashdance* movie. I wouldn't even mind performing for state functions or whatever. It's just that that's not my primary talent and interest. Understanding and ideas, these are my major interests. What do you think?"

"By God, I think I'd like to explore this further." He called his social secretary and scheduled her for dinner with the First Lady and himself. He then saw her to the door of his office, and shook her hand and told her it was a pleasure to meet her. She smiled, sweetly, gracefully, but above all genuinely, and told him it was nice to meet him too, and that she'd see him at seven. She then turned and walked down the hall. You KNOW what that was like. He watched her for a few seconds. Then he looked up at the ceiling, put his open hands together, took a deep breath, let it out, and softly said: "Give me strength."

Chapter 6

"Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases."
—Lewis Carroll

"Tradition is what you resort to when you don't have the time or the money to do it right."
—Kurt Herbert Adler

"Homesickness is . . . absolutely nothing. Fifty percent of the people in the world are homesick all the time . . . You don't really long for another country. You long for something in yourself that you don't have, or haven't been able to find."
—John Cheever

Glen's door banged shut; it's a good thing there was no glass in it, because if there had been, it would be shattered on the floor after that type of door closing. It was two days after the movie. Glen had gone back to his parents' home for a couple of hours that morning. It was now noon.

After hearing Glen's door bang in anger, Robert, who'd been doing some reading, left his room and walked down the hall to Glen's room. The "Alone" sign was out. Good for him! He was beginning to stake a claim on his right to privacy and personal space. Robert checked the door every hour. When the sign was finally off at 4 P.M. Robert knocked. Glen let him in. He told Robert about his morning:

Glen had gone to his parents' home to get a few things. He also had intentions of telling someone, maybe his mother, how nicely things were going for him at his apartment. He didn't want anyone worrying about him. He'd just started telling his mother about all this when his father entered Glen's room, where he and his mother were talking, and interrupted everything by giving him the third degree about finding a job. Glen had asked him nicely if he wouldn't mind waiting until he was finished with Mom and then he would talk to him about that. His father was surprised, and just stood there glaring at Glen. Glen reminded him that it was still his room and he felt he had a right to privacy. This seemed like smart-mouthing to his father, and a nasty screaming argument ensued. Glen's father told him that it was his house, not Glen's, and that he'd go where he pleased in it; and that it was his room, not Glen's (even if a lot of his stuff was still in it), and if he wanted privacy he could go back to his apartment. He then made fun of his son's independence desires, his apartment, and his manhood, asking him how many ladies he'd scored with there in his "bachelor pad." It kept getting uglier, so Glen never did get to tell anyone about his new apartment. Glen banged the door on the way out and burned rubber with his Chevy.

"So you stood up for yourself pretty good then?" Robert asked Glen.

"Yeah, but it felt as bad as it did good. I don't need all that ugliness and hassle. And I never really got to tell her anything."

"You miss your mom a lot, don't you?" asked Robert.

"Yeah, she's all I have, in a way."

"What about your sister and brothers?"

"No good—all we do is argue and fight. Besides, they're so young I might as well talk to my cat."

"Well, you have us, Glen," Robert reassured him.

"I know, but —"

"That doesn't change your feelings one bit does it?"

"No," Glen confirmed. And he proceeded to tell Robert all his feelings on the matter. Robert listened carefully, adding enough active listening statements and questions so Glen would feel totally, 100 percent heard and understood for the second

time in his life (the first was in the park when he met Robert). Glen even sobbed for ten minutes in the middle of his unburdening. He tried to be "macho" about it and make fun of himself, but Robert stopped him, reminding him that, at Galaxy, feelings are totally accepted and encouraged, never ridiculed.

"But it sounds so wimpy and weak —" began Glen, hitting the arm of his chair with his fist.

"No, Glen, people who don't have or express feelings are not 'strong,' they're just less alive than those of us who do. Everyone at Galaxy has and shows feelings at times. They're respected as humans, not ridiculed as weak, when this happens. Weak is someone who's so terrified of his own emotions that he just stays frozen inside, eventually 'needing' alcohol, nicotine, dope, or abusing his family in order to *cope*. Besides, you're not weak; you stood up for your rights in the face of oppression today. Good for you!" said Robert, patting his friend's shoulder. "By the way, have you ever wanted to work at a job real hard just to earn enough money so you could afford to be independent in all ways, so you could avoid having to put up with any nonsense at home?"

"Well, I'm doing that now, aren't I?" asked Glen.

"Sort of. But didn't you kind of 'cheat' and pay rent out of funds earmarked for college? You earned that money summers, I'll bet."

"Right. I earned my car money that way too. As well as doing programming projects for a local company on my desktop computer. I'd work about 4 hours a day on that stuff all year around. Then in the summer I'd also work for ol' Henry, the guy that fixes lawn mowers and stuff. Unfortunately, this year he's retired so I had to apply at Burger King, about the only jobs left in town if the help-wanted signs are any sign. I'll get mornings only, starting next Monday."

"Oh no!" laughed Robert. "I had to do the same thing. The bottling plant where I used to spend summer days is on strike and won't be hiring until later this summer either! You got mornings at Burger King too?"

"Yep! Glen and Robert, the burger boys of Galaxy. Shall we make a career of it—become burger magnates—Ray Krocs?" laughed Glen.

"Sure. Actually, I really don't know what career I want."

"Me either," said Glen. "I guess I'm avoiding your question, though. In spite of how much I liked the idea of getting together sufficient bucks to move out, ever since I turned 16, I never quite felt like it was a cool idea. No way I could afford college then, what with keeping my car running and my face crammed with candy. I'd end up being a ditch digger or some other crap. I'd really like to avoid that scene. Also, it would have felt pretty lonely to have been out there in an apartment, kind of like a hermit. If only I could have discovered the Galaxy trip *then!* It would have been worth moving out and being here at 16, even if I did end up digging ditches."

"Oh, I dunno, Glen, I've a strong feeling that neither of us will be spending much time in ditches. Even if we do temporarily be burger boy wonders now, I don't really think that will be the direction our futures take."

"Here's to that," said Glen, opening a Diet 7-Up and toasting the thought. "Want one?"

"Sure," replied Robert. "Say, why's your old man on your case about work? You've done okay in that area."

"Well, I think he's just mad because he spent his youth working 10- to 15-hour days in canning factories. When I don't measure up to that he blows off steam. I haven't even had a chance to tell him what I'm doing this summer. He's too busy bitching to hear anything."

"I can imagine," said Robert. "It doesn't sound like you've had any picnic over there. It's too bad. If I were you, the next time I was around him, I'd try nothing but active listening, like in the P.E.T. book I know you've been reading. The guy sounds like he's full of pain. He seems to be telling everyone 'how he feels' the weak, deceptive, irresponsible way—the indirect way, where he doesn't own his feelings, and is not

responsible for them, and therefore he's run by them. P.E.T. may not work on him, but it's worth a try."

"Okay," said Glen.

Later, Robert was lying on his bed alone. He was noticing in his mind that when Galaxy people had *feelings*, they were mostly good, happy, excited ones, except for when they were with an outsider, empathizing with their hard times. And that was the thing: people like Glen had mostly sad feelings. It was important to express either type. But Glen had been filling with anger and frustration for years and would end up like his father some day if nothing special happened to get him out of his deterministic rut of induced neurosis. But something special *had* happened: Galaxy. However, most people in the world wouldn't have that advantage. What would *they* do? Robert drifted off into reverie:

Two red 1-gallon gas cans were kind of hanging in midair. They were alternately moving up and down. He watched them, hypnotically; up, down, up, down, up, down . . . Suddenly they were replaced by Alberta Einstein's backside. She was walking. Again with the up, down, up, down, up, down . . . Ahhh, the wonderful rhythms of nature!

But something stronger and less self-indulgent was cooking in Robert's oven, and he returned to Glen's miseries. A lot of people in the world are unhappy like that, he knew. A lot of people have no choices about nurturers, and they evolve no ontological security because they are discouraged by others when they try to define themselves or understand themselves and grow, and they thereby have a hard time with identity, self-respect and responsibility. The worst way in the world to "teach" responsibility is to bitch at someone about not being responsible. It merely humiliates them. P.E.T. is the best way—Robert had surely found that out at Galaxy. As a matter of fact, if everyone got to live there, there wouldn't be any more wars. People would feel too much respect, compassion, and responsibility to even consider killing each other over political boundaries, dogma, and philosophical differences. Galaxy people would be the first in line to defend our country, but would think more than twice about getting inserted into wars *not* about self-defense such as the Vietnam War, or messes like the U.S. incursion into Somalia. Luckily, there was no draft, so no one would be making them join such efforts.

Everyone living at Galaxy—yes, that would stop the wars. But everyone was *not* at Galaxy. And there were wars, terrorism, clashes, skirmishes, injustices, and man's inhumanity to man everywhere. The world is the way it is because—because it *doesn't work.* Everyone has a bomb or terrorism threat pointed at everyone else, like 100 lions all arriving at an antelope carcass simultaneously. The first one to try anything gets ripped apart by the others, even though this action is unlikely to result in anyone getting any antelope burgers.

A return to reverie created a sad little boy sitting in an apartment crying. No one was around. His sister was baby-sitting by playing loud "heavy metal" rock records in her upstairs bedroom, one floor and three rooms away. It was not her fault she couldn't deal with Junior's needs right now. She'd just come back from a hard day at school in which Harold the hunk snubbed her for a phony cheerleader. Mom wasn't back from work, nor was Dad. Even when Mom was back from work, 98% of *her* communications to Junior began with the words "don't," "stop," or "quit." It really wasn't what made Junior happy at all. In the reverie, three feet away from Junior, through his bedroom wall and in the next apartment, sat 66-year-old Mollie, very depressed. Those close to her in this life had left this life "for the next" (as she always told the lady in the line at the bank around the corner). So now Mollie had no one to love. All of a sudden, Robert, dressed as the guy in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* came rushing into Junior's room, chain-saw-ripped a big hole in the wall between Junior's and Mollie's rooms, and was off in the night like Zorro. Sis heard nothing, what with the heavy metal and all, and Junior and Mollie got together now, and often in the future, and that foolish wall no longer kept lives from working.

The reverie grinder began to grind to a halt. Robert began experiencing something like a huge pressure in his brain—as if it were going to explode. Something was happening here. Just before Robert actually drifted off for a bit, he caught a quick

glance of Richard Dreyfuss in the classic *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. He was looking down at a little mountain of potatoes on his plate.

Chapter 7

"If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties."
—Francis Bacon

"Love is contagious. So is its lack. Those who are truly loved are recognizable by their lovingness, generosity, beauty, strength, health, responsivity, and joyousness. The unloved can be recognized by their misery, malevolence, ugliness, rigidity, and spite. The unloved cannot love, and hence spread the disease to their children."
—Philip Slater

Robert and Glen returned from O.D.-ing on burger making; it was fun to be working together and flirting with teenyboppers. After work, each showered away any trace of greasy smell in his own bathroom; then they regrouped in Robert's room. They'd been working at Burger King for a week, and Robert and Glen had spent all the rest of their time learning about each other's lifestyles. They weren't even sure why, at first. Friendship? Curiosity? Glen finished telling Robert about his childhood, its traumas, unmet needs and frustration. Not that there weren't some good moments, happy moments, and close moments.

"But those were in the *minority*. The *majority* of the time things went about like I described. As a matter of fact, some of my friends—at least my former friends—had it worse. There was a considerable amount of alcoholism, drug abuse, and wife beating and child abuse in other homes. They weren't even together enough to hide this stuff when I came around. And many were divorced or separated. I guess the reason I tried to have so many friends is that it cheered me up about my scene. You know, by comparison. I wasn't happy as things were, but I'd have suicided if I'd have lived in some of the scenes I've seen. At least when we were younger, me and my brother and sister could play games and escape the tension. In one home there was an alcoholic mother, no father, a sick baby, and a twelve-year-old guy—I was twelve at the time too—I remember it all really clearly. The guy tried to commit suicide twice that year."

"Well, what about the happy families with nice, together people in them? You never tried to make friends in that type of family?" asked Robert.

"Funny you should ask. Of the people I've been thinking of here, there were three families that I was sure *were* that way when I tried to make friends with the kids in them. There was the minister's family, and everyone seemed ideally happy at first. But I sat on their front porch once, waiting for Billy to come home. They didn't know I was there. The old man kept hollering at the 14-year-old girl and calling her a 'slut.' I could hear him slapping her. She'd been sleeping around. The mother was screaming at him and saying it was his fault. She had a nervous breakdown later that year and has been in the nuthouse ever since. When I asked Billy about all this, he made me promise not to tell, and told me how the father had molested the 'slut' daughter the year before when he was drunk, but he'd gotten counseling and was 'okay' now.

"Another family was that of a prominent lawyer. Everyone was always all smiles. I thought it was heaven. The oldest son got jailed for rape. The oldest daughter died of a heroin overdose. The mother was constantly on tranquilizers for depression. This stuff I found out later. These are not rare exceptions, Robert. I've been looking up some statistics. Kids have a 1 in 4 chance of being physically or sexually abused, not according to reported incidents, but according to expert's estimates. The thing is, most incidents never get reported at all. They get covered up. Females have a 1 in 12 chance of being raped. And a one in three chance of experiencing a rape *attempt*. The drug and alcoholic statistics are even worse (60 million seriously affected). Shall I tell you about the shrink's family?"

"No, that's okay, I get the idea."

"These were the people the town saw as the epitome of health, happiness, and the American Dream. The happiest family I'd seen was Betty Boring's. That's what I

called her, at least. There were no fights, no hassles, no arguments. Everyone just sat around like zombies watching TV. It was scary. But at times I envied them. They had comfort and peace."

"A corpse in the graveyard has that," observed Robert. "Let me see if I get the gist of all this. You've been around, what, a dozen —"

"Two dozen," inserted Glen.

"Two dozen families," continued Robert, "in your search for sanctuary from home hassles and your search for happier, less desperate friends who weren't a drag to be with, and your search for people who were worse off than you so you could feel good by comparison. In all that time you never found one family that was better, unless the death-zombie family would be considered better because they were comfortably dead corpses. It's not better. So do you know what the odds are that you'd have accidentally run into this much misery if it weren't pretty widespread?"

"Damn small," answered Glen.

"*Very* damn small, especially if you were purposely looking for the happy ones. Now, here's the more crucial question. Think carefully before answering. Were you looking for the happiest people you could find in order to have sanctuary and friends, or were you looking for the messes so you wouldn't feel so bad about your scene? Think carefully and be honest, Glen."

Glen thought it over for a couple of minutes. "Okay, here's the way it went down. I'd be sad. I'd seek happy friends or what seemed like happy friends. They seemed happier than normal. I'd get invited over. I'd check out their scene. When it turned out to be crap, I'd feel sad about their family, but if the friend was nice I'd still keep seeing him after school or at my house. But eventually I'd go on to the next friend. In the meantime, I'd feel glad that I wasn't in that family, which seemed pretty bad, compared to mine. So the 'glad about not having it as bad as them' came after I'd seen the truth—I never *looked* for bad ones. With all the garbage I've lived with at home, I'd have to be a real nut to do that."

"So *Leave It To Beaver* reruns are all lies then?" Robert joked.

"I've never seen anything like that anywhere. Oh—correction—I've actually seen it a few places. For instance, the minister's family was exactly like that when I was there or when they knew I was listening. But the second they thought no one was listening, the truth came out. The same for the lawyer's and shrink's family. **So each family that's at all concerned with image trots out a special little dog-and-pony show to display in public or at home when nonfamily members are present. It represents what that family wants others to think of them. Other families do the same around them. And then a silent conspiracy happens. Every family agrees to accept and believe every other family's facade if other families agree to buy their act too. Underneath they all know what the reality is. But on the surface, it's *Leave It To Beaver* everywhere. And then the media colludes with this conspiracy and confirms that, yes, *Leave It To Beaver* is the way most families are!**

"As I see it, the worst part of all this is that with all the unacknowledged deception going on, people eventually begin to believe the lie, because the truth is so uncomfortable. It's strange, because that same media that colludes with the deception in its 'family shows' also has frequent news spots where studies are showing terrible rates of child abuse, wife beating, suicides, divorces, unsafe sex, affairs, alcoholism, unwanted pregnancies, and dope use—hardly a *Leave It To Beaver* scenario by ANYONE'S reckoning!"

Robert was looking at Glen wide-eyed. "Wow, that was really eloquent, Glen. You surprise me. No sooner do we look at how the mud gets in the way of clear thinking in your mind, than you up and kick all the mud to one side and think smart as a whip."

"Actually, that wasn't as hard as you might think; I've been watching these dog-and-pony shows for years, and thinking about them too—you wouldn't believe the one my old man put on when he invited his boss home for dinner. We're talking Academy Award time—it grossed me out to the max. I mean *totally!* Pull-eezzze," said Glen, slipping into Valley Girl vernacular.

"Is that your Joan Rivers imitation?"

"No. But 'can we talk?'" Glen joked.

"I think I know what you're so happy about. Tell me if I'm right. You've been holding in all that frustration about everyone being phony and deceptive for several years, but there was no sign that anyone else saw it at all, so you began to doubt your senses, and maybe even your sanity. But now we've confirmed that it's true, and you've been validated. How am I doing?"

"By George, I think he's got it!" exclaimed Glen, now an English gentleman. They both stopped and thought for a bit, Glen looking out the window, Robert looking at his hands, whose fingertips were touching like so many electrical contacts passing current. Robert broke the silence: "Let's look at where we're going here. *Your lifestyle is fairly typical,* Glen. To be fair about statistics, we should say that your scene would be somewhere between average and high, in the happiness, quality of life, and nurturing of kids scale, if the center of the scale represents average. You may have missed some good families in your 'sampling' just because you didn't have a completely accurate feel for what happiness looks like. We're not from the same neighborhood or school, but would you have 'put us into your sample population' had you known me?"

"I'm sure I would—you would have stuck out like a sore thumb, to me," said Glen.

"Have you ever watched a 'soap'?" asked Robert. "Arguing, fighting, ego trips, threatening, misery, the struggle to make a boyfriend or girlfriend into a father or mother, and screaming and crying when they won't go for it. Contrast this with the TV families from the 50s and 60s where parents are constantly doting on their children and bending over backwards to make their family life work. Hollywood! Life has a few rough spots but parents have hearts of gold and everything will work out fine in the end. The problem here is that the messes in the soaps seem more realistic (and depressing!), except for how attractive everyone is. But the selfishness and egoism and deceptions, these all seem right on. However, the family shows on prime time in the past, and even many of them in the present, leave out many of the ugly realities of real life. Greed, selfishness, hate, abuse, alcoholism, and extreme stress and frustration—all are sugar-coated, hidden, or eliminated. Not that I think they should change this and make them realistic. People watch the tube to escape, not to produce even more stress as they get reminded of unpleasant realities. The writers seem to know that. But where IS there a source of information, media or otherwise, that will let people know all this stuff that we've just realized, so they can come from a realistic perspective about their lives?"

"Robert?" began Glen.

"Yes?"

"Didn't you know this stuff? I mean what the average scene is like?" asked Glen. Robert was silent for a minute, thinking.

"I hate to say it, but I think I've had my head in the sand on this. I have always helped friends look at themselves and improve their quality of life. I think in the back of my mind were two conflicting feelings. On the one hand I've been seeing misery and fear and frustration almost everywhere for many years, and I'm aware of how widespread it is. But on the other hand, I'm ashamed to say that I, like so many of us Americans, believed the *Leave It To Beaver* nonsense and felt that there must be all kinds of happy families out there, but there just didn't happen to be any (except for Galaxy) in my neighborhood. Just a quirk of fate. And of course in all your wanderings you just didn't happen to bump into any. Just a coincidence. They're everywhere; we're just 'unlucky,' that's all! And when others I talked to had the same experience, it was just another fluke. That wasn't very bright thinking on my part; I'm not too proud of my oversight. I guess I was trying to protect myself from the overwhelming implications of such prevalent lifestyle failure.

"The thing is, Glen, when you and I see an idyllic looking family going down the street, or walking around the local fair, we tend to accept the extrinsics of the situation as the intrinsics. 'Look how happy that minister's family is,' you said at first. They *acted* that way and *looked* that way. But then you got the opportunity to see underneath. A mess! The whole thing was an act, a publicity campaign to bilk the public into believing

what his job required that people think. Some people hold positions where they can't afford to have any dirty laundry showing. Politicians, lawyers, bankers, counselors, teachers, ministers, and so on. Like fools, and I'm as guilty as the next guy, we've been taking what we see at face value. We believe what they want us to believe. Glen, what do you say you and I make a pact—*let's never again be satisfied with anything less than the TRUTH,"* Robert proposed, and he and Glen shook hands on that pact.

A few minutes of silence ensued. Glen began asking Robert more about his life at Galaxy; what his problems or arguments were about, how they were handled, how people respect others and their rooms and what exceptions there had been; what people get sad or frustrated about; what type of careers Galaxy people select, etc. The answers were inspiring as well as a welcome change from the depressing nature of the previous subject.

"Do you realize how exceptional all this is?" asked Glen.

"Oh yeah, I've always known it was exceptional, but I don't really think I've ever accepted just *how* exceptional. You know, *Leave It To Beaver*, and other media conditioning—they kind of snuck that one in on me. None of their nonsense affected me that related to how people should treat one another: I knew that I had all that together and their dogma was no competition whatsoever to my experience-based knowledge. But my perspectives on what goes on behind closed doors—here they fooled me a bit, as we've seen. And I give you credit for helping me see through the smokescreen here. Thanks!"

"Robert?"

"Yes?"

"This may be the only happy place on Earth," said Glen.

"Come on."

"Point to another one!" demanded Glen. Robert was silent. "See what I mean?" insisted Glen. He was being very persistent.

"I can't, but there should be a few together scenes in every town. The elements that allow our scene to work are not that unusual or rare. People need choices, not orders. Kids need nurturer choices, because parents are often unavailable or tired or busy or in bad moods, so there absolutely MUST be alternative sources of nurturing. People need respect. A scene needs P.E.T.-type rules. And by the way, at least 7 million people have already been helped by P.E.T. and millions have read the books—there are several by Gordon. This helps set up a context in which responsibility, self-respect, respect for others, and cooperation can all evolve as a result of living in a successful lifestyle. No one here has ever gotten nagged about things. That is NOT how human beings learn! That teaches only resentment and the abuse of power. I keep thinking of how ridiculous it is when I hear about all the nagging and threatening going on in your, and almost every other, family. Where in God's name did they EVER get the idea that such ugliness would result in obedience, goodness, morality or happiness?

"All evidence in recorded history shows the futility of such approaches. Are they blind or stupid or what? And of course, as I've found out in numerous books, as well as in talking to friends about their lifestyles, the answers to these questions are trivially simple: People do NOT bitch, beat, threaten, nag, or trick others about things 'because they believe that it will help their kids learn how to act.' They do it because it happened to them when *they* were little and so they're doing the same thing—their kids push their buttons and they lash out. Simple. And the reason they're making the same error that others made with them is even simpler yet! They use the same rotten approaches because these approaches were learned when they were so small and helpless and all-absorbing that they just took it all in as if the gods had proclaimed this to be the only way in the world to act. Kids—at first—think that their parents are perfect and that the approaches used with them are the best and only ones in the world—and when these approaches fail, the kids blame themselves and the parents blame the kids as well, so the kids end up feeling like *bad, unworthy people.*

"By the time they're older and can see alternatives and have kids themselves, they find it very hard to do anything different from what they were taught early in life.

The early-life learning was associated with a lot of strong emotions, especially pain. So it's much deeper, and more motivating, as ingrained beliefs, than any present-day intellectual concept about child raising. You 'think' the child-raising concept, but you believe, are attached to, and do what your early childhood conditioned into you. And this isn't choosing; it's the determinism of conditioning. If you follow it then others are running your life. Glen, with all you know right now, if you got married and had kids tomorrow, YOU would raise them in that rotten, oppressive manner you're used to. Unless of course you did it here, at Galaxy, or created your own Galaxy and made a heart-felt, profound commitment to Galaxy rules and P.E.T. relationship methods. You wouldn't be able to create a successful lifestyle if you lived alone with wifey and kids.

"The key aspect of all this is adequate nurturing through enough potential nurturers and a context of choice, and when only you and wifey are the kids' choices, most of the Galaxy rules and P.E.T. relationship styles would fall apart sooner or later, because what nurturing choices are there? What choice does the kid have? Some of the time one or both of you are gone, busy, tired, or crabby. The kid is shown that you and her are supposed to be his sole 'answer' in life, his only choice, his only possibility—just like in *Nuts* where Barbra's character's only choice was to take the abuse. And I don't care how wonderful you may be, or THINK you are, NO one is so together, including me or any Galaxy people, that they qualify as another person's sole answer, sole choice, sole resource. Nor should they be expected to be. You see, what's so important to get here is that *I'm not a together guy because my parents filled my needs so perfectly. NOT AT ALL! I'm that way because they realized their limitations and made sure that I didn't have to rely only on them. I relied on everyone here.* And you can't imagine how much I love them all for being there for me. And you can't imagine how much they love and respect me as they've watched me grow from a happy, playful kid to a loving adult-kid (I'm still a kid at heart here).

"When it happens the good way, child raising is NOT about arguing, bitching, threatening, nagging, punishments, humiliation, resentment, frustration and stress. It's about the privilege of a happy community of normally structured families watching each child be nurtured and grow, with everyone who wants to taking part and loving each child; and there is almost no trauma, deprivation, or pain. You see, child raising has gotten a bad name. People tend to think about what it's like when it's done wrong. So the birth rate has been dropping. The average parent has an incredible amount of resentment toward his kids, because the 'happy, loving time' it's supposed to be is not the way it turns out. So they're mad. You know what you've found everywhere. You know what you were experiencing at home. One big, long set of symptoms, each one crying out to be noticed, pointing out the results of doing it wrong!

"Now stop and think about when your parents decided they'd have you kids. Over 90% of parents have kids for the wrong reasons (loneliness, to get someone to take care of them, to relive their life over—through someone else, an accident, to prove manhood or womanhood, because parents are pressuring them to, or because their life is boring), so what kind of upbringing can you easily predict most kids will therefore have? Okay, your parents decided to have kids, live in a house as a married couple, and be 'normal.' Did they feel or think that they were doing it because it's been shown that they can expect to have a happy, loving time by setting up such a lifestyle? Is THAT what THEY experienced in THEIR families?! Of course not! They *survived* those families, to be sure, and had a few good times, but that wasn't the question.

"*Has it been shown* that people will have a wonderful, loving life, and everyone will grow and thrive and become the wonderful people they were born with the potential for becoming, if they follow the normal beliefs and dogma of that lifestyle? That's the question. And the answer is: no. They feel, based upon their early experiences in their first families, that all this is too much to expect. They'll go for the survival and anything else they get out of it is gravy! They'll do what they see everyone else doing, because they don't know what else to do. They'll have wildly unrealistic hopes and dreams and do exactly what they just got through learning (in their early families) couldn't possibly work. This is automatic behavior based upon conditioning. It's not choice. Joe chooses

Beth over Sarah and thinks he's made a choice. But *when it gets down to the far more critical choice of how he'll live his life, Joe will do what he learned from his parents. Which, of course, is probably hopeless.* There's the rub, probably. The guy thinks to himself that perhaps he'll be smarter (but he's really not and he knows it). Perhaps he'll have better 'luck,' a loser word if their ever was one. And the craziness here is, *how could he possibly do it better when he's been so thoroughly programmed,* by his childhood, as well as the media and misleading but well-intentioned books, *to do it wrong!"*

"Wow—this is getting wild. You make it all seem so clear and obvious. How come it isn't obvious to others?" Glen asked.

"Some of it is; I've been doing a lot of reading nights. More often, however, they get half of the answer and then go off on a tangent. In my case, remember, minds without the mud can actually be *predicted* to think the way I've been talking to you: clearly and simply. The mud, that is the pain and barriers caused by past errors, deprivations and traumas, throws a lot of short circuits into the works. And some carefully selected reading materials can be real helpful to prime the ol' pumps. But you have to watch out not to absorb the beliefs spread all over books. They all contain assumptions about what the best lifestyle is, for instance, that not only have no basis in fact, but actually clash with obvious counter-evidence. You see, the biggie is that these authors, like everyone else, were conditioned when very young to accept their own lifestyles as good, right, and perfect and to reject any other possibility as wrong or bad. A mind built on such a 'mud' foundation may not necessarily crumble, but it will certainly be severely blocked in its search for the truth. It's like how everyone was conditioned about tanks, gallons, and cans in that movie. To the audience, who were not conditioned in that area, the characters all looked like fools (except Alberta!)."

Chapter 8

"The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true."
—James Branch Cabell

"Know then thyself . . ."
—Alexander Pope

Glen had been with Wendy a lot lately. She was slowly allowing herself to fully BE around him, based upon how much he manifested his abilities to keep it real, here and now, and related to what IS rather than how he felt he 'should' act or feel, or what anyone else in the world would expect of him. His courage and liveliness were not lost on her, and she loved him, no more nor less than anyone else at Galaxy. The difference with Glen was the large challenge of orchestrating the relationship so it would let him grow, not trip and fall. She absolutely did NOT want him to *fall* for her. Quite the opposite. She wanted to be one of his inspirations on his *rise* to awareness and compassion, to help him see the difference between media-defined love and real love, to help him claim and acknowledge his potential. She knew what it would be like to have an old-styled boyfriend thing with him—it wasn't too appealing. Watching him being led around foolishly by the nose as he dutifully followed his extensive media and peer-conditioned programming in this area would be sad, perhaps revolting. Worse, it would be incredibly irresponsible. And she knew better. And no one had ever treated her that irresponsibly when she was being raised. So why should she forsake her heart's feelings for who she is, while she forsook her caring for this person, by playing it the dumb way, however normal or expectable? In truth, she never even considered such a course of action.

Robert was asking Glen, as they 'bugged the gut,' which means cruise the main drag, after work one day in Glen's Chevy: "So when did you first notice that jealous feeling?"

"Yesterday, when I was with her. I really like her a lot, but this crazy feeling of being jealous of Ben, who she's also seeing, kept coming up. I didn't say anything. I thought I'd run it by you first. It's a way of my trying to be careful with my relationship with her."

"What does it feel like?" asked Robert.

"Well, there's this helpless feeling of not knowing what she's up to with other guys, and then worrying about where I fit in, followed by the jealous feeling about him. It's dumb. I don't know him, have never met him, and yet here I am with a lady light years better than any I've known, and I worry about *him!"*

Robert responded: "Mud is dumb. Glen is the nonmud. The nonmud is smart. Therefore Glen is smart, not dumb. Can you handle that syllogism all right? It's a bad idea to include other people's mistakes with you, as part of your accepted identity. If you do that, what are you going to do when you ask yourself whether you like yourself or not? You don't like the mud. So should you dislike yourself forever because of it? You're not about to make your mud go away. What you need here is to experience that your being transcends all beliefs, all stuff, all mud, all hang-ups. It's the context in which you meet the world. We try not to bring baggage to those meetings."

"It sounds abstract. Got an example?"

"Sorry," said Robert. "Let's take the jealousy. It's like some alien force coming along and trying to wreck your relationship with Wendy. But there's danger that you'll have identity confusion because of all your past conditioning. I'd predict that it feels simply like 'Glen is jealous of Ben.' But it also feels like 'Glen is bigger than that,' as the old expression goes. What do you say we modify that expression to 'Glen is separate from that'? The mud says 'jealous.' Glen says 'I'm glad she says she's having a nice time with him.' Now don't misinterpret any of this. The mud isn't bad; neither is the jealous—it is a real, honest feeling. The strong feelings associated with all this are not bad. They're all okay, and acceptable. Don't repress them. Learn from them. Use them (but just don't

let them use you!). Fool them, by becoming more because of them. You could do it by theft—some call it sublimation. With this, every time the feeling comes up and says 'see, this is how strongly I am jealous about this Ben person whom I don't even know, for Pete's sake,' you say: 'Oh no, mud, that's how strongly I want to transcend my mud and have my relationship work in spite of it, and that's how strongly I want to grow beyond this feeling, therefore I'm stealing all the energy from that mud-feeling and using it all for motivation to conquer this "immudturity."' Why should you let the mud decide what feelings your energies support? That would be the equivalent of being run by others' past mistakes. So—be a thief! It's great, because it lets you retain control and even lets you get some sort of good out of past pains and mistakes. You know, like the craziness of Van Gogh, and how he used the energy of the pain to paint even better.

"Or you could try existential challenge. The jealousy is claiming to be your essence feelings. You're claiming it's not your essence—it's not a true Glen-essence feeling. Go out on the street and meet Mr. Jealousy, sword in hand, and challenge him. Look him in the eye and confront him. To be or not to be. If *he* is your essence, then you don't amount to squat. Being rests on the courage to define oneself, and to risk all to become stronger than the mud. You begin as less than the mud, because the mud 'has you.' Then you choose to challenge the mud, winner take all. If you truly confront its claim to your being, with all your being/soul/essence, then you become more than the mud, and you'll set an existential precedent for lifewish choices in the future: You'll still have to make them, but you'll have the confidence that you can do it and the strategy for how to go about it.

"Think of your mind as a pile of Gs and a pile of Ms and the Ms have you tied down on their pile, even though you know you belong on the G pile. The mud SCREAMS that what you are is in the M pile, and the G whispers that, no, what you are is in the G pile and the mud is lying. BEING, strength, integrity, self-confidence, centeredness, responsibility, and identity are all waiting to see if you have the actual courage to break free from the M pile, which will feel a little like dying as you cease to identify with the Ms and are temporarily without identity, and then it will feel a little like being born, as you run over to embrace the G pile, which contains nothing but being—no beliefs at all—just a self, a context, with which you interface with the rest of the world, including me, Wendy, and the universe." Robert paused for a minute.

"Let me try an example less close to home for a second," he said. "I'm seeing three women. One is Abby and she has two other boyfriends. I feel positive feelings toward one of them. He's sexier, bigger, better looking, as well as richer than I am. But my honest feelings are positive toward him. He's a nice, responsible guy. Her relationships are nonexclusive, by the way—as are mine; she got the idea from my example. Right now most people would be saying to themselves that even though I say I'm not jealous, I still am; I'm just repressing it, or I'm lying. But I'm not. Notice that his being with her doesn't take her away from me; in fact it can balance things out when she may want to see me more often than I wish to see her. Perhaps I'm very busy with other projects or people. You see, it can now be a positive thing, for Abby and me, that this guy is her friend. Her needs are filled better because of him; she doesn't have to go without. Even if she doesn't get quite what she wants from him, because there are types of needs he can't fill, she may still be better off with him or her other friend than with no one. It's for sure that she's better off with me and the other two guys to choose from than just me alone. If I was her only friend, she'd be out of luck or sad sometimes.

"Okay, all this probably would make a person suspect that I am someone too hung-up to make commitments, or someone who is polygamous or a sex maniac or whatever. But nothing could be further from the truth. I have no relationships based upon sex, nor do I want a girlfriend who sees me primarily in those terms. So that's not it. You should know that the mud in your mind is the source for the suspicions I just mentioned. I bring them up because it's predictable that your mud will suggest these things to you. To go on, I have no marriage commitments, to be sure, but I most certainly have intense commitments to these three women. The commitments relate to the being, happiness, and growth of each of them. I am, in partnership with their beings,

responsible for them, a commitment I take on of my own free will because I choose to. This doesn't lessen their responsibility to themselves. It does allow me to do what I like to do most: totally love them. The more they get nurtured in the relationship, the happier I become, and the happier they become. And I'm loyal to all of them; how I feel about one doesn't in any way detract from how I feel about another. Quite the reverse; if I get happy around one, I'm just that much nicer to be with when I'm around another.

"You can probably already see why the sex issue isn't really much of a problem here. The relationships usually have enough of a parental or brotherly or fatherly aspect to them that sex-based relating does not really fit the context of the situation. That doesn't mean that I don't get physically close, like holding, hugging, massaging, wrestling, or the like—I do. But if some aspect of relating is inappropriate, then I certainly don't want to confuse a relationship with it. I don't know about you, but I plan to go through this life but once, and I want my relationships to be as happy and loving as possible. Sex stuff has been overrated by so many, including some marriage manual writers, because that's about all so many normal relationships have to offer. There's so little true intimacy, love, and understanding in relationships, and that includes 'lover' ones as well as marriages. Normal people are likely to be too alienated, closed, self-rejecting, fearful, desperate, dependent and clingy to really achieve any intimacy, love, or growth. Obviously they got this way when they were being raised wrong, like all those families you checked out. So sex may be all they can hope for. I once went along with a relationship like that, because she couldn't find the courage to risk relating to me in any other way. Basically she was too traumatized by her early experiences to ever be open to another person again. I learned some things about life in the experience, and recommended that she seek some form of help so she could be more open to life—I'm no shrink—I was over my head. Besides, I was 16. I was still trying to define where I was going with relationships. That helped. I liked it, for obvious reasons, but it didn't compare with the joy I had found in really loving and true intimacy, neither of which actually require sexuality, but both of which I had experienced quite a bit by that time.

"Incidentally, yes I did say that most normal relationships seem to have an aspect of desperation in them. Consider the statistics: 48% of our peers are sexually active, and yet only 58% practice safe sex, and that's even though there are 50,000 new AIDS infections a year for the past decade as well as some other scary diseases. If risking your life for a half hour of sex isn't desperation, then I don't know what is. It tends to expose the low quality of the majority of relationships. It's too bad.

"To go on, I too like the normal ideal where the sexual can enhance a relationship, and help to express love in a relationship, and I too may get married some day, though I'm sure in no hurry, and I too would be faithful to my wife. But I sure wouldn't let it prevent the type of male and female friendships I now enjoy. The only thing that would actually be different is that I'd state, up front, with any new female friend, my choice to be sexual only around my wife. She wouldn't be much of a potential friend if that killed her interest in being with me! In other words, to be faithful, responsible and moral are worthy goals—I share them with others; I understand and respect sexual exclusivity in relationships, as well as commitments.

"But also notice that some people have values that don't even allow being friends with opposite-sex persons if they're married. Notice that this value fits, and is very understandable, with people who get little love, intimacy, or understanding from their spouse—sex may be all they have, so you'd naturally expect, with relationships defined in such a sexual way, that it would be a bad idea for a spouse to be around opposite-sex people, unless his or her mate was present and it was all nonsexual.

"Notice, however, that being with opposite-sex people even though married would have a different meaning in the Galaxy context. There's never been any unfaithfulness or adultery or divorces or marital strife at Galaxy. Exclusivity in sexual expression isn't seen as that much of a limit to people here—it's such a small part, and often unnecessary part, of what relationships are all about here. We enjoy sex as much as the next person; we're different from the norms in that we don't let it get in the way or cause problems in relationships. A Galaxy person with a spouse simply never *considers* adultery. It's

absolutely out of the question. The divorce rate, and the rate of extramarital affairs in our country are both right around 50% currently. I think our perfect record of fidelity supports my contention that morality is simply a natural expression of a successful lifestyle. Our relationships work, and therefore symptoms that would indicate problems are totally absent.

"I also am in harmony with the 'love thy neighbor' advice found in most religions but rarely practiced by anyone. It clearly means to limit sex to a spouse but don't limit your love for anyone on our planet who might need or want it. And of course people who don't really know how to love think that this also means don't even look at any opposite-sex person besides your spouse—again when you define 'love' as sex, by your actions, even though you never SAY this, you lose much of what is so wonderful about being human.

"We feel that we're one of the first groups to really look at this 'love thy neighbor' cliché about relating to our fellow man and get it right. Others either love no one, or try to include sex with love of neighbors even when they're married. Or they keep spouses virtual prisoners, wanting them to acknowledge no one else on Earth but the one they're married to, a totally unnatural and oppressive concept, that reflects directly on the ludicrous inadequacy of the relationships which they are so unsure of and insecure about that they have to keep each other jailed.

"The bottom line here is strength; do your sexual feelings control you or do you control them? If you control yourself, sexual feelings around someone who is not your spouse is simply more energy. If your sexual feelings control you, and sex feelings lead to sex actions, then you should avoid friendships with opposite sex people—if you're married. There are those who assume that everyone else in the world is as weak as they are, so that universal rules should prevent my being around women if I'm married. Their intent is good, but they need to realize that 'there are more things on heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophies,' as Shakespeare's saying goes.

"Laying inapplicable rules on us because of weaknesses of theirs would be an example of psychological projection. I'm not saying there's any pressure on us at Galaxy—there isn't—but there have been a couple of oddball outsiders in our nearly-50-year history that would have liked to see us be limited BY THE DOGMA IN *THEIR* BELIEFS, REGARDLESS OF HOW AWKWARDLY IT APPLIED TO US. Luckily, such bigoted naïveté represents only a tendency by a few of the radical, self-righteous ignorant out there; 99 percent of people we've had anything to do with are very supportive of our benevolent, nurturing attitudes, even if they are a bit different from their own.

"Isn't it strange how easy it is for people to forget what America is all about? Freedom to evolve a lifestyle that works, and freedom from unreasonable restrictions due to others' dogmatic beliefs, and freedom for the pursuit of happiness, in whatever way we choose—all this is what we protect when the U.S. is in wars; all this is the reason we accept the draft when it comes our way, being willing to fight and die for our country's freedom from oppression; all this is the reason a certain group of oppressed Europeans left their homeland to come to this country in the first place! And yet there will always be a few who don't even understand these basic facts. And the corker of all this is that while our record of fidelity, morality, and ethics is unmatched, the records of those who have wanted us to be limited by *their* rules were always quite sad in these areas. I guess it gets down to their lack of guts to face how poorly their trip was working." They both paused for a minute.

Robert went on: "Back to the jealousy thing. My relationship with Abby is nonexclusive, but suppose I was seeing only her. There still wouldn't be any effect when she saw this other guy. Suppose I love her—which I do. Her being happy is positive to me, whether it happens with him or me. Now suppose I was 'in love' with her, which I am not. I'm defining 'in love' as the media-defined nonsense you see everywhere, and that people unfortunately insist on modeling their relationships after. If I was 'in love' with her, her happiness with me is good but her happiness with him is bad, upsetting, negative. In fact it even wrecks the good I feel when she's with me! Therefore the bads are much stronger than the goods. If you study the character of such a relationship, you

soon deduce the following: It's not about love—it's about dependence and attachment. It's not about caring, it's about possessing. And controlling. And owning. And hate.

"Now let's leave behind this hypothesizing about me and look at the general scene—let's examine Joe Normal's relationship with his girlfriend. The songs and movies about this subject illustrate the hate and dependence clearly, because the second she looks at or is with someone else, he gets full of hate for her. Once again, examine all these facts. What does all this add up to? To answer, think about what it resembles.

"When mothers are raising kids, each kid gets mad at her when she pays attention to anyone but themselves. (By the way, there are no young kids at Galaxy now, but when there were, there was very little of this phenomenon, because when mothers were otherwise occupied, the kids had plenty of people to turn to for nurturing, unlike non-Galaxy scenes. So what was there to be mad about?) In non-Galaxy scenes, the Freudian 'reality principle' is finding out that there's a delay between need and fulfillment, and that the mother is a separate person with needs of her own and others to care for. So sometimes kids have to do without, regardless of their crying and pain.

"In Galaxy, finding out that mother is a person with her own needs and interests creates relatively little discomfort, because kids also find out that she cares about them enough to make sure that someone else will be there for them, regardless. So the resultant character of Galaxy people is naturally compassionate, grateful, respectful, responsible, and loving. Finding out mother is a separate person is still a bit scary to a baby, but results in no trauma or hate, because we at Galaxy don't let this fact lead to deprivation and pain, but just a variation in sources of nurturing at times.

"Mothers *and fathers* are both primary caregivers of infants here (and occasionally other people help with this too), instead of just mothers. As a result, father isn't seen by baby as someone who takes mother away from baby, but as one who also loves and nurtures baby. So the negativity of orthodox Freudian 'psychosexual character development,' complete with necessary separation trauma and Oedipal complex desires for the killing of the father, has been pretty well eliminated here.

"I'm saying that if you raise kids like the Victorians did, with mother-only nurturing, sexist attitudes and policies, and strict authoritarian attitudes and discipline, then you're going to get the type of 'psychosexual' mess Freud described as normal. (But how the heck would he know what normals were like anyhow? He only studied negatively abnormal people!) But as we've shown here, if you raise kids Galaxy-style, you can avoid this stuff. Freud's work related wonderfully well to the negatively abnormal of his time (except that his Oedipal complex stuff is an erroneous sexualization of emotional issues due to his own personal psychological hangups), but in most ways is irrelevant to good child-raising practices of today. The family is changing. Fathers are beginning to nurture. Childcare is becoming an essential institution. Mothers work outside the home. Cottage industries are springing up where people can stay at home for at least some if not all of their work. This all helps to abolish women's previous incarceration and second-class citizenship, and fathers' separation from their kids—a step in the right direction.

"But the statistics on divorce, alcoholism, drug abuse, child abuse, and so on show that there's a long way to go here—there seems to be something vital missing in the normal American lifestyle. And of course I'm in a pretty good position to see what some of the missing ingredients might be.

"In Galaxy, the future is here now. It's obvious things need to go the Galaxy way anyhow, so why wait? We decided not to. And we're glad. As we've been able to demonstrate, the present lifestyle of most of the people in the country is simply at an awkward transitional stage between the past and the future. We're ALL headed for something much more benevolent, secure, fulfilling, happy, and responsible. It's the way the traffic is flowing. But it's taking many generations to get there. Some people will have to be dragged kicking and screaming into the new lifestyles. Galaxy defines the general character of where it's all going, but not necessarily the social or physical structure. We represent a way to have one's cake and eat it too.

"Traditions can either be part of the problem or part of the solution. We have normal nuclear families here at Galaxy and yet we've added the best part of extended

family potentials to the formula. We have high moral standards, and yet it has nothing to do with spankings, authoritarian oppression, and forcing reams of starched-collar religious beliefs down anyone's throats. The result of our Galaxy ways is the evolution of responsible, respectful, patriotic, compassionate people with the highest moral values around and whose family values would have brought tears of joy to the eyes of people like Ronald Reagan. And all we had to do was enhance our choices, space, rules, and relationship styles. It could have worked well even if we hadn't stuck to relatively normal nuclear family configurations. That should always be just a matter of personal preference, because in no way was that the key thing that made it all work. It was the increased nurturer alternatives, the P.E.T. relationship methods, and the high standards set by the elders of this place that made it all work.

"What I like about what all this implies for the future is that none of it goes against anyone's grain. Such ideas will work nicely with almost any type of people with almost any type of background or beliefs. The hardest part for a few will be to realize that the reason they're so adamant about authoritarian types of child rearing is *not that they so firmly believe in the validity of such an approach, or have any evidence for the validity of such an approach, but that they were so firmly conditioned by such approaches themselves that the idea that they could ever think logically and benevolently about child-rearing practices is out of the question. They're only being adamant because of how adamantly such practices were pounded into their brains when they were too young to understand what was happening.* This is a VERY simple concept but some will have difficulties with it at first, because they'll have trouble grasping the difference between feeling strongly about something because of how loudly it was screamed in their ears, and feeling strongly about something because they have good evidence that doing things a certain way will produce great results.

"The evidence is in on both the authoritarian and permissive lifestyles, as witnessed by all the horrifying statistics. The first makes kids angry, hateful, repressed, and less alive; the second makes kids conflicted, resentful, selfish, and disrespectful."

"So you want Galaxy to spread everywhere? Of course—how could you not?" observed Glen.

"Yes, but that thought is premature—I really don't know what to do about that. The concept is simple, but the method—I don't know—let's reserve that for later discussions; I'm still thinking and reading. Let's wait and see, okay? Okay, I've digressed again. And that's because my thinking is like 100 parallel processors in a computer (brains actually are parallel processors), going off in all kinds of directions simultaneously, I can tell—I can feel it, but my words, of course, must choose and stay with only one of these lines of thinking at once, like the CPU in your home computer—unless you have a multiprocessor.

"Going back to the jealousy and hate and possessiveness of being 'in love'—these add up to a regression back to infancy. You're trying to force a boy or girlfriend to be a mom or dad. You're angry when they won't. When a mom isn't there for an infant, he feels rejected and angry. In Galaxy someone else is there when mom isn't; there's still a bit of discomfort at first, but this doesn't last. It's just baby learning something new: That he is loved by all older people, not just mom. Hardly a big trauma. Anyway, boyfriends and girlfriends spend most of their time, after the first month or two of rosy illusions, arguing and fighting. Each is trying to control the other and to force the other to be a parent. The 'romantic' feelings are so strong because the 'lover' never really got needs filled as a child, so the relationship is unconsciously seen as a way to go back and get what was missed. It's no accident the word 'baby' has come up constantly in both 'love' songs and lover's communications. But 'lovers' resent it when their partners won't let them be themselves, and try to force them to be stand-in parents.

"There's another part of the process as well, which tends to further confuse the whole thing. To the degree needs *did* get filled when the 'lovers' were young, they will add another, healthier element to their relationship, exploring who they are, how they relate, what they want in life, what they could be, and how much they're willing to make commitments. This healthier and more responsible aspect of the relationship,

unfortunately, gets so mixed up with the infantile desires to control the other so they can successfully attach themselves as infants to parents, and so mixed up with the anger when the other balks at such a manipulation, that the relationship often leads away from awareness, growth, and fulfillment. Instead it leads toward hang-ups, upsets, identity confusion, insecurity, obsessions, and sometimes even hostile or life-threatening behavior. Or depression, alcoholism, drug abuse or suicide. You see there's a *lot* of pain in most people in the mom and dad areas, as far as not getting the love they needed. So the 'lover' thing can be like getting teased or mocked about extremely sensitive areas, areas full of pain, insecurity, and unresolved attachments. And of course, the media defines it all as being 'in love,' which is tacky at best.

"The bottom line is that because of their parents' child-raising errors, people later have to settle for the confusing, upsetting, painful, and rarely fulfilling phenomenon of 'falling in love' RATHER THAN REAL LOVE. This is why your mud puts your mind on Ben when you're with Wendy, and makes you feel jealous and uncomfortable—even angry."

"Wow—well, I knew it wasn't anything she was doing or he was doing; both were impossible. Thanks for telling me what can be done about it. I'm going to learn about stealing mud energy as soon as possible. You have any books that will help?" asked Glen.

"Yeah, no sweat. The mud will never know what hit it! One more truth about jealousy should be looked at, here. Jealousy is not about having your feelings hurt when you see your loved one with someone else. It's about resenting someone (Ben) blocking your act of *filling your inner emptiness with someone else* (Wendy), as if that other person would be a substitute for your own development of your (Glen) potentials and character and fullness. In such a normal state of emptiness, alienation, and dislike for oneself, one can easily see someone else as a desirable filling for one's emptiness. You hate it if someone threatens to block you filling your emptiness that way, because then it puts the responsibility for your growth and fulfillment in your hands again—you don't get to be lazy and cheat and stick in a replacement self. It's like a kid trying to get a friend to do his homework for him.

"It's very difficult to evolve any real responsibility, self-acceptance, or secure identity after the confusion and deprivation that normal childhoods are all about, so it's devastatingly tempting to want to cheat. In other words, jealousy is a function of emptiness and disliking oneself, and to the degree you're insecure or unhappy about who you are, you'll hate anyone who threatens your 'instant cure' for your plight. You see how this fits in with hating someone who might be a rival and 'take away your mother,' which was my first analysis of the jealousy thing? The first is a regression to childhood desperation for mother love and the second is a desperate attempt to escape emptiness and nonbeing by filling that emptiness with someone else's being. Neither is about love. Both contain hate, fear, insecurity, desperation and attachment. They're actually two sides of the same coin. You're empty and trying to fill that emptiness with someone else's being ONLY IF YOU WERE NURTURED INADEQUATELY WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG. Which leads us right back to the search for a mother to complete this nurturing. People form a secure, full self if nurturing is sufficient and the rules of the lifestyle engender responsibility and self-respect, and where sufficient choices are available so that a kid can define himself, be who he is and get love for that, and find out for himself what is true for him."

"Jeez, you don't pull any punches, do you?" asked Glen. "Am I really that empty and hopeless?"

"When the gas tank is on half, is it half empty or half full? I say that *any empty space in Glen is merely a Glen opportunity.* The easy emptiness 'remedy' is to 'fall in love' with Wendy, try to have her mother you and fill that emptiness all at the same time. It's the one you'd have tried if Wendy and I had given you the chance. Since she's so much more than most women, and is full of love and understanding, it's logical you'd be in more pain than most and really get crazy about it. Which we'd all dislike. We're not trying to interfere with your choices; far from it. We're trying to pull the rug out from under the mud and empower the Glen nonmud. Besides, *automatic, programmed behavior isn't choosing, it's surrender!* We're specifically trying to hold up a mirror for you to find Glen

in, and then support your actions that support what the real Glen is like. Anything else on our part would be irresponsible and dumb. And forget the 'hopeless' comment. The only course of no hope is if we'd allowed you to be run by past erroneous programming until you loathed yourself.

"I keep saying how important it is to let a kid 'find out for himself.' I mean it. But that must occasionally be qualified. You don't let a fourteen-year-old sexually experiment and 'find out for himself' about AIDS the hard way. You make darn sure he has been given all needed facts, and understands well the implications of anything out there that can traumatize, maim, kill, incarcerate, or devastate. It is only then that you let him go out and find out for himself. If he chooses things that wreck his life, there's nothing you can do. You can't keep him locked up to keep him from harm. The locking up itself is harmful, so it's no good. The good news about all this, however, is that if you've set a good example, and have been a nurturing parent with high personal standards, the kid will like himself too much to blow his life with drugs, AIDS risks, or whatever. It's only when a kid feels that life isn't really worth that much anyhow that he has to act out in such ways. So notice that I'm helping you see things that you may trip on, and I'm not trying to restrict your being with her—I'm encouraging it. But only as long as you feel ready to handle it. It's all up to you. Life is one big long beautiful CHOICE." Robert changed the subject.

"Incidentally, Glen, there is a guy, Abby's other boyfriend, whom I don't like much. No jealousy. But he's been a bad influence, pushing her to try dope, unsafe sex, and so on. She didn't buy it, but she didn't drop him immediately either. All I did about it, around her, was to tell her I felt concerned for her welfare because I cared about her. I didn't want her hurt. As things turned out, she dropped him and found a new third boyfriend. I'd passed her 'test.' She had wanted to know if I'd reject her, threaten her, lecture her, hate her, or scream at her—which is what her father so often did, of course. I never did, or wanted to do, any of these. I only expressed concern for her welfare. I gave her plenty of space to make her own decisions. This is the type of respect for her that she'd been looking for in a relationship. And it helped her respect herself, so now she avoids such irresponsible people."

Later that night Robert went to bed thinking about the "normal" family lifestyle, and how stubbornly ingrained it seemed to be. Soon he went to sleep and began dreaming:

He was examining a baby's room. The room contained nothing but two alphabet blocks, one on each side of the room, with a big space-divider screen between them. His mind-camera scanned the first block. There were words on three of the sides: *tank, can,* and *gallon*. The camera then zoomed over to the other side of the room and scanned the second block. It said *family* on one side. On another it said *nurturer*. On another it said *only mom*. He then heard crying. He looked around. He saw nothing. The crying got louder. He went over to the window and opened it. A baby was walking down the highway, carrying a gas can in its tiny little hand. A truck was coming down the road. He could see that it was going to hit the baby. He shouted. The truck kept coming. The baby kept walking. He screamed . . .

Robert woke up with a start. He was breathing fast and his heart was pounding. He thought about his dream, and he felt his dream feelings. Eventually he went back to sleep. As he dozed off, he was fondly remembering the time he and his dad gathered acorns in the woods to use for making little elves . . .

Chapter 9

"All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."
—Leo Tolstoy

"The truth shall make you free."
—The Bible (John 8:32)

"A bad neighbor is a misfortune, as much as a good one is a great blessing."
—Hesiod

Cheryl woke up a little early the next day because Petey, her parakeet, was scolding—the bird rarely did that except if she forgot to feed him. She went to his cage and asked him what he was upset about, in a soft, cooing voice. She put her finger through the cage wires to pet him. He often let her. But what he did this time was to bite her as hard as he could.

"Ouch!" she yelped, retracting her finger quickly. She watched him for an hour, trying to figure out the problem. But the riddle stayed unsolved, so she did some exercise, took a shower, and ate breakfast. Then she went back to him. He was on the bottom of the cage, pushing an egg around with his beak. So Petey wasn't a "he" after all! She had *thought* that Petey had been acting a bit strange lately. She went to her bookshelf and read up on eggs, nesting, etc. She wanted to know what to do.

Once she had finished reading, her mind wandered onto the way her pet had bitten her earlier. Animals relate to the world according to the way they FEEL. Cheryl's first instinct after being bitten was to react and scold Petey. Cheryl hadn't been treated fairly—she was only trying to pet her bird. But Petey was uncomfortable, being about to lay an egg, and Petey expressed her bird-feelings: I hurt. Petey would have acted the same with any creature she could get close enough to. Was biting Petey's way of expressing that she was angry with Cheryl? No. Bird's weren't that complex. Mostly, Petey had no other way besides scolding and biting to communicate her pain. She didn't have the ability to talk (intelligently), so she just acted instinctively. I feel bad. There's a finger. I'll bite it. And even this was an overcomplication. The bird was mainly just reacting blindly to her discomfort. The tendency to indulge in anthropomorphism and ascribe all kinds of complex human emotions to her pet was quite strong, but Cheryl managed to avoid doing it. Perhaps some nesting instincts were also operating, ones which told her to drive away anyone who got near her or her home, since there were about to be little ones. Who can say?

Suddenly Cheryl's pondering took a new direction. There was a poignant analogy here with the reality of human relationships. As she saw on TV and at friends' homes, when some momma is crabby and baby cries, momma is likely to scold, ignore, or resent baby. This momma is crabby for any number of reasons, anywhere from PMS to the cancellation of her favorite soap opera. Momma is experiencing pain, which normally gets magnified as it gets falsely associated with other pains she's experienced in her life. Momma is restimulated, on automatic, and in survival mode (Cheryl had learned much in her talks with Galaxy people). The little pains of the present associate with the bigger pains and deprivations of the past. Sometimes all this snowballs and momma becomes very angry at baby. Sometimes momma even slaps or shakes baby—the statistics were there, she knew, to demonstrate that this was a more common occurrence than anyone would like to admit. She thought of the bite from Petey. Then she thought of a slap from a momma. Then she thought of HER momma and of the other Galaxy people who'd helped to raise her. While it was true that everyone at Galaxy had experienced anger and frustration in their lives, Cheryl was deeply aware of the fact that, at Galaxy, this did not lead to abuse, but to the temporary replacement of oneself as a child's caregiver. Her momma's doing this for Cheryl when her mom was crabby had given Cheryl incredible respect for her mom. How her mom must love her to go to that much trouble for Cheryl!

And how this made her love her mom and other caretakers at Galaxy so much that—well, it was just too much to put into thought-words.

One of Galaxy people's biggest goals in relationships was to make sure that they were into moods compatible with the relationship in question, or to temporarily keep to themselves. This was a luxury that would have been difficult to implement in a normal isolated family scene, but at Galaxy it was second nature. Petey, then, Cheryl realized, was reacting quite similarly to most humans when she felt discomfort and struck out at the nearest object. A blind, primitive, survival reaction related to the reptile part of our minds. Lower animals don't even bother to think or feel "I am angry with you," as they act upon that nearest animal or thing. They just react. Humans often grab a convenient concept to rationalize their upset-ness; one such as "look how bad you are to have upset me this way," or "you're an evil Jew so this anger is just God's way of telling me that it is my duty to war against you," or "why aren't you more considerate to me?" Sometimes the concept is even irrefutably related to the feelings at hand, such as during muggings or when someone is insulted intentionally.

But, unfortunately, it's often the case that the concepts are only either slightly or not at all related to the feelings at hand. People rationalize the connection between the two. Momma, crabby with PMS, spanks her child "because he was so naughty to have explored the living room and left a mess." She forgot that it was her responsibility to move things she didn't want messed with up to higher shelves, and that if he isn't "supposed" to be somewhere, she should have set things up so that they worked out that way. Most of all, she forgot that HER CHILD'S DESIRES TO EXPLORE HIS WORLD AND FIND OUT FOR HIMSELF WHAT IT IS LIKE AND HOW TO RELATE TO IT ARE THE MOST NATURAL, GOOD, HEALTHY DESIRES IN THE WORLD. Cheryl couldn't wait to discuss some of her thoughts on all this with her sister Wendy. She'd known for several years how all this is related to the P.E.T. strategy of the use of I-statements and the use of active listening, but she wanted to expand on some of her ideas with her sister. Cheryl went to the door of Wendy's room. No "Alone" sign. She knocked . . .

After Robert woke up, he began paging through his high school yearbook. He found no one. Oh, there were people all right. But he was specifically looking for anyone at least somewhat similar to himself. Or the face of anyone he felt he could ask about the matter. No go there either. He was still bothered by two of Glen's recent statements; one, that Galaxy might be the only happy place on Earth, and two, that there didn't seem to be anyone remotely like Robert anywhere else, except for Galaxy people. Robert had responded that the odds are that there were probably lots more, a few in most towns, at the very least. But was this true? He evaluated the male and female friends he'd chosen, outside Galaxy. He'd purposely picked the most "together" ones.

They were unlikely to be cheerleaders, bathing beauties, sexpots, or jocks. These types got pathogenic amounts of indirect self-acceptance (and little opportunity for direct self-acceptance, i.e., learning to know and like themselves) and other-directed influences, as there were lots of parents and coaches who wanted/needed to manipulate them or live through them, because of their own emptiness, or because they thought it was their job. Such people got little support for their inner-directed, intrinsic feelings, motives, purposes, and identity strivings. If they "did their own thing" too much, it would make them too hard to live through. The beauties and the sports heroes were in the minority, but they got the majority of the attention, pats, smiles, and acknowledgements. However, they paid an ugly price for their adoration by others. The price was often their beings, their inner selves. Only the exceptionally strong beauty or jock could fend off all this ontological interference and psychological manipulation and R.D. Laing-ish mystification. The rest were easy meat for society's burger grinder. Everyone got what they needed from these people—everyone but themselves. If only the 90 percent of the student body, that wished they could be like or look like these people, knew the whole story, so that they could understand the burdens most of these "cream-of-the-croppers" had to bear. Perhaps then their pain and loneliness would be assuaged. Maybe the females would even cease putting an inch of make-up all over their faces, sort of like a

caricature of their heroines; or maybe the males and the females would even quit goofing around on Facebook obsessively, or constantly texting back and forth when they really had nothing worth communicating, when they'd much prefer being more creative or learning how to grow, to understand, to care. (Social networking did sometimes involve pragmatic issues or healthy identity exploration, but usually it was an obsessive and sometimes even desperate search for indirect self-acceptance.) If only these "left-out" kids felt and heard the tiny voice of their unconscious, the voice of a tiny child crying for his parent's attention, saying "Don't worry, Mom and Dad, I'll be a hero for you if it takes forever!"

Okay, he'd picked the most together ones for his friends. None were in the beauty or jock category. They were all somewhere *between* average and good looking. Below average often meant that the self-esteem was hopelessly low. Most of the fatties and scarecrows also fit this description, as did all of the uglies (that he knew about). So he avoided uglies or beauties, whether female or male. Halfway between average and beautiful, which was where he himself was at, seemed to be the most fruitful part of the continuum to search. They were "cool" enough to be able to like and accept themselves, but not so "cool" as to incur the tremendous burdens of the beauties and jocks. True, some of these people got huge pressures too, but their odds were better. It was easier for a parent to give up in disgust if their kid's exceptionality didn't manifest too grandly.

So, how together were these people (two male, three female)? He thought it over. Then he pondered their lifestyles. Four of five had lifestyles similar to Glen, with some aspects better and some worse. But the more he thought about these people, the more he tended to dump any "together" assessment. Their symptoms were merely a bit more hidden than most, and they seemed to be good at coping. They were good friends, but not very "together." However, there was one who seemed to have it quite nice, compared to everyone else—perhaps even as nice as Galaxy. He asked himself why he thought that. Did he really know? Would it be like the story of Glen's minister's family if he dug deeper? No. He was certain it wouldn't. As he added up Glen's and his statistics, not including anything about himself and Galaxy people, one family in 29 seemed to have its act pretty together even though Robert wasn't aware that that family had any real nurturing alternatives or P.E.T. rules. Robert couldn't stand the suspense about the significance of this situation, so he immediately called up Bruce Chang and invited himself over.

Robert talked with Bruce for two hours. Then he talked with Bruce's mom, his dad, his siblings and his parrot (the latter gave him no useful information at all!). After all this it was really obvious why Bruce's oriental family was working well. They'd dumped the harsher, more authoritarian aspects of their ethnic heritage, but retained the nicer ones, such as respect for other people (especially elders) and friendliness, and a live-and-let-live attitude. But most significant, for Robert's purposes, was the extended family tradition. Chang-family relatives lived on either side of them in separate houses. Another relative lived two blocks away. The obsessive, self-righteous, overly-dogmatic parts of the oriental honor codes had been dismissed, but honor for being a good person and taking great care of one's family was as strong as ever. Now *this* was cultural evolution. An Americanized oriental tradition isn't necessarily going to be viable; recall the Chinatown street gangs. But a tradition that is blended with another *wisely*, where it takes the best from both and leaves the rest behind, as in dialectical synthesis, can be true cultural evolution and progress, at least for those wise enough to pull it off.

This was getting exciting! Robert had discovered another Galaxy, in a way. His questions had led him to the conclusion that they too used the alternative nurturer strategy when the designated one was busy. And though there were no P.E.T. rules, both responsibility and respect were omnipresent here, so perhaps some of the more positive oriental traditions were a good P.E.T. clone. Upon asking, he learned that choices, self-responsibility and lack of nagging were already strong oriental traditions. Why hadn't he learned this about Bruce before? Why hadn't Bruce mentioned this before? The answer, as he remembered his relationship with Bruce, was obvious. When he had been with Bruce, he'd been able to just be, and not be helping, explaining, understanding, etc. It

was like being with a Galaxy person, in a way. Bruce didn't need him, except for Geometry and Trigonometry help, that is. But Bruce was so likable that he was just fun to be with, period. Robert had someblindhow missed the significance of Bruce's being a together guy, and the Chang family wisdom.

Robert still had most of the day ahead of him. It was Saturday noon. He had the morning off at Burger King. He searched his mind for any more well-working lifestyles. No go. There were four high schools in town. He knew the principal of his too well to bother with him, but he asked around and got the names of the other three principals. Then he looked up their phone numbers and called them. The first two that he reached were oblivious to people's subtleties, he could tell easily. One equated 'being together' with good grades! Give me a break, thought Robert. The next thought it was a crank call and hung up. The third at least understood what he meant: Robert was looking for incredibly mature people because he was going to compare their lifestyles and see if there was a common factor underlying their exceptional maturity. Robert didn't say anything to anyone about being a together person himself. He knew that would raise eyebrows, if not defenses.

"Sounds like a great project, Peterson. You doing summer make-up work or what?"

"Will you still help if I'm only doing it to learn something unrelated to school?" asked Robert.

"Sure, but you have to promise to phone back with the results—you've got me curious. Any theories on the common denominator?"

"Alternative nurturers to lessen or eliminate emotional deprivation, and P.E.T.-type rules to give people space to evolve respect, responsibility, and solid identities."

"Sound thinking, Peterson. I've read P.E.T. and I even try to active-listen with troubled students," said Ray Smithers.

"I'm glad to hear that. Well, do you think you can track down some names of likely candidates for me?"

"No problem. Let me think, stare at a few yearbooks, call our school counselor, and call you back in an hour—what's your number?"

Robert gave Ray the number and waited, while he finished a book he was reading. An hour later Ray gave four names to Robert. Robert called them and told them what he was doing, but when they asked why, he felt a little silly saying "he just wanted to find out," since students mostly relate to grades, credits, and brownie points, not curiosity. Buckminster Fuller's encouragement to "go out and find out for yourselves" wasn't exactly gospel to most kids. But they were all intrigued enough to talk to him. To make a long story short, over the next few days he visited and got to know the person, and lifestyle of the person, for each name on his list.

Two had situations somewhat analogous to Robert's. One was poor and black and lived in a tenement in a cruddy part of town. The way this tenement was built gave him and his neighbors great access to one another. There were about 16 other families living there. It turned out that a lot of the people there were not good nurturing choices or friend choices. But about a third of them were, and they lived in proximate apartments on the top two floors. The key to the adults' success at creating a decent, nurturing environment for their kids was to help each other out relative to nurturing, baby-sitting, advice, and even material aid to a degree. The respect and responsibility in evidence came from three places: benevolently authoritarian parents, using relationship techniques they'd encountered in the book *Human BE-ing* , by William V. Pietsch (the book was in many ways a P.E.T. clone with illustrations, and the "together" group were making extensive use of its ideas), and pride that they hadn't let everything and everyone go to hell like their lower-floor neighbors. The authoritarianism was firm, but still pretty gentle and lenient, relatively speaking. For instance, his subject's mother seemed so sweet and benevolent that Robert felt that the authoritarian context was mostly just a tradition—the letter, but not the spirit. The kids seemed to behave well because of love and respect for her, and any blustering from her seemed like mere theatrics to make life more interesting.

The second person was female and young, so he had to be cool so as not to alarm her or her family by giving them the idea that he was "looking for love in all the wrong places," as the song goes. She was only 15. What worked more than anything to keep the guard dogs at bay, so to speak, was the premise of "what a together family they must have, to have been recommended by the principal as a subject of study." Regardless of the fact that everyone was self-conscious about his questions, Robert did learn what had made this family work so nicely:

They ran a ritzy, 48-unit motel a mile south of town. It had started 23 years ago. Since then, the original owners and managers, now grandma and grandpa, had retired and put the motel in the hands of their sons, the present managers. The youngest son was the father of the 15-year-old girl in question. So there were three generations of this family represented at the Starlight Motel, all in adjacent motel units. Units 43-48 were not only off limits to the public, they were fenced off from the other units and had private parking, but more importantly, an added-on, enclosed, common hallway from units 43 to 48. Grandma and grandpa had two-bedroom unit 48. In two-bedroom unit 47 were the eldest son and his wife. In two-bedroom unit 46 were the eldest son's two children. In three-bedroom unit 45 were the younger son's three kids. In two-bedroom unit 44 were the younger son and his wife. In three-bedroom unit 43 were one married sister of the youngest son, her husband, and the youngest son's unmarried sister.

The youngest son, now co-manager, had done the P.E.T. course locally, and practiced it with his kids. Finally, it was interesting to note that the way the six units had been given a common hallway had the effect of making the entire six-unit configuration act as one big home, complete with plenty of privacy as well as plenty of nurturing possibilities for any child. So their extended family worked, gave people lots of choice, space, nurturing, friends, and a very interesting and dynamic lifestyle.

It should be noted that these were normal, conservative, nuclear families. There was nothing radical or even liberal about their lifestyle. It was conservative, even though one son used P.E.T. techniques. Recall that one of the effects of P.E.T. is more respectful, responsible, moral, ethical kids, who are strong and independent, yet extremely loyal to their family. These were *conservative* goals! Even though more liberal people wanted this too, they didn't go so far as to define their politics this way, all under the heading of *family values.* But conservatives did. Liberals might be more inclined to label their most important goals flexibility, sensitivity, freedom, openness, compassion, and a creative, dynamic, and nurturing environment.

Also, just because these nuclear families were adjacent, and there was an extended family format to nurturing, doesn't mean that they were anything but normal nuclear families. In truth, they were normal nuclear families that just happened to be in a position to enjoy an enhanced physical configuration and enhanced relationship potentials. They had more choices and more ways to make things work, thrive, and flourish than other nuclear families.

The third and forth persons that Ray had recommended were a puzzle at first—even an enigma. There were no signs of extended family structure, nor were there lots of nurturing choices. But Robert got his nose to the grindstone in each case and stuck with it. He solved the mysteries and took lots of notes about how these two kids managed to get on the principal's "together person" list.

The third person, a 17-year-old girl, seemed to have no unusual environmental advantages. But Robert probed the mystery further—it took hours. She thought he was being weird at first. But as he got her thinking with all her might about early recollections, nurturing patterns, relationships, familiarization with P.E.T or similar methods of attaining effective parent-child relationships, etc., she finally began to come up with "relevant data," as it were.

It seems that she was not aware of anything being exceptional about herself, her environment, or her past nurturing. She was surprised the principal had selected her. On a hunch, Robert asked her to describe what she thought the average family in town was like. She did. It was a very pretty picture, and there was a minimum of fighting or hostility. People were very nurturing and understanding and so on. This Disney-ish

perspective was her picture of the average, normal family. It also fit her family. It all seemed to show that an average family with two kids, and mom and dad working, could work just peachy.

Was this the family that Glen had sought and never found? Did they disprove his theory that one needed more than a normal nuclear family to really make things work well, a theory that had been validated over and over again in his experience? (Hillary Clinton's book, *It Takes a Village*, has some good stuff in it, whether or not one agrees with her left leanings in other areas, he thought.) If he hid outside the door, would they turn into what Glen's minister's family turned into? He even asked her *that!* She looked at him oddly and then smiled and asked him if he wanted to peep on them. He laughed and then she laughed and this kept up for awhile, and when it finally stopped, she told him about her maid and the wonderful daycare center she went to from ages one to eleven. The former was the nicest lady in the world who had baby-sat her often when she was between one and five years old. Also, both her mom and dad were primary nurturers for her and her brother. The father was a great nurturer, just as unconditionally loving as the mother. Both parents had an Unconditional Parenting book which they consulted for parenting advice. It's one of the best democratic parenting methods around. And the daycare was heaven, with lots of loving adults who were very kind.

The reason she'd had so much difficulty coming up with what Robert was looking for is that she took all this for granted, did NOT see her parents, her maid, or her daycare as exceptional, and figured that most people had something like that. (From her descriptions, her parents, daycare, and alternately nurturing maid were all in the top one percent of the nurturing scale, compared to similar aspects of nurturing in other families.) She also believed that Disney movie families were representative of what the average family was like, except "real people don't really argue that much"!

In between persons three and four, Robert asked himself what he had just learned. It came down to this: if every detail of a normally-structured family with normal, nonextended nurturer possibilities was very close to optimal, and the needed nurturing was there in some form or another, then there is a good possibility that together kids will result. Comparing June's (that was her name) lifestyle with the normal, using scores, we might get:

June	Score	average, normal	Score
3 primary nurturers when young	30	One primary nurturer	10
all nurturers highest quality	10	nurturers: average quality	5
nurturer choice often available	20	no choices	0
daycare has great nurturers	25	daycare: average nurturers	10
Total	85	Total	25

These scores would both compare badly with Robert's probable 150-200 score for his lifestyle, but there was no doubt why June's lifestyle seemed so successful compared to normal ones. Based upon what he now knew, he estimated that there were somewhere between 0.001 and 0.01 percent of lifestyles working as well as his or Bruce's, and 0.1 to one percent working as well as the tenement and motel scenes he'd just evaluated, and one to two percent working as well as June's lifestyle. He considered June's lifestyle the *optimal unenhanced lifestyle success possibility.* This was going to define for him the concept of the limitation on how good it could get without any actual structured lifestyle enhancements that took advantage of extended family nurturer opportunities or multifamily nurturer opportunities. Multifamily nurturing possibilities could consist of scenes like the tenement, where many of the families that helped each other were unrelated, or the apartments (including Glen's) at Galaxy that contained related or unrelated people who contributed to the nurturer possibilities and the overall benevolence of the Galaxy environment.

Finally Robert got to the last person. He was a 16-year-old fellow who was certainly "together" for his age, but he seemed a bit sad. This guy didn't seem to have

any special environmental advantages relative to nurturing, and he was an only child. There'd been no special maids, no especially good daycare. His only people resources were a couple of friends and his parents. This didn't add up, and began to look like an even more difficult puzzle than June, because how could the guy get himself so together by age 16 with such a normal scene?

He finally had to resort to seeing if his parents could shed any light on things. They seemed like very together people, sort of like Galaxy people, and they took the responsibility of consulting the book, *The Winning* Family, when needed. Winning Family Lifeskills is one of the best Dreikurs-based, non-P.E.T., democratic and authoritative parenting methods around. However, they seemed a bit depressed. Perhaps everyone was having a bad day. But, after further investigation, he determined that the parents themselves had both lived in the same Galaxy-like scene when they were growing up, and since they were from two, separate, unrelated families, there was no reason for them not to get married. There wasn't enough room for them to raise a family there, so they moved out on their own and soon their son was born. They were in a different town now. It was a 90-minute drive to their place of upbringing, so there was no way for them to use any alternate nurturing sources there, for their son, except on monthly visits, which is what they did. Also, they themselves personally needed the additional friendships and human contacts offered at their old apartment building. They'd tried to find appropriate friends in their new community, but their experience resembled Glen's: There was a lot of confusion, sadness, frustration, insecurity, and meanness out there, with all the expected symptoms. Robert asked them if there was any way for them to return to the old locale or start their own Galaxy (he used other words), but neither was feasible. There still wasn't room enough anywhere near the old place; their jobs pinned them down in the new place; and they hadn't run into a single person whom they deemed appropriate for the formation of a local Galaxy. With the exception of Robert, himself, they mentioned. So they really did have Galaxy-sharp insight into people.

Robert now saw what had happened: A couple of people, together as could be, but naïve relative to what the rest of the world was like, moved out of paradise and had a child and thought how lucky they were to be living in this, "the best of all possible worlds," as it were. Soon the illusions popped like balloons, and they decided not to have any more children, and they became morose.

Were they "spoiled" and therefore unready for the "real world"? Or were they just stunned and waiting to meet some people like themselves but it never happened? Robert could see that finding out how most of the people of the world treat one another was a profound event for these people. In spite of all this, however, they provided their child with the best possible nurturers, making sure that one of them was always there for him, all the while looking for great baby-sitters, maids, daycare or whatever, but finding nothing impressive. At least they made a monthly Sunday visit to the old place, for their sake and the boy's, but they were never that happy or fulfilled. Robert had a feeling that by the time the boy, his subject, grew up and got married and had a family, much of the special awareness and exceptional compassion that had been the rule for what would then be his children's grandparents would have "worn off," failing to pass itself down from one generation to the next. There was already a sign of this: his subject was not very social—even avoiding social networking and texting obsessions. In most other ways he had a special type of "togetherness" that Robert recognized as originating somehow in a Galaxy-type scene. But he was sad.

What Robert learned from all this is that scenes that really work are so rare that all people in them should use the Internet to network and communicate with each other (within and between scenes) and recognize the *difference* between their scenes and normal scenes, and then vow to try to pass on the miracle in all ways possible, rather than have it slowly diffuse and evaporate, as it had been doing for the last family, as generations moved on. Other thoughts and feelings were trying hard to surface in Robert's mind, but his head was swimming with all this research so none of these things quite made it to consciousness.

So, as he promised, Robert called Ray and gave him a full report, saying that he'd confirmed his hypothesis about the "together" kids having enhanced nurturing opportunities and choices, way beyond average, and either some form of P.E.T.-type procedures, or something like them that creates a great context for responsibility and self-respect to evolve. Then he let Ray know of his statistical estimates about together and untogether kids, exceptional environments, lifestyles that really work, and variations of same, and finally his estimated "optimal unenhanced lifestyle success possibility" limit, as defined by June's scene.

Ray replied: "So things are really that depressing out there, are they? And lifestyles that really work are probably less than two percent of the total? You know, Peterson, part of me wants to scoff at your estimates. However, the rest of me recalls my experiences with thousands of high school kids for over 16 years. And as much as I'd like to deny it, I think you've probably hit it on the button." He thanked Robert for reporting the results to him. Then Robert thanked Ray for his cooperation and told him that he was a swell guy. Finally Ray asked Robert if there were anything in particular that seemed to be holding everyone back from getting their acts together.

Robert thought about it for a bit, then said: "The thing that keeps trying to come up for me here is a quote from no less than Pogo: 'We have met the enemy and he is us.'"

"I hear you, Robert."

"Ahah, principals *can* use students' first names without turning into pillars of salt!" Robert joked.

Ray laughed and thanked Robert again and then bid him goodbye.

That night, as Robert was trying to fall asleep (it seemed to be harder and harder to do lately), Pogo's quote kept running through his mind. What the heck were people doing to each other on Planet Earth? And why? God, if only they could see how much more was possible, how really wonderful it could be . . .

Chapter 10

"Men willingly believe what they wish."
—Julius Caesar

"I am not at all the sort of person you and I took me for."
—Jane Welsh Carlyle

"My son, may you be happier than your father."
—Sophocles

"The reason grandparents and grandchildren get along so well is that they have a common enemy."
—Sam Levenson

"Last time I tried to make love to my wife nothing was happening, so I said to her, 'What's the matter, you can't think of anybody either?'"
—Rodney Dangerfield

"Eighty percent of married men cheat in America. The rest cheat in Europe."
—Jackie Mason

"I have found little that is good about human beings. In my experience most of them are trash."
—Sigmund Freud

"I drink to make other people more interesting."
—George Jean Nathan

"One hundred thousand lemmings can't be wrong."
—Graffito

"I think it would be a good idea."
—Mahatma Gandhi when asked what he thought of Western Civilization

Glen entered his front door quietly and proceeded to his father's room. There he was, on his bed. He was taking his Sunday afternoon nap. But it was 4 P.M. so he'd be waking up about now, thought Glen. Glen lay down on his mother's bed, a few feet away.

"What do YOU want?" proved that Dad was already awake. Glen told him, without being prodded, about his current job status, and that he had his eyes open for anything extra. Before his dad had a chance to complain about what he'd just heard, Glen told him that he'd met some great people, had some great talks, and had started to pull himself together. Naturally, Dad tried to change the course of the conversation in the direction of "why Glen wasn't looking even harder for a job rather than wasting time shooting the breeze with friends," but Glen kept trying to explain to Dad how important his present lifestyle was for him *personally*. He'd needed room to think, breathe, and grow, and he now had it and he was happy. Of course, his dad took that as a put-down of the family home, so he sat up and began to rant and rave—habits die hard. Glen was staring at the ceiling, and part of him got all tight and sick feeling, but another part held up a sign saying "the guy's trying to find out if anyone cares about how he feels."

Glen felt a tremble in his voice as he active-listened with his dad for the first time in his life: "So you feel that I'm only telling you this stuff as a way of putting down our home here?" It was the hardest thing Glen ever did—it meant that he had to control his anger, his hopelessness, his victim-trip vibes, and his resentment. Dad kept on ranting until Glen, now sitting up, got out two more active-listening questions. The third one did the trick. His dad was *very* eager to express his feelings on not just his

disappointment with Glen, but with his home life, his job, and life in general. Glen kept encouraging the catharsis, and his dad used the opportunity to the hilt. He even allowed some of his feelings to manifest in ways other than anger. Loneliness, fear that life was passing him by, guilt about his affair, and disappointment that having kids wasn't the joy it was cracked up to be; all these surfaced in the next couple of hours.

Glen knew that he'd be causing dinner to be late, but he'd informed Mom of his intentions so she'd still have dinner on the stove, keeping it warm, no matter when they came out of the bedroom. By the time Dad's available feelings were expressed, nearly three hours had passed. He'd watched his father begin perking up for the last five minutes as he finished with his family disappointment feelings. Glen felt that his dad had reached the limit of his unburdening, for the moment, so he mentioned how he'd been around a couple of dozen other families around town, and that theirs was above average. Dad said that he didn't believe him, that he was just trying to make him feel better. Glen swore it was absolutely true, and pointed out that the *Leave It To Beaver* families on the old TV shows dad liked are so far from reality it was unreal. This got his father quietly thinking for a minute, after which he changed the subject.

"So you really like your apartment, huh?"

"Yeah, it's great—more than I ever could have hoped for," said Glen. "I'm taking important steps toward growing up, taking responsibility for myself, and becoming a real person there."

"You sound funny. It doesn't sound like you."

"I can see how you'd feel that way. The last time you saw me I was nobody. In fact, you could say that my name was 'mud.'" A tiny smile played across Glen's face. "I've since decided that me being mud isn't good enough for me. I'm beginning to see how much more there is to me than that. The last time you saw me, there was no me to see. I was a 'sad sack' *victim*. That's not a person; it's a symptom. And a month ago I'd have blamed it all on you and the chaos around this place. But I've started to grow wiser than that. It's not your fault. I was just too damned scared to take control of my life and put the responsibility for my choices on my own shoulders. So not only do I absolve you from all responsibility or guilt, but I'd like to say that I admire your loyalty. You've stuck with this family for twenty years, even if it did make you crabby sometimes. I couldn't have done it, if I were you. There's too much arguing, confusion, and distraction—I'd have split. But you stuck by us. How'd you manage that, Dad?"

"I don't know." He paused. "What else could I do?"

"You cared," Glen pointed out.

"Of course, Glen —"

"Thanks for caring, Dad," said Glen, and he hugged his dad. His dad hugged him back. Afterwards, Glen could see the tears in his dad's eyes. Like the ones in his own, he thought.

They went to dinner. Mom could tell what had happened—it showed in her face. She was obviously very proud of her son. She gave Glen's hand a squeeze as he passed, beaming with love for him. Glen laid a P.E.T. book on the kitchen counter behind him as he sat in his place.

"A little present for the family," he said. "Hey, little sister, care to pass the potatoes down this way?"

Glen had just finished telling Robert about his amazing adventure at home. Robert had congratulated him on his success. They noted that the *way* people related was surely the key to it all. Suppose he'd either clammed up or gotten mad? Relationship was not about saying and doing the first thing that occurred to one. It was about doing what worked. It was about feelings, space, empathy, and compassion. It was about aiding feelings to be a force for knowing one another, so that discussions could be about learning, understanding, and making agreements and rational decisions. Otherwise, feelings would support mud forces, irrationality, oppression, misunderstandings, self-deception, and sometimes abuse or violence between people.

Then Glen noticed the books all over Robert's room. "Hey, school's *out*, Robert!" Glen kidded.

"Not for me; I've been researching how much people know and have written about the basics of nurturing, as well as studies on multiple parenting, shared parenting, and so on. There's a lot to go through. It's a good thing I'm a speed reader."

"So this is a follow-up to the study you told me about yesterday, that you did on the four exceptionally together people?" asked Glen.

"In a way. That was more evidence that, in the absence of deprivation or oppression or nagging or orders, people's minds don't get clogged up with mud, in the form of hang-ups, barriers, pain, fear, anger, frustration, resentment, and so on. As a result, normal de-genius-ing, making them normally neurotic and 'dumb,' doesn't happen. They stay smart and together, like they were born (although they don't know much when they're born, they do have a mind whose computer has few barriers, short-circuits, and pain loops, unless the birth itself is bad, which can be prevented with natural childbirth and Leboyer methods). As long as their environment fills their needs, facilitates taking responsibility for themselves, is loving and understanding, gives them space for their feelings, is stimulating, and contains enough information, they'll likely stay 'born geniuses.' My empirical research supports all this.

"My library research shows that people, even the smartest ones, haven't managed to put together all that they know and have it add up to something. Each author comes up with a piece of the knowledge that is required to know how to create a lifestyle that will really work—there are quite a few great parenting books, for instance. But putting all the insights together in one place and adding it all up, and concluding that a Galaxy-like scene is the most likely lifestyle for successful nurturing and the successful producing of together people—this hasn't been done by any author I've run into. It's funny. They get so close. You could just swear that the very next logical sentence they're going to write is the full answer to all this. But they always go off on a tangent. It's the forest through the trees. When the forest becomes incredibly obvious, it becomes *too* easy to see what it all adds up to, so they miss it—the doggone trees are in the way.

"But, of course, it's their childhood lifestyle conditioning that causes them to miss it. Logic doesn't come through when mud is in the way. Being sure that Mom and Dad's way is preordained from above and is good and right, and all other ways are bad and wrong, is simply another definition of *enculturation*, where culture is inculcated into a culture's members. Wouldn't it be wonderful if people benevolently passed on only what was shown to *work well,* as opposed to indiscriminately passing on whatever got passed on to them as kids? You should hear about some of the cultures I've been reading about. They're based on hate, or fear, or rejection, or teasing, or other forms of emotional abuse. Not one of these people seems to question passing on such horrible traditions to the next generation. Again, if Mom and Dad taught it, it must be right. The most compassionate cultures and the most hateful and mean cultures pass on traditions as if they're gospel. People reconsidering the value of their traditions are very rare. (Recall the Putney quote in the drive-in movie?)"

"Well, if your research isn't finding people who truly figure out how to make lifestyles work, what *is* it finding?" asked Glen.

"People—even conservatives—are beginning to drop their mother-only nurturing theories and see the tremendous advantages of shared parenting (husband and wife both as primary nurturers, with both working, as well), and multiple nurturing in which grandparents or others help. They're beginning to redefine the normal nuclear family as a two-earner, rather than a one-earner family, since the working woman family is now in the majority. Apartment complex builders are sometimes including special daycare facilities so that childcare can be overseen better and can be more convenient because it's right with the living units. And extended family housing units are being built more. And daycare is being seen less as a generically negative factor in children's development (as a child-neglect symptom), and more as a factor that can EITHER enrich or deprive, depending upon the quality of the particular daycare facility in question. Babysitting co-ops are forming, also.

"Daycare is an institution whose time has now come, rather than a stop-gap measure for mothers. The terrific value of GOOD daycare is being realized, while at the same time, ways of weeding out the bad ones are being sought. They're beginning to change federal programs and agencies to reflect the realities of the normal 21st century family. Old fuddyduddies, pretending that most of the families around are traditional nuclear families (husband works, wife stays home, mothers and cleans), are being laughed at—only a very small minority of families fit that profile anymore.

"What's happening here is readjustment to a new family demographic. What's also happening here is a rational response to what's been learned from lots of studies about both shared and multiple parenting, as well as studying the personalities of children raised without many caregivers, with husband and wife caregivers, with wife and grandmother caregivers, with extended-family caregivers, and with single-parent caregivers.

"Most traditional nuclear families where mothers stay home all the time are one-parent caregiving situations most of the time, in most ways. Mother and child both suffer in these situations, compared to many of the other situations. This traditional scene does usually beat a single-parent scene, however, with respect to quality and quantity of care and personality of the child. The cases in which it does not beat the single-parent family scenes as often are the ones where the single parent is receiving lots of community, neighborhood, or relative support in child raising, so the woman is not isolated and 'incarcerated' with her kids. Where the mother is socially isolated, the likelihood of abuse or rejection of kids is much higher. It's been shown that isolated women who are stuck with all the childcare are usually bad nurturers, resentful, and angry, and tend to take out their anger on kids.

"They've shown that stem-family (parents, kids, one set of grandparents) nurturing is the best of all, usually, with shared parenting (where Mom and Dad share caregiving) next best, and traditional nuclear family next best, and single parenting last. The kid needs choices, as well as alternate nurturers, because no mother ever has been or ever will be a nurturing person ALL THE TIME. Galaxy could have told them which of these would come out best many decades ago. But we have to be patient because psychological anthropologists are just now realizing this.

"On the other hand, there are a few additional factors that you have to keep in mind. For instance, there are some great, fully-nurturing African cultures that use extended family structures to assure that the children experience no deprivation. The kids are secure and happy and trusting and social and so on. But there are also extended family cases where the quality of nurturing is low. Some extended family structures have quite adequate care, but there is no love; often such families have crowded dwellings where higher levels of emotion would cause jealousy and chaos, so caregiver-child interactions are less stimulating and intense than in our culture, which values individual initiative, independence, and liveliness. Valuing conformity and dependence and peace above the values just mentioned, these other cultures have to nurture differently, to support their culture's values. Sometimes care comes from older siblings who are relatively crude caregivers. There are so many studies. You can find almost any combination of quality of nurturing and quantity of caregivers. One of the combinations you won't find is excellent care from isolated mothers who have no help.

"The bottom line here is that, all else being equal, having a greater number of deeply caring adults around is much better than a lesser number, for nurturing, need-filling, personality, security, identity, and socialization. In other words, Galaxy scenes have the most potential to nurture and encourage the development of together people. However, Galaxy-like scenes wouldn't work if they were configured as a crowded hut with 10 or 20 people residing in it—or a commune, for that matter. The kids as well as the adults would be better off if they reduced the numbers to conform to the configuration in more normal extended family households, because crowding creates aggression, frustration, and reduced nurturing quality. If there is adequate room and people each have their own place to be and the adults get along well, there is no intrinsic liability to

larger numbers, however, unless people try to nurture too many kids at once or there are too many nurturers of one kid, simultaneously.

"When parents do shared parenting, one at a time, the kid benefits and this alternate nurturing situation beats traditional mom-only scenes all hollow. When they try to nurture at the same time, or 'double-parent,' the kid may get confused by it. So they need to return to one-at-a-time care. The two methods are called 50-50 (best) and 100-100 (not as good) parenting. Shared parenting, it has been shown, is best done in the one-at-a-time style, which moms and dads like better anyway."

"Another danger in any type of scene is thinking that kids always NEED someone. Some parents *NEED their kids* quite desperately, because they don't like their lives as individuals, or because they're trying to get the kid to 'love' *them*, so they smother and overwhelm him. This is a grievous error. The kid needs and wants to be alone sometimes, so he can develop his separate identity. He'll somehow let parents know when he needs that. The biggest thing an older child needs is himself. Some mothers find it hard to let go.

"The ideal is choice here. Be available so the kid can choose you, an alternate, OR himself. That's the magic formula. Smothering has never been a Galaxy problem, as we always stay in contact with and respect the indicated choices of babies, kids, AND adults. We're sensitive to where others are at, and we can read babies' cues when they indicate a preference to be alone or with someone else. We've found that babies prefer one-at-a-time nurturers for intimacy and caregiving, but often any number when they're playing—it depends on the type of playing, too. And we've set up the nurturing situation so that it's a choice. As soon as the baby is old enough to indicate in some form or another whom he wants to be with, we pick up on it and try to fill that desire. If the person is gone or has an 'Alone' sign out, we take the baby to whomever else is available.

"Our schedules here used to be worked out so that no less than two possible nurturers were around at all times. A baby acting like it wanted someone else would be taken to the other choice, or sometimes we'd see if an older sibling would please the kid, as long as the sibling was open to the idea, of course. Whatever the baby liked best. The minute a kid got mobile, we'd make sure about safety gates on stairways and then we'd teach about 'Alone' signs and then allow the kid to go to whichever person at Galaxy he wanted to. He'd knock and usually be let in, if no 'Alone' sign was up and the person was in. Occasionally someone would not be into seeing a kid, even though no 'Alone' sign was up. That person would gently inform the kid that they were busy now, and give a rough estimate of their next available time for nurturing—like 'maybe tomorrow,' and then give the baby a hug and send it on down the line."

"Sounds like rejection, sort of," observed Glen.

"No, and I'll tell you why not. First of all, the kid had two or more people designated as his nurturers at that time—usually his mom or dad was one of these, but not always. Most of the adults here feel like moms or dads to all of the kids—of course, our youngest is 12 now so there are no more nurturer designations. So it wasn't as though the kids were toddling around starved for love. The truth is, they were toddling around looking for adventure, to explore, to learn, to 'see the Galaxy,' as it were.

"As you'll see if you read authors like Maslow, if a kid gets really secure, he'll be ripe to take the risks of exploring and learning, and he'll want to 'find out for himself,' as Fuller says. If a kid is insecure, he'll stay right there with his caregiver, shy and afraid, as the risk of exploration would be too scary.

"But the most important thing here is that the kid was learning the basics of choice and responsibility. First, there were two or more people who were ready to nurture him. And he could choose which one he wanted to be with, by vibes when real young, by words or toddling *to* the person later. Second, when a baby was toddling around exploring, it wasn't out of need, but desire. A needy baby would stay with its designated caregiver(s). Usually a parent and one other adult or adolescent were designated, though sometimes it was two nonparents and sometimes it was both parents.

"Schedules revolved around what people desired (choice), what the various employment schedules were, and also whom the baby had shown the most preference for

in the past. So, as much as possible, we tried to get the baby cared for by whom the baby wanted to be with most, and we tried to have the person do it who wanted to most. In the first year, moms and babies spent about half their time around one another, by mutual choice, but after that, anything was possible.

"Cheryl 'adopted' me when she was two and I was eight, for instance. I loved it. Bob headed for Bert half the time from age one on, and Bert isn't even much of a nurturer. Bert is a builder. He'd build models, games, and toys—he has a special room for all that. To Bob, Bert's workroom is Wonderland. He's 14 now and *still* loves to go there. Bert relates to things better than people, so he's our resident wizard. Secure babies and younger children and even adolescents often went down there, and we still do, to see 'what's shakin'.'

"Bert doesn't use his 'Alone' sign. He doesn't ever seem to mind company; in fact he seems to really like it. But he's not the baby-on-the-lap type. He would always have everything he was working on high enough so young ones couldn't hurt it, or themselves. He had other things, which he didn't care about anymore, low enough so that kids could get at them and do their thing. Or they could watch him work or ask questions."

"And if they cried for attention?" asked Glen.

"That was clear from the start. Our policy on that, paradoxical as it seems, was that that was wonderful for kids' development. Eventually, every kid would try to get nurturing from Bert. But all they got was conversation or a neat place to play or a neat thing to watch. So they'd cry a little to test him. He'd just keep working. Eventually they'd go back to their nurturer and get what they needed. Then they'd often come back to Bert!"

"So is he a meanie or what?" asked Glen.

"No, he likes everyone here a lot, and says he's never been happier. But he sees visitors as playmates or friends, not people to take care of. There's plenty of people like that in the world. Galaxy has Bert. He's a great 'playmate.' But what I was getting at is that we consider him an extremely valuable part of Galaxy. He's a godsend relative to learning choice and responsibility."

"I think I have this figured out," interrupted Glen. "Kids are responsible for their choices. If they choose Bert for nurturing, when it clashes with who he is, they experience the consequences of their actions: no nurturing. Crying doesn't make Bert become what they want him to be. So they learn to choose good nurturers for nurturing and Bert for an adult playmate. If they choose unwisely, they experience the results of the choice—the natural consequences."

"Perfect!" applauded Robert. "The combination of Bert and other people temporarily not into nurturing puts the *adventure* into exploring and the *risk* into relating here at Galaxy. You find out that others weren't put here on Earth just to take care of you. They have their own needs and desires and relationships. And if, in the past, toddler Robert came to Dora's door, for example, and after I knocked I heard 'sorry, not today,' then my learning experience and adventure was that 'Dora was too busy to be with Robert today.' If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen. Rather than having a tantrum, I'd either go on to another adventure or retreat back to the security of my present caregiver. You see, a tantrum would be *justified* only if no one, including my caregivers, wanted me or had time for me.

"But this could never happen. You always have the security of a couple of nurturing choices, as this is how we operate here. And if Mom and Hazel were your choices on Wednesday, but on Thursday the choice was Joyce or Mort, then maybe the first few times you'd get the old 'daycare tears,' and try to *make* Mom or Hazel be there for you permanently, every second of every day. It wouldn't succeed, of course, so you soon learn that it's more important that you have good care at all times than to try to make anyone be an ALWAYS-THERE person. (It's been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that always-there persons—ones that are irrevocably STUCK with someone 24 hours a day, are *sometimes* angry, frustrated, and negative nurturers. Every mother alive who's ever been in this situation has realized this fact at some time, but she may

have been FORCED TO REPRESS THESE FEELINGS FOREVER IN ORDER TO COPE AND NOT FLIP OUT.)

"Actually, moms were available a lot in the first year, at least, and so were dads, sort of like the 50-50 caregiving I mentioned earlier. But as time marched on, more and more alternatives were presented, and more and more people were being moms and dads, until you had to conclude that the whole world loved you. It was explained to kids that, outside Galaxy, people might *not* care about them, so of course kids weren't allowed to go out until they were ready. But, of course, they could go to the fenced-in swings and slide place outside, and to the pool (when one of us was lifeguarding), and so on."

Robert went on: "Anyway, what it all got down to was that you learned that people had so much respect and love for you and your needs that they arranged to have people with you (or available for you, if you decided to 'adventure') who were available to nurture you at all times. Most non-Galaxy kids learn quite often, in the outside world, that not only is their current available parent or baby-sitter too tired, preoccupied, or depressed to be able to really nurture, but that there is no recourse, no alternative, no one else they can turn to. Think of the *Nuts* movie and remember that at least one in four kids are going to be abused, according to the best estimates by experts, and THEN consider how really profound a fact it is that there are no alternatives for most kids.

"A few of the books I've read—*Steps to an Ecology of Mind* by Gregory Bateson and several R. D. Laing books—point out the critical factor in whether or not a child goes nuts in a family in which one or both parents act in ways that will tend to cause schizophrenia. That factor is the presence of someone in the family with the insight to intervene on behalf of the child and support him in the face of the nutty stuff coming his way. Such child-supporting factors are built into the Galaxy environment. (Incidentally, the parental behavior which has the greatest statistical probability of causing schizophrenia is called the double bind situation, and it's characterized by an anxious, rejecting, withdrawing, hostile mother who can't deal with the threat of intimacy, but this mother also can't admit her feelings and behavior to herself, so she solicits intimacy from the child but then rejects him when he responds. The mother can't accept her feelings because her socioculturally defined role characteristics are to be loving, nurturing, and mothering. So she neurotically disassociates herself from her real feelings and 'tries to have' the feelings she is 'supposed' to have. This is the root of the problem.)

"Notice, if you will, that Galaxy situations are set up, by definition, to avoid such possibilities—a mother who would tend to instill schizophrenia in others would gross out her kids and they'd seek nurturance elsewhere, while people in Galaxy would insure that the woman got help for her problems. In Galaxy, people are not only allowed but encouraged to have their real feelings. The idea that anyone would try to replace real feelings with phony feelings just to satisfy some social expectation is absurd here. If she wasn't a proper person for young people to be around, our young would find that out in no time and would avoid her until she got her act together. Children have the right to the pursuit of happiness here. There is no 'ownership' by parents here, which would give a parent carte blanche to oppress her kids as she sees fit. We deplore such anachronistic attitudes. I mean, what kind of a mother wouldn't want to give her children the best possible chance at life? This, to me, is what 'Right To Life'ers ought to focus on more, since their stand on abortion, whether right or wrong, obviously goes against the majority, and therefore often accomplishes little. While I can admire their dedication, I feel they'd be wise to try a new approach, since their old one is accomplishing so little in terms of lives saved, and mostly just has the effect of getting Republican candidates rejection from voters. If they did refocus to getting actual existing children the best possible chance at life, their newly-focused efforts, instead of hitting brick walls like they do now, would actually begin allowing various children a better access to a happy life. That equals saving lives, any way you slice it, and both parties, as well as the public at large, would applaud their efforts. The elimination of the all-too-normal habit of the wrecking of children by people whose parenting errors virtually eliminate kids' actual

access and right to a happy life—this is a cause that would actually save more kids' lives and create more happiness than anything else the anti-choice faction could possibly do.

"Anyway, the thrust of all this is that our Galaxy scene is virtually oppression-proof, schizophrenia-proof (with possible exceptions when there are chemical-imbalances, brain dysfunctions, or brain damage), child-abuse proof, and deprivation-proof. It's the precise definition of what any wise shrink, sociologist, therapist, priest, preacher, or social worker would prescribe for his or her client as the ideal environment to either prevent family and psychological problems or to facilitate the cure for already existing problems.

"Even without abuse, in the normal scene there will certainly be a considerable amount of deprivation and pain, as the shrinks have been telling us for a century (while we've sat by asking 'so what can we DO about this?'). Anyway, this will turn into mind MUD, as we've talked about, making born-genius Johnnie into dumb, tantrum-prone, neurotic Johnnie. And you can't really 'blame' anyone. The average scene isn't set up to provide good alternatives. Sure, 12-year-old Suzie is told to watch Johnnie until Mom gets home from work at 5:30, but Suzie shoos Johnnie away if he gets near her—she's busy blabbing to friends on the phone, texting, Facebook-ing, or watching TV. Johnnie's lucky if GOOD or even fair nurturing is truly available 10-20% of his waking hours. And many parents have been abused themselves and pass on the cycle of abuse, and may rarely if ever transcend their past pain long enough to give their kids even a moment of true nurturing."

"Anyway, back to Galaxy. As we grow and have needs filled so nicely, we feel so respected and so much self-respect that we begin to be considerate and responsible. We desire to nurture others, and do so when the opportunity arises, and love doing it, even if we're only seven years old. We try hard not to bother others. We employ the Golden Rule in all things, but intrinsically (because it expresses how we feel and who we are), not extrinsically (because we were told to). We totally understand when someone isn't into being with us, and we begin to express our appreciation for our nurturers and soon for everyone here. We take full responsibility for our actions or choices, and accept people for who they are without judging. We eventually cease needing the people we choose to be with and soon we're with people because we love them and desire their company. We begin to see people and things for what they really are, because our needs don't color our perceptions, nor does past-pain mud.

"Before long we're so secure and happy with each other at Galaxy that we either want to have more kids or meet non-Galaxy people to nurture. There isn't room for more kids here because there are no extra rooms, and because we feel that each of us *needs* an alone space; so, as you can tell, we tend to carry the nurturing instinct to outsiders. You're the first outsider in a heck of a long time who's become an insider. I followed my instincts when I invited you here, and I've never been sorry."

Glen looked especially happy all of a sudden, especially after remembering his success at home the day before.

Robert continued: "Part of me wants to start up a new Galaxy and have lots of kids and do lots of nurturing. Part of me wants to keep nurturing outsiders. A dumb part of me wishes more people *needed* in Galaxy. Nowadays there's a lot of love, closeness, and playing together, but our love is being-love, not needing-love. Cheryl was the last kid to transcend needfulness, and the tiny bit of ambivalence I feel is because I loved it when she needed me. We go diving for rocks in the pool about once a month, and goof off together occasionally, but I miss being kind of a dad to her. I started reading to her when I was ten. That quit when she was eight, four years ago. But, you know, even though I want to have more little ones to love, every time I think about that I realize that I have quite a few friends who need me and who let me love them, and the baby and marriage thing would take much of that time away. And, of course, I don't have a career yet, so what about money? And what about college? The thing is, I really feel I learn better when I do my own reading, thinking, and exploring. I'm not at all convinced, after talking to people in college about what it's like, that it's right for me. And then there's this elusive feeling I keep getting, kind of like pressure in my brain, that I'm missing something

important, that I'm being too conventional, and not seeing the whole picture, and I haven't followed through on the logic of my situation and . . .”

“And what?” asked Glen, after Robert didn't go on.

“I don't know,” said Robert, softly.

“There's something undone, unsaid, unrealized here,” Glen prompted. “You want to 'go for it,' but you don't know what 'it' is.”

After nearly a minute of silence, Robert said: “Yes, that's about as close as I can pin it down. I sort of want to be alone now and put out my sign, but I think first I'd like to discuss a book with you, if you're into it. It's the last one I dug up in my research. It actually doesn't have many insights—in fact, it has some heavy-duty counter-insights—and it is way off the beam in many ways, but it helped me see what so many people are going through out there, from their point of view. It shows how it must feel to get lost and confused, when it comes to parenting, and have no one to turn to for answers, and then desperately decide on a course of action based upon 20-, 50-, 100-year-old values that have already been clearly demonstrated to be flawed, or at least anachronistic. It's *The Coming Parent Revolution*, by Jeane Westin.

“It would be very easy for someone who didn't understand things like what you and I have been discussing for weeks to get misled into thinking that she has the correct prescription for all the symptoms you see in society, many of which trace back to flawed child raising. Normally I overlook such books, since not only do they miss what it all adds up to, but they tend to lead a lot of people down dead-end streets. However, in my search for authors who have figured out the basics of good nurturing and responsibility facilitation, I find her book an excellent resource in seeing why it's all so complicated for some people, why they're angry with society for not giving them a decent formula for the successful raising of a family, and how some of the more ambitious and assertive of these people can easily over-react, scapegoat, shift violently to the right, and regress to worn-out answers from the last century that can so confuse everyone that up looks like down and down looks like up.

“To make a long story short, she raised her kid in the permissive style, because some of the misguided 'experts' in books said to and because the media seemed to promote it, and because she herself was still recoiling from some of the ugliness of some of the authoritarianism of the past. Her kid, predictably, became an irresponsible spoiled brat who thought only of herself. So Westin got furious at everything related to permissiveness, liberalness, liberal child-raising theories, liberal welfare policies, liberal discipline ideas, etc. She felt misled, deceived, and tricked. In her fury she's decided that everyone should totally reject everything with the slightest liberal odor to it, including the entire human potential movement, Maslow, Rogers, etc. She's convinced herself that all these people ever said was that one should be selfish, egocentric, and do one's own thing, and follow the 'me' generation cults and fads. She thinks 'finding yourself' is anti-family! The same for feminism, government's school policies, media, sex education, popular music—all anti-family.

“What's scary about some of this, of course, is that she's partially correct. Some educational and government policies and some aspects of media, advertising, TV, and music *have* become so child-centered that they have an anti-family fallout to them. And kids *have* been taught to think of themselves only, as she says. (But had she bothered to research it, she’d have found that the trend analysis experts say that as the baby boom ages, the child-centered focus will change to adult-focused. So time cures much of the problem.)

“And, as she screams all the way through the book, the forces at work in society today *have* taken away many of the powers and rights of parents to control and discipline and impart values to their children. The laws say a minor can get an abortion without parental consent (in some cases this is good; in some other cases it's not good—it depends on the parents involved). School policy forces sex education on kids that's out of parents' control (such education is vital, but the value systems, or lack of same, that get passed along with the sex facts may be inappropriate, barren or inadequate). Peer groups have much more power to control kids' actions than parents, because of the many anti-

family and liberal laws, policies, examples and influences afoot. The TV programs are kid-centered and make parents out as blundering fools who know nothing and are not to be listened to, trusted, or respected. The same with ads, videos, music and movies. Kids' normal media conditioning adds up to a graduate degree in anti-family, anti-parent values. How can parents, *both* of whom have to work these days to make ends meet, counter all these hedonistic values that wallow in selfishness, dope, sex and possessions? They can't really. And that's her point. A good one, I might add."

"Kids have no respect for authority, others, elders, and especially parents. Kids beat and rob old ladies. Boys talk in the worst four-letter words, and so do the girls. The classroom discipline is so bad that little learning takes place anymore. Teachers are afraid to act, except to demand a higher salary for having to put up with rotten little smart-mouthed monsters. Kids graduate from high school even though they're virtual illiterates, because teachers don't want to put up with them any longer. Kids report that if they had to lose either their TV sets or their parents, they'd choose to lose their parents. There are no more family-centered activities—everything centers on TV or school. Some therapists see parents as the bad guys and kids as the poor victims, as do some counselors and others in social service. (We both know that it's the parenting methods that are bad, not the parents themselves—they need parent effectiveness information, like P.E.T.) Cut-ups in class used to be the exception. Nowadays, *most* of the kids are this way as they conform to peer-group pressures. The kids are a united, disrespectful unit, and the parents are seen as a bunch of naïve, stupid 'necessary evils.' No one seems to be able to keep kids in line anymore. They're out of control."

"Is it any wonder that Westin, most every right-winger, conservative, or fundamentalist, and an army of angry parents want to return to the *good old days* of spankings, threats, orders, obedience, controlling, authoritarianism, forced 'respect,' forced participation in family-centered activities, and parents running kids' lives? Do you see what I mean by over-reacting, Glen? Neurotic thinking is black-and-white thinking, and "either candy or bullwhips" is black-and-white thinking with a vengeance."

"I see what you mean, all right," Glen replied. "This reminds me of our talk about conservative versus liberal. She tried the left and it wrecked her kid. So she jumped all the way over to the right, and now her kid 'obeys,' so all is well. She's missing the fact that a good answer tends to be above, not to the right or left of a bad answer. I remember your comments on the liberal-conservative continuum being transcended by the Galaxy solution—a process of dialectical synthesis. Multiple-nurturers for no deprivation, P.E.T.-type rules for facilitation of respect and responsibility for others as well as self—this is definitely a transcendent reality, as I've seen here."

"Very well stated, Glen. You know, one way of looking at this is that with the countless forces undermining parental control over kids, and kids' respect for authority or older people in general being at an all-time low, concerned parents have hardly any other way to react in an attempt to pull their families back together as a functioning unit except to send out the call for a return to authority, power, control, discipline, punishment, and threats. Now that society has undermined parents so effectively and made monsters out of the kids, parents' only recourse is to get whips and try to tame the monsters. Especially when you look at L.A. street gangs, who now demonstrate the lowest level of respect for life ever reached in this country, with their interminable murders. So Westin is crying for people to dump all their 'liberal' tendencies and build New Traditional Families."

Glen was thinking about his school experience. "It's no wonder she feels that way. Schools really are filled with a bunch of smart-mouthed know-it-alls who have no respect for the teachers. I've often wished the wise-guys and wise-girls would just shut up and at least *pretend* to listen—at least then I'd get a chance to think, and have some peace and quiet."

"So the 'youth cult' didn't really have your full, undivided loyalties then? You didn't fall for the 'us against them' mentality of the loud-mouthed losers, huh?"

"Yes and no, Robert. When things were especially hostile at home, I joined all the teacher torment at school and felt 'in' with the guys there. But when things were peaceful

at home, I resented the smart-alecks for being so selfish as to ruin it for everybody. *I like to learn things!"*

"Good for you! I'm glad you managed to hang on to that much of your real self after all that chaos and empty-headed rebellion. Lots of the guys in my school let all this stuff affect them so negatively that they kind of gave up on education. I just pretty much ignored the whole scene in many ways—thought my own thoughts, read my own books, and completed the necessary trivial little exercises they called homework—not much challenge there!—I did it to give myself a college option. I felt the potential for all this chaos at school to slop mud into my brain if I let it have any effect on me. So I just kind of went through the motions, got good grades, and got my butt out of there ASAP. Like watching a dumb TV show. It's not real.

"A part of me wanted to get the other kids to realize how they were blowing several years of their lives, and that even though the opportunities presented weren't all that inspiring, they were better than nothing, especially if they used my method of using all the info as merely a springboard to get them started, and then did their own private thinking and studying on things. I tried advising that strategy a few times, as well as being a good example of humoring the system while actually *learning a lot in spite of the system rather than because of it.* But it set me up for hassles for not conforming to peer-group standards and attitudes, so before I got labeled a 'traitor' I pulled back and played it cool.

"I can see why it was damn easy for you to go along with the goof-offs at times. It was your only outlet for stress that built up at home. It was your way of fighting back at arbitrary, irrational, authoritarian attitudes and behaviors from your dad. Other types of kids would often be goof-offs because there was *no* form of discipline or control at home, of course—casualties of what Westin is calling liberal parenting. Anyway, how will you and I respond to this book of hers? It was written in good faith to help our society off the path to certain disaster: today's type of kids someday running the world. Now if THAT isn't a scary thought then there's no such thing as fear! In spite of its continuous reactionary errors and black-and-white thinking, it sure hits home in a lot of ways too. Too bad her solutions weren't as good as much of her problem exposing. In fact her solutions mostly stunk.

"When she puts down 60s rebellions and the more liberal attitudes back then, she missed totally the significance of what was happening. Vietnam, Watergate, and all the assassinations rightly made the young mistrust the current values and the older people who were pushing them.

"But here comes the hard part: When they're done rejecting the old, what are they going to replace it with? This is a new millennium question as well as a 1981 question—when Westin's book was written. The boomers have tried communes, cults, anarchy, Peace Corps, peace marches, dope, free love, and corporate revamping. And est and other similar movements, 101 therapies, self-help tapes and encounter groups. Condo living and intentional communities are two of the newer experiments. This is all called exploration. The society was 'adventuring.' But it doesn't establish a viable replacement for the 50s societal tradition of hyperconformity and automaton-man. We're *still* exploring. The jury isn't back. The alternative isn't yet found. Or is it? Care to address this, Glen?"

"Robert—I think it *has* been found. And I'm there. Now. Today. Here. God, I never looked at Galaxy in such a big way! But the world, Robert, the world has no idea! No one knows, Robert!"

"And I don't really know what to do about that, Glen. Every time I think about it I get a headache. The world simply doesn't drop what doesn't work in order to adopt what does work just because someone reads an article in a magazine or newspaper about an exceptional lifestyle. That AIN'T how social change occurs. But can we let that slide for now? The problem seems insurmountable and I don't wish to wallow in that. Let's get back to Westin's book.

"Maslow and Rogers don't tell us to tell adults to go to hell, nor do they tell the young to be selfish, spoiled brats of the me-generation youth culture, as Westin says.

They hold up growth, potential, autonomy, compassion and responsibility as goals, and blind obedience to authority as barriers, to be sure; but they're trying to set the stage for self-actualization, not selfishness, or adult-rejection, or unwillingness to commit.

"How Westin could so blatantly confuse selfishness and self-actualization I don't know. They're opposites. I am self-actualized. I'm also the least selfish person I know. To *give* is what makes Galaxy people happy. That and to *be*. It takes both. One leads to the other. And autonomy means the results of developing your capacity to take charge of your own life, make choices and commitments, and be responsible for your actions. It means intrinsic motivation and being your own person. I am this, and it doesn't lead to rejecting adults—I love and respect adults more than any teenager I've ever met or heard about. And it doesn't lead to rebellion—**there's nothing I'd like to do less than to tear down or fight against the town, society, nation or world that gave me the wonderful opportunity I daily bask in to live freely and happily, to love and learn and grow—life to me is beautiful and all my thoughts turn toward CONSTRUCTIVE changes, enhancements, improvements, ways to make life work better for people, and ways to give back to the world some of the goodness and compassion that's come my way.**

"Surely Westin would eagerly embrace anything that would produce this type of citizen, and surely she can see that the ultimate 'finding oneself,' self-actualizing, or 'enlightenment' will lead to these types of characteristics. What she's confused about here is how a few of the people in the late 60s and the 70s used the label of 'finding themselves' or 'human potential movement' when they abandoned responsibilities, became self-centered, dumped all family ties, developed contempt for the 'establishment' and family values, and went on a permanent hedonism trip. This is not self-actualization. It's merely using a fad as an excuse to degenerate and follow one's worst inclinations and predispositions. This isn't human potential. It's hang-up potential. The media is partly to blame when it turned a serious introspective trend into a sensationalistic fad to sell copy, as it were. And because of the inherent limitations of the 'sound bite,' the quest for inner integrity was cheapened in the eyes of the public, and eventually ridiculed by the right-wingers. I've talked to Sam a lot about this stuff and he talked a lot to his dad about it too. Anyway, once the media turned it into a foolish cliché, it became a joke. This is HOLLYWOOD-styled human potential striving, and it was and is as hollow as it sounds. And perhaps the leaders of the movements were a bit to blame for cashing in and selling out when they should have been redirecting, guiding, and helping to preclude misconceptions about the tendency to seek integrity and wholeness and growth.

"I'm no rebel. I'm moral, patriotic, and lawful. Many of today's kids are none of these. Nor are they autonomous, intrinsically-directed, unselfish, or respectful. They're peer-directed, which is other-directed, and they're disrespectful of nearly everything, and Westin is right to worry about them. But she sure found some of the wrong concepts and authors to put the blame on! Maslow and Rogers are wonderful authors. It's not their ideas, but the misinterpretation of them that caused the problem. Why blame someone for what they didn't say or do? Should we blame Jesus Christ for those incredible jerks that roasted women alive as witches in the Inquisition just because they did it in his name?

"The unspoken part of all these movements is how all the meanings get confused, diffused, and watered down when they become fads. 'Have you been Rolfed, Primaled, and encountered yet?' 'Let's go experience our experience.' 'That's my thing, my bag, my trip. Me, me, me.' 'I'm trying to get my act together.' And that's the trouble. When a good concept becomes a fad, it becomes a hollow *act*. It becomes just another desperate attempt to get indirect self-acceptance from peers. It's more youth cult and selfishness, again. I've studied the est, Re-evaluation Counseling, and Primal Therapy phenomena. Est has disappeared, but the others are still around, incidentally. Anyway, it is or was possible to get something quite valuable from such things *if you had the right approach.* If you had the right context and motivation. They were among the better antidotes for the mud, in the 70s, regardless of whether that mud formed during a permissive or authoritarian childhood. You could actually purge some mud in Primal, but most people

feel that that's doing it the hard way. Identifying with the past stuff is what causes the most trouble, so the est goal was moving from mud context to self-context (M forces to G forces, in your case) and this is a more realistic goal than getting less neurotic by extremely stressful Primal purging.

"But moving from a context based upon the mistakes people have made with you as well as from the beliefs that were pounded into you when you were too small to resist, to a context of self and being is NOT related to either selfishness or rebellion. It's related to autonomy—to shifting your center to being who you are, not who they told you you were, or who they told you to be, or who you think you should be, or how you think you should act because of all the terrible things 'they' did to you. 'Look what they did to me' is B.S. in this new context.

"The people who find fulfillment in life are people who are much more than a product of inadequate environments and inadequate child-raising techniques; they are products of their courage to choose to discover and explore their BEINGS, and to come from, and identify with this being. 'In spite of what came before, this is how I choose to be'—that's the motto of the winners. (That's even the theme of that great kids' movie, *The Iron Giant*.) And if it sounds like people would rebel against society if they cast off beliefs, it's not so. What they do is dump childish attachments to programmed beliefs, and RE-EXAMINE all their beliefs in the light of their new being-context. Those who practice positive self-talk , as outlined by Shad Helmstetter or Wayne Dyer, or inner parenting, as described by John Pollard, have made great positive steps toward this garbage dumping and toward a positive self-concept—self-esteem is the popular word for this these days. Anything that clashes with who they are is dumped, *however, anything that is in harmony with their beings is retained as a valuable life tool.* This whole process should be part of the definition of maturity, growing up, and taking responsibility for oneself as an adult preparing to fulfill adult roles in society.

"Much of this process happens in adolescence, some even later. To the degree a parent doesn't want his child to go through this process, that parent has failed to let go, to separate, to let the kid be himself. Parents who feel a kid is someone to mold, make decisions for, tell what to do and even what to be, so that they can live through the kid as if he were an extension of themselves, have not learned what nurture means. It means to empower, not to program. It means to enable, not to command. It means to inspire and create security for another's explorations of life. The democratic, authoritative parenting movement launched by Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs, Thomas Gordon (Parent-Effectiveness-Training) and others decades ago has proven once and for all what nurturing means. The attachment parenting experts like William Sears (The Baby Book) and Aletha J. Solter also have it right about nurturing—although Sears is confused about discipline. Aletha J. Solter, however, gets it right with her Aware Parenting.

"Anyway, the self-fulfillment trips are a way to become *less* selfish, because of personal growth. But they are also a way to become more selfish, if you merely use them as an escape from responsibility and commitment, or an alibi for hedonism and egocentricity. The key thing here is that it's not the trip that will decide how an individual will choose to relate to it, it's the person himself. A person can use a Bible as a blunt instrument to pummel someone, or as an inspirational book. It was meant for the latter. Growth trips are designed to promote growth, not narcissistic regression. But only the person himself can actually decide what to do with them.

"So if I were a Human Potential leader, I'd quickly get out publicity releases on what the purpose and themes of my work are all about. The Right is trying to slander them to death. The Fundamentalists are trying to make them look like the devil himself. This is incredibly ignorant, and it's sad, and should be stopped.

"Dr. Louise Hart, of all the authors I've ever read, is the person whose thinking most closely matches my own. She's a community psychologist who was raised with extended family benefits, and who sees the immense values in good self-talk, stopping bad self-talk, P.E.T. rules and natural consequences, nonpunitive logical consequences parenting, multiple caregivers and adequate support system resources for families, taking responsibility for oneself, win-win, connectedness, and developing autonomy. She

believes in people creating the Winning Family context. Were she to come here to Galaxy, she'd surely see that we've taken that concept to the highest level.

"But, back to the book, in spite of all this, Westin's misguided tome is correct in worrying about the spoiled, adult-ridiculing, anti-family kids that are so prevalent, as well as the media role models with similar values. But her solution is for parents to use authoritarian means to run the kids' lives—this is supposed to reverse the trend toward spoiled kids running families. But tilting back and forth to each end of the power continuum is a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. Either a child *overpowering* a parent or a parent *overpowering* a child is wrong. So I propose Hart's *Winning Family* as a better alternative, since in a family that really cares about each other, a lose for any is a lose for all. P.E.T. has already proven to be able to empower win-win families and relationships, as has Hart's Winning Family Lifeskills and a over a dozen of the other democratic and authoritative parenting methods around. Westin should have done better research.

"Okay, so we're in a place where permissiveness has caused as bad a mess as authoritarianism. Many do feel the need to return to the whip. But they won't get away with it. Too many people know better. Too many are NOT suffering from amnesia about the 50s like Westin. And too many have tried things like P.E.T. and read things by people like Hart and will scream at her to wake up—the problem isn't as difficult as she thinks.

"You know, I wasn't HERE in the 50s or 60s but Sam's dad was, and I've researched that era. And I never went to a protest. I have no ax to grind, so objectivity isn't that hard.

"Anyway, since 96% of American adults still put family at the top of the list of what's important to them (1981 Harris survey—the same year her book was published), the main thing lacking here is not "creating interest in making families work," but creating viable methodologies. The New Traditional Family of Jeane Westin will work better than the anarchy of permissive spoiling, which some parents are operating under, to further the goals of a family-centered lifestyle. But it's a win-lose scenario that drags us back to the 50s so we can prove we've learned nothing from all the cultural turmoil and change of the last half of the 20th century, and also prove we've learned nothing from the tons of research that has occurred.

"On the other hand, the Winning Family will be a giant step up from any starting point, especially if Galaxy conditions of nurturer plenitude can be achieved as well. A family has to all *pull* together for it to work in solidarity. The problem with Westin's plan is that it degenerates back to *push*, because it doesn't understand the ways intrinsic pulls can be encouraged and empowered in the young. She doesn't realize that kids are *dying* to dump this child-centered chaos and crudity and adult-bashing, and enter the win-win world of respect, responsibility, and family participation. They just need the right opportunity. She's never learned EMpowering, so she makes a plan based upon OVERpowering."

"Power, rightly or wrongly used, to inspire or to coerce—this, then, is the bottom line," said Glen.

"Right, and if the key to making life work is related to power in its various forms, then the fact that we are now leaving behind Second Wave industrialism and embarking on a fast-lane trip through the data whirlwind and the knowledge explosion of the Third Wave—the Information Age—sets a context for the modern world in which knowledge, more than any time in history, IS power. I recommend that you read the Tofflers' *Powershift*. It shows that the main three elements of power are knowledge, coercion and wealth and that knowledge has become the greatest of these. Look at the smart bombs we used in the Gulf War, or how our economic and military power are so greatly enhanced by the knowledge we Americans have. The three elements of power are more balanced in this country than in any other, although Japan and the European Community are moving fast toward balanced power. The Tofflers show in *Powershift*, as they did in *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave*, that they have their fingers on the pulse of this planet and they know where it's at, where it's been, and where it's going.

Robert and Glen went outside and played in the pool with the rest of Galaxy. Glen took turns chasing Wendy and Barbra around. He was “Jaws” and he'd surface and bite their legs. They'd scream and get away. Soon Cheryl got in on it too. Robert mostly swam laps. He'd been hogging Glen enough. It was their turn. Besides, he didn't want his leg bitten!

Chapter 11

"Much had he read, much more had seen; he studied from the life, and in th' original perus'd mankind."
—Dr. John Armstrong

"The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been struggling in you for utterance."
—Oswald Chambers

"As the traveler who has once been away from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own."
—Margaret Mead

"To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life."
—Robert Lewis Stevenson

"We shall have a hard struggle with ourselves to save ourselves from ourselves."
—Arnold Toynbee

Robert compiled and reviewed his research materials. He added his notes, paraphrasing, and authors' quotes with his own capital and bold emphases to the materials most significant to his research, and simply listed other works that were just generally useful or relevant. He noticed that he had several articles that had no detailed reference information and included them, too. In truth, he'd been reading about lifestyles and parenting and relevant sociology a lot since he was ten years old.

Chapter 12

"Show me a man who cares no more for one place than another, and I will show you in that same person one who loves nothing but himself. Beware of those who are homeless by choice."
—Robert Southey

"You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters."
—St. Bernard

Robert was down to his last six research items. He'd finished his sociological, anthropological, psychological, historical, legislative and general lifestyle research. He'd speed-read through everything relevant to nurturing, childcare, multiple parenting, current attitudes, cross-cultural studies on childcare and its effects on personality, and how acceptance, rejection, warmth, and disciplining methods affect children. He'd read all the studies on cross-cultural family structures. He knew what other cultures do and why, what we do and why, what we used to do and why, in relation to all the above areas of concern. More importantly, he could clearly and objectively see the direction that our culture *was going,* and the direction it *should go*, as indicated by the wealth of information he'd pored through. His last items for consideration were mass media pieces on lifestyle.

The first two were TV Guide articles: July 23 and 30, 1988. They were about how TV affects the American family. The authors admitted that *Leave It To Beaver, Ozzie and Harriet,* and *Father Knows Best* and other 50s shows never represented the average American family—they were far too idealistic, clean, plastic, and inoffensive. The programs were blatant "advertisements for the reigning American Dream." Real people were not like that. But such shows kept coming until the 70s, when "relevant" shows sprouted. By the 80s, the networks had to worry about "20-plus channels per household," so they sculpted various shows to fit various target audiences in various time slots. These days, there were hundreds of channels on cable TV.

The family shows of the confusing, "segmented" 80s were targeted toward *kids*. They turn on the set, watch the show, and they respond to the ads which then has economic impact. The shows feature independent, savvy kids, and naïve, bumbling parents, who are too dumb to be trusted or even respected. These child-centered shows show child-centered parents, who are totally concerned with their kids at all times. They're always there when the kids need them. Real parents were not like that in the 80s nor are they like that now, and they couldn't be even if they wanted to be. They have jobs and lives of their own outside of kid concerns. But when real parents compare badly to these kid-obsessed TV parents, real, media-inundated kids get angry and go spend money at the local mall, or escape with more TV, filling needs vicariously. It's a terrible idea to indicate to kids that parents should "always be there for them" and should constantly be thinking about what their kids desire, says the article. It aggravates an already nasty me-centeredness in today's kids. *On the other hand, when the kids are younger, giving them NURTURING whenever they need it IS a good thing for them, and parents need to find ways to ensure that it happens, since they cannot always be available,* Robert knew.

The other TV Guide article stressed narcissism and a lack of belonging, connectedness, or solidarity with others. Such people (the heroes of many programs) have no identities but lots of style; they don't accomplish, think, or inspire, says the article. They merely look cool, in, and stylish. We've all "traded belonging for freedom." And it's left us deprived and confused. Life without real love and intimacy and the risk of commitment is a meaningless exercise.

These people are the opposite of Galaxy people, Robert thought to himself. He knew that any of the hollow style-worshipers, if they had the opportunity to trade places with him, and experience what real life, love, happiness and meaning were all about,

would never want to go back to their hollow style-identities. But the lifestyles of these people, and the examples they are given to emulate, lead in anything BUT Galaxy directions. They are partially deprived, insecure, irresponsible, disrespectful, and desperate people, using drugs, possessions, sex, escapism and pretense as defenses against the pain, confusion, and emptiness in their lives.

Next, Robert perused a piece of wisdom from the book *Living Together, Feeling Alone,* by Dan Kiley, Ph.D.: "Don't attempt to be everything to everyone in your life. If you do, you'll end up being nothing to anyone—including yourself."

This was a key to why upbringings in Galaxy were so successful. No parent tried to be everything to any child. No one felt like anyone's sole "answer." No one tried to pretend to have feelings that weren't currently present. No one had to repress "failing my child" feelings when s/he tried to give what s/he didn't have or feel, since s/he merely replaced herself or himself as the caregiver for a while, making both child and parent much happier. And as a result, nurturers were empowered to succeed magnificently and unambivalently when they nurtured. Many primates and many other cultures, present and past, had already learned this, and they'd operated from such wisdom for centuries—or millions of years in the case of the primates. How had so many of the humans—the "wisest" primates—forgotten such basics?

Next, Robert moved on to the notes he had taken about a *20/20* rerun with a piece called "Slowing Down The Clock." It was a show about aging and living longer. The doctor concluded that **CHOOSING and CONTROL were the two most important elements in slowing down aging—even more important than nutrition and exercise. Being your own person, in charge of your life, is crucial. To facilitate this, many elderly people are beginning to set up multi-adult lifestyles, with three or more unmarried people (co-ed) per household. They act in family-like ways, often eating, playing, and working on projects together. This was seen as wonderful for their health. It gives them choices of whom to be with. It gives them rooms of their own, for privacy. And it gives them caring relationships and control over their lives.**

Next, he went on to an article in *Home Magazine,* March 1988, called "The Houses On The Horizon." The world's lifestyles will *never* go back to 50s naïveté. The decline in the "traditional" family household will continue into the 21st century. There will be more independence, with single-person, "nonfamily" households in the majority. (Some of the nonfamily homes will have two or more unrelated people living together.) But *co-housing* and *shared housing* will be up as well.

"If we're going to continue to live alone, we'll need really quite palatial common space. We'll need good pools, game rooms, and so forth. We need to think of new ways to bring people together," said New York architect Galen Cranz. "It's really going back to the way it was—back to depending on each other," said Donna Mallone, of the National Shared Housing Resource Center. Two or more unrelated people living together (shared housing) is already booming in parts of the country. People are remodeling existing housing to fill this demand, architecturally creating the necessary privacy and personal space, in the many houses not built to accommodate this new lifestyle. Co-housing has unshared living units, but everything else is shared. This "fosters a sense of community while acknowledging that the dominance of the old-fashioned nuclear family is dead."

Many current European co-housing communities offer optional common dining facilities and also childcare. Some even have developed miniature office parks so that people that work at home can have the best of both worlds. **"I think this is a model for the future,"** says Katie McCamant, who has studied co-housing extensively and written a book on it. **"It's similar to what we had before the 20th century. We used to live in villages and neighborhoods with community support. The breakdown of that way of life has led to all kinds of stresses."** These stresses aren't likely to abate, according to this *Home* article, and this means **we may expect many 21st century homes to be built specifically for sharing, or as part of a small cluster of common facilities far beyond those offered by condominiums or planned communities today.**

Robert re-examined the March 1990 *Edell Health Letter* that Hazel had given him, after he'd asked her if she had any literature supporting the Galaxy lifestyle. There was an article about some research done in the town of Roseto, Pennsylvania. Researchers came from far and wide to see what made the town so special, with regards to the near absence of heart attacks. There was nothing unusual about what the townspeople ate, and they didn't exercise more than other people. So after intense study, researchers finally concluded that the reason for all the exceptionally healthy hearts was THE TOWN'S STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY. But in the last few years, the close-knit communities of Roseto began to wane and come apart. People moved from small, neighborly houses to large, suburban ones; they drove to supermarkets instead of walking to the neighborhood store; they skipped the close-knit community solidarity experienced at church, etc. Even though they were now eating less fat and smoking less, from 1965 to 1985 the townspeople suffered 50% more heart attacks and twice as much heart disease. The researchers concluded that a sense of community may be just as important as food to good health. If not more so.

Finally, Robert checked out a *Time Magazine* article on kids, from August 8, 1988. It pointed out that *Ozzie and Harriet* families are (never really true anyway) on the way out. Two thirds of families fit that *family configuration* in the 50s, but now less than one in five are of that type (actually, it depends upon one's definitions; nine percent is the correct figure according to demographic analysis). Working mothers are the rule, not the exception, and it's time we accept reality and figure out how to deal with it. TV is laying strange values on us all; parents are often absent (necessarily, as it takes every adult working to get the bills paid); parents haven't a clue about how to bring up their kids. The hazards and immorality of the adult world descend upon kids so early that the ideal of childhood innocence has vanished (especially with the Internet omnipresence). The roles of motherhood and fatherhood are being rewritten, and parenting is being redefined. Childhood has become an experiment, parenting an improvisation, says the article.

Robert's research was over. His empirical study of the people who were the most "together"; his years of reading everything he could get his hands on about subjects relevant to the Galaxy miracle; his just-completed weeks of intensive cross-cultural study of everything known about nurturing, parenting, multiple parenting, childcare, child abuse, liberal-conservative attitudes, and the causes of personality and character and disorders of same; his years of being an intensive student of human nature, philosophy, psychology, sociology; and his own observations and insights regarding his and others' relationships and his nurturing of others—all this was securely integrated in Robert's mind. A mind virtually "mudless." A mind that could read and understand a book faster than most people could eat a meal. A mind that could meet and quickly understand a person better than they, themselves and others ever would. A mind that could stand back from the complexities of the modern world and see the whole picture—what it all added up to. But what to DO about it all? The headache was returning. Robert kept running into the same concrete wall. Knowing is one thing, but doing is quite another. There wasn't really anything that Robert could do about this stuff. People don't even listen to the President, or Clint Eastwood telling everyone not to do crack, or anybody else either, for that matter. So who'd listen to HIM?

Robert avoided futility feelings by summarizing in his mind the last 75 years in America. Over-controlled, orthodox lives and smothering young evolved into activism, rebellion, protesting, free-thinking, unorthodox young (and some of this rubbed off on the older people—adults lived through the spirit and idealism of the young, and some even copied it).

Johnson and Nixon were afraid of the rebelling young, and thought the rebelling was due to lack of discipline (spankings) in the home. They bemoaned the more permissive attitudes. The young tried communes. Research has shown that this movement FAILED miserably. They tried being hippies, doing dope, being alcoholics, being bums, going on welfare and getting food stamps—another set of dismal FAILURES.

Even though none of these things improved anyone's lifestyle or helped innovate new, valuable lifestyles, they did make a statement: If you adults are such unethical, immoral, selfish, callous (Vietnam, Watergate, assassinations, alcoholism, affairs, tranquilizers) losers, and can't create decent ethics, lifestyles, and ideals, we're going to abandon your ways and go find our own!

Movies changed their themes from pro-establishment Rock Hudson-Doris Day romances (and in the 80s we found out that he wasn't all that interested in Doris after all —another deception added to all the rest) to slasher movies or skin flicks or teen-targeted, hedonistic narcissism. Progress? Hardly!

Lots of young women experimented with unmarried motherhood, to their parent's horror. The single-parent family often came from divorce, as well. Research has shown that the single-parent family is the least viable or satisfying of American lifestyles, rating below bachelorhood, childless marriage, marriage with kids, unmarried couples with kids, and extended families. Chalk up another failure: single-parent families.

In a Galaxy setting, single-parent families would work just fine, in truth, but in normal society this configuration has too few resources, is too isolated, too depressingly confining and one-dimensional.

Swinging and swapping were popular in the 70s and early 80s, but the risk of incurable, devastating diseases has quelled that in many of the people—another lifestyle failure. However, about half of college-aged youths are still practicing unsafe sex, naïvely acting like "it couldn't happen to me," a direct, suicidally-dangerous symptom of the overprotection and over-permissiveness and lack of "natural- consequence training" of their childhoods, which has resulted in incredible irresponsibility.

Some people, with a larger than normal sense of responsibility, became *activists*. In general, an activist is a person who cares enough about something to actually do something about it. In studies, this type of person is altruistic, with a sense of responsibility for at least a large, specific group of people, if not all people everywhere. In relationships, activists have stressed honesty, empathy, and openness. Robert was starting to feel like he was an activist. But he had nothing to protest, no banner to wave, no placard to carry. What he did have was a huge sense of responsibility for and empathy with all the people on his planet. And he knew what was going wrong. And generally, he knew what they could do about it. But how could he tell them? He couldn't. And why would they listen? They wouldn't. Did these facts absolve Robert of the responsibility he felt for people? No. Robert felt that such facts just made it that much harder. And here came the headache again.

Robert quickly "changed channels" and looked at the fact that in his researches he ran across studies that showed that *women who stay home with their kids average 20 minutes a day of watching TV with the kid in the room, 13 minutes of eating with the kid, and less than 10 minutes a day of doing anything educational with the kid. It had been alleged that kids with stay-at-home moms got more quality time, more educational time, or more beneficial time with their mothers than kids with working mothers.*

This was disproven. Moms who work usually SET ASIDE time to be with their kids, and as a result they value that time more, and the kids value that time more. The stay-at-home mothers value the time with their kids less, overall. Because the job has increased their self-respect, they respect both themselves and their kids more than nonworking mothers and therefore are happier and more nurturing when relating with their kids than nonworking mothers. Very win-win.

Nonworking mothers are much more likely to get angry and depressed, and feel incarcerated, and then abuse, neglect, or reject their kids. Isolation with one's kids is the root cause of most abuse, and working mothers are by definition NOT isolated with their kids nearly as much. It was also shown that the better daycares are actually superior to nonworking mom's care in many ways, if you compare an average hour of one with an average hour of the other. The optimal situation for both mother and child is when the child gets BOTH mother care and daycare. Or better, yet, Galaxy-type care, thought Robert. Getting both types of care tends to make kids smarter and happier and more socially developed, as well as providing a more dynamic lifestyle. So the major issue

about daycare is not WHETHER to use it, but, instead, WHETHER OR NOT IT'S A GOOD ONE. Make sure that it is, thought Robert, to an imagined audience hearing his research results. Or better, yet, use Galaxy-type care, which beats daycare, thought Robert.

It underlines an important point when one looks at how everyone had assumed that, as in *Leave It To Beaver,* idealistic things like constant "quality time" were occurring "behind closed doors" in everyone's neighborhoods where mothers stayed at home. Once this was disproven and it became obvious that working mothers were doing at least as good in the amount of time spent, and either the same or better with the QUALITY of time spent with their kids, this gave the society an honest context from which to confirm something which they'd suspected all along: No one person should have to be around any other person constantly. No one person is any other person's answer in life. Each person is his/her own answer. No one is a good nurturer constantly.

Childraising which alternates mother with alternate caregivers is better for both kids and moms, as mankind has known for thousands of years, and as three fourths of all cultures on Earth know (and practice) today. Even most of the cultures with nuclear family foundations are way ahead of the U.S. with regards to childcare and alternate nurturers. Why are we so biased and naïve and full of false preconceptions about this stuff in the U.S.? Because of the American myth of "rugged individualism," which many right-wingers STILL subscribe to, in spite of the tidal wave of evidence that the concept has outlived its usefulness. Someone helping you "proves you're weak or defective," goes the myth. What an incredibly dangerous anachronism to carry around in the nuclear age! Only cooperation with other countries stands between us and doomsday.

The me-generation, youth-cult kids are what Robert thought of as "nonrugged individualists." They are independent and self-sufficient and need nothing from anyone, UNTIL THEY GET COLD, HUNGRY, OR NEED MONEY OR A SHOULDER TO CRY ON. Then they would suddenly remember their families! In actual fact, though, even though kids try to be individualists, most kids today are conformists, obsessively looking for indirect-self-acceptance via texting and social networks. A true individualist is not other-directed and indirect-self-acceptance obsessed, but self-directed (autonomous)—not to be confused with inner-directed , which means run by superego, i.e., parental values, which need to be replaced by one's own values as soon as sufficient maturity is attained to empower this. Kids leaning on a superego crutch is an important interim step in development, but replacement with autonomous values is a critical aspect of becoming an adult. If one never does the work of asking himself who he is, what he believes, and what his values are, a critical aspect of identity formation is missed, and he will never be free to choose, but always be pushed to choose this or that to please his inner censors.

A life, as the Eastern philosophies have expounded for centuries, needs to be in balance. People need individualism and solitude and aloneness. And balanced with that they need cooperation, compassionate socializing, and committed relationships. Babies that choose to alternate between loving security, and aloneness or experiments with new people, with all the risks and excitement inherent in that, fare much better than babies that stay stuck at either extreme: dependence or independence. They aren't meant to always be alone or always be with their mothers or caregivers.

Robert was glad that, because of the phenomenal rise of working mothers since the 60s, most moms had already discovered for themselves what the studies have been showing, which is that having a job improved relationship quality, self-respect, respect for others, identity, confidence, organization, and opportunities to be defined as something besides a mother by others. Jobs for moms make time spent with the family more precious and valuable.

However, daycare, working mothers, and improved relationship quality in and of themselves ARE NOT a complete answer to the problems of the nurturing of the young (setting aside Galaxy realities for a minute). For instance, there are a few exceptions—mothers who do poorly in their jobs and then come home and moan and complain to everyone. It's easy to imagine what a delight that must be for their families. Of course, men sometimes moan about their jobs too.

For another instance, there are a lot of inadequate daycare, homecare, or family care situations, or unfit personnel, so parents must be careful in selecting caregivers. It should be kept in mind that, statistically, abuse is much more likely in the average home under mothers' care than in daycare centers! Also, kids are statistically safer at daycare than at home.

Next, in any daycare situation, a kid may be faced with a situation of choicelessness. There are always people ready to make young people's choices FOR them, figuring that "young" means someone too dumb to know what they want or what's best for them—this type of oppression happens virtually always for the same reason: the caregivers got that treatment when they were growing up. (At least the Montessori approach understands self-direction.) For a choicelessness example, people might simply tell a kid whom s/he can be with, and insist upon that—in other words—they might unnecessarily CONTROL him/her, even though it's been shown that allowing self-control and choices, to the degree possible, is a much better learning situation—one that is much better at teaching responsibility.

Of course, this choiceless situation is much more likely with home-based mother-only care. Robert, remembering Galaxy history, recalled how excited everyone had been decades ago when they discovered what a wonderful effect it had on kids to always have two or more choices of caregivers to choose from—it cut way down on whining, fussing, and complaining, since the kid was the one who'd chosen to be with that caregiver. Putting less pressure on the caregiver was a nice result, but much more significant was the effect on the character of the kid, especially in the area of responsibility.

So here was Robert then; one of the first people to have been brought up correctly, fully successfully, and with no ill effects. The first of the mudless minds. Born a genius—stayed a genius. As a matter of fact, the inspiration of his environment not only allowed unhindered creativity, exploration, innovation, originality, and profoundly rational thinking, it actually encouraged and accelerated it. The exceptionality of both him and his environment put him in a uniquely objective position from which to view and understand the world, in all its sweetness and folly, warmth and insanity, generosity and anger. He was the first person with a mind like that to thoroughly research and explore the myths and realities of childcare, nurturing, lifestyles, choice, and multiple caregiving. The conclusions he came to would be transcendent to all that had come before. He was ready to help the world make a quantum leap from current inoperable lifestyles that de-geniused, neurosified (he loved to coin words), angered, confused, and deprived, to lifestyles that inspired, encouraged, fulfilled, and nurtured. On the individual level and the family level, he knew what had to be done, and generally how to guide people in the right direction. But on the level of the nation or the world—when it got down to getting the message to the masses—Robert was at a loss. And here came that damn headache again.

Robert walked along the path in Taylor Falls park, the same place he'd so often gone to in the past for solitude and to be one with nature, and the same place he'd gone to with his father when he was four years old, to walk in the forest and gather acorns. The park was on the edge of town and consisted of, half, open space to play in, and half, forest and paths. A river with a wooden footbridge separated these halves. The park's boundaries were only a quarter mile into the forest, but the forest itself went on for many miles eastward.

The air was warm and lush. The wind was soft and soothing, with occasional gusts that made the trees sway like impassioned dancers. It was dark, except for the moon, stars, and occasional walkway lights. Every corner of the park had enough lighting so that no one need trip or get lost. It was the middle of summer, and the crickets chirped constantly, without missing a note. In spite of being deep in his thoughts, Robert's heart was played like a violin each time the wind sighed through the trees, a music beyond all music. He'd passed two couples, walking hand-in-hand in the other direction, obviously enjoying the music as well; they knew not to dilute the enchantment with words of

greeting. No one was here for politeness. Rapture awaited those whose hearts were open and whose spirits were free.

Robert reached the tree beyond which he couldn't see the forest, when he was four years old. He knelt, looking up at the tree reverently. The wind sighed loudly again.

"What IS it?" Robert whispered passionately. He longed for an answer that just would not come to him. Maybe he was looking for something simple when the answer was very complex. Perhaps he was looking in all the wrong places and all he had to do was to see the forest through the trees.

The wind sighed again, plaintively.

So did Robert.

An hour passed.

There was only Robert and the tree.

The more he became one with it, the more he knew that the tree was under his direct care. Its future was in Robert's hands. Each time the wind played music in its branches, it became more and more Robert's offspring. It became someone to take by the hand and walk with through the forest, gathering acorns to make elves with. Someone to love, to explain things to, to play with, to nurture.

Robert was a father.

He had asked the tree, with all his heart: What IS it?

The tree had answered him by becoming his son.

There was no other answer.

There never had been.

Robert brushed away tears that had started to run down his cheeks. He stood up and smiled gratefully at the tree, noticing the stars shining between its branches. He walked on down the path until he came to the wooden footbridge. No one was there at the moment. He went to the center and sat down on the edge, dangling his feet over the side, nearly touching the water burbling by underneath. This little tributary of the town's only river joined the musical splendor, the symphony of the wind, trees, and crickets. It was magnificent.

He recalled the tree's answer.

He asked the river the same question.

And got the same answer.

The only one there is.

Robert had a daughter.

He smiled, looking up at the park, the town, the world.

He asked the world the same question.

And got the same answer.

In an enchanted little park in California, Robert Peterson had just asked three questions and gotten three answers.

But he was ecstatic, not worried.

The last answer had been the answer of all answers.

Robert's headache was gone.

In its place was the total and absolute responsibility for his new family.

A very, very BIG family.

The headache had never been anything except a way for Robert to experience initial resistance to awesome responsibility.

But the one person Robert could never fool for long was himself.

Robert had known the answer all along.

Chapter 13

"You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world . . ."
—Thomas Traherne

"We possessed all the universe together . . ."
—George Bernard Shaw

"The silence that is the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."
—William Wordsworth

"No one can be perfectly free till all are free; no one can be perfectly moral till all are moral; no one can be perfectly happy till all are happy."
—Herbert Spencer

"Everything flows and nothing stays."
—Heraclitus

"You can't step twice into the same river."
—Heraclitus

"My country is the world and my religion is to do good."
—Thomas Paine

"We must reserve a back shop all our own, entirely free, in which to establish our real liberty and our principal retreat and solitude."
—Montaigne

It was a few minutes before sunset in early August. Glen looked around Galaxy for Robert. He was nowhere to be found. He finally ended up asking Wendy where he might be. She walked over to a song book on her piano (Wendy was an excellent pianist, who played by ear, but could read music if she wanted to). She opened the book to a piece she'd never tried before and began playing it flawlessly. Why had she ignored his question and started up a concert? Glen was confused. But not for long. He recognized the tune "Up On The Roof," and realized that he'd gotten an answer—it was simply that the answer had more style and character than most answers do, so it threw him at first.

He kissed the top of her head and walked out and down the hall. At the end of the hall, on his right, was a narrow door. He opened it. It was a very narrow stairway to the roof. He went up. Robert was sitting on a bench about three feet from the edge of the flat roof. Glen was seeing a side view of him. He began to shout a greeting to his friend, but stopped himself just in time. His intuitions told him to be quiet. He watched Robert for several minutes. Robert was one with the town. And the sunset, which had just begun. Glen decided to take a chance and he tip-toed respectfully over and sat on the opposite end of the bench from Robert. He joined Robert in looking out over the town, serenely. After a few minutes, Robert greeted him: "Hi, Glen."

"Hi, buddy. Where you been keeping yourself?"

"I guess I've been up here a lot, afternoons and evenings."

"Any room for me in your thoughts?" asked Glen.

"Oh—sorry Glen—did you think I was hiding or avoiding you or something?"

"Not really. I did miss you these last few days, but me and the others have been having lots of fun and some great talks, too, so I haven't exactly been pining away or anything. Your sister and cousins are the most incredible people I've ever met. Every time I think I see a flaw it turns out to be a creative asset. This is hard to get used to. I

get treated so nicely that I cried myself to sleep last night—God, I don't believe that I'm saying this!—because I was HAPPY. That's not like me, Robert. It scares me, almost. It's kind of like I died and went to heaven, except that I've never felt more alive in my life. I want to ask you how can they be that way, and why, but I know the answer: they love me. I want to ask how can they love me—they don't know me that well. But they do—they DO know me that well. I haven't been with them that much, but *they really do know me.* And—my poor little heart!—at first I thought that it was me in love with Wendy, and then I was in love with Barbra too, but before you knew it I was in love with Cheryl too! Damn, Robert, she's only 12!!!"

Robert burst out laughing.

"Oh sure, laugh—go ahead and split a gut—," said Glen. Robert kept laughing, but soon managed to control it.

"I'm sorry, Glen. I'm not making fun of you. I'm just enjoying the hell out of you, if you want to know the truth. Have you proposed to Cheryl yet?" Robert asked, innocently. Glen started laughing now. Robert restarted. Eventually sanity was restored.

"Anyway, last night I fell—watch out, here comes the juicy part—I fell in love with Will and Bob too!" exclaimed Glen. Robert visibly moved way over to the very edge of the bench, trying to keep a straight face as he "escaped from Glen's amorous proclivities."

"Now stop that!" Glen protested, sounding hurt. But he knew that he wasn't hurt, and he knew that Robert knew it too. "Anyway, before the night was over, I was in love with everyone here at Galaxy and it no longer seemed that important what sex they were, how old they were, or how attractive they were."

"Sounds like you had an interesting night of insight. Did you ever get any sleep?"

"Yeah, a little. This 'IN love' stuff is silly, and kind of doesn't fit here. It's loving, but not being 'IN love.' You said that a month ago. I guess my first complete experience of that was last night. Let me lay a sequence on you: I was cared about by you and learned to trust you. You helped me learn about myself—I began to know myself. That successful experience at home with my dad helped. Then other Galaxy people, especially Wendy, helped. Then, as I felt more cared about, I let the real me come out and be known and loved. This me was surrounded with stone walls at home. That's how I survived. But the more the real me showed itself here, the more people could honestly love me and experience me as lovable. Before that I was just potentially lovable, and they could mostly just love my courage for daring to move in here and GO FOR IT. Then, the more I became me and felt loved and lovable, the more I learned to love myself as well. And now that I feel that way, I find myself loving *everyone*. It's like my needs are met and so I'm not seeing people here in terms of what I want or need from them—good old *deficiency cognition*—instead I can just BE with them as they are, not as I need them to be. So with *being cognition* I can see the truth of things, of people, of life. Of course, because of my past I'll slip back toward D-cognition occasionally and have to catch myself. But I can do it. I know I can."

"I've been thanked several times for bringing you here," said Robert.

"You have? By whom?"

"Everyone—except Bert. He doesn't get into that stuff —"

"Say, what have you been up to up here?" asked Glen. "I can tell something is going on with you. Care to share it?"

"I've been debating with myself about whom to talk to about what I'm into, and when. You see, the consequences of the things I'm into will be action, not talk, and very soon. I'll admit that I'm a bit scared. And I hesitate to lay it on you when you're so open and your future is so iffy. I don't want to over-influence you. Let me ask you, where are you at right now about college or career plans?"

"Well, there's a college in town, and they've accepted me, and Will's still going there and he told me about it, and it sounds okay. He said his choice was heavily influenced by being able to continue to live in Galaxy, 'the best home in the world.' That was the way he put it."

"Does he, in your opinion, like the college scene?" asked Robert.

"Not too much—he only did it to try out areas of interest to see what career interests would develop. But you know all that. Why do you ask?"

"I just want to see what your desires are. What career do you want?"

"I'll keep doing my computer stuff."

"You need college courses for that?"

"No, not really; I learn the stuff fine on my own."

"Then why go?"

"'So I don't look like a bum to my family or myself' is coming up, but it's not true. A degree can help me get some types of jobs, but in truth, if I can program rings around other applicants and be willing to prove it, I'm sure I can easily bypass such job prerequisites. In my experience, the more 'courses' a programmer has had, the less likely he is to be a good programmer. For me, programming is something you learn because it's so neat, so much fun, so interesting. If you have to wait and let some teacher spoon-feed it to you over a period of years, you're probably not cut out to be a programmer at all. I'm continuing to program on the computer in my room about four hours a day, in addition to my burger boy wonder routine. The local company I do stuff for would be glad to take me full time. As a matter of fact, they'd let me do all my work at home here. But then I'd never find out what college is like—you know, see the world and accumulate valuable experiences."

"So college is the right place for you to get that. Are you sure?"

"Not really. Let me think a minute, Robert." There was a minute pause before Glen continued. "I think there are the following reasons for my college leanings: conditioning, pressure from home, curiosity about college, illusions that I'll meet 'that special lady' in the college setting, fears that I may miss a lot if I miss the college scene, and, above all, it was going to be a way for me to escape from the home scene."

"Anything else? I'd be interested in helping you analyze this, for reasons of my own." said Robert.

"No, that's it. And I'd welcome help from you in boiling this stuff down to its essentials and looking at it. To tell you the truth, I have mixed feelings about blowing all that money on courses, when I've already taught myself what I need anyway.

"Here now, let me start: I'm going to discount the reason of going for computer courses. Next, I can safely throw out wanting to go for all the OTHER courses I'd be taking, such as history, literature, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. I've learned a hundred times more about that stuff in the last couple of months than I'd ever learned before, and the reading I've already done, at your recommendation, has taught me more about life than anyone else I know has any inkling of. In short, this environment is ten times the learning environment of any college I could go to. Why wade through tons of drivel in order to glean a few valuable tidbits of information about life, when, in fact, the place where I live is *the mother lode* relative to learning, growth, and relationships? Robert, Galaxy is the 'mother of all learning experiences' Why do the college bit? Especially since these colleges want us to pay megabucks for the privilege.

"Let's see, next comes conditioning and pressure from home. I can safely say that there couldn't possibly be a worse reason in this universe to go blow all my money in a college. So that's out. *I* am running my life. *I* am making my decisions. And my dad can like it or lump it. In truth, since our talk I think he'll let me alone and get off my back. If not, I'll handle it. God, it feels good to say that! Fear of him was a huge barrier in my life. Confronting it has been a real eye-opener. I no longer worry about what he might think before I do something. Let's see, what's next on my list?"

"Escape from the home scene is something you mentioned."

"Oh yeah. That was a biggie, but is no longer relevant. I'm already gone. I'm out of there. The problem is solved. That's no longer a reason for anything. I sure as heck don't want to escape from HERE! What's next?"

"Meet a special lady."

"Right. I figured I'd meet Ms. Right and marry her and live happily ever after. Sounds a bit like a fairy tale, doesn't it?"

"A bit. Still want to give that one a try?"

"Well, obviously that ambition developed when I was a lonely, depressed wimp fantasizing to Playboy centerfolds. I won't say that I never do the latter anymore, but the lonely and depressed and wimp stuff is all gone. And good riddance!

"But let me go on, now. I'm not ready to father babies or be responsible for a family. In truth, the exact way that I feel is this: Things are so wonderful in the relationships area right now that I don't want to change anything—ANY change will be for the worse.

"Let's face it, college women are nothing more or less than high school women plus a couple of years of partying and studying. I'm sure I'd be very bored with them in all ways but physically—it's hard to be bored in THAT way around a sexy lady. But, I'd be likely to think of them as 'bimbos.' I guess what I'm trying to say is that I'm spoiled, Robert. Totally and irrevocably *spoiled!* Wendy and Barbra, even though only 17 and 16, are incredible ladies. When they hug me and hold me—I can't describe it—a totally mature woman-love is coming from them. They *know* me—it's so intimate—they are totally open and loving and it's a connection that goes way beyond where any of my fantasies have ever gone. In my fantasies, I'd often concentrated on the sexual aspects, and didn't hold out too much hope that I'd be able to get much more than that from anyone. I think I just never dared to hope that anyone would or could truly know me and love me in their hearts. And why should they have? I was unlovable when I was at my old home."

"So a depressed, lonely wimp deserves no love, and is unlovable, according to your feelings when living there?"

"Right. But now here I am closer to a COUPLE of ladies than I'd ever dreamed would happen. A *couple* of them—not just one. Part of me is thinking that if I blink, this will all vanish. Maybe I'll wake up and this will have all been a dream. Being alone with one of these ladies is the ultimate intimacy. It's done things for my learning about my own heart and self and feelings—that I'd never dared hope for. You warned me about the possibility of OVERWHELM when I first got here. It's so true. Had they been this open to me my first week or two here, I'd be in a padded cell now. It's only the growth, confidence, self-awareness, and understanding that I've gotten here in the last two months, mostly guided by you, that has given me the strength and insight to be able to let all this love into my life without getting shell-shock. And when my conditioning tells me to define the relationships sexually every time I feel sexual energies strongly, I remind my conditioning that *I* am in charge, and I don't need media-conditioned pressures to help me decide how to respond to desires. Here I've learned something about intimacy. It doesn't NEED sex. It can be just as close with or without sex.

"I've done the sex thing a couple of times last year. Neither lady was someone I felt intimate with or close to. Oh, I thought so then—sort of. But now that I've learned the reality of intimacy here, I've come to realize that those experiences were without any love or intimacy or real closeness. They were me settling for what I figured was all I could hope for or expect out of a relationship.

"The truth is, I desperately wanted to find real love and closeness with someone. But I was much too closed and defensive and selfish and egocentric to come anywhere close to real love or intimacy in either relationship. So I settled for sex, and lied to myself about how I felt about it. Well, now I'm going to admit it. I felt—I felt even more lonely after being with them. My conditioning told me to brag to *the guys* about it, so at least my *rep* would get something out of it. But I never did. But what's weird is that I never understood WHY I didn't want to go and brag about it. I was guilty and disappointed, as well as lonely, after those affairs.

"It's funny, but Saturday is the first time I'd ever realized that hidden underneath all my other feelings about these ladies was a feeling—a feeling of—I felt sorry for them. I wanted them to be really loved. I wanted to be able to give them something really special. I wanted them to have something more than me. But it was impossible. We were both closed, nervous, kind of desperate, and full of needs. Most of this was unfilled needs for love left over from childhood. In reality, we were looking for moms and dads. But neither of us had any idea how to nurture, so we could only make one another feel good

physically. I felt gypped and left out. But I tried real hard to convince myself that the relationships were really great, and that now I was hot stuff, and that I'd finally gotten what I wanted. That went over like a lead balloon. How could I believe such a thing when I'd already noticed myself asking myself 'is that all there is?' on the way home from dates with these women?"

Glen continued his feeling-full insights: "Anyway, the bottom line here is that lying next to Barbra or Wendy and holding her and being held, and finding a world full of incredible love and beautiful humanness has—has given me everything I've ever hoped for and more besides—it's helped give my heart such space to grow—and such inspiration—that I have become a very good and loving person. Robert—*I really like myself!* You're all lucky to have me, Robert!"

"That's what we've been telling you, kiddo," Robert told his buddy, going over and giving him a hug at his end of the long bench, and then returning to his own end of the bench. The sunset was getting more and more beautiful as they talked. Robert sat sideways, with his feet on the bench, hugging his knees. "Are we loving you to death, Glen?" Robert asked softly.

"To life, Robert, you're all loving me to LIFE. Bless you for it," said Glen, tears coming to his eyes. Several minutes passed before he could continue. "I—I've grown up a bit. I don't have to think that relationships with women are ABOUT sexual passions. They merely CONTAIN such feelings. And these feelings just make it all more warm and wonderful and exciting and challenging. But the relationships themselves are ABOUT . . . souls that touch. Being one with another person. Needing nothing but being everything. Going beyond myself, and—and in the process—finding myself even more. Right when I leave behind my needs, beliefs, ideas and *mud*—right then I have total compassion for the other person, and right then I find myself taking full responsibility for the other person. Not because you've said this before—not at all. I remember you'd mentioned this, but I didn't remember it until it came up, all on its own. Right then I want to have the joy of loving that person forever, but at the same time I want what I do with that person to be the best thing for them.

"The responsibility I feel has nothing to do with what I think I should or shouldn't do. It's about what I want to do. For instance, if I don't feel that sexual relating would necessarily be the best for someone—such as Wendy or Barbra—then I find that I actually desire to simply steal the energies from the sexual potentials and use them to give the relationship that much more wonderfulness. I've learned your word 'intrinsic,' which I'd never heard before you came along. When I'm choosing to sublimate, and steal energies from sexual potentials, and it's because I love someone so much that I cherish them, and then CHOOSE to, WANT to, DECIDE to be responsible for them and be positive that everything that goes on between us is beneficial and growth-promoting—this is my INTRINSIC self. Robert, I *really care for them that much* that I find myself acting that sensitively and carefully with them."

"I know you do, Glen."

"But—it's so—it's so crazy—so opposite from everything I've ever been told, every movie, every novel, every TV show; how can love be that different from what we've been taught?"

"Remember, Glen, TV shows, movies and novels weren't written to inform or inspire. They're products, which were written to sell and make a profit. They are for entertainment and escape, not enlightenment. How could they not reflect the culture by being full of hollow sensationalism, sexual hedonism, and nonintimate attachments? They function as an escape, and to help people in smugly confirming their beliefs about life and people. Unfortunately, they also teach lies, biases, self-deception, and superficiality. I've been listening to a beautiful human being for quite a few minutes, here. But I'm listening to someone who reflects Galaxy culture, not normal mass culture. You have become an exception. Glen—welcome to the ranks of the 'deviants'!"

"That word usually means bad. You've just used it in the good sense, the sense of abnormal in the positive and benevolent direction. Society usually considers that what

people 'normally' do is the very definition of what's 'good.' And 'right.' I've just seen the flaw in their assumption," said Glen.

"Exactly," said Robert. "So your final word on your marriage fantasy is—"

"My motivation was way off. The desire has vanished. Perhaps someday. Are there any more considerations on my list? I forget."

"Curiosity about college and fear of missing something."

"Actually, I'd prefer to cure that by simply talking to Will some more about what it's like. It's cheaper!"

"Right. Well, the analysis is done. You've done an admirable job of it, too. Your college motivations are all out in the open. What do you think?" There was a long silence.

"Oh my God . . ." More silence. Glen's mind was going a mile a minute.

"Go on. What do you think?" encouraged Robert.

"My God, Robert—what—what I just laid on you is 1001 reasons why—why—Jesus, I'M NOT GOING!!" Glen was speechless. He stood up and spread his hands wide. "After all those times my dad pressured me on this, and after all my fantasies about babes, booze, and being hot stuff—and here—here I'm NOT going! Everything I've said points there; all my feelings point there; my pocketbook, my ambitions, my insights, my relationships—they all say NO. So I AIN'T GOING!" And with that he roared with laughter, laying on the roof and kicking his legs up and down.

After Glen had had a nice, long catharsis, Robert asked gently: "You had a lot of pressure on that one, didn't you?"

"You said a mouthful."

"Don't feel like the Lone Ranger. I decided the same thing yesterday!"

"NO! Robert—you're the smartest guy on the planet! YOU are not even going to college?! I don't get it. What will you do for a career? Holy mackerel—this is getting crazy—I ain't goin', you ain't goin', all God's children ain't a-goin'!" Glen was shocked at this, but all he could do was to lay back and laugh long and hard. He didn't care if the roof dirtied his clothes. He felt deliciously rebellious, and yet not at all worried about his dad having a fit about it. *He* was running his life. And he was free. So wonderfully free! He got up and put his arms out like a plane and "flew" around the roof, buzzing Robert occasionally. Robert was all smiles. He'd never had a friend quite like Glen before. It seems Glen was coming out of his shell. And then some!

After an eternity of Emancipation Proclamation dances, Glen asked: "What are you going to *do*, Robert?"

"That's what I've been up here meditating about for several days. I don't have the answer exactly, but I have sort of a general feel for the answer. You remember that headache I kept having relative to not knowing what to do about the fact that the world needs Galaxy-type lifestyles or something much closer to them than what they now have, and yet there's no way for me to DO anything about all that—who would listen or change anything because of ME—or anyone else—TALKING?"

"I remember, Robert; you asked me to kind of avoid that for a bit. I recognized that you were going through a profound process of some kind with that dilemma—one that required absence of outside interference."

"Yeah—and I appreciate your compliance. Anyway, what happened is that I was experiencing my last resistances to taking full, active responsibility for the world. What I'm talking about here is *walls*. There's a wall, for example, between you—as you were when you came to us, and you today. The wall between alienation and loving responsibility. You've grown by climbing that wall. But there's another wall. The wall between loving responsibility at the individual and group level, and loving responsibility at the national and world level. I climbed that one in the park a couple of nights ago. Sure, I'd felt this ultimate level of responsibility before. And I'd turned myself into a pretzel trying to figure out how I could act on this responsibility level. But this is a Harvey Wallbanger. That's what I call the type of evolution that bangs you up against the existential predicament you're ready to look at, study, think about, and care about, but not do anything about. I'd NEVER have climbed the wall from that context. I just kept

banging into it—hence the Harvey Wallbanger syndrome and the well-deserved headache."

He went on: "What I hadn't done was to sit down and BE with that wall. Apparently I had a need to bang my head a bit first. I guess I wanted to get more real, to physically FEEL the pain and suffering most of the citizens of Planet Earth are experiencing daily as a result of deprivation, choicelessness, power trips, oppression, and loveless lifestyles full of sound and fury signifying nothing. Well, I felt it. And I'm done wall-staring. I'm over the wall and I'm doing. My first action was very big for me—I had to open my heart beyond Galaxy and let the REST of mankind in, as an active responsibility. Previously, I'd limited these responsibilities to Galaxy and friends. From that context, the world's problems were just that: the world's problems. They're now my problems. I'm now on the verge of formulating a plan which I will then act on. Glen, listen to me—I have something very serious to ask you.

"The world is too dangerous, and too unhappy, and too confused, deprived and hateful. It's always had its problems, but nowadays these problems have become a lot more dangerous. Hate has reached the level of suicidal insanity with some of these terrorist groups—they'd even be capable of nuclear terrorist attacks. It's a wonder that there haven't already been any. And this type of thing would probably cause World War III, Glen.

"There are growing terrorist groups ready to act, especially since 9/11, and there are unethical arms suppliers willing to do anything for a buck. No amount of logic will make these crazies sane. No one will ever convince them that their ideas are foolish and naïve and blind. No one will verbally cause them to cease their murderous ways. They'll simply have to decide it themselves. And the only way they'll do that is voluntarily—it must be a result of satisfaction from the way they live.

"Some people feel that if Palestinians were given what they say they want, that peace would subsequently reign. But if they were given Israel tomorrow and Israelis were given Wyoming to move to, it wouldn't stop anything. They'd only want more. They'd only fight each other over their new possession. If the U.S. people converted to the most popular Iranian religion tomorrow, proving that we'd 'seen the light,' they'd STILL hate us and want us all dead. If they didn't, they'd just find someone else to hate and kill. So we're not going to be able to DO anything to please them and pacify them. Also, they won't change because of what we SAY. Anymore than we'll change because of what they say.

"The United Nations and world peace organizations and the Security Council and anything else we can come up with are all well worth having (as was demonstrated after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait), but such things do not stop the hate and terrorism. They temporarily postpone a few actions or mop up after ten-year wars, but they cure nothing. The situations are all like old boilers getting more and more heat applied to them. They blow out here and we patch the leak. They blow out there and we patch the leak. Soon our luck runs out and the whole boiler explodes. There's nothing to 'patch' then—it's all over.

"It's not inevitable that people are full of murderous hatred just because they're poor, Islamic, Jewish, or whatever. History, as well as our current world situation, shows plenty of poor countries that have not been this way—at least, not very often. Lots of countries around the world have been a lot worse off than Germany prior to World War II at one time or another without turning crazy. The Nazi crazies came close to getting nukes, and I think we're all aware of the fact that Hitler wouldn't have thought twice before using such things on his 'enemies.' So every time you try to calm your fears about nuclear terrorism by thinking that no one could be THAT IDIOTIC that they'd use nukes for their 'causes,' remember that joker. Or remember that we used them in that war, and even though we all feel that it saved lots of American lives and helped end the war, what's to stop the crazies in the Mideast powder keg from feeling similar sentiments about their people and their wars? So, in spite of the fact that the world is complex and can't be boiled down to a few simple formulas or concepts or rules, there *are* a few basics that one can induce from the mess:

"Almost all of the anger and murderousness has its roots in the way people are raised. Abuse, deprivation, over-controlling, humiliation, and dehumanizing of any kind produces anger and hatred, among other things. It's been shown that authoritarian child raising does too, and that's a very common method of bringing up kids, as you know, both here and worldwide, especially in Islamic countries. A very harsh version of authoritarian child raising was used in Germany just prior to their turning crazy and murderous. So, simply being poor, if all else is relatively good or fair, doesn't create murderers and terrorists and extremes of hatred.

"People don't raise kids in the traditional authoritarian manner because it's logical, rational, viable, operable, clever, or wise to do so. They do it ONLY because that's what happened to them. No other reason. If your parents cut off your toes when you're born, you'll cut off your kids' toes when they're born. It's as simple as that. That's how people learn the basics of lifestyles: by absorbing what they experience. Kids don't have logic about this stuff—by the time logic develops, the beliefs about such things are cast in concrete. Kids are open to everything, and they trust their parents, and they absorb everything, and they immediately begin to feel that however it is is the way it should be and all other ways are wrong, bad, evil, and dumb.

"So, if the various oppressive lifestyles suddenly (say in 10 or 20 years) changed to benevolent ones, the impetus for the murdering and hatred would be gone and people would negotiate reasonable win-win solutions to conflicts, talk rather than kill, and listen carefully to how others felt prior to all negotiations. It's silly, however, to think we can go teach them how to live. No one would listen. Even if they listened, they'd laugh. 'Everyone knows that toe amputation is the proper way to prepare children for life,' is what they'd tell us. But there's another reason why they wouldn't listen: *We citizens in the U.S. haven't demonstrated yet that we ourselves know how to live!* This is profoundly important—in fact it's the key to the whole deal.

"To make a long story short, just suppose that we *did*, in this country, figure out how to live. Right now the statistics on suicide, divorce, V.D., drug and alcohol abuse, unmarried pregnancy and teen pregnancy, child abuse, spouse abuse, crime, rape, violence and psychiatric problems are all sadly revealing. Suppose we turned all this around, or at the very least created a new lifestyle that, at first, thousands and then millions and then tens of millions chose to adopt—because it worked so well and made everyone so happy and fulfilled. Naïve and/or closed-minded people would stick to their beliefs and reject it because 'it's not what Mommy and Daddy showed us.' Open-minded people would so profoundly love and respect the effect they saw this lifestyle having on those that tried it that they'd dump their beliefs about this area, and admit what most moms and dads willingly admit anyway—which is that they're not perfect and DON'T have all the answers—and they'd adopt the new way, which, luckily, isn't that great a departure from the old ways anyway. Conservatives will be thrilled to hear that it's actually a return to the *best* of the older ways as much as it's an adoption of 'newer' ways. This is similar to the way our society is changing from Second Wave to Third Wave, and some of the characteristics of the Third Wave are not that different from the best parts of the First Wave.

"Okay, Glen, stay with me. We learn how to make life work miraculously in this country. The U.S. goes Galaxy, or at least adopts analogous lifestyles. This is the first stage of my plan. The world watches this transformation with great surprise. But it keeps on going. People in the U.S. become more productive, since they're lots happier and more responsible. Our economy gets stronger. Our debt vanishes. Our people start getting more affluent. But they're too happy, compassionate and wise to just become conspicuous over-consumers, as they did when faced with affluence in the past—besides, what good is a Cadillac or ten-foot TV in a nuclear winter wasteland where you're a tad too dead to drive or watch TV? So then comes the second stage of my plan: empowerment of other countries.

"At first it might sound good to ship all our surpluses to the most dangerously hateful countries; whatever we have that's truly excess gets shipped there WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED, except that they use this stuff to cure poverty, disease, crowding,

bad housing, and do NOT convert it to weapons. But the Saddams and Mahmoud Ahmadinejads and Osama bin Ladens of the world have shown all too clearly what they will do with the resources they get their hands on. Helping people is the last thing on their minds. And too many U.S. foreign aid programs and domestic welfare programs have backfired for me to have much confidence in liberal giveaway ideas. You give hostile countries 'stuff' and they convert it into weapons or enrich local bigshots and ignore the poor. You give welfare to the portion of the American inner-city underclass that's into crime and/or drugs and have never learned a work ethic and you end up encouraging irresponsibility. The fact is that the more we lay freebies on the irresponsible, the more they feel rewarded for irresponsibility. It's Psychology 101. It is only those poor or underprivileged who've managed to develop a work ethic in spite of their surroundings that will use free bucks to help themselves and their families get their act together. But the **Second Wave**, one-size-fits-all, mass-man, social engineering solution that is welfare has helped undermine the ethics of underclass citizens as often as it has supplied the eager-to-work poor with a vital supplement. Look at the state of the work ethics of many of the underclass and compare that to inner-city ethics before all the do-gooder liberals in government, politics and Hollywood painted them with helpless victim colors and tilted them toward dependency or parasitism. And look at the crime, illegitimacy, and teenaged pregnancy statistics for this group then and now. They ain't pretty. The problems increased dramatically as the handouts increased. I was glad to see Clinton opt for workfare instead of welfare in the late 90s. The **Third Wave** solution to the idle, the angry 'victims,' and the poor in general is all the same: empowerment, not handouts. And the best empowerment in the Third Wave comes from the highest source of power: knowledge.

"Anyway, that's what the angry West haters would get from the U.S., to the degree they'd accept it: empowerment. If they have a debt burden, we'd be generous and forgiving. We'd have to be creative and wise about how we dealt with economic impacts and stuff—perhaps we'd have to forgive some old debts or whatever, but it would all be worth it in the long run, as you'll see. But the main thing would be to help them become productive: like they say 'give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime.' So we teach fishing, as it were. And this empowerment would just be stage two of my plan. I'll get to the other two stages in a few minutes.

"The more we did this, the more the world's nations would forget the arms race and begin to spend more on their economic problems, and eventually on those in other countries (perhaps just to look as good as we do, perhaps for other reasons). As they did this, we wouldn't need to spend as much on weapons and defense, and we could then send even MORE help to empower the climb out of oppression and poverty, especially to countries that supported violence toward others. All this could snowball benevolently. I'm saying that the best way to insure there is a future is to INVEST in it. We've invested incredible amounts in weapons to SCARE others into 'behaving.' It hasn't worked. Why not invest in people's lives working? Why not use win-win, since win-lose Ugly American tactics have flopped badly? Naisbitt, in *Megatrends 2000*, said that since the world economy is expanding as it never has expanded before, why not go for win-win? ALL economies can grow. He said that in the 1990s and beyond, economic power will be more important than military power in determining a nation's influence. He says the cold war is over; it's given way to globalization. Many of the wisest people on Earth, as well as the book *The Gaia Peace Atlas*, say that the key to world peace is whether the Haves are generous and decent to the Have-nots, for once, rather than trying to safeguard their possessions by scaring the hell out of poorer nations with huge nuclear weapons stockpiles. Especially since a small part of the defense budgets of the world could solve most of the world's materialistic problems so the Haves wouldn't have as much reason to fear the Have-nots. *The Gaia Peace Atlas* has actually detailed how this would work.

"I hope all this doesn't sound like bleeding-heart-liberal drivel where we go from 'welfare state' to 'welfare world.' I don't mean that at all. Not giving the fish, but teaching the fishing. What I'm talking about is investing in life, not death and terrifying others with our power so they're frantic to build nukes. What I'm talking about is ecological

management, not careless, exploitative growth; and investing in peace, not exploitation and arms races. As the Tofflers say, we spend too much on war-forms and not enough on peace-forms, and we need to drop the careless, exploitative Second Wave ways and pursue the ecologically sound Third Wave ways. In other words, adopt ecological-holistic worldviews as we abandon mechanistic-reductionistic worldviews. Help should be in a form that germinates productivity *and not dependency*, such as modernizing their agriculture or helping them set up free-market economies. We helped the Japanese and Germans become productive after the Second World War—they took it from there. Our help should **empower** productivity and self-sufficiency. This is the second stage of my plan. It entails such things as sending teachers to increase literacy so their people are in a position to be empowered with knowledge. It's been shown that literacy helps women get access to information that leads to higher incomes, improved health, and smaller families—thereby slowing the overpopulation problem. It also entails supporting the poor to secure land rights, supporting local control over common resources to reverse the ecological destruction, extending credit or loans to the poor so they can get tools and livestock and be self-supporting, setting up the equipment to produce clean drinking water and the clinics to insure health care so that people don't try to have large families to make up for the fact that so many kids die of disease, insuring women's rights and support family planning, and—most of all—making sure there are grassroots organizations enabling the people themselves to direct the development process and to accelerate progress by working together. Because none of this works to empower people if it makes anyone dependent. People need to transform from at effect to at cause. People need to run their lives and not have their lives run them. They need knowledge and perhaps a bit of equipment, but unless they organize into grassroots groups for the advantages of cooperation, they won't make it. Think of the pioneers going west in wagon trains, struggling together, hunting together, building together, and organizing for collective security. Alone they'd have been too vulnerable and powerless. Some could shoot, some could fix things, some could cook, some could farm, some could do caregiving, some could direct building, and some could scout and navigate. Who could competently do them all—or even had time to do them all?"

"Are you saying that the U.S. would sponsor empowering countries through foreign aid programs based on teaching, equipping and lifestyle empowering and that people in Galaxy-style lifestyles would only support politicians that would vote for such actions?" asked Glen.

"Essentially, yes," replied Robert. "There are already organizations in the empowerment business. Our country's contribution to this is minimal, at best. The U.N. is mostly stalemated with arguing and gridlocked over disagreements in international political perspectives, talking empowerment talk but more than anything supporting the 'villains of the rich North' giving lots of bucks to the 'victims of the poor South.' Since the North doesn't agree with this perspective, relatively little empowerment is forthcoming. Liberal worldviews lead the U.N. to convince countries to give bucks, but once the bucks reach the 'victim' country, that country's internal corruption grabs it, making the few rich people in the target country richer yet—and more powerful, while the poor get the shaft yet again. Not that different from the way some liberal social programs in the U.S. turned into jokes where only a small part of each dollar went to the 'victims' while the bureaucracy in charge got the lion's share. The liberal compassion urge is wonderful, but the methods they have used in national and international programs have often been ludicrously naïve. Bucks-giving programs are mostly overrated. People need help going from at effect to at cause. Period. Santa Clauses need not apply.

"I stress this latter because even the seemingly kind act of reductionistically giving Rwanda better health care and more food can backfire and create disaster—which is what happened there. Overpopulation resulted from this food and medicine and that in turn led to war, starvation, displacement and disease. A systems-based, Third Wave knowledge approach was what was required there, but what happened was a reductionistic, Second Wave liberal handout approach. The resulting misery was incredible. You can't simply throw money, food or medicine at a problem that is

sociocultural, political, and ecological as much as it is lack of food and medicine. Social engineering backfired there, and it will mostly backfire elsewhere. As I said, people need help going from at effect to at cause by people who have experienced the Galaxy-like lifestyle enhancement—these are people that can be trusted to teach others how to make life really work right. This is true empowerment. Santa Clauses need not apply. Fishing—not fish.

"Anyway, an example of an organization that seems to be able to do this knowledge-based empowerment is the International Institute for Sustainable Development, which champions innovations that empower sustainability. An example of a network that supplies needed development knowledge to those with Net access is the International Development Network. An example of an organization that specializes in assessing the effects of technology on societies, socially, economically, ethically, environmentally and politically is the International Center for Technology Assessment. There are hundreds of other related organizations, and it would have to be determined which would do the most empowering if it had lots of bucks—or if a new one needs to form for that purpose.

"Teachers to improve literacy and help the people absorb and act on the sustainability knowledge from the assessment organizations takes bucks. The U.S. could supply this as paid teachers, but shouldn't consider just sending the bucks to support these jobs to any country—we know where it would end up. The bucks need to go straight to the teachers themselves so empowerment isn't only intentionality but also actuality. There are zillions of other details to work out. I've just scratched the surface here and I'm certainly no international development expert. But Galaxy-type people would discover who the experts are and make sure the best empowerment actions happen by the use of grassroots support for candidates who will champion the U.S. backing of the best empowerment actions. But enough with the details. Let me try to summarize:

"Stage one: the U.S. goes Galaxy and becomes a great example to emulate (no longer a swamp of symptoms, stress, immorality and greed, grossing out many other countries). Stage two: empowerment, as just discussed, on a large and generous scale. Stage three: plant seeds of needed social, political, parenting, relationship, and lifestyle knowledge in key places and people in and from the 'problem' countries. I'd better give examples: People *from* those countries (who'll be returning) or people currently *in* those countries that might be in a position to influence others need to encounter empirically the wonderful advantages of very happy and effective relationships, parenting, and lifestyles, as well as the huge advantages of secular, democratic governments compared to authoritarian religion-oriented nationalism and other oppressive authoritarian political arrangements. This could be arranged overtly or covertly—probably both. The targeted people need to experience firsthand or at least be in a position to observe the advantages of non-authoritarian democracy, both in families and in communities. Covert operations would involve 'conspiring' to have the person encounter the appropriate people and knowledge and lifestyles like in a Mission Impossible operation, while overt ones would involve inviting key people in or from that country (or perhaps just simply tourists from there) to visit Galaxy type lifestyles and get free P.E.T. books and Winning Family Lifeskills books. We'd give them Internet addresses of chat rooms and web sites where others from their countries were discussing and/or considering the new lifestyles and contrasting them with what they were used to. They'd see how they wouldn't have to give up their religions to have a better life, but they would need to let go of ugly hardliner ideas about oppressing women and children, etc.

"The thing we want to do here is help the undeveloped countries and the terrorist-supporting countries get on their feet economically and become more able to sustain themselves at a decent level of existence at the same time as they get wonderful lifestyle insights because of much of the world going in Galaxy directions. Poverty and illiteracy leads to ignorance and the adoption of oppressive beliefs from anyone who offers them, while knowledge leads to awareness, freedom, and a better life. And for those in terrorist countries that are not poor, many are already in a position to have empirical insights

about lifestyles and relationships they encounter via travel, TV, the Internet, movies, or magazines. It's hard to hold a 'Western Satan' concept in one's mind for long when one experiences some of the 'hated' group as being much less Satan-like than many of the people and groups from one's own country—in fact they seem to be the opposite of Satan. In other words, these people need to see and understand the truth of the Galaxy-like transformation of the West and 'the truth shall set them free.'

"I realize how naïve this sounds—and I don't have all the answers or details, here. But the Third World countries are starting to have enough TVs so that they can see the gross disparity between what the rich countries have and what they have, between how we live and how they live. If we don't do anything, the global village phenomenon is going to insure that the poorer countries of the world will begin feeling silly for acting like 30 dogs fighting over three bones when so many of the world's people are knee-deep in bones. But they won't stop with just feeling that silly feeling. After all, it is the U.S. and other rich countries that have the biggest and juiciest bones. They can't hope to scare us into sharing with them by threatening the use of military force. But once they get desperate enough, we can expect endless acts of terrorism, kidnapping, hijacking, and who knows what else? We did not see 9/11 coming. The predictions from the experts about the future are depressingly clear.

"There are already those in poorer countries who send U.S. citizens scam letters that look like free bucks to the American but end up as a rip-off should the American be silly enough to respond out of greed, and there are gangs sending our citizens ransomware which locks up users' computers until they pay a ransom. So—the word is already out about where the 'bones' are. In other words, if our country's heart is set on staying wealthy and safe and secure, we're no longer going to be able to afford to put our heads in the sand regarding other countries where the people are starving, cold, oppressed, and desperate. The global village doesn't work that way in the long run, even if we've gotten away with it in the short run.

"Look at how Taiwan and other Pacific Rim countries went from poor to relatively well off in the blink of an eye. It wasn't because of handouts and charity. It was because of their own enterprise, guts, and the way the U.S. and other countries empowered them to get on their feet. Admittedly, we did it because of our anti-communist ideologies, and because of their cheap labor, and as a way of 'fighting the Red Menace over there.' We didn't do it out of compassion. But even if we did it to promote capitalist ideologies and thwart the spread of communism, it still adds up to a case of investment in a poor country having the effect of helping them go from Have-nots to Haves. All the rich countries of the world could help all the poor countries of the world do this, and they need to avoid liberal handouts and dependency creation in the process. It must empower. It must set people up with enough knowledge to allow the work of their own hands and minds to support them decently—and to support 'prosumption,' in the Tofflers' words. It must allow the natural consequence of going hungry if they fail to work responsibly or eating well if they are responsible. **Natural consequences are the most important learning tool in the universe.** And the lack of a natural consequences context is the key to what went wrong with much of liberal welfare policy in the last half of the 20th century, and is the key to what goes wrong with handouts-based foreign aid, and is the key to what is Second-Wave foolish about welfare states in general. Natural consequences are the basis of ecology itself. To create programs and policy without this Third Wave, new paradigm, ecological-holistic context is to live in the Second Wave past, and worse yet, to fail to learn from the mistakes of the past.

"Now, to consider where things are headed if no one does anything: Remember the use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War and later by Syria in the next century? And how Iraq tried to get nukes to threaten Israel with in 1990, and then they tried to deny it, and then we learned that their rockets would soon be able to deliver devastating chemical weapons to Israel anyway, and then we saw Libya's chemical weapons plants being burned down and no one would admit they had started the fire, nor would Libya admit what those factories were for? Then we found out Germany was helping Iraq get its chemical threat together (the U.S. itself even helped Iraq get its chemical weapon

supplies). And that the long-range artillery that Iraq had in the Gulf War was supplied by a guy whom the U.S. rejected as an arms supplier, even though his weapons would nearly obsolete much of our shorter-range stuff and endanger our troops in a ground war (as it turned out, we made up for this fact in the Gulf War by the softening up delivered by our air campaign).

"Remember these U.S. events: 9/11, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Centennial Olympic Park bombing, the Unibomber, the 2001 anthrax attacks, and countless snipings, shootings, mail bombs, pipe bombs, airplane bombing attempts, and racial and ethnic and religious and anti-corporate and anti-abortion attacks. There were also 53 thwarted terrorist plots against the United States since 9/11, we learned in 2012.

"Anyway, the world's full of arms suppliers, warmongers, mercenaries, opportunists—people who will do anything for a buck. And every year weapons get more dangerous. The ultimate biological weapon may be just around the corner. The whole world may face doom or capitulation to radical demands someday soon.

"Glen, consider all that a mild sneak preview of things to come if the countries in need continue to be ignored and/or exploited. Any country can get desperate and crazy. Look at Iraq under Saddam in 1990. Iraq had plenty of oil wealth but its leadership was so corrupt that all spare cash was spent on weaponry whose purpose was to support Saddam's ego and make him a Mideast hotshot. Such a country was 'in need' because it is so politically and culturally immature that it hadn't learned how to manage to get leaders at the top that support the people in their pursuit of happiness and need-fulfillment

"It's easy to get desperate and crazy in a world where there is not enough to go around and some people appear to be cheating, or perhaps unfairly plunging other countries into debt in order to exploit them. The U.S., Europe, China, the U.S.S.R. and many other countries all had a lot to gain economically by selling enormous stockpiles of arms to Iraq and Iran. Iraq ended up desperate and 80 billion dollars in debt just before it invaded Kuwait. Did we contribute to the Iran-Iraq War by fanning the flames of that useless, senseless conflict to make money on arms sales—which wasted a million people for nothing? I don't know—but I have my suspicions.

"Desperation and craziness merely requires a common perception by some of the people in a county that they're in a desperate plight, or some factional quibbling about religious issues, or for rich countries to spend decades exploiting the poorer countries until the poorer countries conclude from all the evidence that the rich countries are Satan himself, so they have a radical fundamentalist Islamic resurgence whose main goal is to exterminate the 'devils' and those whom the devils are in bed with (Israel).

"Glen, if you were starving, or if bombs fell on your house every few days, or if some insane leader made your eight-year-old son be a mine-field walker, would YOU feel desperate? Or if you were shocked when you encountered a TV in a village showing how the rich countries live, while you and your family lived like pigs (regardless of whether this was because of bad leadership, foreign exploitation, or both)—would this make you feel desperate? Wouldn't you feel that 'when you have nothing you have nothing to lose,' so you'd go along with crazy schemes to terrorize, threaten and extort from the rich countries at your very first opportunity? Not that I'm excusing any country's ugly behavior. But I do understand it.

"So what I'm saying is let's have the U.S. start empowering, rather than undermining. Let's help countries get on their feet so we won't need to give 'aid' in the future, but instead simply market our goods to each other—very win-win. Instead of a liberal, welfare-state context, let's try the Reagan/Bush/Clinton context of trying to get people—and in this case countries—'off the welfare roles and into the work force' (this was part of late 90s' welfare reform in the U.S.). The Worldwatch Institute has said that the wealthy, energy-intensive quarter of the world's population has an obvious responsibility to lead in the search for solutions. They also say that for development to help the poor, it must put them first, as active participants, advisors, and leaders. We need to help them learn to be self-responsible. Just like at Galaxy. Just like P.E.T. does.

"And as hundreds of the wisest people in the world have been saying in the last couple of decades, we will have to cut global military expenditures heavily as all countries recognize that environmental threats to security have supplanted traditional military ones. (The early-90s U.S.-Soviet agreements on arms cuts and the breakup of the Soviet Union underscore this.)

"The extra money not spent on arms, in my proposal, will supplement the extra money made by the West as it gets more productive because of lifestyle transformation, and it can act as the investment money to finance the empowerment steps that help to get the poorer countries and the countries suffering political oppression on their feet. As so many have noted, including the U.N. Secretary-General, the inequitable world situation is intrinsically predisposed toward war and violence. The Tofflers see the trisected world of three Waves as bound to experience serious disagreements because of the very different mindsets of those in each of these three Waves. There's simply no way to change this besides empowering the disempowered as best we can. In other words, we're going to have to, finally, once and for all, DROP our win-lose attitudes whereby we feel rich and happy ONLY if other countries are poor and miserable! That is the old worldview of infinite growth, endless consumption, conquering nature and enemies, and cut-throat competition. The new one MUST be about cooperation, ecology, environmentalism, compassion, empowering, and being in harmony with nature and other humans. We simply don't have a choice about this any longer. It MUST happen.

"Okay, suppose the U.S. started carrying out this plan of ecology-minded, global empowerment, based upon the initial creation of enhanced lifestyles and the awareness, compassion, and wisdom that this would germinate. We'd get our U.S. act together, gain self-respect and respect from others around the world for how we live, rather than shame for this country's lack of ethics or morals, and embarrassment for the accelerating social symptomology here. We'd gain trust and even more respect in the world as we begin our good-will actions, and begin empowering other countries to get productive.

"Soon the whole world would know what the psychologists knew long ago: Negative reinforcement may be good for short-term control of a situation, but positive reinforcement is the best way to help a situation and to empower it to help itself. The world would soon see the glaring difference between what Philip Slater and others have called *positive power* and *negative power*. Our helping Germany and Japan after WWII was positive power. Our Shah escapade with Iran was negative power. The result led to some temporary controls and footholds in a very strategic area of the world, but there was also another effect of negative power: long-term loathing of Americans by Iranians, which may turn out to be only aggravated by our installing a pseudo-democracy there.

"Naisbitt, in *Megatrends 2000,* points out the cultural backlash that is represented by the Islamic revival begun by Khomeini in Iran. It's a reaction against the evils of the Western influence—which is mostly negative power. He calls the case of Turkey (with stubborn fundamentalists pitted against the desire for modern lifestyles and a place in the European Economic Community) a textbook arena for the interplay between the trend toward a global lifestyle and the countertrend of cultural nationalism.

"As you know, the combined power of the media and the Internet—global communication at the speed of light—is the reason for the global village phenomenon, and this tends to globalize values, styles, fads, music, and culture. And, of course, the traditionalists feel their cultures being eroded and holler for cultural nationalism and reduction of Westernizing influences. And that encourages fundamentalist solidarity against the 'satanic' Western onslaught. The lesson here is: had the U.S. used positive power rather than negative power in its dealings with Iran, the fundamentalist uprisings, the hatred toward Americans, and perhaps a whole lot of terrorism and hostage-taking could have been avoided. Or at least soft-pedaled. Media entertainment exports drenched in violence, sex and lousy morals are also part of the formula for fundamentalists' hatred of the West.

"Positive power, the opposite of negative power, acts through compassion, democracy, communication, freedom, examples, benevolence, and inspiration. It's what P.E.T. is based on. Negative power acts through control, threat, manipulation,

undermining, destruction, killing, fear, hate, and terror. It's the basis of—as well as the result of—authoritarian parenting, totalitarianism, and so on.

"In the face of the U.S. display of positive power, which would be viewed positively by other countries, how could other world powers or affluent countries fail to follow suit? They want the human race to survive as much as we do. No country would invest so much in the costs of empowerment that they'd be reclassified from affluent to less than affluent; they'd only give what they honestly DIDN'T NEED. In general, higher productivity, more generosity, better values in our media products, more security and therefore less need for weapons and arms races—these are what would fuel the new world 'Peace Through Sharing' movement. The world *needs* this peace dividend. It *needs* to apply some of its military budget to solving real problems, rather than merely creating new ones by feeding local arms races.

"One of the best people to consult to put all that I'm saying here in context is Robert B. Reich, Clinton's first Labor Secretary and author of such books as *The Work of Nations*. Sounding much like a P.E.T. book, he insists that the world needs to drop its win-lose context (zero-sum) and that each country needs to adopt "positive economic nationalism" instead. Its goal is to enhance global welfare by having each person in a country be responsible for enhancing the capacities of his countrymen for full and productive lives, but at the same time everyone should work with other nations to make sure that improvements in one country do not come at the expense of the people in another country. He says with the global economic web as it is, the old, zero-sum nationalist's concept which depicts the struggle of 'our corporations against theirs' is a fantasy which hasn't been true for many years. For example, if you buy a Pontiac Le Mans, less than 40% of the money goes to Americans; the rest goes overseas to the people who assembled the car, did the designing, and made the engine, axles and electronic components. American lawyers, strategists, bankers, lobbyists, insurance and health-care workers, and GM shareholders get the rest. Some 'foreign' cars are less 'foreign' than this—some are even made in America! So how do you know which car to buy if you're feeling 'patriotic'? Especially since so many domestic and foreign car makers are jointly owned by Americans and non-Americans.

"On the flip side of the coin from zero-sum nationalists are laissez-faire cosmopolitans, who show no patriotism and are unmoved by the plight of the disadvantaged in their country of residence, avoid the obligations of citizenship and take no responsibilities for the fate of their compatriots, nor will they commit to them or sacrifice for them. Reich sees positive economic nationalism as a way to stay off the nationalist-cosmopolitan continuum, thereby avoiding the polarizing we-them dichotomizing in which the Haves put their heads in the sand and pretend not to notice the suffering of the Have-nots. Those adopting this new synthesis will seek to develop the capacities of the workforces of both their own countries and others—very win-win—to enhance world wealth. They'll support shifting high-volume, standardized production to Third World nations, opening markets everywhere to them, reducing their debt burden, and making new lending available.

"Reich sees the new world order as an opportunity to redefine who we are (both as nation-states and world participants), why we have joined together, and what we owe each other and the other inhabitants of the planet. We're all free to demonstrate evolution in action by perceiving one another as something more than economically useful entities.

"Reich knows nothing of Galaxy and therefore has no basis for advocating the more comprehensive, root-cause-addressing plan I have presented to you. But in recognizing the polarization between the Haves and the Have-nots, he clearly warns us about the increasing dangers of continuing to widen the gap between the rich and the poor in America, and he warns us that the Haves may soon be in actual physical danger from the Have-nots, whose resentment and frustration have been seething and building for a decade. He states that the security one can achieve from security-guards and alarm systems is limited. I go one step further than he does. I say that the only true security is either when Have-nots are empowered to be Haves, or at least when their lifestyles

transform from dysfunctional to functional so they actually feel happy, wise, satisfied, hopeful and compassionate rather than hateful, fearful, and aggressively win-lose.

"He outlines how the Haves, which he calls *symbolic analysts*, are slowly seceding from the union, and giving to 'charities' that mostly or wholly benefit the rich. And while the regressive tax structure continues to favor the rich, and the rich form cities within cities and run and own most everything, and the country-club set continues to improve its incomes, property, services and fringe benefits, the Have-nots live in crumbling cities and suburbs with crumbling infrastructures, crumbling transit systems, and accelerating crime rates.

"Anyway, I feel we can take our cue from Reich when we try to put the 'generosity' aspects of my plan into perspective: He specifically states that with the international economic web as it is, win-lose is obsolete, and enriching any other country enriches all of us. Notice the parallel between this and Christianity and other religions, even though this is just systems economics which theoretically contains no moral-ethical bias or leaning? Perhaps the axiom that it is more blessed to give than to receive has more empirical truth in it than we realized. Surely all this is obvious at the biospherical level. The transnational trend is popping up everywhere—not just here. Barriers to cross-border flows of money, information and products are crumbling; groups of people in every country are joining global webs. In a few years there will be no way of telling one national economy from another.

"The Tofflers describe all this stuff eloquently. I should mention that in their *Powershift* book they point out how America, through its omnipresent, monolithic media, has an enormous cultural influence on the world—much more so than any other country. They say that 'vast multitudes around the globe hunger to adopt Western, but also specifically American, lifestyles, attitudes, fashions, ideas, and innovations.' So this new lifestyle of ours MUST germinate here and spread to the rest of the world and not the reverse. We must follow the existing dominant pathways of major cultural diffusion.

"There are a lot of details to work out here, like how to turn the economic effect of all this into an asset, even if it tended not to be at first because of the nature of economics and the fear of change or whatever. But the general idea is that we'd get our own lifestyle act together and then help the dangerously hateful countries out of their reasons to hate us and help them out of poverty if they had that problem, help empower poorer nonhateful countries to leave poverty behind as well via empowerment and not handouts, slow down and stop the terrorism and war-making, and end up influencing the world to go more in the Galaxy direction by examples set by us, then Europe, Japan, Canada, Australia, and finally the C.I.S. (Commonwealth of Independent States—the interstate association of the former republics of the Soviet Union), and China and other biggies. So there, then, is stage four: the world goes Galaxy.

"Now, in the second stage, if the leaders either refused to let us help empower their people or tried to turn any equipment we sent there into war materials, we'd pull back the help and take our offer direct to the people, until the leaders looked like they were backstabbing their own people out of craziness and greed, and wrecking their opportunity for a decent life. The people would force the leaders to allow the help. We might have to be sneaky and covert at first to get around the built-in citizen-exploitation aspects of the country's government—perhaps we'd have to study a few Mission Impossible reruns!

"I feel that if we'd become a generous, loving country full of people whose lifestyles were working and who merely wanted the people of other countries to kiss poverty and hate and misery goodbye, the internal pressure from other people to receive this help would be too great for the leaders to ignore—they'd have to okay it or get dethroned. The people's dreams would come true and the leaders would look like saints and get permanent tenure as a result. This would be too tempting for leaders to resist.

"But it'd be essential to also do what we could in the education department to insure that such health and welfare transformation didn't result in population explosions leading back to poverty cycles. We'd be very eager to work with the leaders on

information campaigns to prevent that. So the dangerous people begin to eat well and live good. Then what?

"Then they begin to look around. They're no longer crippled by the deficiency-cognition that limits perceptions in the survival mode, so they can think and ask intelligent questions. What's causing this change for the better? Why? Who's doing it? They will be enjoying life more and having less reasons to hate and kill. But they would still do it—*because it wasn't the poverty but the UPBRINGING that had predisposed them toward hate and murder.* Here we'd have to be strong and not threaten to cut off empowerment aid. And when aid was not cut off, even the stupidest dolts in their country would begin asking themselves why. What kind of country would help another country live better while the helped country was still responsible—directly or indirectly—for terrorist acts? Only a country that was good, forgiving, mother-like—perhaps 'the mother of all countries.' They'd begin slowing down some of their 'acting out' of feelings.

"And now a long, slow evolutionary process has to happen. The entire world would be wondering: How did the U.S. change from a substance-abusing, divorcing, sinful, selfish, weapon-obsessed wielder of negative power—remember my very specific definitions of negative and positive power—to a compassionate, giving, generous wielder of positive power? How did they transform from alienated and sad to centered and happy? How can WE get to be that happy? How can we get so productive that we can simply give away the excess to those less fortunate? What's their secret? And our allies, first, but later our 'enemies,' would begin living more Galaxy-like. Our old enemies would have changed by now into our new friends, by the way. Even if the crazies kept being crazy for a bit, soon they'd look about as silly, and feel about as embarrassed, as one who passes gas in church (and sits in his own pew).

"So in this long, evolutionary process, people slowly change their lifestyles in the Galaxy direction. This is slow for many because beliefs are pretty entrenched, but for some, like you, for instance, the change may be quick. Those with courage would see that they only live once and they're being given a free ticket to happiness and fulfillment. I predict that once such a lifestyle caught on, it'd spread like wildfire, because who'd want to be left out of 'the promised land'? At first it'd be a matter of it catching on in the U.S., but once that succeeded, the world would be the target. And remember, as the Tofflers and Naisbitt so eloquently remind us, the world emulates the West, especially the U.S., and the better the quality of the lifestyle that manifests here and gets media-distributed, the more eager other countries will be to emulate us, and the quicker it will occur.

"*Positive power precedes permanent peace,* if I may coin a phrase, and this is indeed what the prerequisite would be, on the worldwide scale.

"Speaking of power, the whole process would be, to Christians, a manifestation of the spreading of the Power and the Light, or love and truth. There are many who are 'waiting for the Second Coming' because they like the idea that someone will lead the world from darkness and sin, with the alternative being apocalypse. I'd like to suggest—of course then I'm an activist—a doer—I am not good at being a 'wait-and-see' person—I'd like to suggest that whether anyone is coming or not, and whether it's soon or not, that there is no reason to sit idly by as the danger increases. Religious people have become more activist-minded in this country for decades now anyway, so perhaps this will be in tune with their prevailing mood. Perhaps this will give them a great focus for their strong activist tendencies.

"But, to go on, I'd like any who have 'accepted Jesus as their savior,' whether 'born again' or not, to imagine precisely what actions Jesus would either take or encourage if he were to 'come back' tomorrow. How much different than all I have said would it be? I'm not claiming any special 'revelations,' but I am claiming an inordinate amount of common sense, and I say that the Galaxy-type lifestyle movement would be in perfect harmony with any possible benevolent future world 'salvation' actions. Salvation; world peace; stopping the killing, the oppression and the hatred; a new policy of giving, charity, benevolence, do onto others, the return to family values and good ethics, etc. *There's simply no reason to wait for all this* to be given magically to us without our taking

responsibility for ourselves, our actions, our salvation. After all, 'the Lord helps him who helps himself.'

"However, some 'fundamentalist' religious people would tend not to 'love thine enemies,' as the Bible says, but instead destroy them. Look at the heavy emphasis on military interventionism and weapons build-up for preparedness found in some religious TV programming. (The *Gaia* book I've showed you points this out too.) 'Those whose beliefs are different from ours are the Devil' seems to be their bottom line. It's sort of like they're more 'paranoid' than the rest of us and see EVIL in all differentness. This should come as no surprise, since these same people feel that 'man is born evil and sinful' and that everyone who doesn't end up believing as they do and doesn't go to their churches will end up 'burning in hell.'

"Again no surprise, these same people tend toward authoritarian upbringing, and when kids show spirit, tendencies to explore, curiosity, or simply differentness, this is seen as a tendency toward evil, and is met with harsh 'disciplining'—in other words, oppression. As I'm sure you might guess, this whole thing turns out to be a self-fulfilling prophesy, since, after many experiences of oppression, involuntary forced learning of dogma, humiliation, spankings, orders, coercion, and other forms of negative power (recall my earlier definition), the kids who experience this type of thing can be absolutely predicted to be full of hate, paranoia, anger, fear, 'evil,' and the Devil himself!

"What an incredible cycle of negativity we have here—the older people in these 'flocks' oppress the younger ones until they prove the rightness of all the beliefs of the flock, and these people grow up seeing the Devil everywhere. The reason I mention this is that I'd like to draw a parallel between this child-raising error and the one made by all the radical (and many nonradical) factions in the Mideast powder keg. The upbringing is very similar in these areas. **It all gets down to trying to mold someone into what you want and need him to be, and what you think he 'should' be, as opposed to allowing him to explore his world, choose who he is and how to be, and letting him develop and grow in his own natural way in an environment of love and acceptance and nurturing and P.E.T. rules of responsibility and natural consequences and respect and ethics and good examples.**

"So the Christians can aid the spread of this compassionate, world-nurturing, peace-promoting movement, either in terms of their faith, if they like, or just because they want life to work better for everyone. Whichever pleases them. Judaism and other religions can also choose between having their faiths central to, or unrelated to, the aiding of this movement. Whichever pleases their adherents. My main trepidation about making any real connections to the various religious orthodoxies in the world is trivially simple. It can be predicted that they'll tend to fight about it instead of cooperating. Look at the Protestant-Catholic conflicts in Ireland, or the Arab-Israeli wars over religious and territorial issues, or the uncountable warring 'factions' in the Middle East and elsewhere. Look at Lebanon. There's nothing like a self-righteous bigot to muck up a good thing and initiate policies whereby the world peace movement must be done this way and not that, and he'll shoot anyone who doesn't do it HIS way.

"So I'd prefer that we let it stay as it is, a benevolent lifestyle transformation movement that includes revamping some child-raising and nurturing practices. No matter how one might like to add to this foundation, or modify it to fit one's beliefs, it's still LIFESTYLE ENHANCEMENT. You can see how factionalizing would weaken the whole deal. Why chance it? Keep it pure and simple. If anyone wishes to be involved and be in a religious frame of mind at the same time, fine. Atheists and agnostics are just as welcome, however, since the whole world is to be included and no one excluded. No other way would work. Were talking about species survival and species happiness. If some people get together in Galaxy groups and they also happen to be Baptists or rock worshippers, fine. People need to choose what they feel will make them the happiest.

"As a matter of fact, I'd propose the following as a litmus test for determining which of the religions are positive and which are negative, relative to the survival of the world: We get this movement really moving—replacing greed, anger, hate, and murderousness with compassion and cooperation and love and rationality. We ask that

the world's religions all put in a good word for this and support this peace movement from the pulpit. We find out what kind of responses we get—we examine these responses. In my opinion, the religions that exercise positive power and support this new era of man's humanity to man are positive forces in the world, and the ones that reject it or fight it are negative forces in the world.

"In other words, this ultimate litmus test would show which ones cared for people and wanted to help them improve their lives and help the people to be more compassionate, more altruistic, more moral and ethical, more generous, more loving, and more peaceful. It would also point out the ones who merely wanted to enslave, indoctrinate, brainwash, control, coerce, and take the money from people, and who didn't really care about people's lives and happiness after all.

"The whole world could finally know, once and for all, what forces in the world were trying to destroy it and what forces were trying to save it and keep it peaceful and compassionate. The anti-human 'religions' would stick out like sore thumbs, and they'd be seen as traditions that had somehow lost their way and become caricatures of religions. Other religions would offer to help guide them back to the 'straight and narrow' path of what a real religion should be: a system of faith (regardless of whether or not there were supernatural beings being acknowledged or worshiped) that helps guide and focus its adherents' benevolent, compassionate, altruistic desires into pro-human, loving activities that make life work better, mean more, be happier, and be more peaceful.

"The so-called religions that promoted negative power and hate and racism and bigotry and war-making would be seen as sick or neurotic, needing help and understanding, but NOT needing oppression or humiliation or denigration from others, as these types of things were probably part of what made these traditions 'sick' in the first place. Also, if people unlucky enough to be stuck in negative traditions and orthodoxies were given the right kind of compassion and inspiration and guidance, their tradition might eventually dump its oppressive and anti-human ideas, as these ideas would contradict their everyday EXPERIENCE with all the helpful and compassionate outsiders from more benevolent traditions.

"They may once have needed more hostile and uncaring traditions to help them survive and make sense of a world where they were surrounded by hateful, aggressive, murdering factions and traditions. But perhaps the fact that this is no longer the case and the situation is now reversed, and the fact that the outsiders around them are now peaceful and compassionate, would give them the proper impetus to change their attitudes, and soon afterwards, their traditions. It takes only common sense to figure out that in a Galaxy-like world, Jonestowns would never happen, and there'd be no motivation to continue or join or begin negative-power-based cults and religions, here or in the Mideast.

"Anyway, all this has been based on the premise that the whole thing can somehow catch on in the U.S. So let's say that we can see what the eventual world effect will be if we can only start the transformation process. So can we start it? Will it catch on? How can we make it catch on? It caught on with Bert, Joyce and you—three 'outsiders.' But can it catch on in general? If so, how? Who will do what and how and when? Okay, college drop-out," Robert kidded, "gonna be a bum all your life?" Glen looked surprised. He'd been looking dazed. There was a long silence. Then he spoke and he sounded profound: "Oh my God, Robert . . . oh . . . do you realize what you've just said? You've just put the responsibility for the world . . . for Earth's survival . . . for the human race . . . in your and my hands . . ." Glen was in awe.

"Correction. My hands. I can't put anything in your hands. Only you can do that."

"Oh God . . . I'm scared . . . oh Jesus, Robert . . . oh Christ, I'm about to go crazy! Two days ago I fell in love with damn near everybody. Today I top that—I throw away my college career and then fly around on a roof like a bat in heat. And now we've got to save the whole world all by our little selves. Robert, you're crazy! You're nuts! You're the craziest, nuttiest weirdo on the face of the Earth. I suppose you're gonna want to build spaceships and go save the other planets in our galaxy, and then the other

galaxies, and then the universe too. How about parallel universes and alternate universes? Gonna leave them out? Jesus, Robert!”

By now, Glen was crying. He was emotional, but not mad. He just didn't quite know how to express what he felt. Which was close to overwhelming. So he hollered at Robert, still crying: “This is it. You've finally flipped out! Damn! The second I feel responsible for somebody you turn around and add 7 billion more to the load. You oughta be locked up! You're looneytunes, Robert! How can you . . . how can you TELL me a thing like this? I'm going nuts, here . . . I can't handle all this . . .”

Glen lay down on his back and put his hands over his eyes, as if to shut out the world. He was breathing hard and, still crying, he said: “Whoaoaoaoaoaoa . . . Dorothy, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore! Whoaoaoa . . . Toto, where are you?” And then he got really soft: “Robert, I . . . I can't love that many . . . I'm just not that big. I'm just little Glen; look how teeny I am. I'm a runt-wimp. You're scaring me to death, Robert.” The stars were out; the sunset was long gone. Robert looked up at the stars and smiled, with tears in his eyes. After a few minutes of silence, Glen spoke again, shaky, emotional, but still hanging in there: “Okay, what's the serious thing you said you were going to ask me? You never did get around to asking it. All you asked is am I gonna be a bum all my life. That ain't it. I know you. You got something else in mind. So what the hell is your damn question?”

Robert opened his mouth to speak. Glen interrupted: “Never mind. The answer is yes.” Robert's mouth was still open, hanging there catching the beautiful starlight.

“And I love you too,” added Glen. A long pause.

“I'm not even going to get to ask it, am I?” asked Robert.

“Nah—you talk too much!”

“You don't even know the question,” protested Robert.

“Yeah, but I know the questioner,” Glen said.

“Think you're pretty smart, don't you?”

“With you around, that probably doesn't matter,” replied Glen.

“It matters plenty. Especially when we get to those parallel universes.”

“So when do we start?”

“Five minutes sound good?”

“Works for me.”

“Got your heart all ready for the 7 billion?”

“Be gentle with me, honey. This is my first time.”

“Oh, now I'm 'honey.' This isn't gonna lead to swapping spit in the shower is it?”

“I saw that movie too.”

“You feeling better now, kid?”

“You mean am I done hollering?”

“No, I mean is the overwhelm past?”

“What overwhelm would that be?”

“You know.”

“Oh, that. I just forgot who I was for a second.”

“Oh?”

“My red cape fell off. I went into a phone booth and fixed that. Hope Lois Lane didn't see. Anyway, bring on those universes!”

“So you gonna keep being cute or can we get down to business?”

“Cute? I'll give you cute. Want to watch me change in the phone booth?”

“Cute. Well, anyway, down to business. First we . . . are you SURE you won't let me ask the question?”

“You STILL talk too much,” replied Glen, finally composed.

“So anyway, you know what the game is. And the stakes. The initial strategy is like programming: you learn how things in that system work. Once you understand the system, you create an algorithm to get the job done. Then you refine it. And as you utilize it, you further refine it. Let's start with terms. We can't discuss it unless it has a name. ‘Galaxy’ has worked as a term for us. But it won't mean diddlysquat to the rest of the world.”

"I've been leaning toward 'microcommunity,'" said Glen.
There was a long pause. Robert was thinking.
"That's good thinking, Glen. When did you come up with that?"
"When I was in the phone booth."
"Glen!" chastised Robert.
"Sorry."
"Okay. How about MC for short. You know, MC for microcommunity and TV for television."
"I think it'll play in Peoria. Radical! Let's go for it! It sounds heavy-duty. Like, we're talking *major* new term!"
"I've created a monster," sighed Robert.
"Sorry, ma'am. The facts, ma'am, just the facts. Where were you on the night of —"
"Glen, we could do this later —"
"No, no, sorry again. Back to universal salvaging."
"You okay?—You sound a bit spacey—and don't tell me that's where we gotta go to find those universes!"
"You said it, I didn't. So Galaxy is an MC. And I suppose the thing we want to catch on is the MC movement."
"Let's accept that for now," Robert suggested. "So in an apartment complex with an extended family, an MC looks about like Galaxy. What does it look like in a hotel, in row houses, in an intentional community, in co-housing scenes, in shared housing scenes, in farm communities, in suburbia, and in inner-city housing?"
"You don't ask much, do you? Maybe I better hop back in that phone booth—"
"I see normal suburban neighborhoods as a challenge. How will kids act on their choices if it's raining or snowing? How will they be safe in the dark? There will be perhaps six nuclear families on the block, hopefully defined as one or two MCs. Their MC will be the block or a portion of it. A block will involve no crossing of the street—it will be one big rectangle, enclosed by a sidewalk and streets, on which there are a bunch of houses and yards. How will little ones go to other caregivers and what will facilitate communications? Lots of phone calls? Doesn't sound too great."
Glen spoke: "I see a bigger problem. How will those six families end up living near one another? Not just anyone and everyone will do MCs at once. If there's one MC aspirant in a neighborhood, how does he meet others with interests similar to himself to be friends with, and how do he and several families end up all in one block, ready to do this MC thing?"
"Oops. Great! You've just killed off the middle class in all existing universes," said Robert. "Wanna try for the lower class, too? How about the upper? They're snobs anyhow."
"Now who's weird?" asked Glen.
"I'm getting at the fact that it's the normal middle class who are most open to and hoping for new child-raising ideas. And they are very often in suburbs in single family houses. Would one call these 'normal suburban blocks,' and, by the way, how many houses do they have—about a half dozen or more?"
"I guess so. Let's use that, anyhow. What about the deal I mentioned?" They both thought for a minute, then Glen piped up with: "There needs to be an organization that coordinates various people—MC aspirants—meeting one another in any given locale."
"Right. Good! And the average person moves every 5-6 years anyway. So when a decade of shuffling has passed, a block of nonaspirants could have been replaced by a block of aspirants who could have located each other according to common interests, with the help of the local organization—"
"Let's call 'em MC Centers," interrupted Glen. "No, wait a minute, Robert. We've forgotten what year it is. We don't need centers after all. That's an unneeded bureaucratic hassle. The coordinating can be done more effectively with software, social networking, chat rooms, emails, and texting. The software could be written in PHP and use MySQL databases. I'm quite capable of coding such an app. It would be search and

match software helping you to find people to be in an MC with according to common interests, so people would have to register and answer lots of demographic questions about themselves and any group of aspirants they already know of that want to join them in their MC."

"Good," said Robert. "So the software registration page on the Internet would be set up to register them as MC administrators, representing one person or couple or family or group. The MC database would grow full of these aspirants that often represented a group but other times just one person. A lot of people don't know anyone they'd like to be in an MC with. Like you, a few months ago, for example."

"I have MySQL computer databases—I can just set one up for this. They expand nicely. Of course, since anyone can register and anyone can view anyone's profile, it is important for privacy and security issues that real names, real physical addresses, and phone numbers are not asked for or in the database, although states and towns and zip codes will be. We will ask for email addresses but not display them in their profiles, which is important for privacy and security reasons. Instead, we'll use a private messaging system where people can contact each other through their usernames which we'll have link to the message input form. So when you find the profile of a person or group you like, you click on the username and this automatically is put in the 'To' field of the messaging form. When you send a message to a user, that user gets an email in his email program telling him he just got a new message on our MC website, and it gives the login link so he can conveniently check it out. Let's see—how about in your inbox you can click a button next to each message to indicate you read it and this status will get stored along with the messages in a messaging database—another MySQL db."

"You sound like you really know your stuff, Glen. Will people be able to search for people by distance from each other? You know—people under 10 miles away, or 50 miles away, or 100, or 500, or under 1000 miles away?"

"Sure—I can code in zip code based search algorithms," replied Glen.

"Very good!" encouraged Robert. "After the families have made friends, they'd begin a slow, evolutionary process of either picking a new neighborhood to slowly move into, or more likely move into one where one or two *compatible* MC aspirants already live. Of course, all this presupposes that they already know what an MC is, what its potential is, what it can do for them, their children, their growth, their happiness, and their fulfillment. How will they learn all this? Let's go back to what I said about how a programmer would do it. The 'system' in question would be the media of *communication*. We have to get the word out. To do that we have to use the system. What would most rapidly and effectively get an MC movement launching message to us, for instance?"

"Social networking sites, movies, TV shows, video DVDs, audio CDs, novels, and national news stories. The best impact would be if we covered all bases—utilized all these media," suggested Glen. "We need to do what Bill Moyers, in his PBS TV specials, has called 'holding conventional wisdom to public scrutiny'—what the press is there for. We need to help people scrutinize the conventional errors in their lives that precipitate all the symptoms and keep their lives from working. And we're just the guys who can do it; historically, we just happen to be 'at the right place at the right time,'" observed Glen. "Robert?"

"Yeah?"

"Is all this really what I'm going to be dealing with instead of college or a job? I feel a little like a naked infant wandering through a snowstorm."

"Well, you might have to keep burger-ing and/or programming for a bit longer, since there won't be much early profit in all this. But when you start talking big media such as movies or TV shows or speaking engagements featuring MC spokespeople or nationally distributed 'how-to' DVDs, you're talking big bucks—major moolah. That means investors. That means they'd be wise to give us a small organizer/consultant fee monthly to keep us going while we help put pieces together and find the right people to help with all this, and so on. And I think we'll need to find a few famous people and/or powerful people who can and will stand behind all this. So, to answer your question, I imagine we'd get a minor salary for continuing to champion this project, a salary from the MC

corporation, foundation, or investment organization that decided to take on the project. And the thing is going to need a high-powered publicity agent."

"Are you telling me you're ready to hop on airplanes, zip around the country talking to famous agents, actors, scientists, psychologists, and investment bankers? The thought is terrifying!"

"Yeah, that's one of the things I've had to work through the last couple of days. I've redefined it as *exciting*. Yes, Glen, we'll have to do all kinds of scary things like you said. But hopefully once things get going, the agents and managers and producers will take on their responsibilities 'with viga,' as J.F.K. would have said, and we won't be trying to do any more than we can handle. Speaking of J.F.K., this whole deal is going to be a lot like the Apollo project. Years of hard work and a project of unparalleled challenge and importance and a final result of success—the human race adds another solar body to its potential resources. But cheer up, Glen; no one's going to hit you or scream at you. The worst that can happen is getting a NO or being laughed at. Anyone doing the latter will just be someone who's not very insightful, and therefore probably not an asset to 'Project MC' anyway. We'll be glad they weeded themselves out, and we'll politely go on to our next task."

"Thanks, Robert, I needed that. I guess I have a few excess fears of confrontation—I guess due to failing at it so long with my dad."

"No problem, buddy. When you said YES, without even letting me ask the question, I knew you were the perfect person to help with this project. A guy who, in spite of lots of fears and inexperience, is ready to throw caution to the wind and dive in come hell or high water. A guy, in short, with guts. That was my only prerequisite for a project partner. You got the job, Glen!"

"Thanks, Robert." He breathed a deep sigh of relief. "I might need my hand held a few times, but I think I can come through for this project. I'm not so sure anyone will want to listen to me—"

"Why won't they? I love to listen to you! You're more than smart and interesting. You're entertaining! 'Toto, where are you?' You've got style! And I don't mind a bit of hand holding, but I draw the line absolutely at swapping spit in the shower—"

"I promise, Robert, no spit-swapping—"

"That's a relief. So let's go on. Underground lighted tunnels, like subway station tunnels, between houses on suburban blocks, might work for our suburban block house problem. But few could afford it. Perhaps 5% could. Oh, I forgot—not only are there buried cables, water mains, sewers, sprinkler system pipes, telephone and TV cable lines underground, but I seriously doubt that city ordinances permit such digging—they need to protect cables, pipes, and so on. So, ixnay on the unnels-tay. Anyway, what are MCs going to do to enable little ones to choose caregivers without wandering around the neighborhood in an unacceptably unsupervised fashion?"

"Robert, let's make a list of logical possibilities. I'll start: 1. Caregivers could watch the kids toddling from place to place from their windows. They'd have to bundle up their charges in bad weather. For newly mobile babies that run around aimlessly (and run moms ragged) perhaps there could be some kind of 8-foot-high clothesline wires between houses and the kid on a 'leash' clipped temporarily to the clothesline for transit purposes."

Robert added to that: "2. Caregivers could accompany the toddlers' inter-house toddling adventure."

Glen added: "3. The entire neighborhood could have a playground fence around it so kids were considered safe inside; there'd be no way out except for kids old enough to safely go off MC grounds. And all dangerous tools and stuff would have to be behind locked doors."

Robert added: "I like that a lot, Glen! 4. Special tightrope wires between houses with little hanging cars that would run on them. Kind of like ski lifts. House-access doors at each end, or at least covered porches. The Disneyland solution! Kids would like to ride the wire. Weakness: the neighborhood would look a little unusual."

Glen was grinning. He added: "5. Covered, enclosed walkways with either skylights, high windows, or both, for natural light in the daytime. Automatic timers connected to high, covered light fixtures would insure constant, safe lighting after dark. Or motion-activated switches. Or just use light switches. Toddlers can operate low-placed ones. Weakness: a bit spendy, but not all that bad. Also, the neighborhood would look different than most. I guess the thing to insure here is that they were built to harmonize with the site and the houses they connected, so the planning commissions and building inspectors would be able to smile upon the deal."

Robert commented: "That's great! Actually, that wouldn't necessarily detract from a block's looks. It would just be different, that's all. Kind of like going from Rembrandt to DaVinci—not a step up or down—just a step sideways to a different painting style. And you know, if you look at the daycare trends in industry, corporations, colleges, apartment complexes, condos, and intentional communities, we might even be so bold as to designate a daycare house. Suppose one house is double the size needed by its occupants. Let's say there are eight houses on a block, each with an MC family that's fond of all the other families on the block. All this equals either one or two MCs. The extra-roomy house could dedicate its entire downstairs to daycare, and the occupants would live upstairs. One or both of these people would be downstairs during daycare hours, and the parents, siblings, and extended-family relatives would get their turns as well. The occupants would have daycare as either part- or full-time jobs. They might work at other things, too: Perhaps in the context of a work-at-home job. Parents that weren't working during daycare hours would be caregivers sometimes, along with the house's occupants, which might be parents with kids, empty-nesters, or an older couple. MC adolescents might take some turns at daycare, too, either after school, on weekends, or some evenings—maybe this would be a way to earn a few coins. Gotta watch that one—I nurtured Cheryl a lot but always because I *wanted* to. It's important to keep desirable things from turning into chores because of ill-thought-out contexts. Other cultures do a lot of this sibling childcare, and if done right, with no coercion, it is good for the adolescent, teaching responsibility and giving nurturing opportunities. The important thing would be to always have a choice of two caregivers, and making sure each kid got enough individual attention. The caregiver-to-kid ratio for infants should be one to two or one to three. For older kids one to five is okay. And so on."

Glen put in: "Sounds great, Robert. Or a house could be totally child-proofed and 100 percent dedicated to child nurturing. An MC daycare/fun house. All families on the block would chip in bucks on this one. Another way to go would be building a dome in the geometric center of the block. Then have the covered walkways from it to each house. Sort of like the sun and its rays."

"The SUN! That has a good sound to it. Let's call the idea the 'suns' concept. I like it!" exclaimed Robert. "We forgot one thing. If four to eight MC aspirant families are in a hurry for an MC, it doesn't necessarily mean they have to wait a long time. Here's what they could do: temporarily live in a fancy motel or hotel or apartment complex where there are lots of available adjoining units. For the motels, they might have to do what my one exceptionally together kid's family did: add remodeling in the form of enclosed walkways next to the appropriate units. An easy task, since the walkways you find outside these units currently have only one nonenclosed side anyway. Anyway, during their wait, houses in their prospective MC site would be vacating at the average national rate of one or two a year. Within as little as three years, they'd be in. More likely five, sometimes as many as eight or nine years before ALL were in. But there's even a neat alternative to any of the waiting. Can you guess—"

"Housing developments!" put in Glen.

"You never do let me ask my questions."

"You *still* talk too much."

"You got it right, Glen. They just get a developer to develop a block or tract, I think they say—what the heck does tract mean anyway? I'm guessing. But they'd get 'em to do it 'to specs.' Including walkways, leash wires, suns, skyways (the ski lift deal) or—

or even cute little rideable choo-choos or trolleys or baby buses that go between houses and stop at little station-porches at each house!"

"Oh—that is neato to the max, Robert! That is radical. In fact, it's adorable!"

"Thank you, thank you," said a bowing Robert. "We'd better look out here—we'll put Disneyland out of business if we're not careful!"

"Lemme try one: How about a huge, daycare tree house being the center where skyways and/or covered walkways meet. To get from house A to house B, go from A to tree house to B. To get to daycare only, just go to the tree house. Perhaps add rope swings and do the Tarzan bit—for older kids only, or adults. Or the other Tarzan bit—or was it Swiss Family Robinson?—or both?—where there's a kind of elevator up to the tree house. Ooooh, this is fun!"

"Well, it sure demonstrates one thing. There's a hell of a big opportunity for more than just great lifestyle enhancement here. The potentials for architectural creativity are boundless. The great architects would try to outdo each other with their version of MC structures. Function would precede form, but there'd also be a lot of functional experiments, which would be followed up by experiments in form."

"Will people really need central daycares in MCs?" asked Glen.

"Yes and no. If built right and used correctly, they're the best possible childcare places. Much better than an adult-oriented, middle-class house full of things that kids shouldn't touch. Nothing messes up a kid faster than putting him somewhere that forces you to scream NO every 10 seconds. We ended up devoting a room to daycare here (and now it's a project room since there are no longer any little ones). Add to that Bert's work room and Galaxians are in seventh heaven here now, creatively. When there were little ones, we made sure they were happy and well nurtured in the daycare room. They loved it there. Especially because they often had other alternatives. Choose Joyce in the daycare room, or Mort in Mort's living room, for example. At other times, both of their choices are in the daycare room. If they want nurturing, they go there. For 'adventures,' they go anywhere else. And then, of course, infants are cared for in their own rooms or in a special part of the daycare area. When they sleep, someone watches out for them by being in the next room doing something else. When they indicate a desire for a different person, we get that person—usually the other assigned caregiver. If they mature a bit and get verbal enough to be asking for unavailable people, they simply learn to make do with assigned people. Kids are not supposed to be learning how to CONTROL others, as happens in many homes. That's negative power. Instead they learn to make good choices about what's available. And to understand that when mom works, she's gone and that's that. But since there are always two caregivers to choose from, kids learn early to feel in charge and at cause and responsible for their choices. They love choosing—it means a lot to them. There is little more valuable than autonomy empowering.

"In a few years, almost ALL responsible adults in the U.S. will be employed, whether or not they have babies. That's just a fact of life. It's already true for the majority of women and it's growing fast. And it's an extremely healthy thing for everyone, except for the kids whose parents didn't set up things right for them. There are latch-key children who do nothing but watch the tube or play in the streets—at their peril. There are kids with rotten baby-sitters or bad daycare. But often the mothers who put their kids into such crummy situations are the same ones who'd be abusing or neglecting the kids if they stayed home all day anyway. Anyhow, the main thing about raising kids is that the caregivers are good ones; kids get to choose when possible; people in uncaring moods find substitutes fast; exploration, adventures, and creativity are encouraged; and P.E.T. rules are adopted so that disagreements and negotiations end in win-win, with positive power prevailing, not win-lose, where the negative power of forceful control and threats prevails. This win-win stuff and the rest of the stuff I mentioned is the precise Galaxy formula for caregiving, and you can see the results it's had."

"I'm with one of them."

"What, you got someone in your pocket, or—oh, you mean me!" kidded Robert. "Anyway, in mother-only nurturing situations, a lot of negative power manifests with moms learning to control and manipulate baby and vice versa. They use such drastic

measures because no one has any choice. They're stuck with each other and *their feelings don't count.* Recall the time your dad screamed at you and you came back and slammed your door. Contrast that with your last trip there. The first time your feelings didn't count. Why? Because his feelings didn't count. Recall what that felt like. Now recall the last time. His feelings counted. You made sure of that. As a result, so did yours. It was the first time he'd ever been shown compassion. And the first time you'd ever gotten it from him. You both loved it. Recall those feelings. Galaxy tries to *always* insure the latter situation, and *always* prevent the former situation.

"That doesn't mean no one ever feels or expresses anger. But it doesn't have to be 'look at what you did to me—see how bad you are—you're to blame.' Instead it's 'look how I feel today,' or 'here is how I seem to end up feeling when someone does so and so.' It's done is such a way that the one with the feeling takes the responsibility for the feeling. So, anyway, these P.E.T. basics should be kept in mind when MCs are being designed, built, or run."

"So have a dedicated daycare space to use at least half of the time, and allow some of the kids' nurturer choices to be outside that space, when possible. Your answer, Robert, is to go for both types of daycare so there's more choice," said Glen.

"Right on, bro. Gimme a high five." He got it. Robert was certainly cheerful. He'd obviously been glad to find out that Glen was with him all the way. He'd need all the help he could get. Especially when it came to those parallel universes.

"So just how positive are you that you can save the world?" asked Glen.

"I'm not, and I wouldn't put it that way. Here's the way I'd state it. We both know what a mudless mind is, and how different it is from normal ones. We both know that that's what I have. We both know how hard I've studied and researched and thought about all this for years and how I'm in a great position to be objective because of not only mudlessness, but also having been raised in a scene that works nearly perfectly. Certainly I'm in a position to UNDERSTAND why it worked, and then check out other scenes and UNDERSTAND why they don't. In fact, such understanding is quite trivial to me. And to you, at this point. You don't seem to have trouble grasping any of this. All I've done, with your help, is to look at what's going wrong, compare it to what it's like when it goes right, then logically deduce what, specifically, it would take to enhance the messed-up scene until it worked, and then logically induce what it would take to enhance the general, normal scene until it worked good too. Mudless rational thinking leads easily to mudless conclusions. It wasn't mud when I had six weeks of occasional headaches and tried to avoid full responsibility here. I'd felt safer and less afraid when I loved the 7 billion from afar and was 'responsible' for them in the abstract sense only. It seemed overwhelming—I know you know what I mean here, since I just saw you accept the weight of it yourself and experience the overwhelm. To go from loving them to inactive responsibility for them to total active responsibility for everyone; well, it's scary, to say the least."

He continued: "By the way, there are such things as psychotic disorders based upon FALSE conceptions of self and world that predispose one to feel responsible for the world, resulting in all kinds of megalomania and paranoia complications which create ERRONEOUS ideas about how to accept and act upon that responsibility for the world. Our insanity is a bit different. Correct insights based upon accurate interpretations of observations leading to active responsibility for the world manifested in rational, potentially effective strategies and actions are a way to be crazy that, hopefully, will drive the world similarly nuts, so things can become compassionate and cooperative, rather than selfish and hateful and murderous. So let's be crazy—crazy like a fox. There are a lot of ways to talk about driving all the *normal* insane people in the world out of their messed-up minds and back to sanity. R.D. Laing said it best (you have to take it in the benevolent healing context in which it was written):

"'If I could turn you on, if I could drive you out of your wretched mind, if I could tell you, I would let you know.'

"He was someone who realized just how much damage is done by normal, inadequate child rearing. He went a little overboard, but he tried to set up a scene where

the insane would come back to sanity by following their natural healing processes. It's not that relevant to what we're discussing, except to point out that here was another person who realized what was haywire in the normal scene, and what was needed in that scene that was missing. But he and the other shrinks never did conceive of MC-like methods of preventing family (and therefore cultural) dysfunction. They were **individual oriented** (Laing seemed to be half systems oriented and half individual oriented), which is part of the old, mechanistic paradigm. Systems orientation, which is part of the new, ecological paradigm, is sort of a prerequisite for inventing MC strategies. But that's a big subject—we'll talk about it another day. Anyway, most psychological therapy is a nonsystems attempt at repairing people that dysfunctional **family** systems messed up. The MC approach, unlike therapy (or trips, fads, or gurus, for that matter), cures the **defective** family system, initially, but then raises kids (like the ones here at Galaxy) with virtually no dysfunctionality because they get raised by people who get more nondysfunctional daily, and in a generation or two all dysfunctionality is gone. So from then on, it's all prevention, with nothing to 'cure.' There's something called family therapy that has the systems-curing goal, but its strategy is to fix messes, while ours is to prevent them from happening.

"The bottom line here is that what's been needed is not a new trip, therapy, guru, encounter fad, or pop-psychology cult. Or a new religion either, for that matter; it simply doesn't result in truly getting one's act together to try, join, and follow one of the above. It merely distracts one from the pain, aloneness, alienation, and nonfulfillment. And you end up with less money in your billfold.

"Some of these approaches are at least better than nothing; but one would be better off doing some long, hard thinking alone than getting distracted by many of these trips. So I cannot support the various approaches that have made either a small difference or none at all. What's needed is not a book to think about or a lecture to hear or a touchy-feely group to go to, or a new welfare bill trying to cure bad lifestyles with megabucks and social engineering, or a commune to live in and a hip attitude full of natural foods and long hair, or a new political party or a rebellion against the Establishment because it's not giving us a formula for the American Dream that works. Nor do we need dope, alcoholism, gangs, crime, abuse, affairs, and suicides as a way of saying 'the heck with it—it's beyond my control so all I'm gonna do is cope and here's how I'll do that—or fail to do that.' What's needed is **dysfunctionality prevention**.

"As a footnote, here, there are some people, like Freud, who in spite of advancing the human sciences in many ways, popularized some very harmful and erroneous concepts, especially about women, mother-only child-rearing, and 'necessary' psychosexual steps that reflected more about the oppressive, repressive, sexist times they lived in than anything universal about the human psyche, etc. Many wrong turns in our childcare evolution can be traced back to giant errors in judgment and perception made by very intelligent and well-meaning people like Freud, who pushed things in the wrong direction—Marx was another. Many have suffered as a result. The concept of all sons wanting to 'kill their fathers and sleep with their mothers' says more about Freud, Victorian times, mother-only childcare, the exclusive study of negatively deviant individuals, and tremendously repressive and oppressive lifestyles than it ever said about the true nature of mankind, and the 'evil lurking within us.' Look at how some of today's radical fundamentalists have taken such pseudoscientific mumbo-jumbo and used it to back up some of their alarming ideas about man being 'born bad and evil—in terrible need of salvation—so send all your money to us—in care of this station—today!' If only someone would read to them what has been learned *since then* about the intrinsic goodness of mankind. But they consider *those* books blasphemy! (One could almost say that some of these people were apparently 'arrested at the anal-retentive psychosexual level of development' and are therefore hung up on guilt, punishment, and 'purging evil'!) The lesson in all this is to TRY NOT TO LET CULTURAL CHANGE BE TOO INFLUENCED BY IDEAS FROM MUDMINDS, AS IT IS VERY DANGEROUS.

"Incidentally, if you question the 'mudmind' attribute in reference to Mr. Freud (and remember, 'mud' is no insult—it merely points to a childhood which at times clogged

up a person's mind in some way), then recall that he spent the last 45 years of his life trying unsuccessfully to quit smoking an unending series of cigars. It reminds me of the Scientology headquarters I walked into two years ago to meet someone who was a friend of someone who was into that nonsense. I was hit with a wall of cigarette smoke like you wouldn't believe. And the people in these places are supposed to be 'clears' whose goals are to help others get clear of engrams/neurosis/hang-ups/whatever. They ought to all get lung x-rays and see just how 'clear' they're getting! Anyway, in regards to Freud, he simply found he didn't have the mind-power or lifewish to quit. That is a perfect symptom of mudmindedness. He died at 83, still smoking; he couldn't speak, chew, or swallow. His jaw had been removed because of cancer. This doesn't take away from all his brilliant theories and insights in psychology. But it's certainly enough to make a person stop and think! He used to say 'I have found little that is good about human beings. In my experience most of them are trash.' This says nothing whatever about people but speaks volumes about old Siggybaby!

"If all goes well with our project, there will be enough mudlessness in the future so that those who lead us in our cultural progress will have it *figured out right* and know what to DO ABOUT IT! In other words, we DON'T need gurus, channelers, Swaggarts, or Jim and Tammy Bakker. But we DO need to begin a GRASSROOTS MC movement, guided by the most mudless minds around, and aimed at constructively and benevolently enhancing normal lifestyles so that they succeed better at nurturing, inspiring, and producing happy, responsible, ethical citizens who are not only just patriotic and loyal, but are actually ready to help each other make these enhanced lifestyles a success.

"The best way to quit saying 'the hell with my neighbors, it's every family for itself!' is not to get all 'holy and self-righteous' and go through the motions of caring about others by giving money to a TV evangelist or cult or, worse yet, to Jim and Tammy. Instead, the best way is to simply realize that if the people you lived next to were your best friends, you WOULD be 'loving thy neighbor,' and you WOULD be willing to cooperate with them and help each other, especially with childcare logistics. Once your lifestyle is enhanced in this way and working, THEN go to your favorite charity or church, if you wish, and contribute money to the less fortunate. And you know what? The change of focus from 'trying to assure you will be SAVED' to 'assuring that you and your loved ones are truly SAVED from misery and unhappiness and dysfunctionality' will represent not a vacillation of faith or charity, but a willingness to return to some of the values of the past that WORKED to help life work.

"Think of a man who doesn't care if his neighbors drop dead and who never asks for anything from anyone even if his wife is climbing the walls and freaking out from the burdens of mother-only childcare. The family economic scene has needed her to work for several years, but confusion and (his) false pride have stopped her, even though she may desperately need this psychologically, socially, and for identity and fulfillment reasons. Now think about this same person once he's enhanced his family's lifestyle by putting together an MC. He's returned to the best of the values of the past—the ones the Reagan-types and conservatives in general rightly had in their hearts when they prescribed a 'return to family values' as a cure-all for our drug-obsessed society.

"One such value is closely-knit, cooperative relationships with the immediate community. This often meant *survival* a few centuries ago. Another value: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' When's the last time you saw anyone do anything that didn't make a joke out of this old religious/family value? Oh, it happens, but not as much as in the past. And if you apply these values in an MC, you've got a much better form of childcare going on than taking kids to some nameless center full of strangers that may be expensive, impersonal, questionable, and inconveniently far away. The cooperative relationships *with your best friends,* which happen also to live next door, are the perfect 'conservative' answer to the current omnipresent and universal childcare dilemma.

"The MC incorporates better 'old-time family values' than any normal nuclear family today could ever do, whether or not the mom works. It gives the old-time family values of *extended families* and *respect for the elderly* the best shot they've ever had. It allows lots of unhappy, idle older citizens to become related, connected, useful, and

happy again as they participate in MCs, take caregiving shifts if able or get elder care themselves maybe even in the caregiving space. (The demographics on the increasing percentage of older people in our society in the future are a real eye-opener.) And best of all, MC-type childcare strategies have been proven beyond all question to produce better nurturing than mother-alone nurturing, which lots of families are still blindly pursuing, out of force of inertia—but not force of rationality—as a child-raising strategy. Because no one has bothered to give them the facts. So we empower conservatives to put this mother-alone nurturing idea to rest in an antiques museum where it belongs.

"All of us will have hesitations about being more close-knit with neighbors at first until it finally sinks in: NO, NOT *THOSE* NEIGHBORS, THE NEW MC ONES! People you've found among thousands of other MC aspirants as sharing common interests and being nice, compatible people with compatible childcare needs. People who are the best 'best friends' you've ever had. People you trust as alternative caregivers much more than the matron at the local daycare center. People who help you bring back much of those 'old-time family values' into your lives. People—perhaps grannies, grandpas, aunts or uncles—whom you've been too far away from to share the joys of life and children with very much."

Robert added: "In answer to your question about my level of confidence about 'saving the world,' all I can say is: I'm very confident in me, and in you, and in the basic plan, and in the MC movement (Jesus, how could I NOT be—I was raised in Galaxy!). Now, whether it will save the world or not, I can't speak for what decisions others will make. I know the project has the *potential* to save the world, if accelerating terrorism doesn't start up World War III first. It has mudless truth and objective research behind it, as well as our firm commitment, and our loving responsibility for everyone. *So if we have guts, and really GO FOR IT, and those we encounter have guts, wisdom, and compassion, it's all going to work miraculously.* Only if we lose hope or get lazy, or those we encounter turn out to be alienated, foolish phonies who are incredibly blind and confused, will we fail. I know in advance that I will not mess it up. I've decided that absolutely. So you can speak for yourself, and the people we meet must speak for themselves."

"Robert, *I will not mess this up!* The thought of Galaxy everywhere is more beautiful than any vision I've ever had. I realize the incredible, world-shaking, profound importance of this project. You have my complete loyalty and cooperation."

"Great, Glen. Thanks. That means a lot to me. Let's see, we need to recommend to MCs that each person has his own phone number, so that communication is as nondisruptive as possible. Even if the person is barely old enough to use it. It's the combination of that and 'Alone' signs and Galaxy and P.E.T. rules that allows communications to work."

"Yeah, I've seen that around here," said Glen.

"We need to look at other scenes besides suburbia. We know from Galaxy how apartments work. We can interpolate to hotels, motels, condos, intentional communities, inner-city housing, co-housing and shared housing. Some of these are, or easily can be, set up to be even more conducive to MC lifestyles than Galaxy. There is room for you to do a bit of research here, if you'd like. We need a combination architectural-structural profile and a function-lifestyle profile on all these scenes. We need to develop a picture of the specifics of the average set-up and lifestyle in each of these scenes, the average family forms and household structures, the average childcare strategies and desires, and the average concept of the ideal lifestyle."

"Should I be taking notes? I carry a little pad and pen. I used to carry a smart phone but I've been doing so much thinking and talking to people lately that I found it was an unwelcome distraction."

"Notes are a good idea," replied Robert. Glen jotted down his research 'assignment.' Afterwards, Robert said: "The main thing we're looking for here is the shortest path between two points: a straight line. The path of least resistance between people in any of these scenes getting interested in MCs, and then finding compatible people, and then setting up appropriate MC housing and beginning the MC lifestyle. It

should be noted that the last thing we want to do here is look liberal, rebellious, or like a revolution—especially because we're NOT. We want to thrill conservatives, not scare them. We want a return to 'old family values,' not another liberal step away from them.

"Incidentally, my politics are away from liberal criminal-coddling and toward victim's rights and restitution, as well as finding ways of making people show responsibility by working as much as is feasible, if they're able-bodied and on any welfare-related program or role. I'm against welfare states, because there's nothing worse than teaching a person to lose self-respect to such a degree that he becomes a leech on the side of the system and goes for the 'free ride.' The ride is NOT free—it costs him his INTEGRITY. People need to be taught to be self-sufficient and self-responsible, no matter what it takes, if they're capable of work. No matter what any liberal says, IT TRULY IS FOR THEIR OWN GOOD! However, we don't want our conservative leanings to go overboard and take steps backwards in social progress. Like if we went in the Jeane Westin direction, with liberal-bashing, oppression, spankings, threats, force, *negative power,* and OVERpowering rather than EMpowering. Instead, we want our *return to good family values that worked* to be a step forward, because the current failed experiment of the isolated nuclear family (especially if it has mother-only nurturing) was the step backwards we're trying to recover from.

"We want our step forward to dump all that doesn't work in today's lifestyles, and replace these things with what did work in times past, while adding P.E.T. rules, which are neither conservative nor liberal but simply the most successful relationship-effectiveness rules ever tried. This will all be a dialectical, transcendent synthesis, not a sideways slide back to the right end of the continuum like Westin advocates. We'll take the best of both worlds, and none of the worst of either.

"As we know, more people today are conservative leaners than liberal leaners—look at the '88 election. Even Dukakis himself acted like 'liberal' was a dirty word. And in the '92 and '96 elections, it was Clinton's avoidance of Liberal attitudes that gave him a real shot at winning. *Anyone advocating change without including this respect for and return to the best of the good traditional family values—the ones we discussed that worked well then and are sorely needed now—will have most of the U.S. turn a deaf ear to them.* But then, this MC thing isn't about anyone's politics, so politicians need to be left out of it, as they'll muck it up by trying to use it for their own selfish ends. The changes advocated are about lifestyle enhancement. Things that aren't working well COULD be. Lives that aren't happy easily COULD be. Children not being well nurtured—and therefore currently being prepared to cause most of society's problems in the future—easily COULD be nurtured well. And kids failing to learn responsibility COULD easily learn it.

"I think that the main concept that we need to get out there is that we're not talking about exchanging lifestyles, or even trading upwards, as it were. *We're talking about keeping one's nuclear family or single-parent family or extended family as it is! Now that sure won't scare anyone.* Let's call that MC movement fundamental number one. Fundamental two is that *we'd like them to have the info needed to learn how to enhance that lifestyle*—to add to it—to put the frosting on their life-cakes, so to speak. Fundamental three: half of these enhancements will be based upon things we were wiser and more successful at in the 1800s and even before that. In other words, *a return to all the **best** of the old family values*. It will work even better this time than it did back then, because this time it won't be integrated with the authoritarian threats and punishments and overpowering and forced actions and anger and resentment and oppression (the worst of the old values—the Westin stuff). This time it'll be integrated with the elements of fundamental four: *the best of Galaxy*. More specifically: multiple caregiving (already part of the old-time values anyway, including cross-culturally), choice (the most sacred assurance in our Constitution), and P.E.T. rules—simply the most successful relationship-effectiveness rules ever tried. The latter can be LEARNED BY DOING in a couple of weeks, and that's all there is to it. Oh and don't forget to make sure of individual control of one's alone space (vital), and use of 'Alone' signs. And that's about it. Want to summarize?" Robert prompted.

Glen spoke: "Fundamentals of MC movement: 1. No change to their nuclear family or whatever type of family they have; 2. MC is only an enhancement (and we'll show 'em how to make it), so they needn't get defensive and protective about the way they're used to doing it (which they feel is perfect, because in the child part of their minds Mom and Dad are perfect and showed them how to raise a family, so how could it be imperfect?!); 3. Return to the best of the old family values; 4. P.E.T. rules, self-controlled alone space and 'Alone' signs, choice and multiple caregiving."

"Good summary. How's this: Don't dump it, just add a few nice possibilities and opportunities, making it more dynamic and effective—in other words—enhanced; and incorporate not only the best of the past, but the best of the present in this enhancement, *always keeping in mind that the sole reason people continue to raise kids and act toward kids the same as their parents raised them and acted toward them is because that's what they were shown, NOT BECAUSE IT'S BEEN SHOWN THAT THAT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OR BECAUSE THEY PERSONALLY PREFER OR LOGICALLY RESPECT THAT WAY MOST!* The only exception to parents raising kids the same way they were raised is when parents get reactive and do just the opposite of what happened to them, so that if they were raised permissively they raise kids in authoritarian ways, and vice versa. This is still reactive, at effect, and other-determined. Logic's still the last voice to be heard from, if it indeed ever enters the picture at all."

Robert continued: "I was just thinking: you know, we haven't said anything about the 14% of couples who prefer to remain childless. Is the MC about them or only about child-raising families?"

Glen replied: "That's easier than finding B.S. in an election year. Galaxy itself is no longer about child raising. Cheryl at 12 is emotionally around a normal 19-year-old. She no longer needs guidance and advice and baby-sitting. She is very loving—even with me, in spite of our age difference and my relative newness here.

"At first I didn't know how to deal with it. But then I dropped my age bias and just let her be who she is, a loving young woman. That's when it clicked for me—in fact, that's when I fell in love with her. I should feel weird about that, some would say. But I don't. I trust my experience, not my conditioned beliefs. (The no-sex rule for people that age is a vital belief to hang onto for all concerned, but other beliefs really must be reexamined from scratch.) When the number 12 disappeared, the real Cheryl appeared. There are plenty of confused people out there who would misinterpret it when Cheryl's gestures and expressions show that she's enjoying being female. You could predict that some of them would act out their confusion. Obviously, I'm not about to, not around any woman at Galaxy—I'm incredibly careful and respectful and responsibility-minded in that area. I like it that way. Any other approach would open a Pandora's box of problems and concerns and dilemmas and perhaps misunderstandings. I prefer the sublimation route where there is only *covert* sexiness, and there is also unrestricted, loving openness. It's so delightful and exciting and warm and wonderful. It's beautiful to have such loving, understanding 'sisters,' Robert. And brothers too for that matter.

"But anyway where was I? Oh yeah. Galaxy isn't about child rearing anymore. Hasn't been for about four years, according to Cheryl. And nothing could be more obvious than the fact that Galaxy is an end in itself. Not a means to an end of well-raised kids. This IS the best way to live. I'd stake my life on it. The only error anyone might ever make in such a scene is getting 'ingrown,' sort of. In other words, people out there are dying for the type of outside-Galaxy nurturing that everyone here, except Bert, does with outsiders. It's a regular transfusion of life to some. Others it just helps set on the right track. Everyone here gives back to the community. They all help to make up for the deficiencies in the non-Galaxy lifestyles around us. I've actually felt a little like going that way myself—to act like Galaxy people do around non-Galaxy people. I'm not quite there yet. If our MC project takes enough time, I may be too busy for that. We'll see. No hurry—things are already moving fast enough for me. As you say, don't allow overwhelm. Of course, after saying that you stacked 7 billion people on my shoulders! No—wait a minute—I take it back. You stuck 7 billion people on YOUR shoulders. *I* stuck them on my shoulders! Sorry about the slip," apologized Glen.

"It's fine. This is new. You haven't had them up there all that long; you'll need to get used to it, that's all. So you think Galaxy set-ups without kids are a perfect lifestyle, as well as ones with kids?"

"That has been my experience."

"I agree. The only real problem is when we, having it so good, look at others who don't. We want to help. And we do. This solves the problem mostly. But not entirely. We decrease the sadness, alienation, aloneness, confusion, needfulness and deprivation a bit, but on such a small scale. The truth is, when anyone at Galaxy feels sad it's for one of two reasons: empathy with someone we're nurturing or empathy with the millions and billions we're not reaching. I couldn't stand it anymore. In fact, my head was going to 'ache me to death' if I didn't make a move. So I did. Hence our project.

"Let me hop back to the sex subject you brought up. You think maybe keeping it at sexless, brotherly-sisterly love in Galaxy and deciding sex things on a case-by-case basis outside Galaxy is wisest? With me it's academic—they're relatives. But you're unrelated. Do you feel so much like family that there's a sister taboo thing where there are limits?"

"Sort of. Ironically, I'm 1000 times closer to them than I'd ever hoped or fantasized being with anyone before I arrived here. The whole sexual issue seems superficial—unimportant. If it would clearly be best for them and me in all ways, I'd go ahead. (Except Cheryl, of course—I agree with and wholeheartedly support society's restrictions regarding younger women.) But it is NOT AT ALL clear that it would be best for Wendy or Barbra. In fact, I don't think it WOULD be best for them or me. As a guess, I predict that I'd erect, no pun intended, a lot of barriers in our relationships. And I'm a realist. These women, including Cheryl—incredible but TRUE—are way beyond me. So any barriers would be in me, about me, and because of me. You know what that adds up to? (You can probably tell I've asked myself a couple of these questions before.) What that adds up to is my defective, deficient childhood causing hang-ups in me which would cause huge barriers in me if me and one of these women got involved in that way and I tried to cope with it. I don't think I could pull it off in a way that was either best for me or best for her. Those are the criteria you suggested when I first met you. You were certainly right. Those are the only criteria I'd ever consider, in light of how much I care about these people. Real love does that. The two affairs I had prior to Galaxy—I have to admit that 'what was best for anyone' never even entered the picture. No love there.

"Anyway, the results of an 'affair' with Wendy or Barbra would all add up to me allowing my hang-ups to become a big wall between myself and one of these ladies, perhaps irretrievably. I feel like nothing in the world would be worth that. Maybe someday I'll be so together that one of these ladies will want to be my blushing bride and make babies with me. The thought has 1000 times more power for me than all the previous fantasies of my life combined—it's that miraculous. But what's weird about it is that even if they marry others, they'll still be as close to me as ever—the idea that 'getting closer to one person pushes you farther from another' is entirely foreign to them. In spite of how much emphasis the media has given this misconception over the years. So my conditioned junk about 'nabbing one of them before she's no longer available' has no meaning any longer. Curiouser and curiouser . . .

"Anyway, in answer to your question, I don't think there necessarily need to be limits, although I would not mind them or resent them. What there need to be are simply considerate people like you around. You patiently and clearly explained overwhelm and stuff, and precisely how and why to be careful in these areas. If you hadn't, I'd have probably tried to act on some sexual desires regardless of the effect on anyone. Of course, if it wasn't best for all concerned, the woman concerned would set me straight before it got very far, and from her perspective there'd be no 'harm' done. But there's a lot more to it than that. A giant wall would have grown up between me and someone—let's say Wendy. The irresponsibility of acting on the urge for the sake of the urge only, as opposed to acting in the best interests of the individuals concerned, would have the effect of eroding trust and respect at least from me to me, if not from her to me, and I'd have defined myself in a negative and irresponsible way I'd have trouble 'undoing.' I

might never be able to tear the wall back down again. That would have been the most traumatic, horrible event ever. Who can say if I'd just spaz out, or be closed forever, or what? But it would be the major negative event of my young life—it isn't as though there are other ladies remotely like these that I could 'replace' these with! I can't see ever forgiving myself if I became that irresponsible with such a precious person.

"But, thinking about all this, I observe one thing that stands out above all: You are the one, Robert, who helped me lay the groundwork for all this love and joy and closeness. You helped me in advance to make sure I'd experience the beauty of it all to the fullest, without dropping any 'nitro bottles' in the process that would mess up, not only me, but maybe the relationship and my future as well. You have given me 'Pogo insurance'—you know—'we have met the enemy and he is us,' which you're fond of saying. I feel confident that I'll never ever mess up any of these relationships. They simply mean too much to me. Thanks for what you did for me, Robert."

"You're welcome," Robert replied. "I agree that your messing up those relationships would be painful and disintegrative for you. And that you're smart to stay with 'if it works, don't fix it' in your very successful relationships with them.

"So let me return to the childless couple thing. Such people would fit nicely in either childless or child-full MCs. They might want to care for kids at times—we all have the instincts—but just not bring any into the world themselves. They might be 'empty nesters' who've had kids and want to run the daycare house as a vocation. Or a young, childless MC might wish to concentrate on adult relationships at this time and childcare would be irrelevant until some later time. The Tofflers expect that some of the Third Wave couples of the 21st century may want to concentrate on career until near or at retirement and then do the kid thing, or so it says in *Future Shock*.

"One thing we can say with the utmost certainty: Galaxy MCs are the best child-raising environments and post-child-raising lifestyles anywhere. Let's look at what the child-raising experts say: There's a transcript in my room from a 1988 *What Every Baby Knows* show, a TV show that was on the Lifetime channel. The doctor, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, said that the most important thing a parent can do is pass on a solid self-image to the baby. He also stressed the importance of allowing the baby to have autonomy where he does things and chooses things for himself. This is good expert support for MC lifestyles, since nothing will aid this solid self-image like an MC. Look at you, for instance. The fastest positive change I've ever seen. Your solid self-image would be great for a baby to experience. And the MC experience would enable and empower this for everyone in an MC. As a result, parents parent well, and even when they're not parenting they're happy with their lives. A perfect childcare context. The doctor also points out that the best way to wreck the kid, as in 'spoil,' is not with too much love, but by having him be raised by people who are confused, inconsistent, chaotic, or don't like themselves very much (**I hate to say it, but he described an awful lot of *normal* scenes**). Such parents don't know who they are or what they're doing, so they're full of anxiety. This makes the kid very insecure and liable to cry a lot, so a vicious cycle develops. And abuse can be, and often is, the result, of course.

"Brazelton is from the attachment school—a school which has scientifically proven beyond a shadow of a doubt how vital it is to fill needs well. Their biggest naïvete is that they often hoped—unrealistically—that a solitary mom staying at home will be likely to or able to do this well and consistently in a way that is highly need-filling and not neurosis-producing. The average mom isn't secure enough, knowledgeable enough, or together enough to do a good job of this, relative to the needs of the kid, so she ends up doing only a fair job at best. T. Berry Brazelton, John Bowlby, William Sears, and other attachment school experts find themselves caught on the horns of a dilemma in this area. On the one hand, they describe how important deep, loving need filling is for the child. But, on the other hand, they have to write books whose recommendations vacillate between settling for the mediocre need-filling that the average mom can be expected to do and outlining the optimal nurturing that kids need—which the average mom will find somewhat beyond her. The books try to mitigate this inconsistency by allaying the moms' fears and guilt about the fact that they'll often fall short of the mark. In short, the

average mom is barely adequate, but kids need great nurturing, so kids will get only a piece of what they actually need. And here the books turn to mystification and doubletalk. Happily, there are a few parenting methods from the attachment persuasion that realize the folly of the lone hero mothering myth. In the book Helping Young Children Flourish, Aletha J. Solter says 'One way to make the job of parenting easier is to find other people to help you.'

"Many parenting books turn to mystification and doubletalk as they try not to squirm as they depict mothers unable to do the caregiving alone but also unable to find ways to fill their kids' needs optimally. It too often just sounds like that time-worn expression 'just do your best.'

"And mystification and doubletalk is also found in dictionaries and common usage about the word 'normal.' It can mean either the average *or* the standard or model—like when doctors say 'You're in great shape—you're perfectly normal,' which is a way of implying 'optimal.' But the average, *normal* person's health is *not* great, and is far from optimal. *Normal*—according to Webster—also means one is free from any mental defect or neurosis, which assumes that the average person is this way, and which also has an underlying implication of optimal. But how often do you meet people in the world that don't turn out to have what Putney and Putney—in *The Adjusted American*—call 'normal neurosis'? Normals oppress themselves with negative self-talk, have frustrating relationships because of past hang-ups, believe much that isn't so, tend to do many things without thinking no matter how terribly they work just because their parents or friends did/do things that way. Normals are at effect more than at cause, and have character structures twisted by inadequate childhood environments and current environments. This is dysfunctionality, but it's also normalcy. They were born with brains that worked much better than this, but something went wrong. This is normal. But can we honestly consider this 'free from any mental defect or neurosis'? Is it really the 'optimal' often implied in the usages of the word *normal*? Average and optimal are very different concepts even if the latter is merely implied in its usage rather than stated in dictionaries, but the common usages for the word *normal* trick us into the assumption that one can be both at the same time. Especially the very common phrase 'perfectly normal.' Perfect implies optimal while normal is average. Let's face it, such phrases evolve from the average neurotic's attempt to reassure himself that he's doing great with his life when he gets anxious because he can see how messed up things are in his life—especially compared to the potential he knows underneath that he possess. So the question that should come to mind here in someone who is blessed with good logic is: Should we settle for mediocre childcare or try for optimal? And even more importantly: Is optimal childcare doable in this society or are we forced by the circumstances of limited knowledge and personnel resources in the average environment to make our kids settle for mediocre levels of nurturing? And of course you know the answer. People could do much more if they set it up right, but—in the average scene which is not at all set up optimally for either children or adults—they will do a mediocre job at best, and the self-actualization potential of all will suffer accordingly."

"In the words of Burton L. White, one of the best baby experts around: 'not more than one child in ten gets off to as good a start as he could.' He goes on to say that if parents had more help and a lot more knowledge about how to parent correctly, they'd be able to do well, but as it is, parenting is a time of much stress and unhappiness, which brings down the whole family's life quality. And he bemoans the misinformation or total ignorance with which most young couples enter child raising. Brazelton paints an even drearier picture of the misery that often results when parents feel overwhelmed with the parenting task and become angry, cynical or even abusive. But he tries to calm the fears of parents, saying this is just what the normal roller coaster of parenting is like, so accept it. So, like I said, they expose a large gap between what kids need and what normal parents are ready for, but never really intuit what all this should logically lead us to conclude: it's time for major resource and knowledge enhancements; in other words: MCs.

"We should somehow compare Galaxy with what will be expected to be going on in the normal suburban MC," said Glen. "What can we make of such a comparison? Is everyone going to be able to do as well as the Galaxy MC?"

"No, not at first. Here's my guess about the way the MC movement's first suburbanites will operate, on the average: It'll take a few years to get together through MC search and match help, and become friends and attend social functions together and visit each other at home and see if the proper compatibility exists. Hopefully the computer search would find VERY compatible people relative to interests and vocations and childcare concerns—that's the whole purpose of such a database. Okay—they move into their MC—let's say six 4-person families, mostly with young kids, or kids not yet born (pregnant wife, or plans that include kids soon). Let's say that at first people use phones a lot regarding alternate childcare set-ups and choices. So we've got six normal nuclear families whose mothers and fathers work. (The only exception is the mothers staying away from work for a few months—for bonding purposes—after childbirth.) At first parents do a bit of shared parenting. Then they work into letting their friends be alternate caregivers. Perhaps one house naturally gravitates toward being where most childcare takes place. Also, maybe there are kids nine years old or more that will want to nurture sometimes too.

"The MC participants will soon find that there are plenty of people to take care of their kids, and they can go to their jobs with peace of mind as long as everyone stays open and flexible. All kinds of things like split shifts, flex time, shared jobs and work at home can help all this work smoothly—the main thing is to try to avoid everyone having the same work schedule. If everyone tried to work from eight to five, where would the caregivers come from? On the other hand, if there were either extended families, or participating older couples who preferred doing childcare in the MC over being idle or living in a retirement community separated off from the rest of humanity, then things would fit together more harmoniously and allow more of the participants to have similarly-scheduled jobs. Let's say a couple of the kids are teens who see childcare both as one of their family responsibilities and as a good way to make extra money (this relationship to money may or may not be appropriate—it depends on the values of the people in the MC). And with some parents working part-time, flextime, or different shifts from others, the whole scene would work nicely. (You know, one could use one of the various childcare scheduling software programs to aid MC scheduling of childcare; that should help a lot.)

"Hey, I could make an MC scheduling app, Robert."

"Great, Glen. Let's get to that some other time so we don't lose our train of thought, okay? I really love how you're such an asset to the MC movement, as a researcher, example, programmer, and advocate. It seems there's very little you can't do! Aw heck—do it in your spare time. I know you love programming, so—have fun!

"Anyway, if all this example MC stuff sounds super-normal in most ways, that's GOOD, not bad. Remember, Glen, the MC movement has got to 'play in Peoria,' as they say. People don't want a sudden change. Just the uprooting and transplantation of their homes to the MC will be enough chaos for awhile, thank you. So what they initially want is for things to be easy and uncomplicated. They don't want nosy neighbors or hassles or barking dogs. They probably don't want drop-in visits, nor should they. Social planning by phone is better for everyone. Everyone will want the comfort of going back to their old, familiar ways, which might even include using a familiar daycare at first. In short, at first they'll want to have no change except the moving to the MC. Only when they're secure in their new homes (a month?) will they begin to experiment relative to all their new friends —being with each other and talking rather than being couch potatoes in front of the TV. (Few people realize how they use TVs for 'safe' friends—ones with whom there is no risk, commitment, or fear. Few people realize how fast they'd drop their substance abuse and people abuse and TV addiction if they suddenly had a precious circle of friends to be with. But isolation and alienation have taken their toll—people are numb and repressed in those areas. To have insights—to see the truth about such things—would be an undesirable, painful experience.)

"But back to these new MCs. Soon they'll have some meetings. This will be fun. Soon they'll start coordinating and trading childcare among themselves. Remember, they've already become good, compatible friends BEFORE they move, so don't imagine the normal 'stranger'-type neighbors here—but best friends they ALREADY want to be with. That's why the socializing and meetings will be fun. And why there will be plenty of trust and understanding to facilitate good, alternative childcare set-ups.

"Relative to toddlers going back and forth between places, perhaps people won't mind escorting or getting older kids to do escort duty, watching from windows, or fencing in the entire MC in some aesthetically pleasing way. I tend toward both this fence idea and your covered walkway idea, myself, as it would be the cheapest alternative that would fully fill the bill relative to choice and less control of behavior—this makes things functionally analogous to Galaxy, in important ways. I think the daycare dome (or other structure) in the center sounds great, too, but I'm only one guy—perhaps other people would prefer 'ski lifts,' trains and stations, or Tarzan treehouses. Perhaps others would prefer a specified daycare house, floor of a house, or room in a house to central childcare structure construction.

"Perhaps someone will make a big, rectangular (except on top where it's rounded), plastic bubble to go over the entire block, allowing total climate control, easy greenhouse trips, summer days in winter, and healthy, filtered, pollution-free air to breathe. Think about it! It's not as far-fetched as it seems. 'Moon colony #7' reporting the 49,726th day of warm, sweet, unpolluted air, with sprinkles or rain from all odd-numbered rain-making sprinklers today. All right, who passed gas!?"

They both chuckled, but then Robert continued: "Okay, we're in our MC in Sludge Falls, Montana. Everyone has begun to do the childcare-sharing bit, and to some kids, several different people feel like good alternative moms or dads, or uncles and aunts, in a lot of ways. And the parents have mostly given up vicarious relating via the couch-potato lifestyle, and have mostly given up their social networking obsessions, preferring real human relationships to fake or virtual ones. And the kids prefer playing together to the electronic wasteland, most of the time. Or people choose to be alone in their rooms reading books or working on computers or art or whatever. There is more playing of games, since there are lots more times when people's schedules jive, so they can choose to play or talk with one another.

"Later, there will be more nurturing of outsiders, general community support, and world MC movement support, since this level of responsibility will be a manifestation of the effects of their new lifestyle, with the growth and awareness it engenders. But, right at first, much of what occurs will be centered upon improving the lives of those in the immediate MC. What will happen here is that many of the reasons why people had previously chosen to remain isolated in their nuclear families, with no connection to anyone else, will disappear. 'Dislike neighbors' changes to 'like/love them.' 'Hard to coordinate schedules' changes to 'easy to find people compatible with where you're at'—the odds have gone up 600%. 'Move too often for strong ties and relationships to form' changes to 'stay put except for emergencies.' Job promotions will not be seen as emergencies. As a matter of fact, I'd expect that the especially-together people in MCs will be such good, responsible workers that employers will bend over backwards to extend opportunities that involve no need for relocation. People will realize that they only have one life, and they went through a lot to set up life so well, so they'll be committed to being a close-knit community, like in the many excellent values of the closely-knit good old days.

"MC people will be outstanding in character, like Galaxy people are now. They'll be loyal and caring toward each other. This will take a bit of time, but it's a completely natural reaction to getting the opportunity to live in such a nurturing and dynamic environment. As you've seen so clearly.

"In fact, some MCs will contain already-related extended families who are happy not to have Grandma living alone. It's very understandable that they wouldn't want her in the same household with them all the time, although perhaps some will—it depends on the people and the houses and the relationships. But if she could be next door, available

to be with and often available as a daycare person, and if people respected each other's space (by agreement) so much that they phoned first rather than doing unwanted surprise drop-ins, then all or at least most of the potential conflicts and misunderstandings could be precluded before they ever materialized, so peace and happiness and harmony would prevail.

"You know, there are a lot of people who, like your dad, have never learned that negative power trips like barging into someone's room without permission show tremendous disrespect for both self and other, and are incredibly oppressive as well as very unhealthy. The basis for all good environments must be that each person has his own space to do his own thing in, and that *there's no acceptable reason (short of fire or dire emergency) to ever invade another person's personal space.* Nor should anyone ever tell anyone to 'clean your room.' That gives parental power over a kid's personal space, which is a disaster for the kid in all kinds of ways. We've talked about the ramifications of all this weeks ago—I won't go into it—most of it is found in P.E.T. books anyway, with the exception of the specific personal-space-entry rules and kids' rooms being in the no-problem area, about which P.E.T. is unclear.

"So the person whose room it is must give permission for entry, regardless of age, whether the enterer is the Pope or a mad dad or whatever. None of the 'mother is doing this for your own good' garbage—ripping off a kid's space is NEVER for his own good! No permission, no entry. We've discussed exceptions about infants who can't give permission yet.

"However, it's not just people's personal spaces that must be treated that respectfully. Families' homes must be treated the same way. Give granny or friendly neighbor Gertrude a key that's only for emergencies. She should knock when visiting, and if no one gives permission, she should stay out. However, rather than creating conflict-producing situations, she would be expected to CALL first and ARRANGE her visit so she'd be welcomed at the door. Which is obvious. *So why don't people do it? Because THEY were oppressed when they were growing up. Same old reason. A reason not worth the powder to blow it up, but still a strong motivator which needs to be undermined by very strong commitments and agreements by the people in the MC.* The exceptions to all this would be scheduled visits. Perhaps people make social, caregiving, meal-fixing, house-cleaning, or other prearranged agreements and commitments with granny and Gertrude, and the people in the house feel comfortable if she lets herself in as long as she conforms to the nature and boundaries of the agreement.

"The idea here is that for relationships to be loving, fulfilling, inspiring, and growth-promoting, you have to care enough to set things up so that oppression is precluded, and encouragement and respect and lovingness and creativity are empowered. You cannot do this in relationships if people just do any old thing because they happen to feel like it. If a dad says 'I own your room so I can come in,' he's doing several things: 1. kicking the kid in the face, emotionally; 2. reacting blindly and STUPIDLY to what his dad did to him; 3. oppressing, dehumanizing, humiliating, and tearing down the being and identity and integrity of his son; 4. producing tremendous hatred in his son, which he'll be paid back for many times, perhaps forever, as the son gets revenge for such a deep and unforgivable insult by seeking out actions that will have a negative emotional impact on his father—this may mean growing long hair, getting bad grades to disappoint him, or being a pig. Or he'll try disrespect, lying, stealing, or doing drugs, alcohol or cigarettes. That gives you an idea how devastating it is to a kid when his space is ripped off and he's humiliated like that. Of course, you know all about that; you've experienced years of it."

"Boy—did YOU ever hit the nail on the head! I felt like I wanted to kill him with an axe when he did that. It felt like he stabbed me with a knife and twisted. I felt like I'd go insane, or be forced by my anger to go rob a bank or steal a car or do heroin or knock up some bimbo or burn down our house TO PAY HIM BACK!"

"Precisely, Glen. Space rip-off is the very epitome of negative power. It's ugly beyond most people's comprehension. A sane person would never consider oppressing in this way except for one, monolithic fact: THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM, AND HE'S

STILL VERY ANGRY ABOUT IT, AND HE'LL DO IT TO HIS KIDS TO EXPRESS ALL THE PAIN HE HAS INSIDE RESULTING FROM SUCH PAST EXPERIENCES. We at Galaxy understand all this even better than P.E.T. theory; they support what I've said here, but have fallen short of making absolute rules about it. We didn't; we made those rules.

"Speaking of P.E.T., it is about agreements and rules about respect, personal space, choices, natural consequences of actions, compassion, really actively listening to one another, and taking full responsibility for one's actions, as you've seen here. A few overly conservative people in the past have assumed that it's about permissiveness simply because it refuses to support spanking, punishment, telling your kids what to do, threats, control of the young by the old, and general authoritarianism. These people have trouble understanding, sometimes, that the reason P.E.T. doesn't support such things is that they DON'T WORK. They merely produce temporary, hateful, resentful compliance and endless future retaliation. Sort of like the Israelis and Hezbollah trading terrorist raids or rocket barrages every other day. You scare them away from this training camp, wiping out a few in the process, then they attack in kind, and it goes back and forth forever, without the slightest possibility that any of those actions will ever have any constructive response. The actions are about revenge and retaliation and anger. Period. You spank, kid misbehaves, you spank, kid misbehaves—same deal. If you spank so cruelly and mercilessly and often that the kid is paralyzed with fear and hate, he'll get you back in other ways: crime, suicide, 'accidentally' lighting the house on fire, 'accidentally' maiming his little brother, becoming gay or effeminate or a delinquent or a dope dealer—to hurt you. Or he'll develop a character disorder that drives you nuts and yet you can never seem to put your finger on anything he 'did wrong that you can punish him for.' This is the simplest level of psychology and yet few people truly understand this simple reality, including many shrinks.

"It's so crazy out there: Parents feel that they have the right to enter a kid's room because they're angry, or because the kid will be late, or because they own the room, etcetera. Why can't they see that when they do it they're KILLING him!? If you take away his room, his space, his self-respect, HE'S DEAD. GONE. NONEXISTENT.

"Prisons punish in this way. The result is never 'rehabilitation.' It's intense, incredible, violent, cold hatred. The cons can't wait to get out to rape, kill, steal, and attack. Their plan is simple, to pay society back 100 times over for the humiliation and pain they endured, only this time, TO NOT GET CAUGHT AT IT! Recidivism statistics are a national disgrace. Obviously this suggests something, not only about prisons, but about proper upbringing. Many cons were kids of teenage parents; most were abused; many never bonded properly with their mothers and are therefore without compassion. You can't learn to respect others if you haven't learned to respect yourself.

"People don't 'learn to be good' out of fear; they merely learn to hate and be deceptive if they're oppressed. If we'd use P.E.T. methods to teach responsibility and respect rather than Dark Ages methods to try to beat in or humiliate in responsibility and respect, we'd not only get much less recidivism, but we'd preclude people committing the crime that gets them sent to prison in the first place. This is no naïve liberal plea for prisoner's rights. The heck with that—I care about the victim's rights! This is a plea in the name of all those women who will be raped by ex-cons seething with anger (remember movies such as *Prince of Tides*?), and all those citizens who will be mugged and beaten by violently retaliating ex-cons, and all those families who've had or will have members killed by ex-cons. The truth is, we'd all be a hell of a lot better off if we'd confine our punishments and humiliations to those cons who we're sure will never be freed again. Perhaps the 'lifers' that are ineligible for parole did such bad things that the system feels it has a right and duty to 'punish' them. Fine—as long as that same system makes damn sure they never escape or get pardoned or paroled. That kind of negative treatment followed by parole is playing with dynamite. The outcome is quite predictable. Prison, for the vast majority who will be free someday, needs to be about retraining. It needs to be strict. But humiliation, homosexual rapes and fear of same, brutality, and no respect or responsibility training is a dumb strategy. As far as I'm concerned, the prerequisite to freedom ought to be truly learning self-respect and responsibility for self and others. That

would mean a big change in tactics and attitudes. But look at the horrible price society pays for not making this change. It's worth it to go in the P.E.T. direction with prison rehabilitation methods. Our—the public's—right to have secure lives and safety from preventable attacks is the core issue here, to me. Besides, it costs less than a quarter as much per year to educate than it does to incarcerate—SO WHY DOES OUR SOCIETY PERSIST IN CHOOSING THE LATTER?

"Okay, does the suburban MC ever get to the Galaxy level?" asked Glen.

"Perhaps the second or third generation. Maybe the first generation would get only half way there. Old habits die hard. Unnurturing childcare habits, unfulfilling relationships, or lack of openness to relationships—these will all take time to transform. No one will learn compassion and nurturing overnight. But if they form the P.E.T. agreements and personal space agreements and make appropriate relationship commitments, always giving the human spirit the benefit of the doubt, and if they are brave and persistent in their MC efforts, they WILL end up with Galaxy-type rewards. In order to have a Galaxy life, you must do what Galaxy did: set up life so well that it can't fail."

"How important are the covered walkways? Suppose escorts, window-watching, or MC fencing are most people's initial strategy. Won't they work?"

"I really don't know. We've both just been pointing out strategies functionally analogous to Galaxy. Galaxy is tried and proven. Why experiment with something which may be a lot less effective? Of course, the answer is as obvious as can be: money, hassles with building permits and planning commissions, aesthetics, etcetera. That will be a few of the areas of concern with the covered walkways. Or the ski-lifts or trains, for that matter. But that can't be helped, I guess—you know, the price of progress. In Galaxy, little ones 'adventured' wherever they wanted, except for locked doors, 'Alone' signs, child gates on stairways, the locked door to the roof, and so on. But they also spent about half their time with one of their assigned nurturers, depending upon age. No one had to be concerned when they wandered around, because things were child-proofed. No one had to follow them around or lead them around. Covered and enclosed walkways could perhaps provide the same situation. Perhaps there'd be a bell to ring at each walkway-house connection, to gain entry. A more creative solution might be a kind of cat door with hinges that a kid could crawl through until he was 3-4 years old and able to use a door knob. I guess they'll just have to experiment and see what works. Actually, if the caregiver in charge of the little one saw him go down the walkway to Uncle Harry's place, this caregiver could call Uncle Harry's place to see if someone wanted to greet the kid. Or the caregiver could have some way to monitor the kids so that the areas of all walkways just outside people's houses would have video surveillance, just like security guards have.

"Now, there's one other thing to think about relative to the importance of covered walkways or other constructions of that kind. Environmental safety. How dangerous is the neighborhood? Are the yards of the neighbors safe to wander in or full of hazards? Are there police patrols? What's the crime rate? Is there adequate lighting to safely walk between houses at night? Is the area fenced in? What about weather? Does it snow or rain a lot? Is it really cold or hot sometimes? What about mosquitoes or other pests? Can a child be watched, from a window, as he goes from one house to another or are escorts required? Could a child follow a colored line to insure that he gets where he wants to go? I predict that there are varying degrees of need for covered walkways, or enclosed walkways that act like hallways, and that some people will find them or something analogous to them essential, while others will really not need them very much. Each MC needs to decide for itself, after careful environmental analysis.

"You can see that it will be a bit easier for MCs to function simply and conveniently in hotels, motels, apartments, inner-city housing, and similar structures—but two thirds of families live in single-family homes, while one third live in apartments and the like. In the latter places you simply add a few locked doors, child gates, child-proofed items, perhaps a few child-cat doors, "Alone' signs and additional telephones and you're ready to go. There will be lots of experiments in various types of situations. A

national MC blog will report the results of such things, and all MC people everywhere will know about this blog. People will probably want to do periodic searches for people in their area of town, people that the computers find to be compatible with their interest profile. Even if they don't 'MC' with them, they might want them as friends. Or for those rare exceptions where someone does have to move out of an MC, it will be good if some potential replacements are known.

"Also, some large blocks will want several MCs, but perhaps want all to be compatible with all, so that there's sort of one big MC with several smaller MCs in it. There could be meetings and/or social get-togethers at both the small MC and big MC levels. Taking our examples from the computer world, we'd have to say *Micro*community for the smallest level of MC, *Mini*community for the medium level, and then the *Mainframe* community would perhaps be some sort of organization of all MCs in a town.

"Let's go ask the other Galaxians about all this!" exclaimed Glen.

"Too late, tonight. I'll do some asking tomorrow and call a meeting for Sunday afternoon."

"Neato! Got any predictions on the response?" asked Glen.

"Oh yeah, but I'd rather not second-guess anyone right now."

"Okay, I guess we'll have to wait and see. Say, Robert, something I was thinking about when you were talking earlier is what if all the adults in an MC really do work eight to five? Who takes care of kids then?"

"That's a good one, Glen." Robert thought for a bit. "As you know, here at Galaxy we have Rita who does no work and is retired; Hazel who works here part-time taking in sewing; Joyce, whose security work has changing hours—she trades off shifts with coworkers every few weeks; Mort, who does nine-to-five at his bank; Dora, who does six-to-midnight nurse work, usually; Sam, who does writing—so all his work is at home; and Bonnie, who works nine-to-five at a store. Grandpa used to work part-time at a store until he died—the hours were flexible. Will does college except for the summer; in the summers he did eight-to-five factory work. And there are you and I with morning burger shifts. And you with your part-time programming. Notice that life is full of variation, with various people doing different things at different times. The average MC may have about twice as many people as Galaxy, so the chances for availability will double. If there were half a dozen little ones to nurture here, there would be plenty of people to handle it. And looking backwards 15 years, the main caregivers in the daytime were still Sam, Hazel, Dora, and sometimes Joyce and sometimes grandpa. After five P.M., the main ones were Mort, Bonnie, Rita, Hazel, and sometimes Joyce and sometimes grandpa. And older siblings and cousins took some of the load after school, some weekend days, and a little bit at night. All in all, there have been about 15 people here for a long time, and still are. And we've never had any personnel problems about daycare. I'd like to see average MC families have two parents and two kids (although there will be lots of single-parent families involved too), with four to eight families per MC, which means eight to sixteen potential daycare alternates (adults) and eight to sixteen kids to care for, so only about two of the adults would need to deal with daycare at any given time, since older kids would be in school, or able to help out with care sometimes themselves, which means only about four to eight kids would need care.

"Everyone loves happy, fun, responsible, respectful, cooperative kids, so people would be more likely to want more daycare assignments rather than less—that was surely my experience. And even though there should be two assigned caregivers at a time, so the kids have choices and the caregivers don't get overwhelmed, that doesn't mean that no one else would be around or available. It's likely one older kid and one adult willing to nurture would be present in addition to assigned people, at any given time. One or more children might choose to be with these people. Or it might be that there is a mother or father nurturing an infant or two in a home or two. It's kind of natural and likely that an infant will have mom or dad around a lot during that first year. It seems to work nicely.

"So from this context I'd say that the answer to your question is that if everyone worked eight-to-five they'd either have to hire people to fill daycare needs or change a

few schedules around. It's possible to hire outside people that would do great, but I don't think I'd TRY to do it that way if I was them. Find a way to hire people IN the MC, if hiring must be done. Do NONE of them have extended family members who would enjoy being part of this scene? That's extremely doubtful. Could NONE of them change their job schedules, or get work-at-home jobs that can be done from five to midnight? Again, I have trouble believing this 'none.' The odds say that some could afford to work part-time mornings or afternoons, and perhaps supplement this job with a little evening or take-home work. The odds are that most MCs that start up would already have schedule variations, a couple of part-timers or work-at-homers, retired people, empty-nesters, or available extended family members, so childcare could be worked out much more easily than it ever was when they existed as isolated nuclear families. Remember, since people are now having all kinds of hassles, economic burdens, and schedule conflicts with their non-MC lifestyles relative to childcare, it can be expected that MC life would multiply resources and support so that the problems would be much fewer, the quality of the care higher, and the expense of the care lowered to nothing. And that's not to mention the overall improvement of quality of life, quality and quantity of friendships, compatibility of friends and neighbors, and enjoyment of life. So the answer to your question is that childcare hassles would go down and childcare expenses would vanish, while quality went up. So—not to worry."

"What haven't we covered?" asked Glen. "For instance, we've shown that it will work (Galaxy shows that wonderfully anyway), and how it will evolve once people accept it and try it. We've seen that perhaps Galaxy would be the national MC information center. We'd guide this movement, and keep some databases and statistics here, and do some blogging and article writing for an MC website we'd run. But this all assumes that people accept the MC idea and decide to try it. We mentioned that we'd have to 'use the system' to its fullest to accomplish getting the idea out there. In other words, movies, TV shows, DVDs and CDs, videos, books, articles, and computer program apps like matching and searching and scheduling apps. Someone has to write TV shows and movies, direct 'em, produce 'em. Robert, we need a publicity agent, an investment banker with big bucks, project manager executives of high quality, famous people to align with all this, and a lot of luck!"

"Well, you're ready to handle the database and computer programming and blogging; I'm ready to be overall consultant, research coordinator, and overall advisor; Sam, if he wishes, could write scripts for any of this stuff—he can write anything—he's good! Wendy is a heck of a musician and idea person; Bonnie and Barbra are both fine artists; Mort could lead us to several investors, since he's a banking executive; and Will could be manager and/or organizer of overall movement strategies. He's a genius in such areas. His problem has always been knowing how to use all those abilities; the last time I talked to him, he hadn't yet chosen what to DO with all his talents. That's why he stays in school: to go for degrees in management-related subjects until he hits on a field he wants to work in. This just may be the field he'll like. And I'll bet I don't even have to explain why." Robert grinned at Glen.

"No, I think I see the picture pretty well," said Glen, grinning back. "Well, this is Friday night—or is it Saturday morning? When we get up, let's get everyone scheduled for Sunday—*all day Sunday.* This is going to be heavy stuff. That's my prediction. And let's you and me try to locate a public relations agent tomorrow. I've an idea on the subject."

"You know somebody in the field?" asked Robert.

"No, but I have an idea."

"What? You've got me curious. Come on, spill the beans."

"Well, okay. You know that movie with Alberta Einstein, the one where we had the popcorn fight?"

"Yes."

"Well, I figure that writer is into something. I don't think a fast buck in Hollywood is the only thing careening around in that guy's cranium."

"'Careening in his cranium'?" repeated Robert, with a wry look on his face.

"Well, it's getting late."

"I guess! But, you know, you're right. I too looked for the writer's name in the credits. Stephen Stein, I think it was. His trip about Secretary of Understanding, his trip about Alberta playing against type so glaringly and being compassionate and wise, her seeing the forest through the trees and liberating their world from the bonds of crippling beliefs, and his analogy of tanks equals gallons equals containers representing the reason their culture and their world was tripping and stumbling and suffering so much, with false loyalty to anachronistic, nonviable beliefs and traditions and ideas—all this was deadly satire, timely social commentary, and meaningful allegory—"

"'Allegory'?" repeated Glen.

"A tale or prolonged metaphor representing something other than its superficial content, something more meaningful. Most movies are about what they are about. This wasn't. In a way, it was an aid to seeing the forest through the trees in the areas where we're hurting, due to our blindness relative to the lack of viability of some of our old traditions and beliefs. My dreams made the connections to the analogous situation of mother-only, choiceless, oppressive nurturing. Did you get dreams from the flick?"

"Mostly about Alberta's glamorous goodies."

"Yeah, I had some of those, too," remembered a smiling Robert. "She kind of jiggles her way into your heart, doesn't she?"

"Yep. So let's call him in the morning," said Glen.

"Right. This has been quite a night. Let's hit the rack."

"Right. And thanks a lot for—for everything."

"I was just going to say the same thing to you!"

They walked downstairs and went to their separate apartments.

Chapter 14

"Conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure."
—Thorstein Veblen

"The worst enemy of truth and freedom in our society is the compact majority."
—Henrik Ibsen

"Custom, then, is the great guide of human life."
—David Hume

"What experience and history teach us is this—that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."
—Hegel

"The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes."
—Marcel Proust

"A new idea is first condemned as ridiculous and then dismissed as trivial, until finally, it becomes what everybody knows."
—William James

"The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them."
—Albert Einstein

"We know very little about the real rules of the world, what can and cannot be done and what is and is not possible. But we can choose to see the world in new ways."
—Joel Barker

Before Saturday morning was over, every Galaxy person had agreed to attend a Galaxy meeting at noon on Sunday, right after an 11:00 lunch, which Bert had volunteered to make for everyone. Bert was like that. Both the lunch and the meeting would take place in the 'together space' lounge, between Joyce's and Rita's rooms.

Calls to the owner of the local drive-in (the second one got him; the first one only his early-rising, cartoon-watching son) succeeded in their purpose, only because he happened to save past movie posters. He said he probably had the one they wanted out in his truck. He went out and checked and was back in two minutes. He read everything on the poster, including Alberta's real-life name. He was thanked for being so cooperative. The guys now had enough leads to begin calling. So they got all the relevant phone numbers from Information, then began calling. There was no answer at most of them since it was Saturday. However, one studio number got a receptionist who knew a lot, and she managed to look up Stephen Stein's number for them. Robert let Glen make the call, since it was his idea.

They reached a sleepy Stephen. Glen asked if he should call back later (it was 10 A.M.), but Stephen said it wouldn't do any good—he was awake now anyway. So Glen went on to tell him who he was and then how much he'd liked Stephen's movie. Glen asked if the studio tried to change it or make it more commercial.

"No, they let me have it pretty much as written. I made sure that was in the contract." He went on to tell them (Robert listened on another extension) a little about the time and effort and money it took, the video rights, etc. Glen asked him who the P.R. agent was.

"Me," said Stephen.

"You were P.R. man AND writer? That seems strange. Does that happen very often?" asked Glen.

"Not as far as I know. But, anyway, I succeeded. About 30 million will eventually come in after only an eleven-million-dollar investment from investors, ten of which is for distribution costs and one of which is the movie's cost. We're already over 19 million on the flick. So why'd you call, Glen? You in a cinema class or something? Doing your homework, are you?"

"No, not at all. I'm calling you specifically because we—my friend Robert is here with me—we're just out of high school and are planning our careers—we think we saw something very special in your movie, and we want to ask you about it because we want to learn what we'll have to do to write a movie, and then get it funded, produced, directed, distributed, and publicized. Perhaps you'd be the public relations person. And we also want to do a DVD, a video, a book, a TV series, and a blog on what the movie is about."

"You want to do all this today, or will next week be soon enough?" asked Stephen, with a dead-pan tone of implied cynicism.

"The sooner the better. You see, it's not another slasher movie or skin flick or detective movie or teeny bopper flick. Our intention is to save the world. And before you hang up, we've already figured out how, and it has nothing to do with cults, religion, or politics, or anything crazy or dangerous or radical; in fact, it's just as conservative as it is liberal. And the basic idea behind it has been kind of 'pilot-tested' for decades, and it not only works, it's a miracle. And the reason I thought you'd want in on this is because of your movie. We GOT the message. And we loved it!"

"Okay, you want me to help you do all these things, and then once they're done the world will be saved? That's a lot to ask of a movie, a book, a DVD, a—and whatever else you said, Glen baby. You sure you don't want to set your sights a little lower and just save the U.S.? Or just California? Or—no, I know—try for Newark, New Jersey—they can probably use all the saving they can get!" He laughed at his joke, and so did Glen.

"So what do you think?" asked Glen. "Your movie was one step in the direction Robert and I want to go, here. Ready to go for a quantum leap?"

"At ten in the morning? I'm not sure I'm even ready for the stagger to the bathroom and the cold toilet seat. Jeez, Glen—a quantum leap—I don't know . . . But anyway, you haven't told me who you want to save everyone from. Is it the 'dirty commies,' or is it the UFOs, or perhaps it's the Moonies. Now THAT would be a commendable task! No—I got it—you're going to save us from Joan Rivers! No, how about Jim and Tammy? *Please* tell me you're going to save us from them! No, no—I got it, you're gonna save the world from Vanna White! I got it, didn't I?" Glen was chuckling—this was entertaining.

"No, Stephen. I'd say that I might be able to help with the rest, but with Vanna White, you're on your own! By the way, where did they ever find 'Alberta'—you know—Roxanne Smith?"

"She's a local college student. A brilliant lady, looking for part-time work in acting—for extra bucks. Refuses to do nudies or porn or stripping or whatever else everyone is always trying to get her to do. They didn't actually look for a nude part for her or anything. Nor did they look for a lady like her, physically, to fill the Alberta role. I had just written it as 'a pretty lady.' But she's the one who came off as brilliant—which is what she is—in the audition, and that's who got the part. She took the part in spite of the nudity, since it's a legitimate movie, not porn or slasher garbage or that type of thing."

Glen talked with Stephen for over an hour, explaining exactly what he meant by his 'save the world' statement. Stephen understood, and was surprised by the facts about multiple caregiving creating superior nurturing. "Why haven't they ever told us this?" was the gist of his response. And of course Glen let him know that the reason they hadn't was the same reason that people kept putting up with the tank-gallon-container-can farce in his movie. People don't question the way they were brought up or the things they are taught in the process. They're too emotionally attached to it, and if they do happen to question it, the resulting response humiliates them for naïveté. Not only do people not

question the beliefs conditioned into them as they were being raised, including those about how parents should raise kids, but these beliefs become their REALITY, like the water surrounding a fish. We cannot think *about* these beliefs, for the simple reason that we think *from* them.

Glen let Stephen know that he and Robert had discussed this area before, and the bottom line—the real issue here—was that of *paradigms*. These are the way we perceive the world—the set of beliefs that explain the world to us and help predict its behavior. Our paradigms include defined boundaries beyond which we believe we cannot go. In 1969 we went to the moon. A couple of decades earlier a person could get locked up in a nuthouse for expressing a serious belief in the possibility of going to the moon. Our paradigms shifted their boundaries with regards to what's possible. Paradigms are like colored lenses in eyeglasses—they color everything we perceive. They act as filters on reality. They act as filters even in the "objective" areas such as science.

Glen spoke: "Thomas Kuhn, in his 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* found that when confronted with information that conflicted with their deepest beliefs, scientists either distort the information or fail to see it at all. So, since some of the deepest conditioning in a human being happens in the area of parenting and relationships, at a time when the all-absorbing child takes it in uncritically and trustingly, it follows that if there were to be 'scientific analysis' of a dramatically new situation in which parenting and relationships were of a new and better type, the scientists would either distort what they saw or completely fail to see the major qualitative differences staring them in the face. Their childhood-based beliefs would confuse them mercilessly. Such are the predictions that can be made on the basis of the lessons of history.

"So what's needed then is not analysis and intellectual gum-flapping in the area of transformative lifestyles, but a media blitz introducing the new paradigm with its transcendent, quantum-leap lifestyle enhancements—this blitz must introduce this paradigm so effectively and irresistibly that the wisest, most aware and open-minded people shift paradigms on the spot and want life to be all it CAN BE, not all they were USED TO it being. Such people will say 'Where do I sign?' And the rest of society will soon follow, once they see how life works for these key individuals—these early adoptors.

"The powers that be in your movie kept people away from the possibility of paradigm shift, unknowingly, and those that began to see beyond the nonsense were humiliated into silence for their efforts. But Alberta had a mind that trusted its own experience and not others' beliefs—when her paradigms shifted, she had the courage, stamina and insight to help her society into shifting along with her."

"Exactly," said Stephen. "That's what I was getting at in the movie. The authorities and decision makers in the surrealistic world of the tank-container-gallon farce kept people's paradigms frozen in time, even though the effects of their beliefs were grotesquely counterproductive. Much like the beliefs of the various warring factions in Mideast countries. And like the Pope's anachronistic stance on birth control. And like SDI, even after it has been shown to be nonviable—only a partial protection for our weapons and no protection at all for our general population. Besides being economically unsound, since it would cost less to defend against it than to build and maintain it. But, back to the point. I've always thought that this paradigm thing—although I didn't use that word—applied especially strongly to the beliefs that are holding culture back relative to both child-rearing and relationship practices. But I've never been able to nail down what was going wrong and what would set it straight. In short, I couldn't point the way for the next cultural paradigm shift. But you feel that you people can. Do I read you correctly?"

"Exactly," confirmed Glen. They continued talking.

In the process of getting to know Stephen, Glen and Robert learned that Stephen used to be a war correspondent in Lebanon quite a few years ago, when the fighting was at its worst. He quit that job and came back thinking about how people could be so unbelievably stupid and naïve and self-righteous and blind. The only reason one militant faction had for killing another faction was that they believed something a bit different. People were brought up to believe something or other, and to wipe out everyone who

was different. He asked himself: Was this really "culture," or was it inculcation of insanity, as well as a future death sentence? Why couldn't people see the obvious: that way of holding those beliefs was wrecking their lives, their hopes, their futures, and world peace? That was when he began work on his movie.

"We've gone through a similar process here with regards to the area of lifestyle and child-raising beliefs and practices," said Glen. "There is so much *unnecessary* pain, deprivation, unhappiness, and anger being created every day that could be prevented if people would make a few well-researched lifestyle enhancements. They work! I know it for a fact, Stephen. Because I actually *live* in such an enhanced lifestyle. We call it 'Galaxy.' If the nation and later the world could accept a bit of knowledgeable guidance on a few things where they're goofing up the worst, the priorities of hating, consuming, indirect self-acceptance and win-lose rat races could be exchanged for more humanitarian ones, and people could drop their dope, affairs, suicides, divorces, alcoholism and alienation and instead become responsible, respectful, loving, compassionate people."

"I see where you're headed, Glen. Let's talk more. May I come and see this 'perfect Galaxy environment' you've been talking about? It sounds so different from everything I've ever experienced that I need to see it for myself. Maybe that will make a believer out of me. I'm skeptical because every trip I've ever been near has been losers being followers of even bigger losers. In the back of my mind I've always wish-hoped that SOMEWHERE there was an exception and someone had managed to get their act together."

"When could you come?" asked Glen.

"How about now? I can hop a plane and be there by 6 P.M." Glen looked over at Robert, ten feet away with a cordless phone in hand, and got a nod and a wink.

"Okay. And here's how you get to our place once you get to the airport—no—never mind—we'll pick you up!" Glen said. Then he said goodbye and hung up the phone and took a deep, nervous breath and sighed.

"I thought you said you'd be afraid or stupid or something? That was perfect!" Robert said. He put his arm around Glen's shoulders from the side and gave a squeeze of encouragement. "Whatever it is you thought you had to worry about, you can safely forget it. That was the first official action of the MC movement, and you did it, all by yourself, and all I can say is that you did the movement proud."

"Thanks, Robert. My heart was hopping a bit at first, but once I got over my authority figure fears, it went smoothly."

It was 6:28. *Of course* it wasn't on time; it was an airline! Glen had a piece of paper with "Galaxy" written on it. He and Robert were in suits. It never hurts to be cautious. Stephen came through the gate dressed in slacks and a light blue turtleneck, saw the Galaxy sign, and shook hands with Glen and Robert. They talked all the way from the airport to the apartment building. Stephen was allowed to meet everyone, and was told about the Sunday meeting. He then decided that he'd spend a couple of hours walking around talking to everyone. He spent the most time with Cheryl, to no one's surprise. (She was also the first one he talked to.) If someone was curious about how well a lifestyle was working and why, he'd find out fastest by looking for symptoms and/or character in the children. He came away from that meeting looking very thoughtful. Then he talked to Rita and Hazel. Next Barbra. Then Wendy. Then Mort. Then Sam. Then Bob. Then Will. Then Dora. Then Bonnie. Then Bert. Then Joyce. He didn't mention movies or MC movements to anyone, as he'd promised Glen and Robert he'd let them present all that on Sunday. He kept his questions focused on how they lived and how they felt and what they thought about the world. All of Galaxy knew that Robert and Glen had something up their sleeves, but didn't know what. Bringing home a writer from Hollywood surprised them, but they all decided to just BE with these occurrences, and see what happened next.

Eventually, Stephen got back to Glen and Robert in the lounge. He was holding back a lot of emotion, they could tell. He was quiet—thinking—for a couple of minutes.

Finally he spoke, softly, and the subtly-lighted room seemed to absorb his words. It was hard to hear him. But they did hear him.

His words were: "This is impossible—it just can't be." There was another long silence. "I—I—I wasn't ready for this, Glen. I don't know what—what to say . . ."

"Do you see why Robert and I are trying so hard to turn things around on this planet? These people here weren't born any different from anyone else. They're just people. But they were brought up better, and have a superior lifestyle. Look at the results. And then take a deep breath and look at the *implications,"* said Glen. He was silent then, letting Stephen be with all this.

"Look, guys," said Stephen, eventually. "I've been around the block a few times. Iraq, Lebanon, L.A., Hollywood. I'm only 49 but I've seen a lot of people, trips, lifestyles, fads—I've tried some of them myself. But they weren't what I was looking for. In the back of my mind my movie was a search for others like myself. I haven't even managed to find anyone at *my* relatively modest level of concern and awareness about the world. I was hoping the movie would shake a few exceptionally compassionate and aware people out of the woodwork that would try to contact me. That's one of the reasons I wrote it with that type of allegory in it. I've felt pretty alone in my concerns about where everything is headed. I'm not a doomsday freak or anything. I just see a lot of dangerous overattachment to naïve and malevolent ideas and traditions. The way you people have managed to avoid this trap, and create a lifestyle based upon NOT falling into the normal traps of win-lose relationships and oppressive child-rearing, it's really perfect! I didn't really know *how* to apply what I know to lifestyle and child-rearing areas; I just sort of had a good feel for what NOT to do, culturally, in order for life not to turn into a mess, like it is for so many on this planet. I'd applied what I've learned to areas like prejudice, bigotry, religious self-righteousness, and culturally-supported blind stupidity in general."

Robert spoke: "Would you like to see this type of lifestyle catch on chain-reaction style, where if there were enough MCs manifesting great lifestyle improvements, then sooner or later a kind of 'critical mass' would be reached and everyone would want to go MC all at once? You know, like long hair, hula hoops, Rubik's cube, and so on. The difference here would be that, unlike fads, the MC movement would stay. No one could possibly desire to go from our type of lifestyle to the normal, neurotic, alienation scene. Unless they were brain-damaged."

"I'd *love* to see that, Robert. A chain-reaction of lifestyle enhancement!"

"Any ideas on what part you'd like to play in it all?" asked Robert.

"I could manage the publicity end, make valuable contacts, and help write scripts. The investors for my movie might just be into helping to back this."

"Know any famous people who might want in?" asked Glen.

"I can't say what they'd think about all *this,* but I know some people. My biggest regret about all this is that famous people contact and publicity is something that I'll have to do from my office. If only I could do my job from here—the MC headquarters; I'd get to be around all you people and support the MC movement simultaneously. But personal contact and an L.A. location have always been essentials for my publicity successes—so it wouldn't work."

"I can only speak for myself, but I'd love to have you here on weekends and holidays," said Glen.

"That goes for me too. Of course, it's a Galaxy issue, so we'll have to confirm it at tomorrow's meeting—I can't speak for them," said Robert. "Perhaps the creative space—it used to be the daycare space—could have a bunk put in it."

"You mean it?" asked Stephen. "You only just met me. Why would you guys take a chance on me?"

"The same reason we took one on Glen. Intuition. Or you might say that our life paths are going the same direction. Why not journey together? So how come you're so ready to jump at this MC thing? Is your career at an empty spot? Aren't you busy? Are you treading water or what?"

"Things are going okay, job-wise and money-wise. I've been getting pretty steady public relations jobs. I'm good at it. I've never really been that concerned about bucks.

They always seem to come. What I've been concerned about is that the types of things I publicize are usually silly, trite, insidious, and mundane. I want to make a difference in the world. I've already made enough bucks; now I want to find a way to make a difference and GO FOR IT."

"See what I mean about intuition?" asked Robert. "I already knew that. I can tell you're 'one of us.' It shows. Your movie showed it too. I respect that movie. So, does the weekend commuter deal sound good?"

"Sounds too good to be true. My definition of having my cake and eating it too. Guys, if the others agree about that, tomorrow, then I'm gonna DO it. And I want you to know ahead of time that you won't be sorry you're being so kind and open. I won't disappoint you," Stephen assured them, his emotions shaking his voice. "I've been looking for people like Galaxy people all my life."

"How many of us did you talk with before you knew?" Robert asked.

"I knew after the first one—Cheryl. All the rest were just a glorious and mind-blowing confirmation of the obvious. If that's what twelve-year-olds are like when they're raised right, then everyone else in the world has a *hell* of a lot to learn about child-raising! She'd be an absolutely incredible woman for an 19- or 21-year-old. Her heart and mind are so beautifully open—she's just precious beyond words. How did you DO it?! You're ALL like that. My God—look at what I've been missing all my life." Stephen had tears in his eyes. Glen went over and gave Stephen a hug. It was returned.

Glen told their new friend: "That's what I kept saying to myself after the first day or two of being around here, at the beginning of the summer, Stephen. My life had been a joke up until then." They talked for several more hours, stopping only for snacks and a 15-minute pool dip. When it got late, Robert borrowed the trundle bed under Rita's bed, with her permission, and set Stephen up in the creative space. Then everyone went to bed.

It was Sunday noon. Everyone was finished with the nice lunch Bert had fixed, and he was done with the dishes. Everyone was assembled in the Galaxy lounge. All Galaxy people had noticed that Robert and Glen had been doing a lot of talking and reading lately, sometimes staying up half the night in the process. So they knew something was cooking. They also knew Robert well enough to know that when it was the proper time for them to be let in on things, he'd let them know. That time had come:

"As a first order of business, I'd like to ask if anyone has any objections or concerns with Stephen coming here on weekends and holidays and staying in the creative space and being with us. The creative things around here have been almost exclusively happening in this lounge space and our individual rooms anyway," Robert observed.

"No objections, but I'd like him to tell us more about himself," said Hazel.

"I second that," said Dora. Sam and Mort voiced similar wishes, and everyone murmured agreement. So Stephen gave a half-hour version of his life and career. He spent ten minutes on his movie and another ten on the empty and dissatisfied feelings he'd been feeling for ten years. He'd been married and divorced, but it wasn't about that. The feelings were about a combination of several things: the quality of the relationships in his and everyone's lives; the feeling that he was sure that it could all be much better, but he just didn't know how, or what to do about it; the meaning of existence.

"Are there any liabilities about you—things that you're holding back because you think we'll look down on you or reject you?" asked Sam.

"Let's see," pondered Stephen. "There's nothing too serious. The dumbest thing I've done is getting a girl pregnant when I was 17—I paid for the abortion. I also 'borrowed' a car once when I was drunk—still 17. I've tried several drugs, but they only frustrated and depressed me—so I quit all that in my twenties. I bounced two checks, cheated on my tax return in '97 and paid a penalty, and broke open a Pepsi machine once when it stole my money twice in a row. I used to sneak off on Sundays to play cards with my buddies instead of going to church when I was 12. I have had two knee operations. I have never had V.D. or AIDS or other diseases of those types. I'm heterosexual and see a woman occasionally in L.A. Neither of us do dope or plan to do it.

We don't have marriage or family plans. My relatives are deceased. I'm pretty well off, but not really rich. I'm 49 years old. I'm not on the make. Not for sex, that is. Also, I don't drink, smoke or swear." As he said the latter, Stephen was patting all his pockets. "But God DAMN it, I think I left my cigars at the tavern." Everyone laughed. "Seriously, I really don't smoke or drink. And what I really am on the make for is what I see here at Galaxy. You guys are used to it. I can't tell you what a shock it is to come from the polluted, plastic playground of promiscuity and punk-rock to the Galaxy. It's like a different planet here. You people are a miracle. Thanks for listening to me. Any questions?"

"Yeah, where'd you find 'Alberta'?" asked Will. "I saw that movie too. Holy Chihuahua!" Everybody laughed. Stephen told him what he'd explained to Glen the day before, then asked for any more questions. There were none.

"I move we welcome Stephen here weekends and holidays," said Cheryl. Everyone seconded it. "So, Robert, are you going to spill your guts about what's going on around here, or make us sit here wetting our pants in anticipation?" she asked, kidding her cousin Robert.

He replied: "I didn't realize you still wet your pants, Cheryl. You need me to help change you? I used to when I was seven and you were just a puppy. Remember, honey? You're no less adorable, now. Just larger, that's all!" he teased.

"No thanks. I'll handle my own panties, if you don't mind," she replied coyly. Everyone laughed. It was no secret how Robert had loved being daddy to Cheryl sometimes when she was younger. She hadn't needed much fathering for quite a few years, now, and if she did, Mort was as good as they came. But Robert and Cheryl both occasionally liked to remember back to when they'd 'adopted' each other eleven years ago. Robert was in the mood, suddenly, for giving piggyback rides to Cheryl—even at 12 she still played with him in that way. But the irony of all this was, of course, that she was an emotionally mature, secure woman inside that fawn-like, 12-year-old body, and she'd retained all of her child-like playfulness and innocence, but none of her naïveté and ignorance. It made her irresistible to anyone and everyone. But Robert knew he'd have to postpone the horseplay—he had a very important meeting to run.

He spoke: "Well, let's get going here. Glen and I got you here for a really important reason. As Stephen has reminded us, we all have it really good here, and we're all really nurturing and happy, and this is unusual. The rest of the world is not like that. There may be a few places or families where things are pretty good—my own research in town here have confirmed this—but the general status of the normal, average family isn't too good in these areas. We all see all the unhappiness and confusion and divorces, suicides, teen pregnancies, dope use, alcoholism, neurosis, crime rates, child abuse and worse out there—the statistics DO NOT paint a pretty picture. I won't waste time belaboring such points. We've all discussed this stuff before.

"I would like to re-examine what we've DONE about it all. First, we've taken care of our own. We've made sure that all of us have received all the love and understanding and caregiving choices we needed. There is no deprivation at Galaxy. This was a *very wise move.* And the credit for steering Galaxy in these directions belongs to, first, my grandma (he looked over at her and winked) and grandpa, and next, to everyone who's been part of this scene over the last few decades. We all made it work. We cooperated. We pulled together. And we all love the result.

"Now, the reason it was such a wise move is NOT just that we Galaxy people have enjoyed a wonderfully happy life here. The reason it was so wise is more related to Darwin than to the pleasure principle. I consider Galaxy a kind of benevolent social mutation. Like new biological characteristics in evolution, which usually die out because they're either useless or malevolent, we're a mutated social form. But also like new biological characteristics in evolution, every so often a new characteristic turns out to be advantageous, and as a result it tends to get *selected*. Socially, the commune and single-parent family are social mutations that will NOT be selected in the long run, as there are more disadvantages than advantages relative to good survival. On the other hand, Galaxy life is a nearly perfectly benevolent social mutation, so it will tend to be selected

in the long haul by evolution. 'Survival' doesn't get much better than this! However, there's a problem: Galaxy lifestyle is tending to spread only linearly. So it's being selected, but only by the next generation of Galaxy people. And while it's true that non-Galaxy people will be much more likely to kill each other off than Galaxy people, and therefore a million years from now 'our kind' might prevail, social evolution isn't really about such simple Darwinian principles any more, in the short haul.

"Notice that the *isolated nuclear family,* a product of industrialism and mobility and constant change and anachronistic ethics of rugged individualism, has been in the process of being selected for over a century. Of course, three fourths of the known cultures on the planet use more extended, non-isolated family forms (and have for thousands of years), but more developed countries are often selecting this isolated nuclear type or at least the semi-isolated type.

"ISOLATED. When the profit motive is higher on priority lists than everything else, then the average family needs to be mobile and ready to respond to a better job offer for the adults in charge of it, at a moment's notice. And when people are so confused by outdated values that they're embarrassed to get any sort of a helping hand from neighbors, even about childcare, the families will suffer. Most women work. Families can't afford to hold onto their centuries-old attitudes about all this stuff. The world is changing. Everyone is in the fast lane. Buying a few more THINGS is considered the epitome of 'lifestyle improvement,' even if what is bought is individual TVs for everyone in a family so that they can cease even the pretense of any togetherness. We, here, know the *real* definition of lifestyle improvement. Uprooting for a promotion isn't seen as too terrible out there. And that's because no one even knows their neighbors anyway, nor do they desire to.

"So we boil it down to a semantic-ethical problem. Which is better 'survival,' more buying power, or a nurturing, happy, fulfilling lifestyle? All here know the answer—even Stephen, who had to settle for buying power pleasures as a hollow replacement for life's truly meaningful joys all these years. This is not a jab at capitalism. Merely at conspicuous consumption raised to the level of a religion. Galaxy lifestyles work just fine under capitalism—let's keep it. *But that doesn't mean that the lives themselves need to focus on consumption!* Capitalism is merely the means to an end. It's not the end. Each day Galaxy working people go into a competitive world of business and help some company make a profit, then we bring home checks. But we don't put the money, or what it buys, on a pedestal and worship it. However, ads on TV and in magazines, as well as our culture itself, DO worship these things. People aren't really feeling happy as they do all this consuming. As many before me have said, and I'll repeat it here, all they're really doing is attempting to fill up their emptiness. Their empty lives. Their empty relationships. Their meaningless existences. At least chasing the buck gives life 'purpose,' they think. At least filling up an empty, insecure identity with things, products, status symbols, and brand-name labels lets them be something, rather than nothing, they think. But they're mistaken. These things are incredibly ineffective palliatives. They merely distract people temporarily from their emotional pain—their suffering and loneliness and emptiness. That's why prescription drugs, dope and alcohol are so damnably popular. When the distraction of consumption doesn't work, they get desperate. *Dope and alcohol are a desperate attempt to kill the pain, the loneliness, and the humiliation of a lifestyle that is failing to nurture, to fulfill, to enlighten, to bring happiness*—it is the next desperate step after the failure of the attempt to fill one's emptiness with things, via consumption; and fill one's emptiness with people, via unhealthy, oppressive, *possession*-relationships—the normal kind where someone 'owns' and controls another. This latter has also been proven to be a failure at eliciting happiness. And filling one's emptiness with people by trying to collect a thousand Facebook friends or by spending countless hours trying to get Likes and strokes and indirect-self-acceptance on these social networks is doomed to failure. No emptiness gets filled—you just get distracted. It's a pain-avoidance diversion. It leads not to fullness or happiness but to delusion and depression. The statistics are clear—as well as being depressing in themselves. Full

people already accept themselves; they use Facebook to check on friends and family and see what's going on or get a chuckle at a picture of a cat mothering a duckling.

"For the purposes of argument, let's say that all these people's churches are correct, and that the ethics one can glean from some of the better literature are correct, and that the insights that the *best* (not necessarily the most famous) psychiatrists and psychologists and counselors can help one to arrive at are all correct: The satisfactions of life that count are 'not by bread alone'; 'it is better to give than to receive'; 'money can't buy love'; and it takes love and compassion and giving and helping and awareness for life to be happy and fulfilling. We know this to be true. We know why we are happy. We know what it is about our lives that makes us happy. And the best churches, best books, and best shrinks already know this, and teach this. And the people even know it themselves. Just ask them. But that's just what they SAY. Look at what they DO. They talk about what they really care about in life in well-practiced, conditioned platitudes, representing how they feel they're supposed to feel, and what they're supposed to say. But watch how they ACT—ignoring the hollow words. Relationships take a back seat to individualism, consumption, coolness, style, convenience, profits, dollars. I ask: if people no longer like or care about other people, aren't we at the point of 'bad survival' in evolution, the point where extinction processes out the negative mutations?

"If the punk rockers, skinheads, street gangs in L.A. and elsewhere, terrorists in the Mideast and elsewhere, or the incarcerated members of society who got so frustrated by all this that they simply quit pretending they don't worship things above all, and started stealing *our* things—if the will of these people be done, extinction is near.

"The demographics in this country are interesting: the Ozzie-and-Harriet family configuration is only 7.25% of all households, husband and wife households are 48% of the population—often in isolated nuclear families—but only 23.5% of these contain their own kids, over 18% of all households are single-parent, nearly 34% are in nonfamily households, nearly 27% live alone or with a nonfamily member, unmarried couple households make up nearly 7%, and only 4.4% of all households are extended family types—mostly immigrants. If I've said that isolated nuclear families are not working, I can also say that single-parent families are often isolated and they generally work a lot worse than the isolated nuclear family configuration. A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only, for example, with roommates or an unmarried partner. And these households, often isolated, often contain noncommitted people which makes the situation even worse for any kids that get born into the situation. And the people that choose to live alone mostly are a testament to the fact that many people don't like people, or have been seriously disappointed by people, and prefer to be left alone. Their social hopes have disappeared. They'll try for indirect-self-acceptance on social networks but this will just backfire into loneliness and depression for many of them, although occasionally people find relevant IRL friends there.

"What do I mean by the term 'isolated'? It doesn't mean no other houses are around. It means socially isolated from most people resources—at least ones that are relevant. The neighbors that don't like kids, are sick, are mentally unsound, are scary and attract a bad element, are excons or registered sex offenders, are senile, or even the ones that are always gone are irrelevant. There may be a few relevant people a few houses away that you've never met, but unless you belong to the same church or club or golf course or gym, you may have no idea that they're relevant social resources. Communities and villages and extended families in the olden days often used to offer lots of social resources and people used to depend on each other out of necessity. But these days people are seen as weak or bothersome if they go to neighbors for help. Except in the childcare area. Mothers latch onto other mothers in neighborhoods as potential childcare resources as potential playmates for their kids. A few mothers wisely band together to form babysitting co-ops, but there's not much of this going on relative to the childcare needs out there. However, most mothers feel bad and guilty about the childcare their kids end up getting. The reason is simple: most moms work and their kids either have to put up with a mother tired from work or a home care or daycare situation or a babysitter that does little if any nurturing. Most of these situations produce inadequate

childcare—some of it is just plain bad. As we know, kids need to be with caregivers that love and nurture them and have time for them. This is relatively rare. But it gets worse, because the type of parenting that the caregivers practice is very often authoritarian, or worse yet, permissiveness or neglectful or a combination of these. Even some of the moms that know about authoritative parenting like P.E.T., Aware parenting, Unconditional parenting, or Winning Family Lifestyles are so busy and tired from work that they lapse into the type of parenting *they* received and forget about what they learned. It's a lot easier and faster, therefore they do it to save time. The bottom line? Adequate parenting happens sometimes but good parenting is rare.

"If evolution works properly, why was the isolated nuclear family selected? (I'm really talking about ANY of the isolated family and non-family configurations, but I'll say 'nuclear' to save time..) It's the second least viable lifestyle around, second only to the isolated single-parent family. UN-isolated nuclear families with close-knit community relationships work pretty good—at least fair. And such families that add an extended element to them work even better. But these are exceptions in our culture. Most people, and therefore short-term cultural evolution, have been selecting the *isolated* nuclear family. Is short- term social evolution fickle? Yes! But not only short-term evolution. Long-term evolution often stinks too. There are a few very oppressive, minor, isolated cultures on this planet. Some have been cranking out misery and neurosis for thousands of years with little variation. Some have no love, no security, no respect, and no happiness; but plenty of misery, hate, projection, envy, and meanness. Surely this is bad survival! So why do they get selected?

"It turns out that there are two kinds of survival: survival meaning life or death, and survival meaning life enjoyment because life is working well. The latter isn't needed to keep a species multiplying. Enjoyment is merely frosting on the cake. Species survival instincts are hard at work when the world's starving have a higher birth rate than do people in countries where life is enjoyed a little. The starving people want the frosting too, but settle for the cake alone. 'Oh look, I'm still alive,' is their pragmatic definition of 'enjoying life.'

"If you add all this up, you can see that there's no reason to think that *evolution* is selecting the isolated nuclear family. Its survival potential is not that good. Most other cultures have more viable lifestyles than this and some people in our country and other developed countries have some obviously superior alternatives to this. So let's agree that it was and is the blind, deterministic forces of industrialism, mobility, the automobile, rapid change, and out-of-place values that are trying to select that isolated nuclear family. This lifestyle is a convenient way to deal with today's society and changes and economic opportunities. But I've done tons of research. It's a fact that the convenience and economic opportunity advancements have been purchased at a heavy price. Our contemporaries have had to sacrifice relationship quality and quantity, life satisfaction, meaning, solidarity, connectedness, and committedness to their fellow humans. Stephen isn't the only one who's unhappy with this sacrifice and would like to trade back—increasing life quality even if it costs him bucks, luxuries, and possessions. In fact, in our years of communicating with outsiders, we've met few people who wouldn't trade back most, if not all, of their *stuff* for a happier lifestyle! And that brings me back to my earlier point about what we've DONE about our realization of the unhappiness, confusion, and unfulfilling lifestyles around us.

"As I said before, the first thing we did about it was to take care of our own—a very wise move. We've a wonderful lifestyle to show for it. These are our 'close encounters of the first kind.' But we also have chosen to relate to outsiders. Each of us, as a rule, has seen fit, when not nurturing Galaxy children, to nurture outsiders. And now that we have no kids here needing nurturing, we all have plenty of time to do this, and we do! We look for the most together people and try to give them the space to 'make it the rest of the way,' as it were. And we do nicely at this. It makes us happy and it makes them happy. Let's call these our 'close encounters of the second kind.'

"Now, at the individual level, all this is working for us, and for them. At the level of evolution, though, it's a different story. People out there are choosing the lifestyles

with the greatest economic opportunity potential, and lifestyle quality is merely a secondary consideration—even though they don't think of it this way as they make their money-first-and-people-second choices. And all this is not because they are actually more interested in a few bucks than they are about lifestyle quality and happiness. We know! We've asked! The fact is, they truly do care more about happiness and relationship viability. So the major question that logically suggests itself here is WHY ARE THEY CHOOSING TO SET UP LIFE SO THAT THE ECONOMICS WORK BUT THE RELATIONSHIPS FALTER, EVEN THOUGH THEY ACTUALLY CARE MORE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS THAN MONEY?!

"Of course, it takes no great genius to answer the question. Look at all the statistics on symptoms: divorce, affairs, dope, alcoholism, child abuse, TV and/or Internet addiction, crime, lack of respect or ethics, V.D., teen pregnancies, and suicide. The family is in trouble. Relationships are in trouble. The American Dream is in trouble. Awareness is in trouble. **The answer to the WHY question just posed is that people know what it takes and therefore what to do to succeed economically, but when it gets to relationships, they don't understand them and don't know what to do to make them work, so they simply stumble around, blindly, hoping that they'll work. And they usually DON'T!** This includes friendships, male-female, spousal, and child-parent relationships.

"Our Galaxy rules are a combination of proven guidelines and rules to follow in order to enable relationships to work well, and this in turn allows our lifestyle to work well. We are much more like the traditional family Reagan used to talk about than most of our contemporaries. Like the traditionals, we stay put as solid, loving, responsible members of our immediate community—we don't act like irresponsible, unconnected tourists—like so many isolated nuclear families do—and we don't accept jobs that force us to move. We make the jobs conform to us, not the other way around. We couldn't have become Galaxy had we valued bucks over lifestyle. Nor could traditional American families have formed solid, moral, responsible communities if everyone had been constantly uprooting and splitting. People totally forget this fact when they conceptualize what today's contemporary 'traditional' family is like, thinking of the mobility as merely extra freedom and choice, forgetting most of the community-centered values that made the actual traditional families of the past viable. It's a rather convenient amnesia, as it allows people to chase the buck, at the expense of community solidarity and lifestyle viability, but without any regrets or guilt. But, as we've seen, they're only hurting and fooling themselves. The problem is that what they're losing is too little understood—too intangible—so it's quite easy to spend an entire life moving and failing to make a happy life, moving again and failing to make a happy life again, and so on.

"It's time that it somehow is made clear to our culture just what it was that made certain aspects of life work better in the past in more traditional families, so the culture can once again incorporate such ethics, practices, and traditions into its normal lifestyles. The culture has become so materialistic that it has become blind to the value in anything else. This is a very conservative position I'm taking here, but there's a reason so many conservatives seem to be longing for the 'good old days.' We've lost something. They can feel that. They can feel that it's very important. And they want it back. And they're totally correct in their instincts of cultural preservation here. Liberals have only to understand what it is that has been lost, and what it would mean to their own lifestyles to get it back, to be persuaded to hop on the bandwagon of cultural reclamation.

"Stephen, here, can bear witness to what it feels like to come from the lifestyles that have lost much of what the culture used to have to offer, into a kind of oasis of preserved traditional values—which is us. It's stepping from the deadness and coldness of materialism and greed to the aliveness and warmth of solidarity, connectedness, respectfulness, meaningful relatedness, and truly caring people. It's like beginning to breathe again—like a rebirth. This is a generalized paraphrasing of the experiences of outsiders over the years as they enter and experience the Galaxy reality.

"Now I don't pretend for a moment that families in the old days had it as good as we do, nor did they have P.E.T. rules to keep relationships so happily growth- and

responsibility-promoting, nor did most of them have as many alternate caregiver choices. In fact, much of the solidarity of the old days came from people struggling for survival TOGETHER, farming TOGETHER, building TOGETHER, and then playing TOGETHER. Families stayed together because that's what worked—they needed to. Connectedness to the community was likewise a necessity. *What the culture has forgotten is that it was not only a necessity, but an opportunity, to be that close, connected, committed, and one with both a family and a community.* We know—we experience what that opportunity is all about every single day. And we don't tend to stray too far from the 'oasis,' as that's where the happiness and love are. This opportunity has to do with allowing people to be truly secure, fulfilled, loved and loving members of a wonderful extended family. It's like constant proof that the world is good, and the world cares about me. My cousins and aunt and uncle and grandparents and sister and parents all feel equally close to me and to each other. It wouldn't really matter that much if they were simply a few more nuclear families, rather than relatives. Joyce and Glen and Bert can attest to that—they're no less close from being unrelated.

"The Reagan types of the world—or just call them conservatives—they often don't even know that it is this wonderfully human, secure feeling of solidarity and meaningful relatedness that they pine for when they long for the traditional family values of the good old days. Their cliché-dropping about traditional family values begins to have a hollow ring to it when it gets overused in political contexts. If only Reagan would have shown a five-minute film clip depicting a Galaxy-like lifestyle of solid, meaningful relatedness, and pointed and said 'that—that is what I want us to recapture!,' then I believe his clichés would have worked on the liberals. As it was, most liberals tended to feel that his pleas for old family values were merely his way of being stuck in the past, unwilling to get with the times—a stubborn old fuddyduddy who would destroy 50 to 100 years of 'progress' if given the chance, simply because he hadn't kept up with the times. There's a bit of truth to this, of course; most older people do tend to prefer the music, values, and lifestyles of their particular 'good old days.'

"But liberals usually missed a much more important message—Reagan, and others like him, were longing for a time more human, happy, connected, and secure. And this is one of the things that endeared him to us—like a respected grandfather looking back at better times and trying to tell us how to recreate such times. The problem, of course, is that he didn't have a clue how such a thing could be done, nor did anyone else. His strategy of following normally-prescribed conservative policies surely didn't do the job. We got more debt but less inflation and unemployment out of that—not that much else. I'm not knocking him—I don't like to think of what a liberal president might have done in those eight years.

"But back to the point. Uprooting and splitting was something avoided if possible in the 'good old days,' because relationships and communities meant a lot to people and they knew this and recognized the value. We at Galaxy avoid uprooting for the same reason. We are also respectful, responsible and compassionate, which is becoming more and more rare with each succeeding generation of Americans—there's very little besides self-centeredness in most kids today. But respect, responsibility and compassion were pretty common in the 'olden days of traditional values.' They were needed, so they were inculcated. True, it was done through authoritarian means, and this made it oppressive to the ones being inculcated. But no one knew any better and everyone simply accepted the necessity for respect and responsibility to be instilled in the young, regardless of the threats or spankings that might be required. It seemed so obvious at the time that it was essential that such things be instilled that few questioned the methodologies. And many kids didn't even need threats or spankings. The mere knowledge that they would get along well if they acted responsibly, and would be in big trouble if they didn't, guided their behavior, whether out of fear or respect or both, and that was all there was to that. They were certainly better off than today's casualties of overpermissiveness—the spoiled, self-centered, greedy brats that pass for some of today's young. Obviously it's the P.E.T. rules that we use that have helped us so enormously in this area, and it's what other

contemporary families need in order to allow responsibility and respect to germinate in their members.

"Now, even though we rely heavily on those P.E.T. rules, this is not the whole story. The other part of what makes our relationships so successful here is in the child-raising area. My grandparents came up with our multiple nurturing and alternate caregiver rules and strategies—we've refined them a bit since their creation. No one ever feels *stuck* with anyone or anything, everyone has choices, and feels responsible for those choices, and when we were being brought up, we had caregiver choices and felt responsible for those choices too. We don't feel helpless, limited, controlled, at effect, deterministic, or in need of rebellion or acting out, the way most of today's young do. Because what we are is what we've chosen—we're responsible for how we feel, what we do or say, and whom we choose to be with. But the responsibility is never a burden—it's an opportunity. The result of this responsibility, respect, and compassion context we all have as a result of being brought up here is that our relationships with each other and with outsiders really work, and they're extremely satisfying and loving, and are more or less guided by an instinctual Golden Rule of doing onto others as we would like others to do unto us.

"When relationships and lifestyles really work, one isn't likely to walk out on them and cut most of them off every time there's a chance of a little raise if one moves to a different town. It's analogous to the TV-watching statistics. People out there are watching the darn things 5 and 6 hours a day, as opposed to our average of 2 or 3 hours a week per person. The bottom line here about both relocation and TV usage is that IF RELATIONSHIPS WERE WORKING, PEOPLE WOULDN'T PREFER FANTASY-LIFE RELATIONSHIPS VICARIOUSLY GOTTEN THROUGH TV WATCHING—THEY'D INSIST UPON THE REAL THING! PEOPLE ALSO WOULDN'T MOVE AT THE DROP OF THE ECONOMIC HAT IF THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT WOULD BE CUT OFF AS A RESULT WERE REALLY WORKING AND MEANT A LOT TO THEM. So all this adds up to the fact that outsiders' relationships are not working. So they pretend-relate with the tube or with social networking. They don't have to RISK commitment and be responsible that way. TV viewing has become for the risk of real (nonsexual) relating what inflatable dolls have become for the risk of real sexual relating—but at least the latter has a good excuse in the form of fear of disease. The last time I investigated, the only risk one needs to take in nonsexual relating is just being oneself, and occasionally someone won't be too crazy about you—I've never experienced that as any big deal.

"Okay, outsider relationships aren't working. What can they do to enable these relationships to work? Create Galaxy-like lifestyles. Most won't be able to use apartment-type housing, however, since two thirds of the people in the U. S. live in single-family homes. But, not to worry, Glen and I have worked this stuff out. But I'll get to that later.

"Right now I'd like to talk about 'close encounters of the third kind.' We've done great with first and second-kind relationships—those with Galaxy people, and those where we nurture outsiders. But that's where we've always stopped. Obviously we've always WISHED that the rest of the world would be able to enjoy life as much as we do. But they don't—by an exponential factor. And we didn't know what to do about that. Close encounters of the third kind are those that we, if we choose to do this, will have for the purpose of helping the world's people learn how to create lifestyles that work and relationships that work." Robert saw profound looks on the faces of his beloved extended family. Wendy and Cheryl both had tears running down their faces. They so dearly hoped that their cousin Robert had come up with a way for them to help the sad and lonely people of the world find happiness and love. It had been the uppermost hope in Cheryl's heart for over a year, and in Wendy's for over five years, that such a thing would evolve. No one at Galaxy, however, had ever been able to figure out how to go about it. All the other members of Galaxy had fervently hoped for this too, of course, but the others had become more resigned to the "obvious" limitation of nurturing outsiders one at a time—how *could* they do anything on a nationwide or worldwide scale? It was a heartfelt dilemma, without apparent solution.

But perhaps there was a solution. Robert was still talking: "Evolution. Is the human race going to make it? There are an AWFUL lot of weapons in the world, and an AWFUL lot of hatred, misunderstandings, war, terrorism, confusion, and anger. Anger that originated in a depriving, oppressive lifestyle. If people had Galaxy lifestyles, they'd dump the war games. Killing people because their beliefs are different isn't just immoral—it's *stupid*. We don't have that kind of stupidity here. So what in the world would cause the world to move toward Galaxy-type lifestyles? That's the $64,000 question, isn't it? There's no overnight answer, that's for sure. But there *is* an answer, and it is my opinion that this answer stands as the only thing that will allow the world to make it through the dangerous decades ahead without nuking itself out of existence. Nothing else that could be done would reach the source of the problem. All the anger from all those failed, oppressive lifestyles has to find an outlet. It often finds war as that outlet. Most of you have read *The Gaia Peace Atlas.* So it's only a matter of time before some poor, miserable fool presses the doomsday button. The ultimate pay-back for Mommy and Daddy not filling those early needs well, but instead depriving and oppressing, and often abusing. Revenge of infinitely satisfying magnitude.

"I suggest that if the lifestyles of the world continue to generate the amount of anger and bigotry and hatred that's found in the average citizen in the world, we're all eventually going to end up as glowing dust particles. Negotiations never involve people who will listen to each other, and few people in the world have heard about active listening or Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg. The negotiations merely postpone further bloodshed—they seldom abolish it. Again, that's because the lifestyles that produce all the fear and hate and pain haven't changed, and all the resultant anger needs an outlet. Look at the incredible cauldron of seething hate on the other side of the world. How could any agreement do anything but postpone? Their lifestyles are steeped in oppressive tactics of child rearing and instilling with less-than-benevolent beliefs that *encourage* and maximize hatred, sometimes for the 'Glory of God'! Their politics are as repressive as handcuffs. This is sad. But it's also very dangerous, as 9/11 proved.

"So what is the answer to the riddle? Is the human race going to survive? I maintain that the answer won't be decided by Security Councils, United Nations, treaties, or ambassadors. They'll perhaps help a little. But the key will be in the hands of those who actually address the root of the problem and offer a way to transcend the traditional but unnecessary cause-and-effect cycles of oppression-hatred-killing. Even though these offers won't be snapped up overnight, if the proper examples to emulate are publicized enough, and the more affluent nations take a new, benevolent tack toward both the poor and the hateful crazies—including direct aid in areas of empowerment and education, then we can eventually expect good responses. And if we offer help in moving toward less oppressive lifestyles, and the new, Western, Galaxy-like lifestyles are so successful and growing and publicized in affluent countries that other countries will simply feel left out of life's enjoyment and potentials if they don't get in on it too, then we can expect eventual movement in the direction of happy, fulfilling life, as a replacement for miserable, oppressive existences.

"I mean—let's face it: No one is *born* crazy, so if a country's rulers are clearly a barrier to a country's people being happy and enjoying life, eventually the people are going to give said rulers the word to shape up or ship out. We were all born with a common desire to be happy, loved, and loving, and to grow and learn. We all would MUCH prefer having our lifestyles facilitate this, rather than having our lifestyles preclude this, SO IF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE CAN SEE THAT THE WORLD IS DYING TO GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT AND NEED AND ONLY THE RULERS STAND IN THE WAY, THE PEOPLE WILL EVENTUALLY EITHER CHANGE RULERS' ATTITUDES OR CHANGE THE RULERS THEMSELVES. Arab Spring refers to the democratic uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011. That was a step in the right direction, but only a little one, compared to what's needed. The world can make damn sure that these oppressed people get the word on what is happening in the outside world, with all kinds of broadcasts, leaflets, Internet communication, and undercover operatives, as needed, to spread the word about Galaxy lifestyles that they can have too. No ruler

could hold out against all this. The world is too small. Communication advances have made it so that nearly everyone knows what's happening in the rest of the world at all times. That's why the new freedom and democracy movements in Eastern Europe that began in 1989 were so inevitable. How long can you be a Have-not watching the Haves have? This plan takes advantage of the realities of the global village. Later, Glen and I will be getting into the details of what I mean by direct aid from affluent countries to trouble-spots, as well as what I mean by facilitating their moving in Galaxy directions, and also what I have in mind about our country and other countries turning into examples to emulate, as a prerequisite to plans that deal directly with the hate-mongers.

"So, to reiterate, the key to peace will not be in the hands of the negotiators who postpone wars for a few years. We need them to do this as a temporary expedient, to be sure, while our plans are getting off the ground. But in a situation where the motivations for war are being brainwashed into the young daily, and where the meaning in some peoples' existences is dependent upon how many of their 'evil enemies' they kill, and where the goal of some peoples' nations is to destroy or displace certain other nations, and where terrorism has become relatively common in some places and is a way to bring 'honor and glory' to one's clan, and where oppressive child-raising methods produce endless hate, fear and anger, perpetually feeding this entire cycle of violence, it can easily be predicted that wars will continue to break out, and that terrorism will continue until the situation changes radically, and that no negotiated peace will last more than a few years, and that eventually terrorists will get their hands on nukes and do what we all fear most. **The key to peace will be in the hands of those who help transform root causes—who help the world learn to improve lifestyles so that the oppression ceases, so that the hate and fear can cease, so that the motivations and energy behind all the wars and terrorism will be undermined.** Those who facilitate these lifestyle enhancements will be the key. And since no one else seems to understand what all this is about, we here at Galaxy, who DO understand what lifestyle enhancement is all about, are in a very strategic position.

"If the wackos that bombed the World Trade Center and the ones who did the 9/11 attack had had nukes, they'd have used them and the toll wouldn't have been only 6 dead and 1000 injured for the former and thousands dead for the latter, like it was. They'd have taken out the city. And of course the sequence from there to Armageddon is easy to figure out: U.S. responds by blowing up every suspected terrorist location in the world. Terrorists respond by blowing up other U.S. cities. U.S. blows up Iran and Syria and probably other countries with its nukes. Russia is mad because of all the fallout ruining its land so they respond by blowing up Alaska and/or Hawaii and/or U.S. air bases overseas to get the U.S. to stop reacting so violently. U.S. bombs Russia and precipitates Armageddon. Even if the actual scenario turns out to be about chemical or biological weapons instead of nukes, the end results will be the same. There's enough hate, mistrust, fear, and win-lose sentiments in the world right now, today, for these doomsday events to occur at any time. All it takes is for the wrong people to get their hands on the wrong materials.

"Remember the scientific fact that if we nuke it up, evolution will give the grand prize to the cockroaches, not to us humans, since they'll survive the nukes—we won't. (Any human 'survivors' wouldn't live long. Radiation kills. And the intense radiation would cause our genes to mutate into mush, so the human gene pool would turn into a cesspool. Any 'human' surviving all this would end up a monster breeding other monsters. The monsters would die out eventually too. No true humans would survive.) The winner of the game of life is the survivor. For evolution to SELECT humanity, we have to prove viability. And to do that we have to reduce the nonsurvival forces *at their roots!* Negotiations are helpful, but in the long run they're Band-aids. A Band-aid on a wound doesn't make the wound nonexistent in history. It still happened. 'Patching things up after years of fighting' is a dangerous strategy to rely upon. Who'll patch things up after the H-bombs hit? We must clearly do what the medical profession has been forced to do by public demand: counsel preventative medicine. Prevent the wound from occurring, rather than bandage it after it has occurred. In my analogy the average child

rearing, worldwide, is the wound, with the brainwashing and oppression combination in the craziest countries being the deepest wound.

"Band-aids are not only in the form of negotiations, or other postponement tactics. A replacement of one ruler for another (he only gets on the 'throne' if he promises to 'get those bastards' even more than the previous ruler) temporarily re-channels energies in a political direction. Another Band-aid. Another one is national disasters—people get too busy trying to survive to fight. But, to carry on the analogy, remember that the wounds are constantly festering and never heal, and that the prevailing child-raising techniques re-inflict these same wounds daily, so no Band-aids will have any lasting effects. Therefore there is much pain and suffering and no real hope of a sustained peace.

"And they need someone to blame all this on. *Since when did such countries have the integrity to take responsibility for the fact that most of their misery is self-inflicted?* Self-inflicted from various brainwashed-in bigotry, bias, prejudice, hatred, malevolent traditions, beliefs, practices—many of which center around child-raising and what they choose to call 'religion.' I find it ludicrous to use the word 'religion' for organizations that aid in instilling hate, fear, and ignorance. Obviously if that's what religion is, people are better off being atheists. But most people choose to let religion be a force of compassion and hope in this world, so let's not write off the many because of the foolishness of the few. Religion isn't the culprit or instigator—but it's often the context in which the negativity is implanted. Okay then, the wounds are constantly being inflicted, but by their own culture. However, since kids can't question what parents do (and live to tell about it), the wounds, in effect, are blamed on the 'evil empires' next door. 'Those people took away our promised land.' 'Those people are trying to steal our land and exterminate us in the process.' 'Those people are infidels, pagans, blasphemers, nonbelievers, heretics, barbarians, devils.' 'Those people are the reason we're so miserable, so full of anger and hate and fear. They are the reason our lives don't work and we're so unhappy.' Now, I don't have to tell you how ridiculous such an assumption is. The idea that one country is unhappy and that it is no fault of their own, but it's all the fault of a neighbor, is childish ignorance. At the level of individuals in society, such a declaration would get you laughed at, and, if you persisted, institutionalized. But at the national level, such foolishness is quite common.

"We here at Galaxy know the meaning of responsibility and find such ignorance ridiculous in the extreme. As you can see, if this whole cycle were interrupted by lifestyle enhancement that precluded the initial oppressiveness and the initial creation of emotional pain, hate, and fear, then the 'religious' beliefs about loathing their neighbors and killing them for the glory of God would lose their inertia and be relegated to the impact of fairy tales, which is, after all, what they are. So even if the culture's elders kept teaching such bunk, it would have little impact, and would eventually be dumped, as those doing the teaching would look very foolish. Leaders would no longer get away with forcing upon people the neurotic black-and-white worldview in which everyone must *either adopt the evil ways of the West or return to the oppressiveness and ignorance of the Dark Ages*—the Tofflers describe the choice as either Third Wave or Dark Ages, with radical fundamentalists selecting the latter because the former is 'evil' but the latter is somehow 'holy.'

"Okay, everyone, if you've followed all this, you understand that I'm saying that *oppressive lifestyles* lead to doomsday. The connection is as incontrovertible as it is profound. At the very least they lead to hate, fear, and misery. But eventually to war in most cases—check your history books—you'll see. Galaxy people are in the unique position of not only knowing all the truths about the wounds and the bandages, but knowing how to preclude any wounding in the first place. Most of us would have little trouble in guiding any person or country in learning how to stop the wounding, start the healing, throw away the Band-aids, and start enjoying life. And this puts us in a position of responsibility. In a way, we've had our heads in the sand; but there's no reason for, or purpose in, blaming ourselves. The truth is, there's no easy, obvious solution to all this.

"So, back to the $64,000 question: What would cause the people of the world to gravitate toward Galaxy-type lifestyles? Unless we can answer this, we can't really take the responsibility for world survival. I, myself, have taken this responsibility 100%. I intend to proceed full-tilt regardless of who helps. Glen and I are not college-bound. He's decided he wants in on this. We won't be doing any more preparing for making bucks by getting college degrees. Instead, we'll be preparing for making PEACE.

"And aside from war and peace issues, and Armageddon prevention, let's recall that average lifestyles in this country—in fact as many as 98% of them—are not leading to happiness, fulfillment, self-actualization, satisfaction, and good relationships that work well, or responsibility, respect, and compassion being instilled in the young. The statistics are quite clear that we're not even close to achieving these things as a nation. But the frustrating thing is that WE EASILY COULD BE. This country has the needed affluence and resources to allow us to concentrate on relationships and lifestyles for a decade or two, and turn alienated, materialistic existences into warm, human, loving, compassionate existences, through lifestyle enhancement.

"Now, let's look at how other countries will respond to Galaxy-like lifestyles either in our country or their own. Never forget that most of the heads of countries in this world love their people and wouldn't hesitate to improve the lives of those people if they could see how to do it. Russian leaders would support Galaxy-type lifestyles springing up in Russia if they would help the people act more responsible, productive, loving, and creative. And that is precisely what this type of lifestyle enhancement would do—as you all well know. In the late 80s, Gorby actually told his people to take responsibility and change societal structures to allow personal initiative, as his people's way of doing their part with perestroika. Before he stepped down, his strategy was to try to inspire the triumph of individual responsibility over the anonymity of the collective. He knew that the collectivist experiment was a bust.

"Within all collective groups—including not only the Communist Party but organized religion, unions, big business, political parties, government and cities—it is possible to hide from one's individual responsibility, manifesting Frommian regression and Maslovian deficiency cognition, or more simply, lack of maturity.

"As Naisbitt says in *Megatrends 2000,* individuals seek community, but avoiders of responsibility too often hide in the collective. Marx, Lenin, and other Russian leaders should have known this from studying history, and dealt with these issues in their theories and policies. Collectives aren't necessarily successful communities; it depends upon people taking responsibility at the level of the individual. Like Galaxy people. But state socialism doesn't create a climate of responsibility. Rather one of fear, pretense, deception, and irresponsibility.

"In *Previews & Premises* and *Powershift*, the Tofflers saw the great errors of socialism in wrapping everything around class and economics. This was a Marxist flaw of huge proportions: the unidimensional, reductionistic, old-mechanistic-paradigm-based idea of seeing everything from the perspective of money and class, and relegating other social factors to the position of being minor or nil. Never was there a greater need for systems thinking that saw all the aspects of society as vital; yet never was there a theory that overemphasized one main aspect over all others to a greater extent than Marxism. The Tofflers see the need for affluence, peace, and social justice—the socialistic ideals—to be as noble now as when Marx promoted them. But socialism, welfare state strategies, big government liberalism, social engineering, state control, centralized control, etc.—these are the wrong way to strive for such goals. They are obsolete, stuck in the past, and naïve. They are Second Wave anachronisms and have no place in 21st century Third Wave societies. We can do better. The Tofflers' books point the way better than any others I've seen.

"Back to the point I was heading for about the Russkies: Seeing that the U.S. has such grave symptomology in the 80s must surely have postponed the Russian movement toward democracy and free-market economics, for although Gorbachev could see that our economic status demonstrates the superiority of free-market policies over state-controlled, social-engineering-based economics, he could also see the degenerate

potentials of our system. They were and are quite conspicuous. In fact, they helped precipitate the Islamic fundamentalist backlash. We all know the trouble *that's* causing in the world.

"Naisbitt also says that for the first time in 200 years, more people are moving to rural areas than urban. They're going for quality-of-life reasons such as low crime rates, lower housing costs, recreational opportunities, and most of all, A RETURN TO COMMUNITY VALUES.

"He says that the current religious revival reflects a shift from the collective of organized religion to the **individuality of faith,** whether that is faith in a healing ministry, a spiritual teacher, the word of the Bible, or a more personal spiritual perspective on life, people, and **responsibility for the world.** Naisbitt says that only individuals can express the transcendent. In other words, saying 'me too' isn't a religious act.

"He says that historically people have felt powerless against the social context, so the only way they could assert themselves is through rebellion. But he then says that today there is a new possibility: The individual can influence reality by identifying the directions in which society is headed. Knowledge is power, in this Information Age. He says that 'by identifying the forces pushing the future, rather than those that have contained the past, you possess the power to engage with your reality.' This is precisely the raison d'être for many of the Tofflers' books as well. We at Galaxy have seen where things are headed, and why. We're in a very powerful position. I'm talking about positive power. What we have is what the world wants. I'd like to share it with them.

"In other words, people, what I'm saying is this: Today is the first day of process of the world finally getting its act together! Glen, Stephen and I have all chosen to begin the process of the actualization of this miracle as of today. That makes three of us. I suggest that each of you decide where you stand with all this and let us know if you want in.

"The answer to the big question, about what we can do to cause lifestyles to gravitate toward Galaxy lifestyles, is multifaceted. It has to do with an incredible information campaign with multimedia scope, with a movie, videos, web sites, chat rooms, computer programs, audio tapes, books, speakers, TV series—you name it. It has to do with aligning with smart, famous people and contacting high-powered agents and investors. It involves a lot of effort from a lot of people—it even involves getting cooperation from various existing organizations. After all, can you think of one such organization, aside from the military-industrial complex and the shrinks of the world, that could gain from all this craziness? Schools, colleges, churches, governments, aid agencies, missionaries, P.T.A.s, families, communities, nations—all have much to gain by enabling the process of world peace through massive lifestyle enhancement and benevolent child-rearing methods stressing responsibility, respect, authoritative parenting, choices, and natural consequences.

"No longer will the abysmal failures of permissive spoiling or authoritarian oppression even be considered as potential child-raising strategies. From now on, they're to be seen as what they are: mistakes from the past. Failed experiments. And mother-only nurturing, with no respite, in isolated nuclear OR single-parent families—again, a failed experiment. NUCLEAR FAMILIES ARE GREAT! GALAXY SWEARS BY THEM! BUT THEY'RE MERELY AN INGREDIENT IN THE RECIPE! TRYING TO FORCE THAT ONE INGREDIENT TO SUFFICE TO CREATE THE ENTIRE PUDDING IS LIKE A COOK SERVING PEOPLE ONLY SUGAR OR ONLY MILK AND CALLING THAT 'PUDDING.' IT DOESN'T CUT IT. MY RESEARCH HAS PROVEN THIS BEYOND ALL DOUBT, AS HAS OUR LIFE HERE AT GALAXY. NUCLEAR FAMILIES ARE THE PERFECT BUILDING BLOCK FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIFESTYLE, BUT ARE, IN THEMSELVES, INADEQUATE TO FULLY SUPPORT THAT LIFESTYLE IF THEY ARE ISOLATED, ALONE, AND USING THE INOPERABLE CHILD-RAISING STRATEGIES SO MANY USE TODAY. GALAXY ITSELF STARTS WITH A NUCLEAR FAMILY BASIS IN ITS VERY SUCCESSFUL RECIPE. BUT WHAT MAKES IT WORK ARE THOSE ENHANCEMENTS AND EXTRA INGREDIENTS WE HOLD SO DEAR. IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE IT'S A NUCLEAR FAMILY, BUT BECAUSE OF THOSE IMPROVEMENTS. THE

JURY IS IN. WE DO KNOW HOW TO MAKE LIFE WORK! AND THERE IS NOTHING STOPPING THE AVERAGE CITIZEN FROM ENJOYING THIS NEW LIFESTYLE WITHIN A FEW YEARS—PERHAPS EVEN A FEW MONTHS, IN SOME CASES! AND THEY CAN CHOOSE OTHER FAMILY STRUCTURES SUCH AS SINGLES, SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY, STEP-FAMILY, MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILY, AND OTHERS AND THE GALAXY RECIPE WILL STILL WORK, SINCE IT TRULY IS THE ENHANCEMENTS AND EXTRA INGREDIENTS THAT MAKE IT WORK.

"In short, then, what I'm asking here is this: Do you want to establish this, our home, as not only our home but also, at least temporarily, as the headquarters of a new movement, one neither liberal nor conservative, neither status quo nor revolutionary, nor even scary or threatening or even very controversial to anyone; and this headquarters will be the coordinating center for, at first, national, but later, worldwide evolution toward a Galaxy-like lifestyle? Do you, each of you, want to become part of a kind of gentle conservative activism that strives to empower others to enhance what they have? This isn't about anti-establishment tearing down. It's about pro-establishment building up.

"It's about a return to only the BEST of the centuries-old traditional family values, as well as the adoption of only the BEST of the child-raising and lifestyle-enhancement methodologies available in today's world. It's about the best of BOTH worlds, with the disadvantages of neither. It's about synthesis; it's about transcending of shaky lifestyles with strong, moral, secure, responsible, respectful lifestyles in which, FINALLY, THE PEOPLE WHO DESIGNED AND REFINED THEM KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE DOING! For once! It's about teaching people that they can have their cake and eat it too. We can show them how. We can show them the REAL key to peace and happiness on this planet. This isn't about putting down nuclear families, it's about enhancing their context until they work as people have always wanted them to.

"We've all found out, in our close encounters of the second kind, what people have in mind when they get married and start families. They want to somehow live so well that they enjoy the type of love and compassion and friendship and meaning that we have here at Galaxy. And yet, my research shows that less than 2% get anything close to their original wishes fulfilled. So 98% have to cope with various degrees of frustrating failure, sometimes outright misery. They wanted Galaxy happiness. That's a fact. We've seen this. So what I say we do here is to turn around and tell them that it's not too late, YOU REALLY CAN HAVE IT THAT WAY! I'll be getting to the details of my proposal later.

"But for now, I just would like to find out: How many of you are with me? How many want in? I see by your faces that you love me. I know that, people. I've always known it. Where do you think I got the guts to be saying all this today? This—me—is what happens when people are brought up wonderfully. I am much more grateful than I could ever say about what you've given me. You're the best family in the history of civilization. I love you all so very much. But what I'm talking about is not about one person, or one Galaxy apartment full of people. It's about one galaxy full—beginning with Planet Earth. You've all had the benefit of Galaxy life. You are all products of a wonderful lifestyle. So your hearts can't really feel very different from mine about all this. What about it—anyone want in?"

This last couple of minutes of his talk were quite emotional for Robert, in a happy and inspired sort of way. He was so much a part of them, so much one with them; in a way he felt he was speaking for all of them. Around the room there wasn't a dry face anywhere—even Bert's. But was it only each other that they loved? Was the Galaxy lifestyle's effect that limited? Or did they also have a deep universal love for humankind? Robert already knew the answer. But it was up to them to speak for themselves. And so they did. One at a time, each person in the room stood up, went over to Robert, gave him a hug, looked into his eyes with a heart full of love, and said, simply: "I'm in."

Once all were committed, Wendy, still standing near him after her commitment, went up to him, crying softly and happily, and whispered in his ear: "Oh God, Robert—thank you—thank you so very much!" Then she motioned for Glen to move over toward her. He did. She thanked him in the same way. He looked like he was nearly overwhelmed with happiness. He couldn't believe all this was happening. And yet it was.

He was ecstatic. Wendy was also ecstatic. She'd been dying for something like this to happen. She was "too full" of love and compassion. Even her close encounters of the second kind, added to her close encounters of the first kind, were not enough for her. She wanted it all. Everyone. And Robert had just handed her the key. Her life turned around in that moment. She understood what all this would mean to the world. And the very essence of Wendy was now dedicated to nothing less than the happiness of 7 billion people.

The meeting went on for hours. Robert supplied all known details. Bert left at the appropriate time and cooked for them, bringing in food on several trays at 7 P.M. They continued meeting through supper, with Glen and Robert alternately talking and eating and the rest posing questions and then everyone brainstorming about all the exciting possibilities.

Just before it was time for Stephen to get driven to the airport, he spoke to them: "I've asked to be in on this. You've consented. I want you to know you won't be disappointed. This is the big one for me—the one I've been waiting for all my life. It's all or nothing. I'm going to call in all favors and markers and pull out all the stops. I've always known I'd recognize the big one when I saw it. Well, I'm seeing it! And you know what—it's about 7 billion times bigger than I ever thought it would be. I'll be back Friday night. I'll also be calling a lot during the week. It'll take a couple of weeks to leave my other responsibilities behind, honorably and responsibly, so I can concentrate on this deal full-time. But I'll still be working on this stuff half the time until then anyway. I'm still a little bit in shock here, people—the impossible has happened. If I do anything dumb or act weird anytime in the next few months, be sure to call me on it. I'm used to a different type of people. Don't be afraid to call me collect—the phone bills are on me. There will be no money from you to me or from you to anyone else on this project. The project will be funded by investors and possibly foundations and grants as well. With the happiness, fulfillment, peace and survival of the world all at stake, there are lots of potential funding sources. Everyone in the world has a lot to gain—so I predict lots of response if our presentations are good enough. You guys begin dreaming up the specific contents of the movies, videos, books, DVDs, TV series, computer programs, and so on. And also come up with concrete strategies for the MC movement itself, with all the database entries and searches, MC center functions, architectural enhancements to facilitate some of the suburban MC implementations, and so on. Mort, call me on coordinating investor contacts. Sam, let me know what you'd like to write and what you'd like me to write in my spare time. Did I leave anything out? Nope? Okay, bye-bye!" Glen and Robert drove him to the airport.

Before going through his gate, he hugged them both and commented briskly to Glen: "Say, kiddo, thanks for calling me yesterday morning. I have only one question, though—are you SURE we can't save the world from Vanna White?" Glen and Robert chuckled over that one as Stephen headed for his plane.

Alone in his room later, Robert breathed a deep sigh of relief. He'd done it! The meeting came off well. Everything was going fine. The whole thing was getting big. Something told him that that should scare him. He didn't listen to it. He was, he knew, a lot MORE afraid of how the world might end up if no one gave peace and love this type of boost. So what if he was to be in a key position for this transformation? The rest of the Galaxy people and Stephen would be working right there beside him. In truth, as wonderful as Galaxy life had been, for the past several years he'd detected a kind of yearning, almost an incompleteness, in a few of its members. Especially Wendy and Cheryl, but also in Will and Barbra, and a little in Sam as well. In spite of being very happy with all their close encounters of the first and second kind, as well as finding a lot of meaning in such a life of compassionate relating and helpful lifestyle guidance and encouragement, there was something missing. It was less noticeable when everyone was younger and there was more Galaxy nurturing to do. But now it was there quite conspicuously (to him).

And the source of this malaise was easy to target. Life at Galaxy was working, but life for most outsiders was not very happy, fulfilling, inspiring, or growth-promoting. And that felt bad! But what could be done about it? Is there hope? Can our country somehow become central to such hopes?

It was more than the type of clichés dropped by politicians for decades about the U.S. being "the major hope of the free world, and as long as one individual on the planet is suffering under the chains of tyranny, our job is not through." That was fine, but that was about being a champion on a white horse, a hero, a savior, the good guy in the white hat. Unfortunately, however, there were the realities of the Mideast, and various other prolonged, painful power struggles around the world. And the new types of terrorism. Military solutions based upon the old, Second Wave model were mostly obsolete now. The Gulf War may easily be the last of its kind—with two armies trading weapons fire on a battlefield. He recalled ideas from the Tofflers' *War and Anti-War* as well as *Powershift*. Everything has changed, and there's no going back. Either the world survives through education, information, peace-forms, and *positive power* perspectives or it won't survive. Either it gets along because of communication, knowledge, and compassion, or it will get dead. The rich will not succeed at hiding from, protecting themselves from, or seceding from the poor in the 21st century. The "fast" Third Wavers won't be able to wall themselves off from the "slow" First and Second Wavers as a successful coping strategy anymore than an ostrich avoids anything (except light) by putting its head in the sand.

If reforms and MCs combined to help the former Soviets, the resultant people would be into compassion, not war and misinformation. They'd be responsible and productive. But since we in the U.S. would have begun the MC movement before them, we'd be "ahead." Eventually, both countries would have better citizens and a happier, more affluent lifestyle.

But other, more dangerous countries will be where things get hairiest. The entire strategy of giving lots of unconditional (except the rule about not turning any materials or equipment we bestow on them into weapons) help and empowerment to the most dangerous countries would have to start with us, and with Japan or Western European countries that have gotten in on the MC thing early.

Other things need to supplement the empowerment process, such as a strong U.N. and other world governance bodies, the spreading of both the new, ecological-holistic paradigm and MC lifestyles across the face of the globe, the spread of knowledge-based technology and mass media, the slowing down of global and regional arms races, the balancing of military powers in each region (balance downward, rather than upward), and the success of Tofflerian peace-form organizations so that peace is achieved.

How to Change the World, by David Bornstein, shows how social entrepreneurs create social change. Around the world, the fastest-growing segment of society is the nonprofit sector, as millions of ordinary people—social entrepreneurs—are increasingly stepping in to solve the problems where governments and bureaucracies have failed. This is kind of the "micro" approach. The "macro" approach is to inspire whole nations—whole cultures—with MC realities. This would fail unless the U.S.A. did it first.

Eventually, countries with dictators will get tired of being exploited (world media will show how good other countries have it compared to them) and, seeing the MC thing working here, they'll demand that their leaders get their acts together and let them do the MC thing too—without interference, which will make the leaders try to crack down, which will make the people rebel and eventually replace their oppressor. Look out, dictators.

Robert stopped again. He went back to his bed and lay down, got under the covers, and looked at the ceiling. What was he trying to get at? Further mental explorations had him zeroing in on the most vital concept of all: None of his MC ideas, methods, and plans had any value at all unless the world managed to keep from pushing the self-destruct button. It's why the terrorist countries like Iran and organizations like the Hezbollah kept coming to mind. The entire MC idea presupposed that the nations of the nuclear club didn't try out their weapons on each other, killing half the people and sending the rest into the hell of nuclear winter. It was a basic prerequisite. So the bottom

line for the MC movement, Robert realized, was to get MCs going as fast and as strongly as possible, and in as many countries as possible. The doomsday clock was ticking. If the MC movement succeeds fast enough, that particular infamous ticker will back way up until it's no longer a concern. The final and ultimate question, then, about the MC movement was: WILL IT BE IN TIME? Negotiations truly are mere postponements, when the underlying causes of the anger and hate and fear are not dealt with. The steam will simply rise through another, possibly more dangerous vent. LUCK dictates whether that new vent has a pile of nukes on it. We need to turn that around so that human responsibility, compassion and choice are behind what people do with their weapons—especially nukes. So, the ultimate question was dominating Robert's consciousness as he tried to fall asleep. But sleep wouldn't come.

He returned to the fact that life for outsiders (outside of Galaxy) was usually not very happy, fulfilling, or growth-promoting. This really did feel bad. What he hated about it was the fact that it didn't have to be that way—he knew how they could adjust things so that their lifestyles would begin to work for them. But they didn't know how. The whole thing, then, was to hurry up and tell them, and fast!

Robert was treading on more familiar ground now in his meditations. He knew exactly why it feels so bad when one is happy but others are sad and mud-mind-confused. Watts talked about the illusion of separateness, but even one not willing to see things from such a nebulous and seemingly abstract context as Watts will eventually end up in similar territory in trying to understand the universalities of compassion and human solidarity. The malaise in himself and his Galaxy family, even though paradoxically mixed with a deep joy of life, was an entirely natural consequence of self-actualization, awareness, enlightenment, compassion, maturity, and being-cognition unclouded by needs or mind-mud. It contained no "guilt" at all. It was a natural, benevolent being-process.

The Earth is a big, living biosphere. There are, physically, no real boundaries where one entity in this biosphere ends and another begins. There is no true distinction between environment and organism. There is a constant exchange between the two—now the first becomes the second—now the second becomes the first. The exchange is at the atomic level, the chemical level, the cellular level, the gaseous level, and even levels as exotic as the levels seen in Kirlian photography.

The names and labels we give to things fool us into subscribing to the illusions of true separation and true identity, but we (and other forms of life on Earth) are merely differentiated but unseparated expressions and manifestations of the same biosphere, the same oneness and world-being. The existential-compassionate malaise of Wendy WAS the malaise of Robert: they didn't "each have it." It was a common denominator and medium. Like a wall's wallpaper is a medium for the flowers in its design. Wendy and Robert were flowers on the same wallpaper and yet the wallpaper *is* flowers and the flowers *are* wallpaper. Do we think that naming parts of the wallpaper "flowers" makes them not-wallpaper or un-wallpaper? It does nothing but point out the ripples on the pond. Wendy-flower and Robert-flower are only two ripples on the wallpaper-pond of life. Wendy and other Galaxy people were the nearest ripples to Robert's ripple in the pond, and had the happiest trickle-splash-burble of any he could see or hear.

But if something were muddying or even sludging the water for distant ripples, then Wendy's and Robert's ripples will also be muddied. The East has known this (although they haven't always acted like they knew it) for ages; the West keeps heroically clinging to its delusions of rugged individualism. What besides such a delusion could have possessed it to give most of the Vietnam sector of our biosphere an incredibly toxic bath in Agent Orange? It only dared because that country is "over there," separate and distinct from "us"—surely this devastation can't and won't affect the West now or later. Yeah. Right.

And yet the West can no longer afford such a delusion. The world is too small and biospherical. It's too delicate. We need to realize that the waste we dump is the waste we eat and the waste we become. The poison we spread is our future. The toxins we spray today will be our babies' arms and legs and eyes tomorrow. All the astronauts saw this,

as they looked down on Spaceship Earth. The cosmonauts said the same thing to the Ruskies. Astronauts live in miniature biospheres in shuttles. They know that long-term survival in space means that we drink what we pee, however processed and refined. A lesson in humility? Not at all. A lesson in *oneness*.

Compassion is not about "sympathy" at all—it's merely the expression of the realization of a universal truth—we are one. It surfaced in Wendy's music, Barbra's art, Sam's writing, and Robert's Robertness. Pretty rippling on a pretty pond, but no less pondish for all that. It wasn't as though the Galaxy people had been lulled into the delusion of separateness since they were so happy, and therefore different, from their fellow ripples. They felt the oneness intensely—it was the natural consequence of such an upbringing. What had been lacking for them had been a way to focus this oneness-response. But it was no longer missing—Robert had named it well. He'd called it:

Close encounters of the third kind.

Robert slept.

Chapter 15

"Logical consequences are the scarecrows of fools and the beacons of wise men."
—T.H. Huxley

"With the exception of the instinct of self-preservation, the propensity for emulation is probably the strongest and most alert and persistent of the economic motives proper."
—Thorstein Veblen

"We awake after a sleep of many centuries to find ourselves in a new and irrefutable sense in the myth of humankind. We find ourselves in a new world community; we cannot destroy the parts without destroying the whole. In this bright loveliness we know now that we are truly sisters and brothers, at last in the same family."
—Rollo May

The Grayson house's TV was tuned to an old *Dragnet* rerun:

[TV] Captain: Pierson's got an epidemic on his hands out in West Valley.

[TV] Pierson: Friday, you remember the way it was in '57—four radio units covered the entire division. Things have changed a lot since then. About 130,000 more people have moved in.

[TV] Friday: How many more men did you get?

[TV] Pierson: Not enough.

[TV] Captain: Here are the statistics, Joe: John's division covers about 85 square miles; eight different communities; at the last count, 330,000 people, one half of them are juveniles. That's more people than the entire population of Savannah, Georgia.

[TV] Pierson: And I've got just ten officers to handle them. It's getting out of hand. First two months of last year we arrested 489 kids. First two months of this year we arrested 596.

[TV] Friday: What's your biggest problem, Pierson?

[TV] Pierson: All of 'em: narcotics, grand theft auto, drinking, shoplifting; we got 'em all.

[TV] Captain: It's not just a problem of law enforcement; it's a community problem.

[TV] Pierson: The trouble is, there *is* no community, Captain. These people come piling in here from everywhere. They don't know each other and don't want to. They come out here, make a down payment on a house and move in with a couple of kids. That doesn't mean they made a home no more than giving a name to a place makes it a community.

[TV] Friday: Yeah. And you get a little weary hearing every kid give the same excuse when you tag 'em. 'You don't understand. I just want to belong. That's why I did it.' Belong to what?

[TV] Captain: What it boils down to is the new morality, isn't it? A whole new sense of values. The kids see it on television, read it in magazines, even hear it from the pulpit: 'God is dead; drug addiction is mind-expanding; promiscuity is glamorous' . . .

No one was watching the show; the TV was on only because the program that came before "Dragnet" had been viewed by a member of the household, who hadn't bothered to turn off the set. A few minutes went by . . .

[TV] Mother: He was never in any trouble before. It's like living in a big vacuum out here. Do you know that? Back home we used to have friends, neighbors. Out here all we have are people who happen to live next door. We've lived in the same house for 2 years and we still don't know anybody. Not really. Not like it was back home. Nobody's got any roots out here. My husband says it's like being in the army. The first thing you ask somebody is where they're from. You know what I mean? [Friday nods.] Nobody belongs to anybody or anything. We're all strangers. It makes it difficult, you know.

[TV] Friday: What's that, Mrs. Larson?

[TV] Mother: Raising a family . . .

Thomas Grayson was reading the newspaper. The TV was mere background noise—like it is in so many homes. Kind of like the family pooch—a familiar old presence that added a bit of color and variety, but not to be taken too seriously. A few minutes went by . . .

[TV] Vice Principal, Mr. David Carroll: Oh, I don't know. Maybe they need 'em.

[TV] Friday: How do you mean, Mr. Carroll?

[TV] Vice Principal, Mr. David Carroll: Belonging to a club or gang gives them a sense of security, a sense of belonging somewhere, gives them something they don't get at home; things we all need: love and affection, security, recognition, new adventure. [If] they don't get those things at home, they're gonna look for them somewhere else . . .

The moment had come. Robert and Glen had to contact the man that Stephen had told them was the smartest business mind he knew: Thomas Grayson. Robert tapped the number into the phone, got a relative, asked for Thomas Grayson, and soon got him. Robert introduced himself and asked if it was a good time to talk because he had some vital issues to discuss, and he would need a little time and undivided attention.

"Well, I was reading the paper, but if this is truly 'vital,' like you say, then I can forget that—it wasn't that enlightening," said Thomas.

"Great, then I'll proceed. Stephen Stein recommended you. He said you're a brilliant businessman. He was so excited and impressed by what I'm about to tell you that he's decided to concentrate on this deal full-time and not continue with his other PR work."

"That IS impressive—Stephen is the best PR man I know," said Thomas. "Oh, and you can call me Tom."

"Sure thing, Tom. My family has been enjoying P.E.T. rules since Thomas Gordon first invented it. We have not only thrived and been well-nurtured—we've become extraordinary. P.E.T. rules are part of the reason. Louise Hart's Winning Family Lifeskills are part of it as well. Anyway, the remainder of the reason we're doing so well has to do with other lifestyle enhancements my grandparents came up with quite a few years before P.E.T. came about. These enhancements not only harmonize well with P.E.T., the two enhance each other exponentially. The results are pretty wild. I'll get into details later. But first I'd like to confirm a concept I have about you and what you'd like, not because I know anything about you but because MOST people would like these things. Here it is: Would you like to see good parenting replace the haphazard, inadequate and often even bad parenting that's everywhere you turn in this country? We'd like to see this replacement process grow like crazy, until THE best parenting method and THE best

lifestyle the world has ever known combine and become THE major lifestyle, first in the U.S., and eventually in the world?" Robert asked.

"I'd love that—sounds too good to be true. But only IF I agree with your assessment about it being THE best parenting method and THE best lifestyle the world has ever known. How could such a thing happen, though? People are too set in their ways. Not that many are open to change. Even when their lives are a mess and their kids are getting wrecked, the majority would rather die than learn a new way. They feel they'll somehow raise kids well, and when it doesn't turn out that way, they're too darn busy repressing the truths of what's happening to be open to change, or even hearing about new ways."

"Exactly, Tom," said Robert. "That's why I'd like us to try a different approach."

"Who's 'us,' Robert?"

"Fifteen of us live at this enhanced lifestyle we call Galaxy—that's our apartment building's name. We also have Stephen in on this with us. This is just the beginning. It's obvious why I feel this is something *you* should be in on from the start, I'm sure. We NEED a business wizard. None of us have much knowledge about starting and running businesses."

"Oh yes, if you or 'we' can create an explosion of people everywhere adopting great lifestyles, wherein great nurturing of kids happens, I want to be right there cheering and helping. Bank on it! I see the inadequate parenting symptoms all over the place, daily. It would be great to see this problem fixed. However, I'm not convinced that any type of scheme could pull it off. If I were, I wouldn't be sitting here reading a newspaper. But that's obvious, of course."

"Totally," confirmed Robert. "Good. Now that we've confirmed positions, let's go on. First, rest assured that neither me nor my large extended family—let's just call them Galaxy—are kooks, cultists, weirdos, hippies, religious fanatics, right or left wing, or heavily committed to any group, organization, or dogma. We are legitimate, and we're constructive and pro-establishment, not radical or anti-establishment. We're in harmony with the ideals and ethics of Parent Effectiveness Training books. They represent one of over a dozen acceptable parenting methods. They are a part of the answer to the lifestyle enhancements we are experts at here at Galaxy Apartments.

"Second, we're not naïve—we know there's no overnight answer to people's lives working better. A process is necessary. A process that takes time.

"Third, in our attempt to speed up the spread of great parenting, great nurturing and great lifestyle enhancements, we're not implying that anything or anyone is trying to purposely wreck parenting and lifestyles. Our intention, then, is not to denigrate the current parenting and lifestyle strategies but to give them a giant boost."

"You have my undivided attention," said Tom.

"Parent Effectiveness Training has been working great for tens of millions of people all over the planet. It is only one part of the solution, but it's certainly an important part. Do you know it?"

"Nope. It sounds interesting though. I've read a lot of sociology as well as business tomes, however. My favorite author in that area is Philip Slater, who concurs with your desire to improve nurturing and lifestyles. But please do go on about Parent Effectiveness Training." said Tom.

"People who've given it a chance have been very happy—it changes their lives. Or in my case, P.E.T. has always been there, so I've never experienced the oppressive, sad, unsuccessful types of lifestyles with power and control relationships and win-lose solutions.

"And yet the majority of people have never heard of P.E.T., and continue failing with their relationships and lifestyles; and never seek aid, guidance, training, advice or wisdom. It continues to perplex me that parents delay so long, when things are messing up, before seeking a better solution. Most people's relationships are full of pain and anger, confusion and misunderstanding. It's not what they want—it's what they settle for. Their lives are very unsatisfying and unfulfilling and yet they look around and see that others are having the same experience so they figure they're doing okay after all. So

they keep plugging along, sadly, hopelessly, without looking for a better way. Parents normally BLAME their kids when their communication with their kids isn't working. They never question the quality of their parenting and relationship skills. They don't see that this is a great part of the problem. Parents want the easy way out. They want to take their miserable kids to a doctor, counselor, or priest and get them 'fixed.' This attitude is nearly universal. Often they get some quack to prescribe drugs for their 'conditions' and Big Pharma is all too happy to oblige. Parents use beliefs like 'loving your children is enough' or 'other parents need training much worse than we do' or 'troubled kids come mostly from broken homes' to avoid addressing their serious problems with their kids.

"The bottom line is that people's beliefs are stronger than their experiences regardless of how badly these beliefs fly in the face of their experience, the psychological knowledge of today, or common logic. If people are having a miserable time with their kids in an inoperable lifestyle, and they can see that if something isn't done soon then the relationships will totally disintegrate, then how can they possibly believe that 'you don't need to know anything at all about how to be a parent, as long as you love them enough'? How can they believe that the skill comes naturally to parents once they reproduce, when all the statistics reported on the TVs they watch show that exactly the opposite is true—especially the ones about ignorant parents? Why are people so willing to put so much stock in the ridiculous old wives' tales and nonsense and dogma in their heads, regardless of the tragic costs, and so little stock in seeing and acting on the real, tangible facts of their lives, which are ongoing, visible, and obvious?

"Of course, we both know the answer: Most people respond to challenging or stressful events in their lives with repression, denial, fear, neurosis, cowardice, and general irresponsibility because they were brought up badly enough so they never really developed responsibility, security, logic, self-acceptance, courage and compassion. People in survival mode react blindly to their own emotions and the concepts associated with them. Various present-time worldly stimuli 'push the reactionary buttons' of most normal people, and these stimuli are associated—as engrams—with certain emotions and concepts. There's no logic here. It's essentially programmed behavior. It was programmed in because this normal person had a normally inadequate, partially depriving, sometimes oppressive and/or abusive environment during his childhood. These early deprivations are the types of experiences that put people into 'survival' mode—the mode in which the negative experiences are recorded unconditionally as illogical programs, to interfere with emotions and decisions later in life.

"This is the basic psychological information anyone needs to understand why the normal individual acts so much more from beliefs than experience, and responds very little to the real world, but very much to his inner world of beliefs, biases, negative associations, fears, illogical past-programmed concepts, and irrational hopes to finally get mommy or daddy to love him. The fact that a supposedly intelligent human being would blindly allow himself to be a confused, fearful, angry, alienated person year after year, and blindly allow his family to end up the same way, without making any efforts to alleviate the situation, is as ridiculous as it is sad and revealing. Is he CHOOSING to have a miserable life and drag everyone around him down with him? No, he's at effect, not at cause. No real choices here. He's simply a cork on the ocean of determinism, bobbing and floating any way the waves happen to take him. He's a *symptom* of everything that's ever happened to him. He wears his past on his face and in his heart and it influences his every move and thought. And yet he's much more likely to become an alcoholic, a spouse or child abuser, a pill-popper, or a depressed TV addict or workaholic than he is to seek any type of help. He plays the comparison game: I'm doing as well as the Joneses, so why do anything? Think of how desperate a mind has to get before it can warp its thinking to such a degree! For Pete's sake—the guy's going to take his life and family down the tubes without a whimper JUST BECAUSE HIS NEIGHBORS ARE DOING THE SAME THING! Not a mental giant we're talking about here!

"But, Tom, the man wasn't born that dumb and self-destructive. He has to LEARN this skill—his upbringing taught it to him, thoroughly and patiently. What's also very striking here, logically speaking, is that the poor guy has never once considered whether

it was his lifestyle (the isolated nuclear, single parent, or any other type of family) or the people in it that have brought all this misery down upon him. So he blames his kids; then he blames his spouse; then when the screaming dies down he blames himself—at this point he collapses in front of the TV with or without a bottle. Or he may have an affair or get divorced or separated. He obviously BELIEVES that his family and/or spouse have failed him, so he cuts himself off from them as a way to escape confronting the real problem—which is, of course, his lifestyle—one which failed him, his parents, his friends, his relatives, his peers and coworkers, and his family. But he doesn't see this—his hang-ups and the troubles they precipitate have so filled up his mind that his mind is no longer intuitive and clear like it was when he was born. It's become sludge-like. Black-and-white neurotic thinking prevails and blaming the nearest person is the closest thing to insight the poor fellow is going to squeeze out of his cloudy mind.

"More on that later. Anyway, whatever negative his parents did in his upbringing, he'll carry over to his kids, even if the programmed reactive behavior changes form or content a little bit. He was CONTROLLED in his upbringing, so he never learned to take responsibility for himself and control himself. That's why his life is so directionless and empty. This normal person was raised in the opposite of a P.E.T.-type lifestyle, where responsibility, self-control, and intentionality are direct results of successful relationships and rules. But the guy keeps using rationalizations and erroneous beliefs like those I've mentioned—especially the 'all kids need is love' one which is just plain dumb. He uses them to avoid taking responsibility or constructive action. Ignoring and blaming are the nearly universal responses here.

"Notice his lifestyle and beliefs are a blunt denial of the very existence of the thing called science. The science of parenting is highly advanced, yet he knows nothing of this. Which is a scathing indictment of our educational system. Rightwingers in general and religious fundamentalists in particular try to either change any curriculum in the parenting area to authoritarianism or stop any teaching in this area at all. They consider and type of parenting that doesn't believe in corporal punishment to be permissive liberal spoiling, and they want to make sure their kids are never exposed to such teachings. As a result, most people come out of high school knowing little if anything about parenting, nurturing, psychology, sociology, or life in general. Many have never experienced any helpful knowledge about conflict resolution, and tend to respond to conflict with negative power instead of understanding and good communication.

"You can see why the theoretical person I've been discussing has little hope of getting either parenting or lifestyle choices right. You can see why the parenting problems are so confusing to people and why they invariably mess it all up.

"So far, I've illustrated just how profoundly past upbringing errors can and do interfere with the present-time ability to think. Most people rarely if ever BE HERE NOW. They're usually locked into unconscious struggles to turn opposite-sex peers or spouses into moms or dads, because they're symbolically struggling to get their mom or dad to start loving them. In other words, they were once partially deprived so in the present they are constantly or at least often manifesting the pain, fear, confusion, irrationality and anger resulting from that deprivation, in the form of anxiety, frustration, inappropriate negative emotions and psychosomatic disorders. And bad parenting decisions. MOST people spank. That fact alone is a perfect manifestation of the triumph of ignorance."

"Yes, it's all true —" Tom put in.

Robert continued: "What I've said thus far should be common knowledge to all high school graduates. It isn't. I'm only expressing these obvious basic psychological realities to establish a common denominator of agreement from which to proceed—a springboard into the heart of the matter, if you will."

"Consider your groundwork well laid, Robert. Where does this all lead?" asked Tom.

"Well, it's been my role in life to see to it that as many people as possible have a P.E.T.-type environment where there is less deprivation, more responsibility, better and more fulfilling relationships that are based upon win-win, not power, so the result is

mutual respect where all members of families can become what they are capable of becoming. This helps people learn how to fill needs, rather than overpower one another in ugly struggles. Many professionals in the field of psychology have been amazed to find that P.E.T. can and does do what years of psychotherapy often fails to do: help people accept their own feelings and share them with others, and help them acquire greater freedom to be themselves in their relationships with others. I myself know just how well P.E.T. works—it's what I was raised with.

"Now—how to make P.E.T. spread faster! Let's examine method of dispersal and possible P.E.T. enhancements."

"This is the juicy part, then—"

"Virtually dripping, Tom."

"Okay, there's nothing wrong with P.E.T. as it is, but the average person doesn't know about it. That must change. It spreads best in parent groups and videos, but it could be spread in many other ways and in many other forms. It could be part of normal curriculums. It could be passed down as part of one's lifestyle—like with me. Its form could be DVDs, TV shows, movies, computer programs, weekend training marathons, books and so on. AND IT NEEDS TO GO BIG TIME. It needs mass exposure. It needs the backing of big-stakes investors. It needs to be part of an incredible 'conspiracy' of multimedia exposure—it needs to be a household word representing how to make relationships work and lifestyles work."

"I surely don't have the resources for such things, and big-stakes investors need to see a nearly infallible business plan which nearly guarantees success in order to 'go big time,' as you put it," said Tom. "Like putting Natalie Portman in a movie, for example, since she makes more per dollar invested than any others, currently."

"I also haven't the resources to help our project financially. Nor does Galaxy. But this whole P.E.T.-spreading thing is a lot more than just parent training; it is about saving the world. The world NEEDS P.E.T., and NOW, not later. The world needs it NOW. That's a critical fact and one from which to operate, not out of desperation or fear or panic, but out of certainty. We at Galaxy KNOW this is true and we must begin acting that way! And P.E.T. is only half the answer."

"How does one go about applying P.E.T. to the world situation?" asked Tom. "I see the need for this after what you've said, but I don't really see the method or strategy."

"Then that becomes part of our challenge—creating a long-range plan that addresses that vital concern. Let me spell out some of the steps in the sequence of the general scheme, as I see it. First, Galaxy people work with you and other appropriate people to develop a more detailed plan that presupposes unlimited resources. Second, line up important people in our corner, not just for endorsements, but for active, ongoing support and participation. I'm hoping you're such a person, but don't give that any though just yet. When the drug thing got out of hand, all the big names were actively enlisted to speak out against it in movie and TV spots, as did the political bigwigs and the President and First Lady. Let's neither of us forget for a second that inadequate parenting and win-lose relationships full of power, overwhelm, and oppression are doing ten or a hundred times more harm every day than drugs. One is substance abuse—the other is more like life abuse. The various aspects of the inadequate parenting reality are more chronic and covert compared to the relatively acute and overt aspects of the drug problem. 'Misparenting'—may I coin a word here?—is less sensationalistic and has a more complex cause-and-effect relationship with its symptoms."

"Good word—I'll remember it," said Tom.

"Thanks. Anyway, the next step is to get this well-orchestrated plan in front of the most popular actor or actress—one willing to support this and even be a spokesperson. He or she will try to align the public with us. Next, align the biggest investors or a billionaire or two.

"Kids are defensive about what they're told about life, whether at school or at home, but they lap up the oatmeal that they keep getting fed from movies, TV, and teen magazines, blogs, and websites. And most adults do a lot of their learning, intentional or

not, from the boob tube. We've got to supplement the teacher-parent-school approach with the mass market approach. And that means big bucks. Movies, TV shows, DVDs, videos, websites, books, magazines—all these not only reflect culture, they also help create it, for better or for worse. We've got to address and impress the masses with big people, big money, big ideas, big plans, and a real solution in our repertoire, one with the potential to save the world."

"There's that phrase again. I'm uncomfortable with it," said Tom, using a good I-statement.

"I know—I'm young, idealistic, and want to make grand, world-shaking and world-saving gestures as a manifestation of the impetuousness of youth," Robert said.

"Something like that," Tom admitted. "I tend not to bite off more than I can chew. Can you chew a hunk this big, Robert? A *world-saving* hunk?"

"Yes and no, Tom. I can take responsibility for this plan's success. As a matter of fact, all the Galaxy people, the public relations guy Stephen, and I have a profound joint agreement to do this thing. Each is responsible for the plan, the nation, the world. P.E.T. is one of the two main reasons we have become people who value taking responsibility. We just happened to decide to take it beyond the level of the individual, the teacher, and the family to the ultimate level of responsibility. Anyway, I don't have to personally chew the whole hunk. They'll be a lot of wonderful people—hopefully including you—that will be alongside of me chewing their parts of the hunk. The plan requires no supermen—merely people doing their parts.

"However, most people resist anything with the potential for positive change. It's the nature of the normal neurosis of the normal ADJUSTED AMERICAN, as in Putney and Putney's book. It's totally unconscious, illogical, and obscenely irrational for one to be afraid to give life a chance so that one doesn't offend one's neurotic, irrational programming, which will somehow offend one's parents—even if they are dead! And yet this is the mode in which so many people operate."

"Robert, will your solution address THIS?" asked Tom.

"Well, Tom, in the long run it will. In the short run there is nothing that can be done to address all the emotional harm that has come to the normal neurotic in our society. Sure, it can be mitigated with good self-talk, as taught by John Pollard or Shad Helmstetter—this will help to neutralize some of the bad self-talk that parents and other caregivers have programmed into kids' minds unintentionally. But other than that all we can do is to give them opportunities to have their lifestyles and relationships work better. This will make them insecure as their programming gets disobeyed. But the improved life—the better relationships as they begin P.E.T. rules—will create more security and comfort than the 'disobedience' causes discomfort. The net effect will be a plus, except in the case of psychosis or extreme neurosis. Change can feel like death or torture to these people sometimes. But I'm no fool—the obvious initial target for the project's marketing, even though generally the target is everyone, is specifically the early adoptors," said Robert. "These trendsetters will like it and relate it to others via Facebook, chat rooms, homemade YouTube videos, texting, email, and just plain old phone calls. But you know a heck of a lot more about this stuff that I do."

"Your conclusion about market target is generally correct, although there are exceptions," said Tom. "So you say your solution will eventually eradicate the normal neurosis of the average person? How else could P.E.T. become a mass phenomenon, as you advocate? People will say NO to P.E.T. as long as they're neurotic and alienated enough to be thoroughly scared of the prospect of change, even if it's for the better. Right?"

Robert answered. "People so thoroughly overwhelmed by their programming that they're run by the symbolic threat of withdrawal of 'parental love' if they exit their programming loop and become their own person and begin to live and develop an identity and autonomy—these people are terrified to learn how to improve their lives (CHANGE!) and make relationships work (CHANGE!) and finally have happy families (CHANGE!). People declining the P.E.T. opportunity are great rationalizers, I've learned. On the outside they're playing the role of being too 'together' to need any sort of help,

insights, training, or wisdom. On the inside they're crying to their symbolic mommas: 'See how faithful I was to the programming? NOW will you finally give me what I need?' The joke on these people, of course, is that their actual parents DO NOT really want them to follow these sterile, lifeless, programmed pathways to a conflict-laden robot-existence, and the actual parents would give them more 'strokes' if they DID take P.E.T. and improve their lifestyles and relationships and become more alive, likable, lovable sons and daughters! So it's not their parents' 'wishes' they're so faithful to after all. It's their engrammatically programmed, unconscious SYMBOLIZATION of what they mistakenly feel their parent-gods want from them. All that 'loyalty and faith,' all that desperate effort to please 'the ghosts of parents past,' all that present-time sacrifice in the name of the 'sacred parent-pleasing purpose,' and then the whole thing turns out to not only be a misunderstanding but a dirty joke as well! And the joke's on them!"

"I just had a thought," said Tom. "All this reminds me of the first *Star Trek* movie, in which the huge machine killed off 'imperfect' life to 'please' its original programmers, even though this is not what those original programmers had in mind at all!"

"Great analogy!" said Robert.

"So where are we here with eradicating normal neurosis so people can say yes to P.E.T.?" said Tom.

"Well, keep in mind what a tremendous motivation it is for the average person to 'keep up with the Joneses,' 'be like everyone else,' or 'fit in.' This is Adjusted American neurotic motivation, but it can actually aid the P.E.T.-spreading process once it gets going. If no one around you is together or happy, you won't have anything to remind you that real happiness is possible. You'll even tell yourself that you are happy when you are not. This is the current, normal situation. But what happens if a grassroots mass movement begins? What happens if a lot of people around you get it together and are happy, using not just P.E.T. but also positive self-talk to neutralize bad programming and finally some of the guidance from Louise Hart's Winning Family Lifeskills? It was easy to repress nonfulfillment and power struggles and win-lose misery before; nothing reminded you of the alternative. But when a lot more people have their act together, and our movies and stuff hit, the reminders of what life was meant to be like will be omnipresent. The normal neurotics will end up wanting and taking P.E.T. just to be like the many others around them who are conspicuously happy in fulfilling lifestyles. Their motivations to 'not stick out' and 'be like others' will finally work FOR them, for once. David Riesman had a lot to say on this subject. The other-directed conformists usually are thwarted and psychologically stunted by their passion to conform. But in this case it will ironically get them doing something that can hopefully start them on the path toward autonomy—Riesman's goal for the healthiest and happiest life.

"Eventually they may even admit to themselves that they're taking P.E.T. in order to go for happiness and fulfillment. But not at first. Their fear will overpower their lifewish at first. Their faithful allegiance to the 'ghosts of parents past' will be more important than having a happy family or happy life. After all, the letting go of that allegiance feels, however irrationally and incorrectly, like nonsurvival and death. They won't drop that past baggage easily. But they're still human. They still need love, happiness, fulfillment, self-actualization, and meaning. Their neurotic lifestyle was not producing these things. So when enough people around them go for the brass ring, they'll do so too. Think of all those sad times when such parents, in the midst of domestic turmoil, sit there sobbing (or feeling like it) 'Oh, if only we knew what to do; if only we could be happy like other people!'

"When VCRs first came out, not everyone wanted one overnight. Initially, only people open to new things—early adoptors—wanted one. Later, people sort of open to new things and sort of motivated by conspicuous consumption and conformity got theirs. Eventually, everyone wanted one. The same with computers. Central to the conformity issue here is the fact that conformity often doesn't pertain to what the average person does. It pertains to being like the ideal person in the group and class with which you identify—for the goal of Putney and Putney-type indirect self-acceptance or Riesman-type other-directedness, of course. This fact is critical—it means that if the key few people in

any one group or class do something, the entire rest of that group or class will want it too. It's a sociological fact key to marketing strategies. Therefore, Tom, we need only 'sell' P.E.T. to those key people. Those are our target market. The rest will follow to be like others and keep up with the Joneses. And the thing that we are marketing to these key few is more than just P.E.T.—more on that later.

"Back to the VCR thing. VCRs went from a novelty to fairly common to a middle-class necessity. They're a great way to avoid annoying ads and inconvenient program schedules by time-shifting. Of course, Tivo and DVRs have replaced VCRs for most people. Even though they're perceived as something the middle-class can't do without, in truth, it's easy to do without them. They're merely a PERCEIVED necessity. It wasn't that long ago that they were perceived as a luxury. But lifestyles have changed; women work; being in control of one's life is seen as important; people get so busy that schedule convenience and control and efficiency begin having more and more ramifications in the fast lanes of the modern world. Even people too busy or lazy to record TV programs so they can watch their programs when they want still rent or stream movies and watch *these* when they want. These days they usually go to Netflix.

"Perceptions change as a result of mass media manipulations and as a result of perceived value. The perceived value of a VCR or DVR isn't that different from its real value: It's an interface between viewer and network. It allows you to take control of timing, schedules, ad annoyance, and seeing what you want when you want it. You get nearly infinite choices and you get to be at cause. All this fills perceived needs much better than the 1950s and 1960s way of TV viewing, where the stations controlled what you saw and when you saw it, with few choices. Now, what I'd like to point out about this is that in the 50s and 60s there was the same need to be in control, to have viable choices, to be in charge of scheduling rather than allowing networks to arrange your time for you, and to have better programs—how much *Leave It To Beaver* can one stand? I've talked to people who used to watch TV back then. Bickering about which channel to watch or when to eat supper, due to the rigidities of TV scheduling, were an everyday occurrence in middle America. Now people can watch one channel as they record another, or they can go to a different room and choose the program they want on a separate TV. No more fighting. There's a built-in antidote for normal win-lose family strategies here. Why shouldn't people get to watch their favorites, instead of being stuck with parental dictates or majority rules decisions? Boob tubes don't cost much. But the biggest freedom of all is granted because of the VCR or DVR: One can watch what one wants when one wants it, including programs not on TV. Just rent or stream the video.

"The thing is, needs aren't changing that much. People needed good choices, schedule control and ad avoidance—especially cigarette ads—in the 50s and 60s. But the knowledge and technology weren't really there. So they didn't get it. Their needs went unmet. Now the knowledge and technology is there so the need for these things is being met. You can say there's overchoice to the point of future shock, and the alternatives are mind-boggling and confusing. Also true. But in general there ARE plenty of choices and the viewer CAN control what he sees and when he sees it and whether he sees ads or not, or even when he sees movies, which he now rents or streams from Netflix or waits for a year or two and sees them on TV channels. This is progress. This has value. This meets needs. This is lifestyle enhancement. So the masses have adopted it.

"Okay, now let's switch to the subject of lifestyle and relationships. What I've said about VCRs and DVRs and Tivo applies there too. People's needs aren't changing that much. People need lifestyles that work and relationships that work. But most families' relationships are based upon conflict-producing, win-lose power relationships and authoritarianism, permissiveness, or, worst of all, a combination of the two. These methods have been shown to be nonviable. This, now, is the pre-P.E.T. era, when P.E.T. itself is not that well known. And yet people need good win-win relationships and viable lifestyles NOW. They need P.E.T. now. The knowledge and technology may be there now, but it isn't in the hands of the people yet. That will take a few years. So, right now, people's needs are not being met. Just like with the pre-VCR situation. They needed

choice and control then, but had to wait. We're in the pre-P.E.T. era now. People need life to work NOW, but must wait. Wait for us to make P.E.T. go big-time.

"Tom?"

"Yes, Robert?"

"P.E.T. is the VCR or DVR of lifestyle and relationships. It's GOING to be seen as that in a few years, and it will continue to be seen as that throughout the 21st century, first in this country, then worldwide. My friends and I are going to make this succeed, no matter what it takes. And you're one of the most respected business gurus in our country. And we want you in." There was a minute of silence.

"This is all rather sudden, Robert. I'm sitting here at my home-office desk trying to come up with reasons not to get involved. I'm uncomfortable with a sudden goal change at my age. I want to tell you that, because of A, B, and C, I must decline. I know damn well that having an explosion of nurturing, happy lifestyles is the answer to many of my dreams—of America's dreams. I guess I feel that perhaps I'm being teased. Maybe I'll get my hopes up and then find out that it won't work, or that you guys are flakes, or . . . I tell you what: If there is a chance that what you say is actually possible, then I'd never forgive myself if I didn't do my part. So the next step for me is to determine if it is really a viable possibility or not. Let's see—you say there are fifteen of you plus Stephen to cover PR. Hmmmmmm . . ."

"Mind if I invite you here to meet us and talk?" asked Robert.

"Well—uh—well sure! Why not? I can't expect sixteen people to fly here." And so they proceeded to set up a weekend much like the Stephen weekend.

Once the details were settled, Robert went on with the conversation: "Remember the movie *The Big Chill*? That's a hint about something I said earlier."

"Yes, I caught that one on the tube a few years ago. Why? What's the connection?"

"Remember what I said at the beginning of this call? That P.E.T. is only half the reason for the extraordinary success of my Galaxy extended family?"

"Yes," responded Tom.

"Do you see where I'm headed?"

"No. But let's see. Friends reunite, get cozy, and finally confront reality and go their separate ways. But there was that comment from one of them about never leaving. The idealist in all of us. Wouldn't it be nice if we could have our cake and eat it to? Unfortunately, we're all in the fast lane. Relationships are fleeting and commitment becomes more rare each day. We have to grab what we can in this area. Let's see now. What's the connection? Um—I do see a possible connection here. You live in an apparently successful extended family situation. They didn't. But wished they did—although they weren't related, so 'extended' would not be the correct term, technically. Your situation is pretty rare. Most people can't set up such a situation. Most are not that friendly with their relatives that they'd want to be that near to them. And with regards to the movie, the possibility of unrelated people living together for extended periods—well, jobs and family concerns would pull them apart quite rapidly. The commune movement of the 60s and 70s showed how unrealistic such a lifestyle is. Hmmmm—well, that's all the connections I have on the subject. Why do you ask?" asked Tom.

"I'm leading, here, in the direction of the other half of the Galaxy success formula. P.E.T. is half the formula. And rest assured that communes are NOT the other half. They're a failed experiment. Would you prefer I spell it out or would you rather take pot-shots?" asked Robert.

"Well, it's an interesting riddle, Robert. Let me run with the ball a bit more. Not communes. Not liberal. Not radical. Pro-establishment. Those are the only characteristics of your plan that I can recall. What else?"

"Nuclear family foundation, in a multigenerational environment where everyone controls their own space" replied Robert.

"That's a relief. A plan must be realistic to be viable. How many nuclear families are there in Galaxy?"

"Two, but it could just as easily work with three to six or even more."

"Ummmmm-hmmmmm. The advantages of both the traditional, respected, accepted family structure, and greater people access, as in the temporary reunion in *The Big Chill*. Very interesting. Hmmmmm. . . . This is bringing to mind the many essays I've read on the subject of the isolated nuclear family and its associated woes and symptoms."

"Bingo! You just won the blender and toaster, Tom!" exclaimed Robert.

"Hah! That was fun. I like where this is going. I was dreading that you'd suddenly drop a bomb about Moonies, Hare Krishna, the New Republicans, or God knows what else."

"No, as I promised earlier, this is neither liberal nor conservative nor left nor right nor radical nor weird. No cults, communes, religious fanatics, political ties, or anything else. As Jerry Pournelle's and Larry Niven's arcology people would say in their *Oath of Fealty* sci-fi book, THINK OF IT AS EVOLUTION IN ACTION.

"Or use the old Edmund Burke adage: THE ONLY THING NECESSARY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS FOR GOOD MEN TO DO NOTHING. This, of course, refers to the myriad of nasty symptoms resulting from the current isolated nuclear and single-parent and step and mixed family lifestyles—all isolated, and yet no one seems to be seriously looking for an alternative."

"Isolated, then, is the key word here," said Tom.

"Absolutely. Social resources—viable ones—are mostly weak or absent. People work, so they get strangers to do caregiving for their precious children out of necessity, feeling guilty all the while. Mom-alone caregiving is as deficient in optimal nurturing as daycare or home care or babysitters. And few adults have dear friends who won't just move away to pursue a higher paying job. By the time either adults or kids develop deeper social connections, either the connections move or the family itself moves. The average family moves every 5 years. For example, in the U.S. 37.1 million people moved in 2009. It takes years to develop deep, meaningful social connections. So what are the chances of anyone of any age having lasting social resources, lasting connections? Pretty poor. Relationships are transitory. Like clouds. Here today, gone tomorrow. This is nothing like the viable communities, villages, and extended families from a century and a half ago. Connections meant something back then. People were interdependent in communities.

"Anyway, the alternative I'm talking about is pro-establishment and slightly conservative, as is the nation right now. It continues to manifest great respect for the best of the old traditional values. Authoritarianism is *not* one of the best of those values, obviously, which research has proven unequivocally. Nor is permissiveness, of course. Notice that the only sure characteristic of the American voter in elections is a yearning for the BEST aspects of the traditional American family. Think of *Leave It To Beaver,* even. It certainly wasn't the plastic, goody-goody, or authoritarian relationships in that show that people yearn for. Nor was it women's place in the home as a vacant, submissive homebody whose identity depends upon her husband and her kids for existence. Women and most thinking men unanimously like today's equality (and women working) much better. Women get to be real people! So, few people yearn for the negatives of the past. Life was all conformity, judging, fitting in, and stifled sameness back then. It needed aliveness, freedom, and soul. But my grandparents lived through it. They saw it all firsthand."

"As did mine," agreed Tom. "I've heard the stories."

"Well, I suggest we continue this conversation when you get here Friday night," said Robert. "I've planted the seed; let's let it germinate. Let me add another movie to that seed, sort of like as fertilizer: *Grand Canyon.* There—enough seed-planting and enough fertilizing. I'd like to see where it goes." Tom agreed, and so they confirmed the scheduling details and made their goodbyes.

Robert breathed a sigh of relief. Things were really cooking! He looked over at Glen, who'd heard it all on a phone speaker.

"That was nicely done—good job, Robert!" said Glen.

"Thanks."

"Were you nervous?" asked Glen.
"Do bears crap in the woods?"

It was Friday night. The guys were bringing Tom back from the airport. They were all still chuckling over the way Tom reacted to Robert's age when he met them a few minutes ago. The entire phone conversation had led Tom to believe that he'd been talking to at least a college graduate, if not someone with an advanced degree. Robert, in order not to incur any negative stereotypes, has introduced himself with his name and city of residence and had left out the age and credentials factors. He didn't feel that 'high school graduate' would aid his cause any!

Glen spoke: "I guarantee that, once you know Robert better, you won't care the slightest how old he is or how many degrees he has," Glen assured. "Robert is just—well—ROBERT—and that's all there is to that. But, enough said. You'll see."

Pretty much like what happened with Stephen (who had been on a different flight and had been brought to Galaxy by Wendy and Barbara in a separate car), Tom was allowed to meet and talk to everyone, beginning with Cheryl. (The first thing that happened when he got alone with her was she asked him if he'd flown to Galaxy. He said yes, he had. Then she asked him if his arms had gotten tired! The rest of their talk was more serious.) After talking to everyone else, he talked to Stephen last. Finally it was 10 P.M. and he asked to be alone. He'd been given the Peterson living room for the weekend, with added bed. He went there, pinned up the 'Alone' sign on the closed temporary curtain between the living room and the rest of the house, and sat down on the recliner to think. It was hours before he went to bed.

It was noon. Tom had risen just in time for an 11 A.M. breakfast, which he shared with the rest of them. He asked when there would be a Galaxy get-together and was told it would be immediately, unless he preferred to wait a while. He suggested swimming first. They agreed. Everyone who wanted to swim did so for about an hour. Others sat around in lounge chairs discussing various aspects of their 'close encounters of the third kind.' Tom swam, but it was obvious that he was also listening to various conversations. Eventually people were dried, dressed, and waiting in the lounge for a meeting. Robert quietly asked Tom if he'd like to simply talk to everyone, ask questions, or take part in a meeting, which he, Robert, could now begin. Tom said he'd like to first speak his mind; then they'd see where things went after that.

Tom positioned his chair to face the others and then began: "Galaxians," he began, getting a smile from nearly everyone, "I know that you know how unique and inspiring you all are. And now you know that I know that you know—that I know—wait—I'll start again." Chuckles from the audience.

"Robert lured me here with wild claims about how P.E.T. plus some other secret ingredients would EXPONENTIALLY increase the good effects of P.E.T., and your group would illustrate that fact. He further stated that you've decided to make this quality of life available to the masses, which will allow the country, and eventually the world, to get its act together, to quit hating and start loving, which is obviously what they'd rather do anyway. I didn't have any way to point out the flaws in his plan over the phone, so I came here to find the flaws, point them out, and fly home with a self-righteous smile on my face. That would allow me to avoid being responsible for a lot of challenging close encounters of the third kind, which I'm sure I'd be doing from now until Saint Peter called me up to the pearly gates. However, there's more to me than resistance, defenses, and rationalizations. I'm not a lazy guy. I just want to use my time wisely. I want to get satisfaction and happiness out of life, not struggles, problems, and frustration. You're attempting the near-impossible. It's not going to be easy. But I can see that you truly love what you're doing. It reminds me of Peace Corps ads: 'the toughest job you'll ever love.'

"I don't want the rest of my life to be about a futile struggle to get people to wake up and learn to make their lives and relationships work. As I've been told by Robert, most people have too many neurotic barriers and too much programming to allow them

to say yes to P.E.T. So, historically, P.E.T. has been for those who are ready for it, or for people after self-improvement or family harmony.

"How many families can honestly say that they've got it so together that their relationships and lifestyles are so wonderful that there's simply no room for any enhancements? Ladies and gentlemen, I've encountered hundreds of families, but never found one fitting that description yet. Actually, as of last night, I can no longer say that. I haven't the slightest idea how you Galaxians could improve your situation. Any change would have to be for the worse, as far as I can see. But then you guys are another story entirely. I've been talking about everyone else in the world.

"Anyway, back to what I want. I've watched the vast majority of our citizens manifest lifestyle problems, family problems, and personal problems for years, wishing all the while that this vast array of social symptomolgy could be eliminated or at least seriously mitigated.

"However, Robert says that the fearful will eventually do it to keep up with the Joneses, because the same fear that keeps them from learning P.E.T. now will get them to do it later when they begin to stand out conspicuously as losers for not doing it. Fear of peers or neighbors looking down on you isn't that intrinsic a motivation, but if it gets the job done—what the hell? Of course, all this requires that the key people in each group or class accept this new P.E.T.-including lifestyle. Luckily for your plan, these few people are only a small minority, but they are the target market—once they go for it, the others will follow.

"Robert says that the mass media has to be the major factor to get things to this point—and famous, good, respected people have to get on board in order for the MC movement (which I was told to call it, by many of you) to have credibility and viability. Only with these key people speaking for MCs, and acting on their MC opportunity, can you expect the chain-reaction effect to occur where all the other-directed, alienated, formerly-P.E.T.-rejecting normals decide to go for MCs, which include P.E.T. rules.

"You're all more together than other people I've met. And yet none of you took a P.E.T. course—I asked. That includes Glen. He's been around only a few months, and has become an incredible young man. He operates from win-win P.E.T. principles, and has never taken P.E.T. What does this mean?

"Well, you've all read the P.E.T. books and adopted the rules and procedures, even improving on some of them. Your 'Alone' sign tool is a definite improvement which you tell me isn't in P.E.T.—I asked.

"But back to the topic of Glen absorbing P.E.T. rules and attitudes from the environment. He says he did nothing but skim the books and talk to Robert about the rules and agree to abide by them. And the rest of you youngsters here were simply shown P.E.T. from your earliest years—you never needed courses or books, even though many of you have taken the time to read them. What all this says is that regardless of whether anyone ever takes another P.E.T. course, the MC movement can still work and incorporate P.E.T. as its relationship standards. P.E.T. can spread through the normal functioning of good lifestyles, rather than trying to get people to go to trainings—parent effectiveness should simply be one of the qualities of effective lifestyles.

"But in spite of how good the communication rules and practices are in a P.E.T-using family, this won't make parents without the time or ability to nurture well into parents who suddenly can and do nurture well. You guys and your Galaxy—you guys and your MCs—you've probably got your fingers on the biggest factor regarding failure of P.E.T. to chain-react and bloom in all families in our society. I can see what Robert had in mind about the exponential way P.E.T. and MC procedures work together.

"Anyway, with regards to the spread of P.E.T.-including MCs, I'm betting their organization can supply you with thousands of testimonials from families, schools, churches, counselors, teacher groups and others that love P.E.T. because of how well it works for them. I'm sure that will help. You know, if your MC launch is good enough and enough famous and wise people are on board so that the key targets are enlightened about the cure for the innumerable symptoms of isolation, ineffective parenting, and ineffective relationships, then I really do see the possibility for the chain reaction of P.E.T.

as part of the success of the MC movement. I can see that education and generational passing on of P.E.T., rather than trainings, can be the way P.E.T. spreads once a critical mass is trained. Trainings will then be only for people who somehow got missed by the other dispersion methods.

"So, to recapitulate, the scope and magnitude of P.E.T. need exponential expansion here. I agree that I'd like to help that process along. Luckily, the solution isn't in convincing reluctant neurotics to fearfully participate. I wouldn't do that—nor would you waste your time that way. Who needs the frustration? But we'll use their fears to our —and their—advantage. A lot of products are aimed at lifestyle enhancement in today's market. This will be the first one that's not superficial—it will be the best and most meaningful product they've ever bought. And yet the price will be merely a couple of movie tickets, a video or DVD or two, a book or two, and catching the new TV series that relates to all this. I propose a program, an hour in length, called 'Leave It To MCs.'" Everyone laughed.

"No, I'm serious. Show a black-and-white *Leave It To Beaver* rerun, with authoritarian 'solutions,' and follow that with a color remake in which all relationships are enhanced by both P.E.T. and the expanded relationship and nurturing opportunities in MCs. Let people experience the wonderful difference—like I already have. Why settle for *The New Leave It To Beaver* (which my grandson tells me was an actual TV show that came out around 1990), when you can have something meaningful and helpful like what I'm saying? It's just like what I've always thought about learning good ethics and values. By far the most reliable and effective method is for parents to be good examples to emulate. Well, the new show will be precisely the needed examples to emulate that the not-yet-MC-knowledgeable masses will need. You can't have millions of people come here and visit Galaxy, you know!"

"I like the idea," said Stephen. "If part of an overall MC movement plan, the idea has great promise."

"Thanks, Stephen. I'm trying to make all this real in my mind, and coming up with that idea helped me get my feet wet," said Tom.

At this time, others chimed in with encouragement regarding this series idea, supporting his efforts with enthusiasm. Rather than these new programs being a slam at old traditions, they'd be merely showing the difference between the 50s and 60s ideas of lifestyle and discipline and the new 21st century way—the MC way. The new ways would so obviously transcend the old in effectiveness, psychological ramifications, responsibility teaching, empowerment, true character building and awareness that the millions of parents still using such archaic methods would be empowered to wade out of the stagnant pools of old-fashioned parenting methods and enter the crystal clear streams of MC and P.E.T. relating and nurturing methods. Maybe other "popular" family shows would even follow suit.

"I like where this is going, Tom," said Robert. "After all, one can't really blame the parents who are still doing it the old way, even if the symptoms coming out of such attempts are flagrant and obvious (and heart-breaking). No one had really come up with a demonstrably superior method and put it before the masses in a viable and acceptable form. The new show wouldn't be a slam at tradition at all. On the contrary, it would be an acknowledgement of the goodness and rightness of the best parts of the traditional values, ethics, and lifestyles.

Tom continued: "Why merely laugh at the irresponsibility and ignorance and naiveté of Wally and Beaver in a sitcom, when, with a little reworking, people could see how Wally and Beaver don't necessarily have to act humorously irresponsible and then get humorously authoritarian reactions from their parents? Instead, they could confront problems that would NORMALLY manifest irresponsibility in kids, but the kids and parents could respond in responsible, P.E.T. and MC ways—perhaps with humorously naïve onlookers, neighbors, classmates, or peers around them, advocating the anachronistic methods. The humor would be the contrast between past ignorance with all that's known today about parenting, relationships, and lifestyles.

"Perhaps we'd all see that kids act irresponsibly because we TEACH them to act that way with incorrect parenting strategies and examples, rather than because 'kids will be kids,' and 'kids hate responsibility.' Hogwash!"

Everyone joined in the discussion to embellish Tom's idea. Eventually, Tom had the floor again. He had some more he wanted to say regarding the overall plan: "After long and serious consideration, I've been able to conclude that my business plans do indeed dovetail with your MC plans. So we need to talk turkey here. But let's first deal with the MC issue. If for no other reason than to make sure I see it all correctly. Now, Robert left me, in his phone call, with a little riddle. He said that P.E.T. was only half of the world's needed solution for life working for all so there's peace and happiness. He used the movies *The Big Chill* and *Grand Canyo*n to hint at the other half. I made some guesses and he said 'Bingo' when I said the isolated nuclear family was an important factor. I've done a lot of thinking this week. And then I talked to you people last night—bless your sweet little hearts. My God, you're a lovable bunch! But anyway, I learned the answer to his riddle. And it certainly feels like seeing the forest through the trees. The answer has been in front of my face, and everyone else's faces for many years. It was just too obvious and easy to see. We were focused at six feet to infinity and yet the answer was an inch away. I've been contrasting what happens in normal families with what happens in P.E.T. families and then contrasting that with what happens with you Galaxians. There IS an exponential difference. Robert didn't exaggerate. But why this difference? *Because doing the best you can with what you've got simply can't measure up to doing the best you can with what's needed!*

"In other words, most of the people in our society have gotten used to a very limited and inadequate social environment, a weaker and sparser one than is enjoyed by many other societies, I might add. (I've traveled around the world quite a bit, so I ought to know.) The process happened insidiously, over hundreds of years. This doesn't imply that fully adequate social environments ever existed. I don't know that they ever did. But at least in the past there were more involvements with extended family members, bigger families, more family-aiding personnel and therefore more choices for the young, and more close-knit community ties that filled some of the needs for dynamic and adequate social environments for all. These things point to some of the viable, yearned-for traditions of past family lives, traditions still in force in a few other existing cultures, I might add.

"The antithesis of these yearned-for aspects of life is today's ISOLATED nuclear, step, or single-parent family—or even isolated singles living, and people feeling this social inadequacy turn to social networks, trying their best to fill the void. But of course they are mostly just distracted from loneliness and depression—rarely do they successfully find the deeper, more meaningful relationships they truly crave.

"Robert's research, which he was kind enough to give me a synopsis of, shows that extra choices, multiple parenting, shared parenting, and actually choosing whom you want to be with at a very young age can have a profoundly positive effect not just in the area of self-responsibility, but self-actualization and character development in general, as well as happiness. Let momma be the key nurturer for the first few months to promote security and bonding, but beyond that, the more choices the better (as long as they are good choices and are chosen and not imposed), and the more P.E.T.-type relationships with these people the better.

"You people are positive proof of what Robert already knew from experience long before he began his research: **P.E.T. methodology can be exponentially enhanced if not only the relationships themselves are top quality, but if the baby/child/youngster can experience himself actually choosing these relationships, and therefore experience being in control of his life and relationships to the degree that is feasible; and to do that he needs to have an adequate social environment so there are actually sufficient personnel to allow real and meaningful choices.**

"To address the old wives' tales of the psychology of the past, which I can do because I did a bit of Internet researching over the week: It may be true that learning to

cope well with your present situation is character-forming, but if it doesn't allow supportive creative space or fill needs regarding nurturing social contacts and choices, it also creates resentment and character flaws. Character may 'build' when you learn to get along with whomever you're stuck with, but it builds even better if you can choose among people to be with so you can feel, be, and act RESPONSIBLE for your choice, for that relationship, and eventually even for that person, if appropriate.

"A mother incarcerated with an infant or toddler, when she is in a non-nurturing mood, defines a deprived situation which we've always thought of as unavoidable and inevitable. And, in the isolated nuclear, step, or single-parent family, it is. But that doesn't make it benevolent or harmless. The ideal, and this would prevent a lot of abuse, depression, frustration, and anger in this world, would be if the mother would at least opt for a temporary replacement for herself, or better yet, allow the kid to choose to be with someone else, so the kid has performed a positive action with regards to taking responsibility for himself and experienced the natural consequences. I can say this stuff authoritatively because I had a double major in college: business and psychology.

"But, back to my point. Sure, the kid will need to experience people in bad moods in his future and learn to deal with them. But let him CHOOSE to do that in the future, from strength, rather than pushing this down his throat now when his lack of readiness makes his experience helpless, deterministic oppression or deprivation with no recourse, leading to unhappiness and symptoms. Let the kid CHOOSE to confront life's more stressful and unpleasant realities as he feels the ability to handle them. Because if the kid is NOT ready for the situation, then as any shrink and many laypeople know, the kid is going to be thrown into automatic survival gear, and he'll record the scene as an engram —the word you guys like to use—and he'll collect what Glen likes to call mind mud, and he'll be programmed with the negative emotional impact of the situation in irrational, foolish ways that will cause much future confusion, pain, sadness and hang-ups in relationships. In other words, it limits his potential and lowers the quality of his future, his insights, his abilities, and his life. Clearly the reason you Galaxians are so evolved is that your self-actualization and relationship and psychological growth potentials are not only not quelled in such ways—they are actualized, boosted, and optimally maximized. You didn't have deprivation. Instead you had choices and need fulfillment. While others were learning to resent, to scream, to have 'normal'(?) tantrums, and to be selfish, you were learning to choose, to be responsible for yourself, to grow as a person, to be compassionate and loving, and to be happy. You learn to love very early here.

"There is no flaw in P.E.T. philosophy—I read the book during the week. But when it gets applied in an inadequate social environment that doesn't allow adequate choices, and sometimes forces two or more people to be stuck with each other in rotten moods, you won't always be able to preclude the negative emotional consequences of the situation. The key word here is STUCK. If only there were choices, a way out, an option. If only deprivation or negativity wasn't so 'inevitable' and frequent. Unfortunately, applying P.E.T. in the normal ISOLATED nuclear, or other family structure, even though it will preclude some of the deprivation and negativity, and resultant harmful consequences, will allow some of these things as well. There simply won't be adequate human resources to prevent it. There won't often be an alternative.

"P.E.T. deals with the enhancement of the relationship tools of a family, but it doesn't deal with a family's personnel inadequacies. Only something like your MC construct can do that. In *The Big Chill*, the friends were sure they couldn't have their cake and eat it too. Now I'm not so sure! They hinted at 'oh, we'll never leave,' to express their true desires for a truly adequate, dynamic, lively social environment. But they didn't mean it. You know—reality bursts the bubble. Now, of course, if they had tried it, commune-style, in that house, it would not have lasted long—perhaps it would have been better than nothing—more likely it would have wrecked good friendships forever. Such experiments are doomed to depressing failure. But, on the other hand, if they'd used those normal, good, benevolent, lifewish-filled desires as the energy behind the formation of an MC, and put their nuclear or other types of families in proximity to one another, such as Galaxy apartment configurations or even suburban blocks, properly

enhanced for the purpose, they might find that they too, if they included P.E.T. rules so relationships could be handled sensitively and responsibly, could enjoy the phenomenon I'd call Galaxian happiness and fulfillment.

"I should also address how the 1992 movie *Grand Canyon*—another of Robert's hints—fits in here. Researchers have shown that steep-gradient nurturance eventually leads not only to alienation and disconnectedness but to the polarization of society as well—Slater dealt with this. The Haves win and the Have-nots lose, mimicking the win-lose and often hateful sibling rivalries in normal families, and as this process accelerates, the 'grand canyon' between the Haves and the Have-nots widens—currently it's the worst it's ever been. Lawrence Kasdan, who wrote, produced, and directed this film (Meg Kasdan co-authored it), tells us that the fear that's keeping everyone disconnected from everyone else originates in this socioeconomic polarization. He actually has his characters explain this stuff in the movie—a daring but wise move, in my opinion. He never really sees the steep-gradient-nurturance cause behind the polarization, but then he doesn't have to. That's our job, Galaxians.

"Of course, Robert B. Reich has pointed out—in his *The Work of Nations*—the other polarization causes that relate to changing from national to global economies, politics, and so on.

"But it's the steep-gradient-nurturing approach that predisposes us toward this win-lose phenomenon more than anything. Philip Slater said this. He also said, in *Earthwalk*, that the steep-gradient-nurturing approach makes it hard for us to evolve wisdom or understanding or care for the environment, or to care for others realistically according to who they are rather than idealistically according to the projected mother symbol we lay on them, and people raised in this win-lose manner are full of oedipal motivations that tend to make them conflicted, guilty, tense, obsessive, and neurotic. They are not just win-lose—they also strive fanatically to achieve success and power and wealth regardless of how many people they have to step on. They have little interest in community since their entire psyche is rooted in competition, not cooperation, so they are in harmony with plundering and exploiting whether it be the environment or a country.

"In Slater's words: 'if we wish to enhance wisdom and understanding, we should seek precisely the opposite arrangement [meaning the opposite of the win-lose steep-gradient-nurturing approach so prevalent in America]: diffusion-of-nurturance communities that will produce flat-gradient personalities.' He said the key here is how the highly mobile ISOLATED nuclear family produced this win-lose steep-gradient-nurturing approach, all of which makes not only community but democracy itself impossible. Slater tells us that primitive cultures understand their connection to one another and to the environment—they're part of one another. But, above all, our country's disconnected, alienated people need *reconnection*. In Maslow BEING states, especially peak experiences, people become reconnected with humanity and nature—I forget where I learned that. This being state, and the being-cognition that goes with it, seems to be perpetual for you Galaxians—you're what people are meant to be.

"Anyway, in Kasdan's movie people are so disconnected that any compassion shown, aid given, or friendships formed all seem like miracles to the lead actress. Connection is a random accident, a quirk of fate, something one nearly feels like apologizing for or being embarrassed about. Even though his lead characters see life's transience, they don't take responsibility for making the essential connections that give life meaning. Heroic individualism has been raised to an art form and people are not too happy at first if they find themselves in a position of needing anything from anyone. People just wait helplessly and numbly for connections to accidentally happen—to fall right into their laps. That way no one can accuse them of seeking them because they NEED other people. What ever happened to Barbra Streisand's song about people who need people being the LUCKIEST people in the world? There are grand canyons of disconnectedness between people, and few dare to make the jump that bridges the gap between people. Bridging involves risk. (It's so much easier to communicate superficially with Facebook pseudo-friends.) And risk is for the secure and existentially responsible,

traits which these characters' lifestyles had never facilitated nor empowered in them. But Galaxy does empower this. And MCs will too. MC people will find out that flat-gradient-nurturance—which is multiple nurturers, used by most cultures for many centuries—especially when guided by P.E.T. rules, leads to relationships that feel good, like assets, and like something meaningful and worth the time and the risk. I predict that MCs will cure this country of its relationship phobia so fast that people will soon be laughing as they remember back to the many contortions—including most of what goes on on Facebook—they used to go through to avoid the risk of *real* relationship. (By the way, I loved the movie—it was great.)

"Well, what do you think? Did I grasp the MC concept and clearly see where P.E.T. fits? Or not?" His answer was a long, loving round of applause from his audience. They made it a standing ovation. It was a heck of a nice MC endorsement from the best business guru around.

Eventually, he decided to share some more of his thoughts with them: "I was just thinking of something Robert and I discussed last night. He said that if you look at upbringing patterns around the world, you soon see that logic plays no part in it—there is no fairness, rationality or good sense. What there are is traditions and beliefs. Unquestioned beliefs. If kids are raised in a society that beats its kids bloody once a day, the young will believe that is the proper way to raise kids—and do it to their kids someday. There are some incredibly inhuman cultures and traditions in our world today, and some of the world's past cultures were very trauma-causing as well, even though there were some good ones. The thing we must all keep in mind is how out of control all this is. It's programmed behavior, not logical. It shows caving in to past conditioning, not good sense.

"Culture wasn't purposely designed to fill our needs, as we might like to think. It was deterministically designed as a response to the hang-ups and pain and anger and biases and ignorance of those that came before us. Occasionally luck allows a bit of logical functionality, wisdom, or insight to sneak through and be involved. But it's blind luck if the blind determinism of cultural evolution can actually produce something viable, much less benevolent, which is why so many past cultures failed. We are *at effect* of our cultural evolutionary processes. No one can ever tell what will happen tomorrow. We've gone through assassinations, Watergate, Vietnam, hippies, the ME generation, punk rock, AIDS, and L.A. (and now other) youth gangs, armed like the Mafia, killing anyone randomly. Worst of all, we endured 9/11. A lot of these I mentioned, before I mentioned 9/11, are still with us, as are humongous divorce, crime, illegitimacy, and suicide rates. No one planned any of this—it just happened.

"We try hard to put ourselves into IN-CONTROL postures. We politically throw a few dollars in the direction of some problem—a pretense at getting it under control. The dollars control nothing, but such tokens can symbolically alleviate some of our anxiety at being so hopelessly out of control. When Bush declared a war on drugs, the wisest analysts soon estimated that no amount of interdiction, use of the military against traffickers and cartels—even directly against the South American or Mexican suppliers, or increased drug-related penalties could possibly change anything except perhaps slightly raising the street prices of drugs or slowing down the supply by two percent. And if the street price goes up, it will only make users have to mug more of US to get a proper high. What kind of CONTROL do you call that? It's stark raving helplessness, hopelessness, and impotency, by anybody's measure. The truth is, was, and will be obvious for all to see: The only hope for curing the drug problem is lifestyle enhancement to eliminate DEMAND. The MC movement can and will put the drug lords out of business. The MC movement can and will give us control over our society, our fate, our future. It's the answer all of us non-Galaxy people have been hoping and praying for for decades. It truly is the way to make the world work.

"Stephen explained to me about how his movie allegorized the tyranny of deterministic beliefs, paradigms, and traditions. The reason I mention this is that it is these same programmed lifestyle patterns which result in minds so insecure and confused that they're too fearful to even consider doing anything to help their situation,

like P.E.T. Most people seldom do anything logical or sensible about their relationships and family lives. They merely choose among programmed choices: mess up family and relationships by methods A, B, or C. No one seems to be able to think clearly in this area. With the exception of you people. Robert stands out as the most capable thinker in this area I've ever met. And yet he's a mere teenager! Why is the average person's mind so incapable of logical thought in this area? Because this area is crammed full of mercilessly strong and thorough programming. There's no room for real reasoning. Whatever people experience as babies and young kids is absorbed like a sponge, and it becomes gospel. All we need to do is have P.E.T. and MC things happen to babies and kids from now on, and the result will be people who can think, who live right, whose lives work, and who are responsible, respectful, compassionate and happy. Babies will like absorbing a P.E.T.-MC lifestyle more than a normal inoperable one. Why? Because it will actually fill needs and allow them to choose who they are and who they want to be and who they want to be with.

"Isn't it strange? I've masters degrees in business and psychology and have worked with people all my life from a business context, and yet I've always committed the same faux pas as my peers: I accepted our lifestyles as a given and only dealt with people within the context of this given. The problem with such an approach is that logic based upon some given is only as viable as the given itself. If the given is flawed, then so will the logic be. I've seen what shrinks do in this area: aid the relationship quality and effectiveness within the accepted, given context. They call this being *realistic*. They even implied that those who wouldn't accept the givens were left-wing idealists not to be taken seriously. And yet, just how realistic is it to expect an inadequate situation to somehow bear adequate fruit?

"Now, I've talked to everyone here. You all have a different perspective from the shrinks with regards to being 'realistic.' To you it means you adjust the context and givens until it works for the people in the situation. You are in control of your lifestyle. It is not in control of you, as is the normal case. Your lifestyle serves you. Normal people serve their lifestyle. They were programmed with that lifestyle and their lives are an homage to that lifestyle, and it matters not a bit whether that lifestyle is satisfying or fulfilling. What matters to them is that they conform to these givens so well that they don't offend the ghosts in their minds that represent those who originally programmed in those givens in the first place. On the other hand, you guys 'program' yourselves—when you make choices and find out the result, it is added to your mind programs that x is a positive way to go but y . . . not so much.

"But—back to psychology. It is not their assigned province or duty to violate their boundaries and go into sociology and manipulate the social scene. Let the social workers do it—it's what they get paid for. So they accepted the social scene and lifestyle, and they enhanced relationships, attitudes, adjustment, awareness, resourcefulness, defenses and approaches. Thomas Gordon is a psychologist. But he personally went beyond his original mandate and started P.E.T., which has enhanced millions of lives. Had he stuck in some MC prerequisites, which require a large commitment among one or two dozen people, he'd have helped many less people, or he might have failed entirely.

"And yet the word 'realism' is sticking in my craw at the moment. The difference between P.E.T. and the P.E.T.-MC combination is that the first does the best that it can with the limited amount of resources that it has at its disposal, while the combination acknowledges the needs of the situation, and then fills them, and then does the best that it can from this new context. The concept is trivially simple—transparent— obvious. It doesn't start with the orthodox givens. So it is unrealistic. Or is it? As I talked to you Galaxians, I saw nothing in your past or present that was at all unrealistic. But what I did see is a tendency for me to redefine 'realistic.' The truth is, I feel *your approach is more realistic than any I have ever seen.*

"The truth is, I feel that shrinks trying to engineer workable relationships in unworkable contexts—such as the isolated nuclear family or step-family or single-parent family—is UNREALISTIC. I'm not an M.D., but if a patient were running a mild fever and throwing up, I'd send him home for bed rest and aspirin. I wouldn't have a psychological

therapy session. Similarly, if most of the factors in a person's lifestyle run counter to his needs for a fulfilling lifestyle, shrinks really should be 'realistic' and get him to cure his lifestyle of the 'flu' before they deal with him psychologically as an individual. Otherwise, they'll end up confronting a frustrating, losing battle as all his 'psychological problems' turn out to be symptoms of the deprivations, oppressions, or chaos in his environment. That would be analogous to having the flu sufferer in for a session and all he could do would be to shiver and throw up. It's the wrong context to do psychological work. And yet, in the case of the flu sufferer, no shrink would be 'unrealistic' enough to proceed to a session, even though 100 percent of these shrinks would happily go on to a session where psychological progress was virtually at a standstill, in the case of the person at effect of an inoperable lifestyle.

"Here's where the word 'realistic' gets tricky. A 'realistic' shrink helps the patient adjust to the realities of his lifestyle—helps him cope. Helps him find 'happiness' even though he's stuck in a mess. Is that a semantic contradiction or what? Of course, there's the new wave shrink who's more like a 'lifestyle programmer,' and who looks at all the possible resources in the community at large, in the patient, in the family, and so on. He tries to get maximum utilization of all intrinsic and extrinsic resources of the patient by the patient. The therapist is facilitator, catalyst, resource manipulator, and source of information. This all seems quite realistic and reasonable, and, in fact, it is.

"However, this holistic social work approach tends to use as its model the normal American family. It upholds the standards and goals of the contemporary scene, regardless of how viable they are. Are there any such therapy situations in which people are actually aided to enhance their lifestyle structure until it fills needs, before 'therapy' occurs? Sure there are. But for every one that recognizes exactly what those needs are and how to deal with them, there are 10,000 that don't, principally because the therapist involved has the same lifestyle programming as the rest of us, and he believes in and accepts many of our culturally conditioned lifestyle standards and paradigms, regardless of how viable these standards and paradigms actually are. Therapy is only as good as the therapist's awareness.

"But there's an even bigger problem: Most people aren't going to be able to simply enhance their lifestyles in the MC direction at the recommendation of a helping professional. It's not that easy. Most people don't really know that many people they'd like to be in an MC with—if any. This doesn't mean they wouldn't like to do an MC or wouldn't profit wonderfully from it—they would. But they haven't yet met the people they'd be MC-compatible with. Or perhaps they've met one or two. It's not enough. So I see the database of MC aspirants and the periodic, criteria-based selection-searches for MC compatibles you people told me about as essential elements here. And the coordination, organization, and communication levels required for commitment and harmony as you get to know your fellow MC-hopefuls and deal with moving and environmental adjustments—I see the MC search and match website as essential for coordination, as well as being where the databases are stored.

"In view of all I've said, how much good would it do to have counselors point in MC directions as a way to help their clients get their acts together? The answer is simple: If an MC website with a search app in particular and the MC movement in general were truly available resources for this person, then it would do an enormous amount of good. I hadn't talked to you Galaxians for more than a few minutes before I knew that. On the other hand, if the person had no such thing available, then it would be good idealistically, but UNREALISTIC." Tom paused and looked like a light bulb had lit up in his head. "Okay, okay—this is where I needed to go with this. "The shrinks have always had 'realistic' mean that you have to accept a person's situational givens, and work within that framework, and not point in unrealistic directions, because you want him to have his life improve, which it won't if he fails—from chasing the unrealistic windmills of impossible-to-achieve goals. So the shrink's goals have always been relatively modest: a bit of self-awareness—a piece of insight—a little more integrity, etcetera. Because they know there isn't any way to expect the patient to be able to do very much to change the mess he's living in. However, that's all B.M.C. (before the MC movement). Once we're A.M.C. (after

the movement is in full swing), it becomes *unrealistic* to accept lifestyle messes, and it becomes not only *realistic* but *essential* that all helping professionals point in environmental enhancement directions, with P.E.T.-MC as the main resource to consider. Well, what do you think?"

"I like it!" exclaimed Sam. "And I don't think any shrinks will be put out of business for the next 50 to 100 years. There will be anxiety and hang-ups to deal with as normal neurotics on the verge of doing the MC thing, whether for the right or wrong reason, confront their fears and confusion, and come face-to-face with programming that says they're evil if they make any changes in their conditioned lifestyles. They'll want to purge some of the energy from 'the ghosts of parents past' before proceeding, so they preclude wigging out."

"Actually," said Tom, "I think a contextual shift for the helping professions, like what we're picturing here, would be a genuine breath of fresh air for them all. Why deal with the wreckage of totally-avoidable lifestyle errors when they could be dealing with the serious, unavoidable psychological difficulties of life?"

"There's never been a hint of psychological problems here at Galaxy," said Mort. "Maybe enough MCs will spell the end for the helping professions, eventually. Then they can all become fortune tellers." Everyone laughed at this.

"There will always be those people who are too nonfunctional to make life work," said Bonnie. "These people will still need help. Unfortunately, they're likely to be those least able to pay for it. I predict welfare and human services picking up the bills from the shrinks."

"I predict prisons using P.E.T.-MC principles to help the inmates find respect and responsibility," offered Cheryl. "I also predict that as MCs spread more and more, our society will need fewer shrinks and social workers, because people will learn to be more resourceful and responsible. Even now people feel embarrassed to consult these people, because they know that getting their act together is their own job—needing help seems like failure to them."

"That brings up a point about P.E.T.," said Tom. "According to P.E.T. people, one of the major reasons people have avoided it was because they thought of it as therapy or the like, which it isn't. They consult a lawyer when they need legal advice, and they think nothing of it. But when they need child-raising or lifestyle advice, they think there's a stigma. It's merely adult education. It's merely parent-effectiveness experts sharing what they know and letting participants discuss their progress at relationship enhancement, if they desire. And when I say they need child-raising advice, I'm merely pointing to the incontrovertible facts shown by statistics about lifestyle realities—their normal, average families are fighting, stressful, chaotic and frustrated, which indicates that the family definitely DOES have room for the lifestyle enhancement called P.E.T., whether or not one or both parents chooses to recognize that fact."

"I think your concept of 'realistic' shifting according to what, indeed, IS realistic is a good metaphor to help guide the entire MC movement," said Robert. "That helps me put a few loose ends in place, in my mind—thank you. Like you, I didn't want to support an idea that shrinks and social workers have erred all along with regards to being realistic about trying to get their clients to get their lifestyles together before working on individual psychology. The truth is, was, and always will be that getting one's lifestyle together first before beginning any other process is always advisable and helpful. But, as you pointed out, it is only after the MC movement is strong that such advice may be actually realistic. Why should a shrink 'work on' what are essentially a fellow human's totally understandable 'symptoms' of resistance to oppression and deprivation, when he could just as easily be a catalyst for P.E.T.-MC solutions that would merely require lifestyle enhancements to effect? The MC solution would be the realistic one. But in the past, the MC solution would have been the unrealistic one and 'psychology'—hopefully with a holistic context—would have been the realistic direction to go. But soon, having the MC websites and databases in place and the movement happening will change the entire helping profession's context and approach, in most cases. The next ten years will be pivotal for all this.

"Oh, and one other thing. I think it would be relevant to point out that although the P.E.T. theory is flawless, the P.E.T. context is a bit ironic. The main thrust of P.E.T. is to free the slaves—the Emancipation Proclamation for relationships in general, as it were—making Thomas Gordon the Abraham Lincoln of family politics. P.E.T. helps people drop power as the basis of relationship, and dump orders and nagging and coercion. P.E.T. helps people DEMOCRATIZE family and relationships. It lets people be responsible—especially kids—because now they can choose and take responsibility for their choices. This inserts integrity and maturity into families that have never known such things. But the irony is that—like today's political contests—the available choices are often so limited that they make the actual choice one makes meaningless.

"The up side of this is that the very fact of making a choice, even if it's a choice between two nonviable options, puts one in control, at cause, and in a position of self-acknowledged responsibility. But the down side is that in most families people are going to be 'free to choose among various forms of deprivation' more often than not. So freedom of choice itself is no guarantee of need fulfillment. Johnny badly needs nurturing but Suzie is baby-sitting Johnny by blabbing to her friends on the phone, and he gets rejected when he tries to get her to pay attention to him—she's taking care of HER needs. Or perhaps she too needs nurturing from a parent, but no parent is available, so she is blabbing to block her feelings. Johnny cannot choose to be nurtured; he can only choose between styles of deprivation: TV, Suzie, depressing loneliness, or whatever.

"It's good that the parents are out there in the world working, taking responsibility for themselves and their family and being productive members of society. But even if mom were home, statistics say that she would often be busy, watching TV, napping, reading, or doing her own feeling-blocking blabbing.

"So the irony is that P.E.T. frees people to choose, but if the choices are lacking, then the situation hasn't really gone from negative to positive. For instance, if Johnny and Suzie were in a P.E.T. family, how would this help the above situation of deprivation? (Beside the fact that they'd be more likely to share their feelings with one or both parents at some later time, and have problem-solving meetings on the quality of childcare, perhaps.) It is the MC's MAKING MEANINGFUL CHOICES AVAILABLE that is needed. The essence of the situation is that P.E.T. improves the way people relate but has relatively little guidance to offer when it gets to the problem of making people available to relate to in the first place.

"But the reverse is also true: If the MC concept did not include P.E.T., then we'd have to say that the MC takes care of the problem of making people available to relate to but offers no guidance about HOW they need to relate in order for their relationships to be a success. And of course that is precisely why the P.E.T.-MC COMBINATION is so effective. Contemporary families have not one but TWO critical problems to address; P.E.T. addresses one, and MC-type caregiving addresses the other."

"I see shrinks in the near future helping people overcome neurotic resistances to getting their acts together by going in the MC direction," said Wendy. "But in the long haul, I see shrinks working on the real nut cakes. Or those with chemically or traumatically caused psychological imbalances, and that stuff."

"I'll buy that," said Tom. "Well, let's discuss what part I'll play in this movement. I love the idea of a P.E.T. explosion. I want to aid it all I can. How can I help best? I really don't know. What do you need from me most, Galaxians?"

At this time they discussed various possibilities. Being ready to be a front-line person who could represent P.E.T. and the MC movement at the same time in a business context, helping to recruit famous people and investors, creating business plans, being a movement consultant and/or director; all these topics and more were covered. Tom agreed to fly to Galaxy (the MC headquarters) periodically and check in often by phone, and be available for the various tasks involved in making the movement a success. Once the discussions were completed for the moment, he called home and gave his family a quick, excited summary of what had been going on the last couple of days. One could tell that he was getting some excitement at the other end of the line. After all, how could anyone NOT be excited about the prospect of giving the world a real, honest chance to

start working right? Eventually he hung up and, selecting a book from his brief case, walked over and sat down to speak to them again.

"You know what?" asked Tom. "There's another piece to this puzzle that no one has mentioned. It just occurred to me. When I was at the airport I picked up some reading material. Have any of you read this?" He held up the book *Age Wave*. Everyone shook their heads NO, except Robert, who raised his hand YES. "The title doesn't sound like something related to what we've been discussing. But I marked some spots during the flight—what would I do without Post-its—and I think it'd be appropriate to read a couple of these. Some light bulbs are turning on in my mind. I think this may be important.

"Demographics have never been that big of a concern with me. But the changes in demographics in the next few decades are going to have a large impact on the future—on how people live. Let me run a few ideas by you. I think you'll see why they're relevant. As a result of *the senior boom* (people living longer, so there are more seniors around), the *birth dearth* (the plummeting of the birth rate starting around 1980; the great population of older people isn't being offset by an explosion of kids), and *the aging of the baby boom,* the country is changing dramatically. There's an Age Wave. Here's a quote:

"'Fully one third of all Americans—76 million people—were born between 1946 and 1964. Likened by demographers to a pig moving through a python, this generational mass has dominated American culture for four decades. . . . At each stage of their lives, the needs and desires of the baby boomers have become the dominant concerns of American business and popular culture. . . . The era of the United States as a youth-focused nation is coming to an end, and it will not be seen again in our lifetimes. . . . An estimated 20 percent of the baby boomers will have no children at all; another 25 percent will have only one. . . . The over-65 population in 2000 is likely to be close to 40 or 45 million, representing as much as one fifth of the total population. . . . In 1983, the number of Americans over the age of 65 surpassed the number of teenagers. We are no longer a nation of youths. . . . two thirds of all the men and women who have lived beyond the age of 65 in the entire history of the world are alive today. . . . Throughout most of recorded human history, only one in ten people could expect to live to the age of 65. Today, nearly 80 percent of Americans will live to be past that age. . . . In 15 years there won't be anybody as powerful as the organized elderly. . . . When the boomers advance into their fifties and sixties, they will become the demographic group that sets the political agenda and dominates election outcomes . . .' You're probably all saying 'So what?' I'm getting to the juicy stuff . . .

"This next quote relates to the CONNECTEDNESS issue: 'People in the *third age* [over 60] should be the glue of society, not its ashes.' I believe that Hazel and Rita are glue in Galaxy here, and as such they have a critical evolutionary role. Am I right, ladies?" asked Tom.

"Yes, Tom," said Rita. "I've always thought of myself as a pretty sticky person." Everyone chuckled.

"Me too," piped in Hazel.

"The book calls the third age 'a living bridge between yesterday, today, and tomorrow.' He says that 'with the coming of the Age Wave, a new era of human evolution is unfolding, the third age of man. The purpose of the third age [over 60 years old] is twofold. First, with the children grown and many of life's basic adult tasks either well under way or already accomplished, this less pressured, more reflective period allows further development of the interior life of the intellect, memory, imagination, of emotional maturity, and of one's own sense of spiritual identity (akin to Erikson's concept of the achievement of ego integrity and to Maslow's concept of self-actualization).'

"Anyway, we're talking about MCs being the wave of the future. Doctor Ken Dychtwald, the author, says that 'If you can anticipate the movement of the baby boom generation's life-span migration, you can see the future.' It seems to me that this guy is telling us which way the traffic is flowing. And it's up to us to make sure the MC

movement is flowing with that traffic—not against it. Okay now, here's the juicy stuff I promised—here's a quote:

"'You will change your conception of family life and the ways in which you relate to your parents and children [as a result of the Age Wave]. . . . The child-focused nuclear family will become increasingly uncommon and will be replaced by the "matrix" family, an adult-centered, transgenerational family bound together by friendship and choice as well as by blood and obligation.' LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOUR GALAXY FAMILY HAS BEEN PREDICTED, BY THE WORLD'S BEST EXPERTS, TO BE THE LIFESTYLE MOST AMERICANS WILL HAVE IN THEIR FUTURE! Yours is indeed a MATRIX family! Watch where all this is going—another quote:

"'You could interpret the news of the coming Age Wave in two ways. You could hear it as a forecast of a dark future, a slow descent into senility and ossification, a hardening of our arteries as individuals, and the slow death of our culture's vitality and creativity. Or you could hear it as news about a world of extended opportunities, of enhanced possibilities for living, of new freedom and new hope. . . . If we envision these later years as a time of boredom, social isolation, and ill health, we may consciously or unconsciously aim ourselves in these directions. On the other hand, if the expectations we have of long life are filled with vigor, fulfilling activities, and social usefulness, we might similarly aim ourselves toward these more hopeful possibilities.' It's all a matter of attitude. And it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. Taking charge and steering your life where you want it to go is critical here, he says. And nothing could possibly be more 'take charge' than participation in the MC movement.

"Our country is gerontophobic—it has some ugly ideas about aging and senior citizens. As our country ages, we have to drop these paradigms or we'll choke on them. Dychtwald says: 'If we cling to our myths and fears about aging, many of the possibilities of the Age Wave will remain undiscovered and unawakened.' He sees the Age Wave's potential as '. . . a dramatic and unprecedented expansion of our opportunities for growth, adventure, wisdom, experience, and love.' I've personally experienced that this is true for me—I'm 66 and very healthy, productive, and ambitious and probably have 20 more years to go. But I also see plenty of my over-65 contemporaries stagnating. They've bought into the erroneous myths about aging. They haven't seen through these myths. Here are six myths, as seen by Dychtwald: People over 65 are old. Most older people are in poor health. Older minds are not as bright as young minds. Older people are unproductive. Older people are unattractive and sexless. All older people are pretty much the same.

"Now, you all know that I don't fit the negative stereotypes, and that neither do Hazel and Rita. We're all healthy, sharp, productive, and DAMNABLY ATTRACTIVE, if I do say so myself!" Everybody laughed at that one. Not that it wasn't true. Perhaps it was a bit "immodest."

"But here's where it gets especially juicy and relevant—I quote: 'Chances are that if you continue to challenge yourself, your sharpness and understanding will increase with age. . . . Much of what was once attributed to a loss of intelligence [in older people] is now being recognized as the result of the way old people are often treated. It has been shown experimentally that people left in isolation become less social and less mentally active. If we were to take normal, functioning adults of any age and isolate them, confine them to wheelchairs, and regiment and patronize them—treat them, in other words, the way many elderly are treated, especially in institutions—within a matter of weeks they would begin to act senile: dependent, querulous, antisocial, irrational, and unintelligent. Study after scientific study has shown that people who stay active and intellectually challenged not only maintain their mental alertness but also live longer.' The media images of the elderly are simply incorrect.

"But look how all this strengthens the case for the MC movement. Not only can it be shown by demographics and logic and interpolation and trend analysis of all kinds that MC-type lifestyles are the wave of the future, but it even specifies ISOLATION as the factor to be overcome. The MC's major function is to cure the myriad symptoms stemming from the isolation problem. The function of the 'third age' people is to glue

together the generations to prevent isolation and to empower CONNECTEDNESS. Robert's studies, Dychtwald's studies, and my lifelong experiences as a businessman, family man, and holder of a masters degree in psychology all confirm that isolation and lack of connectedness have been, along with erroneous parenting tactics, the reason that most families are dysfunctional and many are failing outright. So, ladies and gentlemen, this all adds up to something. This all means something. Are you seeing it? Are your light bulbs switching on too?" Everyone nodded affirmatively. It was all starting to add up. And the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

He continued: "Things are going to be *naturally* moving in the Galaxy direction in the future, in good part because of the irrepressible reality of the Age Wave. But whether the culture goes that way kicking and screaming, afraid of the future and depressed by the facts of the Age Wave, or eagerly, excited by the inherent advantages and opportunities of the Age Wave—that's the question.

"We're in a good position to show them how this can be the best thing that could have happened to this me-first, Facebook obsessed, youth-obsessed culture. We're strategically located in such a place that we can help them understand that the Age Wave is our culture's way of maturing, of transforming from a society based upon greed, sensationalism and escapism to one based upon wisdom, compassion and cooperation. We can quiet their fears about lifestyle changes, as we show them how the ultimate matrix family—Galaxy—is a miraculous example of the exciting changes to come. We can remind them how matrix families closely resemble the most successful family structures of the most successful cultures both now and historically. We can remind them that the people abuse, substance abuse, and divorce rate symptomology so conspicuous during the reign of the isolated nuclear and other type of families are not prevalent in past and present societies with matrix-like configurations.

"Dychtwald says: 'With the coming of the Age Wave, we will witness a dramatic evolution in the structure and purpose of the American family. Shifting from a nuclear, child-centered orientation, the new matrix family will be adult-centered, will span three, four, even five generations, and will be bound together as much by friendship and choice as by blood and obligation. With this shift, the essential family-oriented human needs and activities such as love, caregiving, friendship and support won't change. Instead, the form of the family will shift somewhat to better meet these needs in our changing times. . . . The nuclear family became dominant during the first half of the twentieth century, not because it was a "perfect" kind of family unit, but rather because it was appropriate to the economics, demography, and life patterns of the times. The child-centered family was the inevitable result of our youthful, child-focused culture . . . The evolution of the family isn't new to history. This basic social unit has been continually changing in size, shape, and focus in keeping with the unique tone, style, and emphasis of the economics and demography of the times. . . . The nuclear family, which fulfilled a unique function, was one of the shortest-lived family metamorphoses in history. According to Dr. Matilda White Riley, president of the American Sociological Association, "As four (or even five) generations of many families are now alive at the same time, we can no longer concentrate primary attention on nuclear families of young parents and their children." . . . the nuclear, child-focused family is becoming transformed into a new form, more appropriate to the needs of an aging society. . . . The matrix family of the Age Wave is *adult-centered* . . . the majority of family relations are no longer between young children and adults, but between adults and adults. [Galaxy is already at that point.] The matrix family is *transgenerational*. Relationships that combine, cross, and skip generations become increasingly possible in our long-lived era . . . The matrix family is *bound together by friendship and choice as well as by blood and obligation.*' (Hence Bert, Joyce and Glen.)

"He says that a lot of things will be 'geared to help millions of adult Americans learn to relate with and, if needed, care for their loved ones without spoiling their own lives in the process.' He's referring to the fact that many families find out that it is very frustrating and unexpectedly burdensome to care for a couple of kids or an elderly relative or two, or both, and many families are amazed at how expensive and time-

consuming it is, how difficult it can be, and how it can disrupt the lives of a nuclear family's members severely. He warns that there will be more and more elderly cared for in more and more private homes, and if the negative attitudes toward older people continue, this is going to be a chaotic, stressful and unhappy era for all of us. He cites the increasing amounts of abuse of senior citizens in our society as writing on the wall. He says that people that try to carry on business as usual, making no lifestyle adjustments to adapt to the Age Wave, the working mothers and the two-income families, are going to be stressed beyond their capacity to cope. However, people who INCREASE RESOURCES, CHOICE, AND POTENTIALS, by use of matrix-family configurations, will find that all this is merely the culture maturing, and learning BETTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. He didn't use these exact words, but that was the essence.

"In other words, the best type of lifestyle to not only cope with the Age Wave but to also cope with the other cultural changes of our present and our future, is the matrix family configuration. And furthermore, all of us here know that the MC is the best matrix-type lifestyle. I thought at first that Galaxians were ahead of their time. But the cutting edge of the Age Wave is already upon us, so it's more that the nonmatrix lifestyles are BEHIND the times.

"The incredible sales increases in the health products industry, from Fonda's *Workout* video to vitamins to gym equipment to jogging shoes to health club memberships, are the baby boomers' way of trying to retain their youthfulness even though they're no longer young. 'If they have their way, they will be the first generation in history to take 100 years to become 50,' is the way Dychtwald sees it. But healthy bodies won't mean much if their family and social lives are a flop.

"To help accommodate the changing lifestyle patterns, the *Journal of Home Economics (1980)* defines 'family' as 'a unit of intimate, transacting, and interdependent persons who share some values and goals, responsibility for decisions and resources, and have a commitment to one another over time.' Dychtwald sees this as more realistic and actual than 'a group of persons of common ancestry,' which is Webster's definition.

"Dychtwald also describes roommate matching services which are popping up all over, as well as shared housing. Roommate matching is an invaluable aid to older people who live alone and need more human resources. It sounds like a crude version of your MC database plans. With roommate matching, one gets to share rent and housing with someone, and therefore defray costs and cure some of one's loneliness. With the MC plan, one not only defrays costs and precludes loneliness, one participates in the most workable lifestyle ever. Shared housing, he tells us, is also a popular stop-gap measure for dealing with the expense and isolation of living alone. But, again, one won't find that this pragmatic expediency guarantees that one will incur the blessings of a fulfilling, happy Galaxy existence. More likely, one will just be a little less lonely and less terrified on bill-paying day. Life won't necessarily work well. But coping will be a bit easier.

"Another thing: he describes something called ECHO (Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity) housing. It allows people to care for older relatives without having it impinge upon their lifestyles too heavily. It's basically putting a small prefabricated cottage in the back yard. Robert has talked about central daycare 'hubs' and 'suns' as ways of watching over little ones from an MC context. I propose that you expand the functionality and realism of these central structures to include: caring for kids as planned, but also caring for elders when the kids are grown up, and also caring for kids and elders simultaneously, to a degree. This could be a natural progression as empty nesters find themselves wanting to go to the hub to be caregivers for their grandchildren or even great-grandchildren, and then as they get to a condition where they themselves need help, expand the hub a bit to allow for this contingency. The vital thing here is that kids don't get in the way of taking care of elders and that elders don't get in the way of childcare. To the degree this is a potential, the hub needs structural divisions and dual functionality. Or think of an MC, as it matures, transforming the function of a hub from daycare to elder care.

"Finally, I'll point out that as divorce statistics skyrocket, sociologists are saying that this doesn't necessarily mean marital rejection or failure. This is in Dychtwald's book,

too. It simply means that more people are willing to try again when it doesn't work the first or second time. I see by the looks on your faces that you have something to add here. I'll bet I can guess what. If marriages had the support of adequate resources, such as in Galaxy in particular and MCs in general, then they'd be unlikely to fail.

"One has only to examine the REAL reasons people get married in the first place (not the ones they cite) to see why most are doomed. Such extremely common reasons as: to get the father or mother one never had, because one is getting parental pressure to get married, because of unexpected pregnancy, and 'to have some kids to get love from'—these are the real reasons, and if good relationships grow after such a shaky foundation is laid, it can only be a lucky accident.

"Dychtwald seems to imply that if people greet the Age Wave with open arms and readjust lifestyles in the matrix direction, then divorce will not be so necessary, since families will be more successful due to increased resources. But he also implies, while examining the increasing divorce rates of older people, that divorce may be seen as a necessity for most long-lived people, as they try out various relationships with the goal of settling for the one that works best. The Tofflers say this as well. Dychtwald also points to the increased incidence of older people living together without marrying. I can't argue with his ideas and implications—the guy's right on the money. But I can say that I'd prefer to see people, through MC databases, start with more compatible relationships in the first place, and then, through MC formation, participate in those relationships in reliable MC contexts so the necessity for divorce is lessened. I've seen over and over what divorce does to kids—it's not pretty. On the other hand, if there are no kids involved and older people wish to indulge in serial monogamy, then I say let them do whatever makes them happy and I wish them good luck."

Joyce spoke: "Tom, I LOVE what you've been saying! I'm really thrilled about the way so many things seem to be pointing in the MC direction. The movement needs all the help it can get. The fact that social evolution is working with us as a close ally is very encouraging! Thank you so much for that examination of the Age Wave. It was wonderful." Everyone chimed in with their agreement with Joyce's statement.

She continued: "I'm living with the best family in the world. I never want for relationship, love, or attention. I'm not blood-related to or married to anyone here, but it really makes no difference. I'm SO happy that they love me. And when some were younger it was wonderful to mother them. I feel incredibly lucky. And now I get to move from close encounters of the second kind to close encounters of the third kind. Life is a magnificent adventure! Rita, Hazel—what do you think?"

"Exactly what you said, Joyce," said Rita. "This Age Wave stuff is right on as far as I'm concerned. Perhaps Hazel and I will have special MC-headquarters jobs that are about integrating the way the Age Wave and MC movement interface—or dovetail is more like it. I can certainly see myself as an example to emulate for other seniors—I'm happy as a lark, sharp as a tack, and DAMN good-looking!" Everyone howled at that.

"So am I!" exclaimed Hazel.

"Hey girls, I said it first," mock-complained Tom.

When everyone calmed down, Robert changed the subject: "Say, Tom, have you read Rollo May's *The Cry For Myth*?"

"Yes. Why?" asked Tom. But he continued: "No, let me see if I can guess. Hmmmmm . . . The book was about myth but May was a therapist. One major connection between the two was when he discussed Adler. Adler often treated children, and in doing so he looked for the 'guiding fiction,' which is another way of saying 'myth.' It refers to a significant event in one's early childhood that the person remembers; the event is turned into a myth which the person then uses as a guide to guide him or her through life, whether or not that event is true or not. One knows oneself through this myth. Let's see . . . I recall other things he mentioned:

"He also discussed how most people are easy marks for a consumer culture in which no matter how much you have, you're manipulated into feeling you want more. You guys would say that inadequate nurturing, steep-gradient nurturance strategies, and

constant bombardment with advertising are all combining to make consumer-automaton personalities whose past deprivations are going to be exploited all their lives.

"He discussed Philip Slater's works on loneliness and the consumer-culture as produced by steep-gradient nurturance, mobility leading to mythlessness and disconnectedness, and the collapse of the myth of heroism.

"He showed how our myths give us identity, community, morality and meaning, and that each of us, in trying to make sense out of the world we experience, is forced to form myths which seem to give life coherence and context. He told us that it is imperative that we rediscover the myths that can give us the psychological context that can weather the challenging times we are in. The pioneer, cowboy, and *Leave It To Beaver* myths are weakened and no longer fit. But nothing has come along to fill the vacuum —" Robert interrupted:

"I believe you've hit upon what I was about to say. Do go on." Tom continued:

"I didn't just get off the boat, ladies and gentlemen. I've a lot of experience under my belt. The hollow materialism of empty, lonely automatons WAS NEVER THE AMERICAN DREAM! Nor was greed and egoism the American national character. But it is where things are going. One of the reasons P.E.T. is a challenge to so many, according to Glen, is that active listening forces one to care about, to listen to, and to relate to others —which is hard to get into if one is obsessed with oneself night and day. To Adler, neurotics were those people who were isolated from their fellow humans; and the cause of neurosis is the lack of social interest, i.e., concern for others. He taught that psychological problems are not solved until the patient develops an adequate concern for society, an acceptance of his responsibility toward the community. He was also one of the founders of the democratic parenting movement, but P.E.T. books take this movement much farther in a more useable direction for the layperson. In these books Gordon stresses 'examples to emulate' as the key to good learning and healthy socialization and good values development. But there are no heroes in society and our homes offer no heroes to look up to. So what are we to do? Examples to emulate, sad to say, are coming from the media. We are raising Madonnas and rappers and Simpsons. Bill Moyers, May points out, found out that many young people thought of Boesky and Milken and other greedy lawbreakers as role models.

"Whatever can our society do about all this? Well, just suppose there were role models that expressed not only the TRUE American Dream but the TRUE human dream as well. And just suppose there was something anyone could do in their own environment to become their own heroes and heroines—something that Joyce has just called close encounters of the three kinds. And just suppose that the personal myths that each of us seek within ourselves to give psychological integrity and meaning could center on making the world work rather than on emulating the self-centered greed of Boesky and Milken. Peter Berger has said that 'It is through myths that men are lifted above their captivity in the ordinary, attain powerful visions of the future, and realize such visions.'

"Dear friends, it may be you with whom I'm speaking, but I am clearly addressing the world, and they will hear these words once we get things going:

"I believe that the world is going to soon change from symptom to synergy, from greed and hate to win-win thinking and cooperation, and from crying to thriving. I believe that the world now has, in the form of Galaxy and the MC myth, an example to emulate, complete with heroes and heroines. It won't matter so much whether or not we are real. What will matter about such a myth, as May so aptly points out, is the quality of the myth. Every person will soon have the opportunity to become his or her own personal hero or heroine, participating in the greatest quest the world has ever united behind: the MC movement.

"There is one basic common denominator between conservatives, fundamentalists, activists, liberals and the rest of the factions. All want peace and all want the world to have decent morals and values that result in a happy life full of love and meaning. But nothing has really come along that is DOABLE in which all these factions can begin to work together for these goals. That's why the groups spend so

much time throwing rocks at each other and so little time making the world, or even their own lives, WORK. There needed to be a plan. And now there is.

"Richard Louv, in *Childhood's Future*, has come closer to outlining such a plan than any other person I know except for you Galaxians. He calls for a "family liberation" movement that can cross ideological and class with fundamental principles like none of us ever again raising a child alone, so no more steep-gradient nurturing—there needs to be more social resources in each child's care. We need to re-weave the social web, as he says. Another principle: that the main goal of programs involving children and families should be to increase positive contact between children and adults. Also that little meaningful political change can happen for children without grassroots action beginning in the family and extending through neighborhoods, schools, and the workplace. MC movement ideas dovetail with his."

"I must confess that I've been pondering the fact that for a business guru, you seem awfully well-read and knowledgeable about life. I'm surprised and frankly delighted," said Hazel.

"I believe that this is the reason Stephen was wise enough to recommend me. I BELONG here helping you guys with all this stuff. And . . ." He looked at Stephen. " . . . thank YOU for that. I believe it's the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me!" He smiled at Stephen.

The conversation tapered off to general socializing and friendly relating for a bit. Eventually hunger got the best of them.

They ate supper, talked some more, and went to bed. Sunday they got as detailed as possible on who was doing what and when and how. Eventually Tom and Stephen were taken to the airport for their flights south.

Chapter 16

"People want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it."
—Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Why not try peace for a while? If we find war is better, it will not be difficult to fight again."
—Abdu'l-Baha

"Wisdom comes from life experience, well-digested. It's not what comes from reading great books. When it comes to understanding life, experiential learning is the only worthwhile kind."
—Erik Erikson

"All theory, dear friend, is grey, but the golden tree of actual life springs ever green."
—Goethe

"Above all he [J.F.K.] gave the world for an imperishable moment the vision of a leader who greatly understood the terror and the hope, the diversity and the possibility, of life on this planet and who made people look beyond nation and race to the future of humanity."
—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

"Since the measuring device has been constructed by the observer . . . we have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning."
—Werner Karl Heisenberg

"O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—no body knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why—"
—William Congreve

Allen Reginald Wilson was a busy man. He was the third richest man in the world and a leading social thinker who liked to communicate via YouTube videos. In order to not be overwhelmed by the din of those people asking for funds or trying to get attention or advice about various things, he'd done what all famous people have learned to do—build a few screening barriers between himself and the general public. It allowed him to avoid an assault on his privacy and peace of mind. A scientist (whose special interests were futurism, sociology and psychology), more than most, needs time and space to think, wonder, plan, experiment, research, and confer. So he read his "fan" mail only when he had rare moments of inactivity, or as a diversion during breaks in his routine. Allen Wilson had inherited most of his money, but it hadn't spoiled him. He'd gotten lots of degrees—he loved learning. He had masters degrees in sociology and psychology and a graduate degree in futures studies. He was an expert on the books of the Tofflers—Alvin Toffler was the person he admired most. He felt that this was a guy who truly "gets it" about the world. Allen spoke at many conferences and had done the talk show circuit about his ideas, although he had not written any books. He preferred discussing ideas, and he was good at it.

Stephen pointed Glen and Robert in Allen's direction. Although he didn't know the man, he certainly knew OF him. Glen's research netted him no phone numbers—this was not unexpected, as one in Allen Wilson's position would have an unlisted number as a prerequisite for sanity. Even Stephen—with all his contacts—couldn't get the number. Only a masochist would allow these people access to a phone number. So Glen had typed a letter trying to arrange a phone appointment between Mr. Wilson and Robert. (Glen was helping Robert out with some of the details in order to do his part, as Robert would

be the one to actually make the call they hoped to set up—or at least, that was their plan.)

Glen got back a postcard asking him to put his communications in writing and Mr. Wilson would read them if and when time permitted. The card was obviously a standard response from a secretary. So Glen persisted. He wrote a short letter that contained just enough of an informational tease to stimulate Mr. Wilson's curiosity:

Dear Mr. Wilson,

I've seen all your talks on YouTube, and so has my friend Robert Peterson. We—and others—are engaged in an important project that will help the world go in a direction that I'd call the epitome of where you'd like it to go, according to everything you've said. I realize that you get some crank letters, but this isn't one of them. I don't want money, free advice, or to waste anyone's time. Robert and I want only the opportunity to talk to you in person and then simply let YOU tell US what YOU'D like to do. This is very, very important and absolutely guaranteed NOT to be about religious trips, scams, shams, or anything else silly. We respect your time, and we respect you. We know what you've been trying to do about the world situation, via your talks (we mean BESIDES teaching people about the Tofflerian clash of the three Waves and what it means, obviously your favorite subject). We are trying to do the same thing—in a different but completely compatible way. So please return the enclosed card after filling in the blank with a convenient time and date and office phone number for a phone call from Robert and me. We don't feel we'll succeed at getting an appointment to see you in person unless we first talk to you on the phone and you learn why it's important to make time for us in your busy schedule. We feel certain you'll WANT to see us once we've talked to you a little on the phone.

Sincerely,
Glen Andrews
Galaxy Apartments

Two weeks later the card was returned with a time and date and office phone number. The time was 3 P.M.. The date was on a Saturday. But the appointment was for them to show up in person! A note scribbled in at the bottom of the card requested a phone confirmation of the appointment immediately. Glen called the number, got a secretary, and confirmed the 3 P.M. Saturday appointment, whereupon she gave the address of his office—where they'd meet. Glen ran to tell Robert—and everyone else at Galaxy—the good news. Everyone was delighted.

It was Saturday, 2:30 P.M.. Robert and Glen, fresh from the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, walked into the reception area of the designated office where Mr. Wilson was at work, met the secretary, and took seats when asked.

"You're a bit early, but you're cute, so I'll overlook it this time," she said, breaking the ice in a forward kind of way. She smiled. They smiled back, and then blushed in spite of themselves. And, as fate would have it, Mr. Wilson picked that moment to open the door to his office and step into the waiting room. He noticed the blushing.

"Is she picking on you fellas?" he joked. This made them blush even more. "Why don't you come back here now—that'll keep her from picking on you any more." He winked at her as he ushered the blushers into his office. They introduced themselves and shook his hand and then seated themselves. Mr. Wilson then asked a few questions about his YouTube videos. The guys gave perfect answers with no hesitation.

"So you really have checked out my videos. Very good. Now, let me ask what it is you think I'm trying to do in my videos about the world situation."

"First," said Robert, "you're trying to get everyone to think about the type of future we want and then adjust what we're doing in the present so that we succeed at germinating that type of future. You say that as Toffler's Third Wave rolls in and the

Second Wave rolls out, we need clear thinking about future possibilities and about creating new ideas to cope with them, and that becomes essential to survival. You say that in a culture that changes at an extremely slow pace, the best knowledge to guide one is rooted in past traditions and is handed down from one generation to the next, so doing what one's parent did and teaching your kids to do what you did is smart—it's cultural wisdom. But that is only for a slow-changing society. In a fast-changing society in transition that is trading an obsolete type of civilization for a brand new one—like what's happening in the advanced countries today, past traditions are not the sure guide to present decisions and future possibilities they once were. So instead of simply doing what one's parents did, it is wise to think about the realities of the evolving Third Wave—with the help of your videos—and then to adjust and fine-tune ones plans and actions according to what's needed in the new emerging reality. You've attempted to help create the consciousness needed for all of us humans to undertake the control of change, and the guidance of mankind's evolution,' so we can humanize distant tomorrows.

"Second, you're trying to get us to adopt more Tofflerian-styled peace-forms and rely less on war-forms to settle disputes. We need to learn to communicate effectively rather than resorting to violence. The most important change that needs to happen to differentiate the 21st century from the 20th century is the replacement of win-lose, zero-sum thinking with win-win thinking. And we need to realize that the highest quality power is knowledge, which will have to end up as the dominant type of power people and countries choose in the 21st century if we are to survive it. Happily, you see that power adjustments at the highest level in nations need concomitant power changes at the lowest level, since using Second Wave power in families, which is authoritarianism, will not produce the type of person we need to become leaders and wise power adjusters at the highest level. Look at Iran and Syria.

"Third, following through with my last point, you're trying to have the powers that be cease thinking and acting in Second Wave terms when the only hope for things to go right instead of wrong is if they think and act according to the reality of the new emerging civilization: the Third Wave. If the transition from Second to Third Wave continues to be handled stupidly by those in power, you see violence and terrorism of a worse and more sophisticated type breaking out. People will fight back when their backs are against the wall. On the other hand, you don't want the people to rely on political salvationism—the proverbial knight on a white horse—and social engineering like the liberals have tried in the past. Such things are Second Wave mass-man solutions and cannot possibly succeed in the 21st century.

"Unfortunately, both major parties in the U.S. are dedicated to the preservation of the old order, the industrial past, and the Second Wave. They're also dedicated to representing corporations more than the public, since that's who funds their re-elections. You feel, like Robert B. Reich, that democracy is being undermined as corporate power is dominating. Bureaucratic, centralist, big government solutions are still very attractive to some liberals, and attractive to Democrats in general to a limited degree, but mainly Democrats preserve the Second Wave by their eternal indebtedness to unions, civil service, and industry. Conservatives prefer to preserve the Second Wave by a nostalgia-based return to the 1950s and to Ozzie and Harriet, and via Second Wave economics (like 'trickle-down'), and through their eternal ties to rich people, corporations and trade associations. Conservatives rightly advocate dropping the discredited, invalidated idea of utopia through tax-and-spend, big government guidance, regulations, manipulation, and management. All but a few Americans have learned the lesson that the best way to muck anything up is to create a big government bureaucracy to 'fix' it.

"Anyway, your main point about the dangers of social engineering is that we need bold and imaginative new ideas, not old, Second Wave, mass-man ideas that have been tried and that have failed. Progress via the political salvationism mindset of elitist social engineers is just such a failed idea. We need revamped political institutions and systems solutions that see the whole as well as the parts, not reductionistic solutions with a mass-man, one-size-fits-all context. We need what Toffler calls 'anticipatory democracy' and 'decision division, minority power, and a semi-direct democracy' that's really set up for

the people, not pseudo-representative democracy that's actually set up for the special interests and designed for the mass society. And we need to rely on empowering all citizens with adequate knowledge to be able to participate wisely in democracy, rather than relying on glorified personality contests composed of dissembling politicians misrepresenting and distorting facts and intentions in ways calculated to persuade and to push the emotional buttons of unwary voters so that they will be blindly manipulated to choose a candidate that—once in office—will normally support the wishes of special interests rather than those of the people who voted for him or her.

"Fourth," continued Robert, "you want Third Wave thinking to guide advanced countries to get their act together so they can successfully address the radical fundamentalists' assault on the Enlightenment's ideas, as since they're trying to force the world back to the Dark Ages. Otherwise, things may get nastier than modern societies can possibly deal with. So 9/11 may just be the warm-up. Part of this will require more and better peace-forms and more Third Wave types of war-forms. Like killer drones against terrorists.

"Fifth, you want the U.S. to update all its Second Wave institutions to the Third Wave, not just the political ones, and this includes all social institutions, such as schools, unions, communities and families, since the country is now suffering from. You see the Third Wave as potentially having a great effect on families, communities, and the environment, as more people work at home and/or telecommute, and the society becomes home-centered and more rooted, with less commuting and more community. You champion Toffler's 'electronic expanded family,' and you cite the isolation of families —and especially women homemakers and caregivers—as being a characteristic of the Second Wave that the First and Third Wave civilizations will be less apt to put up with, since there will be less need for it. The Third Wave will help do what Philip Slater has called 'reconnection'—the deep social need for the isolated and disconnected of the Second Wave to reconnect. This helps address the problem of people being alienated from each other, which you stressed in your books.

"Sixth, you want the maldistibution of knowledge to be corrected. We need to empower all people everywhere with the best and latest knowledge so that the Have-nots focus on improving their lot via education and hard work rather than violence, crime, and intimidation. For example, *How to Change the World*, by David Bornstein, shows how social entrepreneurs create social change, which nearly always entails considerable knowledge distribution. You also stress that knowledge can also transform enemy into ally.

"Seventh, you want the U.S.—the world's biggest exporter of culture—to become a positive model to emulate, instead of a hated model of violence, materialism, greed, corruption, sexual excess, and immorality. Our country is much more than these things, but other countries judge us by our media exports—especially our movies—and they're often rightly offended and even disgusted by what they see. Such things spur radical fundamentalists to increase the extremism of their already hard-line perspectives. It's partly how the phrase 'The Great Satan' came about.

"Eighth, you want Third Wave think tanks.

"Ninth, we need grassroots pressures from below to adopt Third Wave thinking, organization, and structure. This will, in Toffler's words, 'place strategic pressure on existing political systems to accelerate the necessary changes. Without this tremendous pressure from below, we should not expect many of today's nominal leaders . . . to challenge the very institutions that give them prestige, money, and the illusion, if not the reality, of power.' The conservative instinct to prevent change—to protect what they have by preserving the status quo—makes otherwise smart people into idea killers. They tend to defend the status quo as practical, no matter how absurd, oppressive, or unworkable it may be. You want us all to do our part in the reconstitution, not merely of our obsolete political structures, but of civilization itself. You say we need to create our destiny.

"This, then, is why we're here. To aid in that destiny creation and that reconstitution of civilization—to do our part to help the world go in the direction your videos say you want it to go. Which also happens to be the direction Glen and I and a few

other people want it to go. We intend to be—hopefully with your help—the ultimate catalyst for not only creating a viable Third Wave civilization, but empowering that civilization to be peaceful, happy, creative, wise, compassionate, environmentally smart, and composed of people with unprecedented good character, loving hearts, and brilliant minds. But rather than foolishly wishing this to come about from the elitist actions of social engineers, political heroes, or prophet-gurus, we want to empower people to bring it about themselves, through their own wise choices and actions. No one will be *expected* to or *asked* to do anything. We plan to simply communicate with exquisite clarity what it will take to precipitate all that I've just described, and then **let people simply utilize their hearts and human wisdom to make up their own minds—to CHOOSE—how they'd like to respond to this information, or whether they'd prefer not to respond, at least for now.**

"We're aware of the horrible mess the social engineers made of the 20th century, with all its bloodshed, hate, fear, force, and misery. We know why these mass-man prescriptions could never have worked for the betterment of mankind no matter how well thought out or benevolent they may have seemed at their onset. People need to be at cause, not at effect. They need to manage their destinies, not be manipulated by well-meaning elites who 'know what's good for them better than they do.' Above all, people need to take the existential responsibility to choose who they are, who they want to be with, how they want to live, and how they want to find meaning in their lives. Programs laid on people by bureaucracies created by Second Wave political saviors on white horses simply do not fit the needs of the situation. What's needed is not humiliating manipulation by so-called 'experts,' but inspiringly beautiful lifestyles that bring out the best in people—**but that are chosen by individuals and families and NOT imposed by 'political saviors.'**"

Mr. Wilson looked like he had a head-full of thoughts. He spoke: "Wow! That's an *incredible* goal you have there, boys. If you could truly precipitate all that you say, it would be the greatest miracle in all of history. Are you sure you're being realistic? Isn't all this overreaching a bit?"

Robert responded: "You'll hear our plan. Once you hear it, *you* decide whether we're overreaching or not. I'd bet you'd love for Third Wave civilization to be as wonderful as I've just described. Am I right?"

"Anyone with a heart, a mind, or a soul would love such a thing, obviously," said Mr. Wilson. "What you just said was the equivalent of not only saying that *life on Earth will evolve into something wonderful for everyone*, but that *the world will be saved from its considerable doomsday potentials and become peaceful and happy*. What human, whether religious or not, could fail to love such a thing? As long as—as you say—it is something that is happily CHOSEN by each individual and family with no pressure or force."

"Then you'd love to help all this along—IF things are truly the way I described them?" asked Robert. "I swear on my life there's no weirdness, religious trip, cult, commune, guru, scam, channeler, sham, hidden agenda, UFOs, or other foolishness. I'm dead serious and being 100 percent honest and straightforward. If I cannot support what I've just said and get you to truly see how we can actually become just such a catalyst as I described, I'll quietly fold up my tent like a Bedouin and slip off into the night, and take Glen here with me."

Mr. Wilson immediately replied: "I cannot imagine anyone not wanting to help the world becoming a peaceful, happy place, as long as each person freely chose whatever this entails and was not influenced by untruths, weird chemicals injected into the air to brainwash people, subliminal messages sneaked into TV broadcasts, or other assaults on free will. It must be that they simply learned about great lifestyle enhancements and chose to go for them. Nothing under the table—"

"Exactly!" interrupted Robert.

"Well," said Mr. Wilson, "you've surely got your work cut out for you to get me to buy into such a thing. I'd have said such a thing was impossible. But you're saying it's not. How old are you two, anyway?"

"Nineteen," the boys said in unison.

"Seems a bit young to know how to do what all the wise men and brilliant minds in all of history have been wishing to do but couldn't figure out how to do. But you deserve a fair hearing, Robert. This promises to be a very interesting afternoon! I'll say this for you: You've got one hell of a lot of guts, and you must have one hell of a big heart—to even *want* to be trying to do all this. My hat's off to you both."

"Thank you, Mr. Wilson—" began Robert.

"Call me Allen," said Allen.

"Okay, Allen. Shall I begin? It's going to take quite a while—" asked Robert.

"Go to it," assented Allen.

"All right then. Einstein said that we should study war as if it were an *illness of childhood*. Think about the implications of that phrase for a minute." He paused for a minute, letting everyone ponder that inordinately perceptive phrase. "I'll be revisiting that concept later once I've built an appropriate framework.

"Our advanced cultures have improved in many ways over the last few centuries—but is it fast enough? More specifically, can we continue to cope with the cultural lag produced when social institutions evolve and progress much more slowly than science and technology? I know you realize that question is rhetorical. We surely know the answer is 'no.' Otherwise, we wouldn't all be living in such a *dangerous world* full of hate, ethnic cleansing, killing, coercion, misunderstanding, poverty, misery and ignorance, but also full of incredibly dangerous weapons of mass destruction. There are plenty of good things on this marvelous planet, but why, exactly, does all the rotten stuff have to be? And there's plenty more coming, all experts say. The trisected world with the clash of First, Second, and Third Wave civilizations is a big part of this, as you and Toffler have said. It's the major context. The Haves won't be able to hide from the Have-nots much longer. You and Robert Reich are merely two of dozens who've said this latter. Soon the disparity is going to push things to boil over in very bad ways. You predicted increases in terrorism—as have most knowledgeable social analysts. Some of the forms it is likely to take are unthinkably nasty and dangerous—perhaps worse than 9/11. Some would even be hard for our species to survive, if not from the terrorism that starts things then from the horrors that are perpetrated by the anger of the initial targets.

"On the one hand, there's great hope in peace-forms and Third Wave knowledge and the benevolence and cooperation these two can lead to—since most hate and prejudice stems from ignorance. There's also great hope in people reading Toffler books and watching your videos and seeing how to cope with all the rapid transformations and inevitable conflicts without running amok. But, on the other hand, there's a problem. It has to do with how the root causes of all the problems are being addressed far too slowly, hesitantly, and incompletely—and they're often not addressed at all."

Robert took a deep breath and went on: "So this is where we plan to focus here. But it won't do for me to jump right into that without first laying the necessary groundwork. Be patient when I'm reviewing things you're already familiar with—you obviously know a lot more than we do about many of the important areas we'll go over. The impact of your incredibly wise videos and Toffler's book sales speaks for itself. But there are other areas where we have really done our homework, and loads of thinking—areas on which you've never had the time or inclination to focus that much attention. But first, the familiar:

"Nationalism is slowly being replaced by a more global worldview. Astronauts and cosmonauts have seen the delicate planet Earth from above, and realized that we're all one species on one world—boundaries are an illusion. Many visionary leaders imagine a time when the allegiance of each human transcends state, nation, and religion and is to mankind as a whole. However, the trend in the direction of oneness is too slow. The right catalysts are desperately needed. The knowledge in your videos is one such catalyst—an essential one at that. But it's not the only one needed. The Third Wave itself will provide another catalyst—it's so much more ecological, human and responsible than the Second Wave, which is nothing if not a study in excesses. More is better. Bigger is better. Ouch! If unfettered growth is intrinsically good, how would one explain a thing called cancer?

"The physicist Fritjof Capra put out *The Tao of Physics* in 1975 and *The Turning Point* in 1982 and called the exploitative, careless, simplistic, Second Wave worldview the old, mechanistic-reductionistic paradigm, and the Third Wave, organic, systems worldview the new, ecological-holistic paradigm. But his 1975 book's purpose—as described right in the subtitle on the cover of the book—was to draw parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism, not focus on the paradigm shift from mechanistic to ecological worldviews, which he didn't get into that heavily until his 1982 book. So there was more 'yin' and 'yang' than paradigm shift in *The Tao of Physics,* therefore people like yourself—too busy and focused to wade through his long and very complex views of exotic physics and Eastern mysicism—would be unlikely to run across the terms he used to describe these worldviews. In *The Third Wave* in 1980, Toffler called the Second Wave worldview 'indust-reality,' naming it because you'd seen no name, at least no acceptable one, applied to it previously. This was two years before Capra published his focused paradigm shift analysis in *The Turning Point*, which clearly spelled out and named the two worldviews. For our purposes, we can say the old and new paradigms, the Second Wave and Third Wave worldviews, the mechanistic and ecological paradigms, or whatever. Anyway, what's clear is that we need less people subscribing to the old, Second Wave worldview and more people subscribing to the new, Third Wave worldview. Some of our thinking must necessarily be of the old type, but even most of that needs to be tempered with the new, systems type of thought. This is happening a lot in physics and more and more in other sciences as well. Medicine has been forced to get more holistic, and psychology and sociology see individuals more in the context of the family and social system around them than ever before. These are only two examples. This is all leading somewhere, you have my word on that.

"Many social and psychological scientists have realized just how profoundly our upbringing affects our character, intelligence, self-actualization and happiness, and much research has supported this. For instance, Harlow and Prescott have shown that physically affectionate societies create nonviolent character in their citizens. Where punishment is stressed, there tends to be torture, slavery, murder, bigotry and obsession with supernatural beings intervening in daily life.

"The late Carl Sagan had pointed out that: 'If Prescott is right, in an age of nuclear weapons and effective contraceptives, child abuse and severe sexual repression are crimes against humanity.' He and hundreds of other scientists also have cited research that proves that the importance of **enriched environments** in early childhood can hardly be overstated. Such conditions need to be in terms of not only affection, but choices, stimulation, challenge, opportunity and variability. Many cite the British polymaths such as Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, and Jacob Bronowski, pointing out that the development of such gifted individuals required a childhood period in which there is little or no pressure for conformity. It needs to be a time in which the child can pursue his interests—find out for himself, as Buckminster Fuller would say. The emphasis is on choice, space, creativity, intrinsicness and not extrinsicness. Many have noted that Einstein succeeded in spite of regimenting attempts from his schools; i.e., in spite of his education, not because of it."

"Let me guess," said Allen. "*You* are one of those gifted individuals and a lot of it is due to an upbringing like what you just described—affection, choice, space, encouragement, freedom, and no pressure. There's no other way a 19-year-old could be sitting here discussing these things so clearly and confidently."

"Yes, that's one very important piece of the puzzle," agreed Robert. "But there's more to it than that—"

"Do please go on, then—this is intriguing," prompted Allen.

"Well," said Robert, "I myself have studied quite a bit of research about upbringing, as well as doing a bit of my own, and I can confirm that Harlow and Prescott were correct. But more than that, I can point out many diverse sources leading to even more important conclusions. For example: Sagan, when trying to figure out ways of improving the highly-symptomizing American society, had looked at the possibility that less advanced cultures may be abandoning vital traditions as they adopted more modern

ways—practices that would have incredibly beneficial effects on our society if we'd adopt them. He was correct—such a thing *is* actually occurring. I was thinking of some of the better multiple-caregiving childcare traditions that emerging nations (some Polynesians, for example) are leaving behind as they enter the modern age—much to their social and psychological detriment. You've referenced some of the nasty side effects of so many of us in this country adopting *isolated* nuclear family lifestyles, citing this as Second Wave, and being happy that at least some of the Third Wave family structures will be leaving this isolation behind. Problems as diverse as identity conflict, ontological insecurity, alienation, general anxiety, lack of connectedness and relatedness, substance abuse, child abuse, depression—the list is endless—can be traced back to this partial root cause. Many Polynesians had lots of benevolent childcare traditions that worked much better than ours do now, and when they started abandoning them, kids and parents started acting as neurotic, hostile, selfish, and mean as U.S. kids and parents normally act—it was a great shock to them. The switch from multiple caregiving to isolated families without caregiving alternatives (just mother)—which some of these people have made due to industrialization—has been devastating in many ways, except economically. A study of some other cultures, the Zulus or some past Native American tribes, for instance, show similar scenarios. Fortunately, in some cases benevolent and superior traditions were so highly valued that they were retained in spite of pressures to 'modernize.'

"Some of the most significant work on caregiving traditions has been done by Dr. Ronald P. Rohner. In his search for universalist principles of human behavior, transcending old obsessions with cultural relativism that had transgressed the boundaries of good sense, he made cross-cultural, objective studies so that results would be relevant to the human species, not just to isolated cultures. The one fact that stood out clearly with regards to the species as a whole is that withdrawal of warmth has malignant effects throughout our species. There are cultures that always do it, ones that sometimes do it, and ones that rarely do it. Parental or caregiver love, and the loss of or lack of that love, have profound implications permeating both personality formation and the entire social system. Prescott is again confirmed.

"In addition, many advantages have been discovered when multiple caregiving traditions are used in uncrowded, accepting, benevolent situations. Advantages over single-parent or isolated nuclear family situations were quite significant. Many aspects of extended family scenes are more effective at nurturing than normal nuclear family scenes simply because of the arithmetic of added resources. And multigenerational extended families were the most effective of all. It can be shown that the more a child experiences caregiver choices, the more security, nurturing, and satisfaction there is for all concerned. This is especially relevant now that the American woman—including those with young kids—has gone to work, and now that as many as two thirds of all marriages today will end up on the rocks, and now that family size has been dwindling for several hundred years—there are fewer family support personnel available on the premises these days, so people opt for inadequate caregiver resources like babysitters, centers, and home care places all of whom are just in it for the money. You cannot buy true caring with money anymore than you can buy love from a lady of the evening.

"All this adds up to families having fewer human resources than in the past, even though sociology and psychology are perpetually giving us more and more reason to believe that the opposite trend is what we need: We need INCREASED family resources in each family scene, or at least available to such scenes. And I speak from experience. I've lived in an enhanced environment all my life. I've studied the research. I believe, in fact, that we are all BORN wanting things this way. Just because we're humans we're born wanting maximal love, maximal caregivers (after the first few months of intense mother-child bonding, and within reason), maximal choices about caregivers, timing, and which activity to pursue next.

"Let me support all this. Let me show you an article from a U.S, News & World Report from February 25, 1991. It's called *The Biological Roots of Good Mothering* and it's by Art Levine." (He hands the article to Allen.) "Notice how the scientific community has

supplied us with reams of evidence for what I'm saying. You hold in your hand a mere sample of this evidence. Over the years, dozens of researchers in sociology, animal science, behaviorism, cultural anthropology and child development disciplines have tried to reteach us what we already knew. Not only humans but primates in general have known for thousands or even millions of years that maximal resources is the most viable social strategy. And they've also learned that this in no way precludes privacy or good couple relationships. Quite the reverse: it is the security, growth, integration and inspiration one gets from a maximized resource environment that makes both couple relationships and individual privacy more meaningful and workable, since people who are insecure and don't know how to treat each other do poorly in relationships with self or other (in marriages they end up opting for divorce, in personal privacy they end up depressed, lonely and alienated, obsessed with artificial relationships on Facebook). Read through the article for a minute, if you would." Allen does.

"The main three things that prevent abuse in both primate groups and human groups is utilizing multiple caregiving, having good examples to emulate, and enhancing the environment relative to space, creative possibilities, safety and peacefulness. With primates in human-furnished environments, 75 percent of mothers abused their young in the 1970s before this new knowledge was put to use. Now, with good environments, multiple caregiving and good examples to emulate available to most of these primates, abuse is down to only 2 percent of primate mothers. Analogous programs, projects and studies with humans have given similar results. I want to be very clear that the jury is NOT 'out' on this. It's been back in for thousands of years. From every known shred of evidence, both primates and humans have usually adopted such natural, logical parenting and community resource strategies since prehistoric times. The mystery here isn't 'What is the best way to parent?' The mystery is 'How did we ever manage to FORGET what we knew?!' I submit that today's Second Wave, ISOLATED nuclear and single-parent and step family is about as 'natural' as the zoos from generations back, where they employed tiny cages into which miserable mother and infant primates were incarcerated. What I'm saying is as factual as anything in science—if I'm wrong then E doesn't equal M c squared and 2 and 2 isn't 4 and Pluto isn't cold and the Earth is the center of the universe. So why are primate-nurturing environments being enhanced while human-nurturing environments continue to deteriorate? Ignorance, old paradigms, and determinism. Unnecessarily inadequate human environments are the perfect breeding ground for abuse cycles, crime, hatred, fear, insecurity, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, selfishness, and violence. Hence, the current U.S. situation.

"On the other hand, crowding even more monkeys into small cages and precluding personal space and privacy would have made matters worse, not better. This is analogous to why hippie communes were such a major flop. We NEED well-defined physical and social family structures that afford family privacy, personal space and personal privacy. We NEED marriage and personal commitments. And we NEED for the viability of the family to rest upon the viability and resources of the community within which that family will function. (Sometimes 'community' may merely mean a few other families in a neighborhood.)

"Sometimes people wonder why it doesn't work to throw money, food stamps, and welfare programs at disadvantaged families—it often even seems to make it worse sometimes as the less responsible among the disadvantaged become leeches on the system, abandoning any pretense of responsibility or self-reliance. But something that does work is thorough, dynamic, in-depth, need-targeted social work. The reason is simple: the social worker supplies needed social resources and examples to emulate to his or her 'cases,' who respond positively. A viable example to emulate can mean a lot when a disadvantaged, dysfunctional family is surrounded by more of the same—people like themselves. People in cramped quarters that are given roomy quarters respond well, too. But most important of all is when the people in need get help with their young in the form of daycare opportunities or qualified part-time caregivers, or at least help in finding co-op baby-sitting partners so they can get some time for themselves and also for part-time or full-time employment. Often these people will need aid in finding employment.

"Almost all mothers want to be more than just caregivers. The only problem with this idealistic picture, in which all the needs and hopes of the disadvantaged are addressed, is that most of these things happen only in projects and studies, not in the normal casework of underbudgeted social workers. There simply aren't anywhere near enough available resources or trained personnel to go around to be able to help disadvantaged families in this way. But even if there were, why help cure problems and symptoms when it's possible to do something dramatic to address root causes directly? In other words, why opt for *intervention* when *prevention* is so much more effective, easier, cheaper, and logical? More on that later.

"Both historically and cross-culturally, it has been shown that the most enduring and successful lifestyles, families, and child-rearing techniques have been based upon the multiple caregiver type. Our culture's present course away from this natural, intrinsic human direction is one of the main precipitators of the present problems of suicide, divorce, drug abuse, crime, gangs, selfishness, and depression so prevalent in today's society. Recall that I said that ISOLATION is the main cause of this stuff. Well, it should be pointed out that the degeneration of childcare from an enjoyable group activity in times past (*and times present* in many societies on this planet) to an incarcerating, constant, mother-only burden is just another form of isolation. It's a side effect of families isolated from any real social neighborhood, group, community, or extended family *support*, and—as you've noted—this isolation thing is part of the negative legacy of the Second Wave.

"Somehow, against all historical precedent, especially cross-culturally, many in our culture have mistakenly concluded that isolation is a cultural necessity, that working women are a negative phenomenon, that close-knit community ties (especially childcare related ones) are intrinsically bothersome, annoying, impossible, or old-fashioned in today's society, that sharing a potentially enjoyable and inspiring social function like childcare with neighborhood friends somehow reveals that a woman is too weak to handle it herself, and that extended family lifestyles are impractical and outmoded. These erroneous conclusions come from many sources: misunderstanding the meaning of some of the Bible's context and intentions; too big a reliance on mobility; sexist bigotry and bias; failure to widely publish some of the better studies that compare daycare effects with mother-only caregiving; ignorance regarding identity formation, nurturing, ontological security, history, and the differences and commonalities of men and women; and forgetfulness regarding the marvelous advantages once enjoyed by most of our citizens in this country—and the world in general—in the areas of solidarity and connectedness and close-knit communities.

"The latter are a major part of what used to make Reagan—and still makes nostalgic conservatives—long for the 'good old days': You didn't see much gang warfare, epidemic substance abuse, constant crime and violence, and complete lack of respect and responsibility back then. The problem is that we've forgotten what it was about the good old days that precluded such things. It wasn't fear of a whipping, as some of our least knowledgeable people keep trying to tell us. Check the statistics: our prisons have a greater percentage of well-whipped-as-children people in them currently than the population at large. Authoritarianism creates resentment and meanness in the long run, not respect and responsibility, But back to the point:

"As Sagan said in *The Cosmic Connection,* intelligence is one of the most useful evolutionary adaptations—it's an 'extension of an evolutionary tendency toward control of the environment.' He also pointed out that an infant begins to mature when it discovers that it's not the whole of the universe. Then he made an analogy that a society begins to mature when it realizes the same thing (people then become world citizens rather than nationalists). It is time we applied our intelligence, in my opinion, to exercise control of the social environment, but *not* via government sanction or social engineering 'programs.' Specifically I'm referring to *individually chosen* maximum lifestyle enhancement, based not upon traditional or fashionable societal mood swings and fads, but upon known universalist facts about the needs of the human species, what best nurtures this creature, and lifestyle practices that can best enable this nurturing. I'm living proof that when you

do it right, the results turn out right. And so are my sister, cousins, parents, uncle, aunt and grandparents. Not a dud in the bunch. Genetics? No, most of what is operating here is nurture, not nature. Culture, not heredity. But culture enhanced to the point of complete viability, not 'normal' culture. As further support, there's Glen here, who was a normal neurotic outsider just a few months ago, but is now a very together, happy, inspired, deep, caring young man. He's evidence that if you do it right, even late in the game, the results are stunning. He's living in his own apartment right next to mine. We're having a great time there at Galaxy Apartments.

"To continue: Modern American parenting is a research project. It has experimented with all three elements of what Toffler refers to as the power triad. Force, which is lowest quality power, was tried in the form of authoritarianism, and it failed. Modern American parenting then moved to medium quality power, which is money. This was tried in the form of the bribing intrinsic to permissive parenting. Darned if this didn't work even *worse*. Finally, a small fraction of parents have moved to highest quality power —**knowledge**: the type of power that empowers rather than merely manipulating. And it *worked*! As I'm certain you yourself would have confidently predicted. The best parenting knowledge on the planet comes in the form of authoritative, democratic parenting—a subject I'm very knowledgeable about. More on that later.

"Many have marveled at the British polymaths and the causes of their germination. Piaget, Buckminster Fuller, A. S. Neill, Maria Montessori of Montessori School fame, and dozens of others have stressed learning environments full of choices and opportunities rather than pressures and conformity. The operable word here is CHOICE, which lets kids define themselves, supports autonomy, and helps kids learn to be at cause, not at effect, which in turn helps kids learn responsibility. It's important to point out here that my upbringing used this same sort of choice-filled basis—but it *also* did the nurturing environment of the British polymaths one better. Choice was applied to caregiver choice as well as activity and timing choices. And then there's yet another factor. Are you acquainted with P.E.T.?"

"I'm familiar with Dr. Gordon's work. We have done some active listening and family councils with our daughter when she was young, along with some natural-consequences parenting."

"Great!" exclaimed Robert. "That—and the P.E.T. additions found in the thinking of Louise Hart's Winning Family Lifeskills—were the other half of what made my lifestyle work so well." Glen had raised a digit to indicate he had a contribution. Robert recognized the signal and nod-acknowledged it.

"When Robert says 'well,' it should be understood to mean 'MIRACULOUSLY.' As an outsider who's lived at the Galaxy Apartments for only a few months, I can still remember what it was like to feel normally frustrated, depressed, angry, rebellious, and irresponsible all the time. The difference is—is—is too much for my poor little vocabulary to express. Moving to Galaxy was like going from Hell to Heaven. And yet we've determined that I was only NORMALLY—not exceptionally—frustrated, depressed and angry. Robert's been happy and confident and creative all his life. And responsible—amazingly responsible. I've just been introduced to all this, but I can testify to the fact that something very important is going on here. Like when Richard Dreyfuss in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* played with his potatoes, built them into a flat-topped mountain, and said 'this means something.' I too am crazy about P.E.T., by the way. I tried it on my dad at home—it was unbelievable. It and my new attitude about life—which I got from living at Galaxy—was so great it turned around my relationship with him and everyone else in my family overnight. That's all I had to say."

"Thanks, Glen," said Robert. "Let's see now, in response to your question, Allen, about what I feel you were trying to do about the world situation in your videos—"

"You've mentioned nine main points, all related to various aspects of the Second to Third Wave transition, the cultural lag and its causes and dangers, and the reconstitution of civilization itself. You're of course correct, and I'm thrilled you're taking on the reconstitution of civilization itself, which both Toffler and myself asked everyone to help with, so seriously. If everyone would be as responsible as you seem to be, the

transition would be very smooth, peaceful, and benevolent. But what else am I trying to do?" asked Allen.

Glen put in: "There's the attempted encouragement of less regimented schooling that is more like what the polymaths had and is better at teaching reasoning and thinking so vital for success in the Third Wave."

"Yes," confirmed Allen. "Well, there are plenty more but there's little need of going over them here. Are you actually in harmony with all of those goals?" asked Allen.

"I feel aligned with all of them," replied Glen. "But we're only going to concentrate on the ones directly pertaining to our goal of making the world work through empowering people to choose to create lifestyles that work, and our goal of catalyzing Third Wave viability."

"My answer is the same as Glen's," replied Robert.

"What ARE your goals, Robert? Besides 'being the ultimate catalyst for not only creating a viable Third Wave civilization, but empowering that civilization to be peaceful, happy, creative, wise, compassionate, environmentally smart, and composed of people with unprecedented good character, loving hearts, and brilliant minds?' (I took notes.)"

"I've taken responsibility for the world working. There's no cult, no religious trips, no gimmicks, no scams. I know basically what would allow it to start working better and I have some neat ideas about how such things could begin to happen. I have 16 people in on this with me, including a Public Relations agent and the business guru Thomas Grayson."

"I've heard about this business genius. He's supposed to be the best," said Allen.

"We know the guy well. He's about as good as it gets. Anyway, where was I? Oh yeah, one of the people in on it is a 12-year-old girl. Which means a lot more than you might imagine. Anyway, your videos implied the question: If WE don't start taking responsibility for the survival of the world through arms reduction, cooperation, the transcendence of nationalism with world citizenship perspectives, peace-forms, wise and creative new ideas, and the reconstitution of civilization, who will? Waiting for politicians to pull a rabbit out of a hat is a recipe for suicide. Like you say, without tremendous grassroots pressure from below, we should not expect many of today's leaders to bite the hand of the Second Wave system that gave them their power. I'm basically asking the same thing your videos ask: If not us, who? If not now, when?

"You have already, through your videos and consultations with many powerful people, done a lot to reduce world tensions and beat swords into plowshares and knives into knowledge. But the underlying root causes of terrorism, hate, fear, violence and oppression of women and children are still as strong as ever, and both you and we—Glen and I—are afraid that no matter who does what, the potential for cataclysm and disaster are omnipresent."

"Quite true," sighed Allen.

"It's my opinion that our fears are realistic and that continuing to rely on luck is suicide," said Robert. "The Cuban missile crisis got us an inch from disaster. Good luck saved us more than anything. Reason suggests that luck can't be counted on in the next crisis, as Robert McNamara implied in a 1989 *Newsweek*. The most likely precipitators of global war, as you've said often, are no longer nation-states like Russia and the U.S., but terrorists like the 9/11 terrorists, and we know what kind of minds they have. Death with 'glory' doesn't phase them a bit. I certainly hope they keep up the negotiations and peace initiations at all levels, in all countries. But I seriously doubt that these things are enough to keep terrorism from increasing, even if the peace-forms you hope for actually evolve to supplement these negotiations. Don't you?"

Allen responded, looking thoughtful: "Well, that might just depend on the timing, quantity and quality of the peace-forms. And let's not forget that there are other necessities here if peace is to prevail, such as a grassroots swell of pressure for peace in all countries. Peace needs to come from the bottom up so the leaders feel empowered to create peace from the top down. Just as Third Wave thinking from Third Wave political parties will only become a reality if grassroots movements force it to happen, so too Third Wave thinking from nation-states and international organizations and the creation of

Third Wave peace-forms will only become a reality if grassroots movements for peace force them to evolve. Since you already seem to know what my videos say about these matters, I'll refer to another point of view that also makes sense and dovetails with much that I've said; in fact, I've said most of the following things myself in various videos: I'm referring to the point of view from *The Gaia Peace Atlas*. Here—I have the book right here, with some markers in it." Allen picked the book off his desk and opened it.

"Here it's saying that 'Ecology also teaches us that large problems often need small solutions—in many millions of individual and community efforts—a paradox that governments are poor at grasping.' This is like Toffler's and my decentralization advocacy. *Gaia* says we're in an age of frightening contrasts. They're referring to materialism, greed, and high expectations in life, these are going on simultaneously with awareness of wars of great savagery as well as poverty, famine and lots of suffering. This makes us paralyzed in our hearts and minds. This fits with Toffler's concepts about the world being predisposed toward friction due to the fact of its trisection into the three Waves.

"It goes on: 'Yet we are seeking to build a global community. . . But what we have created is, so far, neither an equitable nor a sustainable community.' I've said all this often.

"One of Gorbachev's main reasons for allowing freedom in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe was the fact that he recognized that economic growth in the Information Age would be impossible unless he dropped his controls on media, free expression, free access, and freedom in general—in other words, he needed to make the U.S.S.R. a democracy or his economic woes would be hopeless. Toffler told him as much personally. However, another reason Gorby allowed freedom—that fits into what I was just saying, is that *global village media pressures*—in other words, communist countries finding out through the media how much better the West was doing than they—were causing the people to be dissatisfied. He saw this as a great motivator—you know, keep up with the Joneses (the West). But he could also recognize that the realities of global village media pressures could begin sowing the seeds for a revolution from within. People started realizing that huge military budgets represented money that could have improved their lives but didn't. Funny—Marx said the Have-nots would rise up and overthrow the Haves in capitalist societies. And here that's happening in communist regimes more than in capitalist ones. History is the ultimate performer of legerdemain. 'We will bury you' has changed to 'We will copy you.' I like it. There's risk in the ensuing chaos, but I consider the process to be healthy. But there's a disgruntlement germinating in the working class. The party leaders were relatively well off and weren't about to rock the boat, but nonparty citizens were doing poorly. So grassroots pressure is again the major force that will sustain any real improvements.

"Such pressures help the powers that be in all countries realize how big war-form budgets are compared to both peace-form budgets and needed social spending, and how —as *Gaia* says—a small piece of this war-form allotment could solve many of the world's problems relatively quickly in the areas of hunger, shelter, disease, agriculture, and the environment. It's depressing to know that all that money—around a trillion dollars a year worldwide—is being spent to arm, destroy, endanger, threaten, and spread fear, hate and suffering.

"Here's another quote:" continued Allen. 'If there is to be one world, it will have to be born of a massive, worldwide, local and general public rejection of the can't be done mentality, and a firm majority intention that it can, and will, be done.' Here's another: 'Historians may come to regard the rise of mass movements for change as the most significant factor in the late 20th century. Today's politicians ignore this public concern at their peril.' (And mass movements for change are increasing now in the 21st century.) Of course, it cuts both ways. This technologically-empowered mass-movement phenomenon not only has people comparing themselves to others and being motivated to want change, it also is the tool the powers that be manipulate to keep themselves in power. (That's how the Bosnian mess got started by people like Slobodan Milosevic.) Media can be a force for truth or for rabble-rousing demagoguery. Sometimes it has depended upon

whether programs coming in from the West get through and upstage the boring propaganda broadcasts, as happened in East Germany—one of the precursors to Berlin wall removal. Maybe 'you can fool some of the people some of the time, but . . . etcetera,' is appropriate here.

"*Gaia* leaves out some very important issues when discussing the evolution of a self-governing world community—a true global village, and gives the current U.N. organization too much credit for potentials which, under its present form, it doesn't have —"

Robert interjected: "I like the self-governing world community idea. All governance requires is giving the U.N. or some new international organization some *clout*. The Gulf War coalition confirmed the fact that such a thing is possible and that most countries are even capable of cooperating to achieve it. If we can't or won't give the U.N. or some new international organization clout, we'll be stuck with continuing the impossible quest of peace and security via arms and threats. That road leads to hell. Of course, we must update the U.N. to Third Wave standards first. It is rather obsolete now, and not ready for more power."

"There's the rub, then," said Allen. "The 'new organization' idea you cite is obviously a reference to the fact that the U.N. is a Second Wave dinosaur, which was what I was about to get into. As you say, it's futile to pin hopes on it in its present form—and more funds wouldn't help much. There are too many things the U.N. cannot do, regardless of its economic support base. The fact that it represents only nation-states, and does not share power at the highest level with nongovernmental organizations, global corporations and other powerful entities means it simply cannot be very effective until it revamps to Third Wave standards. I suppose you've read *Gaia?"*

"Yes, and I have a few notes on it as well," replied Robert. The quote about 'mass movements for change being the most significant factor in the late 20th century,' is one I relate to as well—only I extend it to the 21st century. Even though the Second Wave is a 'mass-man' thing and the Third Wave is mostly too full of diversity to be seen that way, there are still some things that the people as a whole want and will demand: peace, health care, safety, education, happiness, and so on. I'll soon be getting to a place, in my talk with you here today, where I will be pointing out just how vital this nonpolitical mass movement phenomenon is for all our futures—it relates to lifestyle enhancement in the multiple caregiving and P.E.T. directions and how such things can exponentially spread. One could call all this, simply, a lifestyle and parenting resource enhancement movement.

"But since we're on the *Gaia* subject, I'll point out that, and I quote: 'For most of our [human] history we have lived as small bands of perhaps 10 to 30 individuals, hunting and gathering, with leaders chosen on occasion for their strength, knowledge or sheer "charisma." And for most of our history, we have not known or practiced warfare—organized killing by order of a leader.' We humans have normally had a dozen or two people in bands for safety and security and as multiple caregivers—it's sociologically a perfect size for peaceful and happy coexistence as well as resource sharing.

"I myself live with—or should I say 'near'?—over a dozen others, but am not physically closer or more crowded, in my apartment building, than any other normal middle-class apartment dweller—this latter is vital. However, we all consider each other important human resources. *That* is how we differ from normal, *isolated* families. For the majority of mankind's history he's known that *adequate human resources are a prerequisite for a satisfying lifestyle*. Lately, however, many cultures have forgotten this knowledge, due to the isolating tendencies of Second Wave industrialism, mobility, and the technology-dependent nuclear family. People seem so overfocused on adequate *material* resources that they somehow think the *adequate human resources prerequisite is anachronistic*. Advertising and using TVs and social networking for virtual friends are partly responsible. More on that later. Anyway, I feel that the cause of preventing war would be aided greatly by a return to the enhanced-social-resource context of old. *People with adequate resources of both kinds are happy and therefore not predisposed toward war.*

"If they have enough 'stuff' but are alienated, disconnected, and lonely and/or isolated, they're sad enough inside to be easy pickings for warmongers who distort the truth to exploit them so that these warmongers are given power. The warmongers get them to turn alienation to anger at an evil 'they' the warmongers choose to be 'the cause of their problems.' The psychological mechanism called 'projection' is a vital warmonger tool. If there were no negative feelings to exploit, the warmongers would be seen as sickos to pity. If people have good connections to humanity but are without 'stuff' or food or shelter, they're sad, and maybe really hungry and cold, but, again, not necessarily angry. When the global village phenomenon informs them of how so many others live well, or warmongers exploit them like with the alienated people, then anger is likely. If people have no 'stuff' except enough food and shelter, they're rarely sad or mad until they discover the truth about the rest of the world. This is easy for warmongers to exploit.

"Exploitation is pretty simple if the people can be made to feel like victims. Here, the U.N. comes into play. Not only does the U.N. insure that all countries find out how other countries' people live, but the U.N. often puts the plight of the poor into a victim context and implies that decency and morality dictate that there should be a massive redistribution of wealth and resources from the North to the South, implying or overtly saying that this international liberalism is only fair since colonialism and exploitation is what victimized all the poor in the first place, a silly overgeneralization at best. On the other hand, the U.N. feels like it has the right to lay this guilt trip, since it's always working to ease the plight of various suffering people via various agencies, and the logically easiest and most straightforward 'fix' for the world's inequities is RICH GIVE TO POOR. More on this later, too.

Robert continued: "To go on, here's a Marilyn Ferguson quote: 'If we limit ourselves to the old-paradigm concept of *averting war,* we are trying to overpower darkness rather than switching on the light. If we reframe the problem—if we think of *fostering community,* health, innovation, self-discovery, purpose—we are already engaged in *waging peace!'* I believe this fits nicely with what I'm saying. Fostering successful community connectedness—in other words human resource enhancement—is the best context for avoiding war. It's a type of peace-form, in that it deals with some root causes of war.

"Here's another *Gaia* quote: 'Humanity is no more innately combative than it is innately peaceable . . . a growing child is subject to influences from parents, schools, and older children; from the media and war toys, as well as myths and stories that sanction and even glorify war. . . . But war is a *social* construct, and the responsibility for bringing up children in the "cradle of aggression" is as much held by women as it is by men.' We're *teaching* war to kids. They're not inventing it. And in order to have these kids willing to hate, maim, kill, and be bigots, we have to get them emotionally prepared to act in these ways. The average war-making culture's authoritarian child-raising technique does just this. Kids learn to hate as a result of various forms of negativity in childhood. It's easy to exploit this hate later and get them to kill Jews or Arabs or 'capitalist pigs' or 'commies.' I'd like to suggest both that childhood negativity is avoidable, and that if it didn't happen it'd be difficult to get kids to become murderers 'for the glory of God' or any other reason. I myself would be first in line to fight off enemies invading our country, or even to help Kuwait save itself from Saddam's genocide and butchery—as long as no other way of solving the problem is feasible besides armed conflict. But there's no way they'd ever get me to murder 'gooks' or 'commies' in some foreign country just to further the exploitation goals of the military-industrial complex. My emotions, as a result of a good childhood, support protecting loved ones and country, but are repulsed—extremely repulsed—by the idea of exploitation and murder as a 'duty' to the military-industrial complex, hiding behind our flag."

"I go along with that," agreed Allen. "Incidentally, since you just touched on the subject of innate proclivities, let me point out what Sagan said in his *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* book from 1992: Over a set of hereditary predispositions human society lays down a kind of stencil that permits some to be fully expressed, some

partially, and some hardly at all. Alpha male dominance proclivities may be part of our genetic heritage, but are only *genetic heritage predispositions tendencies. They doesn't dictate actions. Depending upon the structure of the society, many different human proclivities can be elicited*. He also said that for a society to be successful, it must be consonant with the nature and character of the individuals who must live in it. If those creating social structures overlook who these individuals are, or sentimentalize their nature, or are incompetent social architects, disaster can result. (Marxism is such a disaster.) But he considers it hopeful that it has been shown that we're capable of self-knowledge and new forms of social organization, and able to figure things out and build things that never were. It's essential that all concerned realize that we cannot wait for natural selection to mitigate our ancient primate tendencies; we have to transcend these proclivities, dismantle inoperable institutions, and create a society less apt to bring out the worst in us, according to Sagan."

Robert responded: "I'm in total harmony with all that. Actually, what you just said dovetails so completely with where we're at that we can cite this consonance—whereby '*for a society to be successful, it must be consonant with the nature and character of the individuals who must live in it*'—as one of the main reasons we knew we had to come and see you. But more on that later after more groundwork has been laid. I'll go on with what I was saying, and, you know, I believe we're developing a common denominator between us via *Gaia* and Sagan-think, so I'll stick with that:

"As the *Gaia* book says it, 'A global constituency is arising of those who seek peace' and people are wanting us to all shift to the new ecological-holistic paradigm. And I say to accomplish these things we have to cease to predispose our young, in our country and others, to the emotions and motives of war through inadequate child-rearing practices. This dovetails perfectly with the discussion of Prescott's studies in Sagan's *Cosmos*.

"Allen, the *Gaia* book and Toffler's *War and Anti-War* book are the best sources I know of for war avoidance. In *Gaia*, they leave almost no stone unturned in their search for wisdom about the attainment of peace. The weakest spot in *Gaia* was when they warn us not to teach war and aggression. They're absolutely correct, of course, but the missing insight they needed, to tie their whole peace quest together with the necessary preconditions for a lasting peace, is the fact that if childhoods fully nurture and there's no instilled pool of hate and fear to draw on, there will be an absence of the needed emotions for war in the children, so war will have been prevented in the most basic of ways—with the exception of actions to specifically defend one's country and loved ones from outside attack."

"Interesting," said Allen. "So we've examined, then, the necessary factors for war avoidance. All you've just said plus peace-forms ideas."

"Does the war avoidance goal need anything else to empower it?" asked Robert.

"Yes. Knowledge. If 7 billion people knew exactly what nuclear war or the onset of nuclear terrorism would mean to them, they'd holler loud and long to their leaders. We need to take advantage of the facilities of the Information Age and never let anyone forget what's at stake. Also, required educational treatments of the subject in all schools in the world. And better intelligence (that would have helped with the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis, the car-bombing of U.S. peace-keeping forces in Lebanon, and many Vietnam-related decisions, but even more so it could have prevented 9/11). And war avoidance needs better control of terrorism—hopefully a more cooperative international effort to root it out and stop it. Those are the main things," said Allen. "What are we missing? In what other areas is it vital for the world to get its act together?" Robert took a deep breath, put his fingers together (as if plugging in a circuit), leaned back in his chair, and considered Allen's question.

He spoke: "The answer to that is another one of those forest-through-the-trees things; it's implicit in Sagan's and Toffler's writing and your videos, though not actually dealt with precisely. The problem is that, essential as the negotiations and intelligence and grassroots pressures and better education and cooperative ventures and peace-forms are, they don't get right down to the nitty gritty *deepest* roots of the dilemma.

"They only attempt to control symptomology that stems from deeper problems. We need a collateral attempt at doomsday postponement dealing not with symptoms but with the *deepest* root causes. I'm in a perfect position to see clearly what such an attempt would be like. It's almost like I, like the rest of the Galaxy people in my environment, was BORN into the right strategic position to know just how to begin the thrust of this collateral approach. In the ideas I've been quoting back to you from your videos and Sagan's books are the seeds and concepts for most of the major aspects of this other approach. In a dozen different ways Sagan indicated how socially retarded we are, how our traditions and lifestyles have never been a logical result of deducing rational strategies for filling our human needs efficiently and successfully, but have been merely the results of conditioned beliefs that constitute stale, anachronistic paradigms, some of which are very unfriendly to the logical filling of actual needs. We have 'hand-patched and rubbery' social theory and practices, as he used to say.

"And you've pointed out that people, in going from First to Second Wave, didn't consciously and purposely choose Second Wave lifestyles. They did what was easiest and most convenient to adapt to the new realities of the Industrial Revolution. Their lifestyles happened to them. They didn't choose them. They chose careers, jobs, spouses, and to have families, but their isolated nuclear and single-parent family lifestyles with random parenting or parent-copying parenting just happened. It was a clear case of being *at effect* of parents, advertising, cultural traditions, TV shows, romance novels, and so on. They were simply not *at cause*. Knowledge needs were limited to how to run appliances, make budgets, find baby-sitters, clip coupons, and other such concerns.

"Glen and I feel that this time, when we evolve from one Wave to the next, it must be different. People need to make knowledgeable, informed, wise decisions based upon the best lifestyle, family, relationship, child-raising and communications information available on this planet. This should be the model to emulate for everyone transitioning from Second to Third Wave lives. How can people be Third Wave if they don't adopt its most basic element—*knowledge*? And part of Third Wave strategy is to accept the fact that knowledge only helps people if it's *applied*! The Third Wave can't be about what you know, but about what you do with it. As change tries to 'future shock' people, it's of no use for them to simply read from Toffler's books or learn from your videos what to expect and how to adapt to it, and then go along acting and thinking and deciding based on the old Second Wave paradigm they were used to. The cultural lag exists because the Second Wave pushed us ahead technologically while culture made relatively few gains.

"In fact, most of the social and cultural changes were simply an unintentional side effect from technological change! *This does not represent conscious, wise life strategies, but putting one's fate in the hands of chance and determinism*. The latter is defined as things happening as cause and effect sequences without people truly having the free will to really influence, change, and take control of their destiny. Futurism would be useless if determinism was an accurate philosophy, because 'whatever will be will be.' I say determinism is weapons-grade 'balonium.' We have free will. Period. Some people don't live very conscious, aware, wise lives, so they are bound to feel deterministic, since they're not putting out the effort to *choose* who they want to be and what they want to do—life just happens to them. But this proves that some people are lazy and apathetic and existential duds; it doesn't prove determinism!

"Traditions are conditioned in so obsessively that the children undergoing this process are barely able to find enough thinking room in their brains, amid the clutter, to do any real reasoning. And when THEY have kids, they virtually play back a recording of their conditioning onto their kids' minds.

"You've said that slow, traditional societies can copy parents and get along okay, but fast, modern societies like ours are changing rapidly and we cannot use Second Wave thinking and blindly accept parenting methods from parents as we enter the Third Wave, because in reconstituting civilization, we must discover new ways appropriate to the new Third Wave realities. This was a vital element of civilizational evolution, but not that many people heeded your guidance. Anyway, when our society's people copy parents, mistakes get passed on as often as benevolent practices. Which brings up the

evolutionary analogy. Why won't social evolution, like biological evolution, naturally experience mutations, both positive and negative, and eventually—in the long haul—select positive mutations? The answer is fairly obvious. Glen?"

"Because there's not enough time. It only takes one Inquisition or Hitler-Nazi mutation to set us back to zero. And in these days, one negative mutation can easily create the conditions that could snowball into doomsday. Perhaps the clashes in the former Soviet states will somehow lead to a situation in which angry, oppressed people get their hands on a few nukes. Or perhaps the next Saddam will wait until he has a small nuclear arsenal. Perhaps the next fanatic has already gotten nukes. Perhaps he has sent terrorists to U.S. cities to plant some of these nukes as a preparation for the ultimate blackmail."

"Yes, how many times I've considered that analogy myself," said Allen. "With biological evolution we can wait until nature comes up with the next enhancement. We'd like the luxury of that much time with cultural evolution, but we don't have it. We must MAKE social evolution progress, guided by the best and most insightful futurism, before some of its negative, randomly deterministic experiments take us under."

"Well," said Robert, "a survey of your videos, Toffler's books and Sagan's books shows really only one other thing beyond what we've mentioned: You both encourage societies to be open-minded, flexible, dynamic, experimental and insightful. We should no longer simply blindly accept the lifestyle ideas our society conditions into us, you and he say; we should question the basic premises upon which such ideas are based (since they're mostly Second Wave and out of date). We should search for optimal social solutions.

"A study of the past shows that this type of healthy openness and flexibility, combined with scientific skepticism, good futurism, and critical thinking (so that our openness leads to enhancement, innovation, and solutions to serious problems rather than to astrology and cultism), will lead us benevolently and enthusiastically into an exciting, secure future filled with wonder and liveliness, rather than dead ends, stagnation, superstition and conflict. You two are not the only ones that said this, but, in my opinion, you two said it best and got the most respect and responsiveness when you said it. We're on the exact same wavelength—which is one of the reasons why we're here.

"Sagan also said we should delve deeper into the mystery of what is a human being. We barely know ourselves. We need 'experimental societies and positive social mutations,' as he said; and the government and citizens need to act benevolently toward such experiments. To reiterate what you two have said and what I mentioned a while ago, you anxiously await the day when there will arise an experimental community—appropriate to the realities of the Third Wave—that works much better. Sagan called for one that truly inspires, nurtures, encourages oneness and openness and responsibility and integrity—one that truly WORKS. A 'viable alternative will then be before us,' he wrote. Allen, I believe that time is now. The alternative *is* here, although it's anything *but* 'experimental.' It's been working wonderfully for many decades, as has P.E.T. and democratic-authoritative parenting in general. And I've noted already how flat-gradient nurturance has been humanity's norm for thousands of years. There are still some things to figure out, and the lifestyle isn't 'perfect,' and there are many things to work out about normals adopting such a lifestyle. But—basically—I truly feel that the Third Wave alternative you and Sagan have called for is here.

"This is the key to the second prong (dealing with root causes) of the collateral approaches to enhancing life on Earth and postponing doomsday. It's the key to supplementing the first prong (symptom-suppressing) approaches with something that has the goal of making life work great for the world, which goes way beyond the first prong approach. It's analogous to the drug crisis situation that came to a head in 1989 with the 1st Bush's 'war on drugs.' The strategies addressed a few of the symptoms but did little to address the root causes. George Will and other good social commentators warned us that we'd better start looking at why there is such a demand, because symptom-suppressing methods will at best make a ripple in the pond of the drug

industry, whereas if we eliminated demand, we'd cure the drug disease completely. Will didn't mention it, but it's interesting to note that there was a missing element in the Bush plan: Bush wanted to 'educate' people not to do drugs; but he forgot that most users aren't using because they're IGNORANT—they're doing it because they're DESPERATE and/or SAD (even though they often act 'cool' and composed and don't manifest their desperation and sadness overtly). So if desperate people try to soften their pain, sadness, and depression with drugs, 'educating' them to cease and desist is naïve, unless it somehow includes a way to address their alienation and depression. People who feel alive don't need drugs to help them feel alive; people who feel dead most of the time are predictably going to want to prod some 'aliveness' out of themselves, regardless of how artificial, dangerous, degenerate, and devouring a drug-high 'aliveness' actually is. A plan that ignores this isn't a plan; it's a postponement, a diversion, or a sleight-of-hand. The real issue here is not JUST SAY NO to drugs and to supporting drug war strategies—even if they had the slightest chance of working, which they don't. The real issue is WHY DIDN'T THE LIFESTYLES OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE (USERS) NURTURE BETTER SO THAT THE PEOPLE IN THEM FEEL ALIVE AS A RESULT?

"Now, the implementing of effective lifestyle enhancements that fit Third Wave realities is in absolute and direct harmony with everything you and Sagan have ever said, and it is the perfect antidote for the unintentional destructive force of the Second Wave isolated nuclear and single-parent family, which, coupled with doomsday fears, are causing great stress and symptomology in the modern world. Suicide, child abuse, substance abuse, crime, lack of ethics or responsibility, gangs, general fear and depression, divorce, and all the rest of this stuff are because lifestyles are failing to nurture, empower, encourage, inspire and actualize their adherents and this failure is in spite of the influence of social networking—it doesn't seem to be helping much. An in-depth probe of these lifestyles—which I've done—shows with crystal clarity why they fail. A part of it is having the wrong relationship practices. P.E.T. is a lot of the answer here. I'm delighted you're already aware of this.

"But the other part of it is a much more forest-through-the-trees kind of thing. *Inadequate human resources and inadequate choices about same.* The correlations between personality and patterns of nurturing have confirmed what we already have been intuiting as a species: Children and adults need multiple relationships; children need multiple caregiving; children need caregiver alternatives (think of what that would have meant to Barbra Streisand's character in the movie *Nuts).* Caregivers demonstrably need intermittent relief: no one should ever be totally STUCK with anyone else. No single person is anyone else's ANSWER/SOLUTION. To choose is to BE—it gets down to existential and ontological questions about the necessity for CHOICE before a person can take responsibility for his actions, his being, his essence. If the only people a child is free to be around are people who treat him in a way that does not WORK for him, then in this lifestyle the child will falter, suffer, stagnate, warp, and perhaps turn off completely—becoming another drug statistic in a few years as he tries to do something in his adolescence to turn himself back on. In a more optimal lifestyle, however, the child will explore other alternatives and *choose to be nurtured,* and thereby *choose to be* in spite of factors at work that work against his growth and maturation."

"You live in just such a situation, then?" asked Allen.

"Yes. And I can testify to its effectiveness and benevolence. So I'm saying, then, that not only history, research, anthropology, and cross-cultural studies of all kinds support my conclusions, but the experiences of 16 people actually living in such a lifestyle confirms the whole thing beyond question. I KNOW that this is the right direction for the world to head in. Had you been brought up at Galaxy Apartments, Allen, you'd know it too. Sagan said that when an 'experimental community that works much better' evolves somehow, 'a viable alternative will then be before us.' And you've called for all people to try hard to evolve the best Third Wave civilization lifestyles possible. WE DID, and the next step for you is: 'So where do I go from here?' 'What do I do about it?' I'm hoping you'll decide the obvious: come to Galaxy and see for yourself. If you agree that Sagan's 'viable alternative' or your optimal Third Wave society is before you, then join us in our

goal of helping the world move in the direction that will work best for it. A direction that will be the most likely of all possible directions to take the world away from doomsday, toward oneness, toward peace. Allen, I believe I can explain and demonstrate why I believe that what Glen and I call the MC movement is the key to transcending nationalism in favor of universal citizenship, and the perfect common denominator with which to unite citizens of the world into a common family-like unity, without having to fear being undermined by defensive actions on the part of the powers-that-be and those still stuck at the level of Second Wave nationalism. Of course international ecological concerns need to be part of this, too, but so many people are in survival mode, concerned only with their present unmet needs, that ecological responsibility will seem somewhat abstract to them at this time. They need to feel their lifestyles fill their emotional-ontological needs more, first, and THEN see to it that the biosphere gets ITS needs filled."

"Gentlemen," said Allen, "I was glad about the experiments of the 60s and 70s. I was glad to see people perform commune experiments, and to see the Israelis tinker with the kibbutz lifestyle, and religious sects play with ashrams and such. I myself, like Sagan, advocated then, and still advocate now, that thinking people experiment courageously and intuitively with lifestyle alternatives and let us all know when and if they discover a superior set-up. You're saying 'we did this, and so here we are letting you know.'"

Robert responded: "I'm convinced that seeing MCs as 'experiments' would be silly and counterproductive, as well as irrational. I believe that as a futurist and a special kind of social scientist, you'll be obliged to make allowances here for the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. I believe that a constant presence of observers in 'experimental' MC lifestyles would erode the viability of the lifestyles until you would have more observer-generated than lifestyle-generated phenomena under study. I also believe that a lifestyle of such quality would not easily be translated into expressions of quantity. Based upon these beliefs, I'd like to extend an analogy. Come and see Galaxy for yourself. But think of it as if you were a normal, 19-year-old young man going on a normal date with a normal, lovely young lady. The question is not 'What are her measurements?' The question most certainly must be 'Am I in love?' And you won't even have to ask it of yourself. If it happens you'll know it in grand and glorious ways. If it doesn't, you'll simply look elsewhere for romance. Hovering over all these deliberations is an irrepressible truth: if life is truly working, the living will feel it and will know it—no yardstick required.

"In *The Tao of Physics,* Fritjof Capra points out that the idea of participation instead of observation has been formulated in modern physics only recently, but it is an idea which is well known in Eastern philosophies. The notion of the participator is crucial to the Eastern worldview, and as Watts would say, observer and observed, subject and object, are not only inseparable but indistinguishable. Physics, through quantum theory, has done much to help us see oneness and unity in all things, and to see that matter is made up of *relationships*, not '*particles*.' So have the Eastern philosophies. And in Sagan's writings and your videos the ultimate solutions always come down to oneness and unity rather than nationalism and territoriality. Astronomy had helped him to see the oneness and unity in the universe. So, since it's futile to study people as objects or lifestyles as sets of data, could I convince you to abandon that evaluation strategy and replace it with your heart and humanity in this case? The cultural lag desperately needs a quantum leap of cultural enhancement and insight as a cure, because the terrorists are BOUND to get their hands on nukes someday, even if the nuclear powers stay friends. The world could suddenly get horribly dangerous. But, beyond that, the world needs lifestyles that work well and fill needs, because all humans have the right to be happy, fulfilled, and actualized. They deserve it. A few unfortunate traditions and deterministically-randomly developed lifestyle customs are all that stand in the way.

"Since we didn't know you personally, we didn't know if your response would be—in a word—OVERSCIENTIFIC. I truly don't believe that the world has TIME for exhaustive 'studies' to be made. Nor do I feel it's necessary. We feel we can adequately support the claim we are making that *the MC movement is an idea whose time has come, and which*

can easily be rationally arrived at by good critical thinking, intuition, and a study of already existing studies, research, lifestyles, cultures, and cross-cultural data. And visiting our particular MC won't hurt either. MC means microcommunity, by the way.

"I've studied the environments of other very together adolescents, incidentally; and ADDED HUMAN RESOURCES beyond the norms of the normal nuclear or step or single-parent family, as well as SOME SEMBLANCE OF P.E.T. OR OTHER DEMOCRATIC-AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING RULES, were, without a doubt, the main factors behind the young people's exceptionality. This is all in harmony with what Sagan has written about the urgent need for enhanced environments, the great environmental advantages of the British polymaths, and overcoming the built-in R-complex tendencies through adequate love and nurturing, which will bring out our most human qualities. Notice that he implied ADEQUATE, not 'whatever amount happens to be convenient for parents to provide.' He may have been intuiting and recommending more than he ever knew here, Allen.

"This whole area is absolutely the most forest-through-the-trees area I've ever seen—in fact the whole problem here is not that the answers are hard to fathom at all; the problem is that THEY'RE **TOO** OBVIOUS! (As obvious as the cure for the 'abuse of primates in zoos' thing I mentioned a while ago.) I mean, really, now—am I to believe that he recommended that people give more than they have to give, pretend to nurture when they're unnurturing, be who they aren't, and do what they can't do? Is that his enhanced environment solution? Of course not. But he didn't say *how* they were supposed to suddenly give more than they could give—you know—this **adequate nurturing** stuff. He, like everyone else, was running into the brick wall of conditioned beliefs about lifestyles and was unable to finish his thought, as it were. He more or less left it up to us Galaxians to finish the sentence. In a way, it's all a matter of luck. My grandparents just happened to question a few assumptions that no one had really ever thought to question. 'It just seemed like a good idea at the time,' is what they always said when they were questioned. Sounds to me like they happened upon this—they lucked into it by chance—the thought just happened to occur to them. They aren't necessarily brighter or wiser than anyone else. I doubt I'd have figured this stuff out either. I too would have found normal cultural concepts to be so entrenched that they were invisible.

"Lucky for all of us that my grandparents happened to come up with it! Luck—isn't that a heck of a reason for the world to suddenly have a chance to get its act together? Why couldn't it have been great thinking, great wisdom, or the results of careful scientific analysis? But people, unfortunately, are not even remotely logical when it comes to their lifestyles and traditions and customs. They're programmed. Period!

"As I've said before, one could perform relatively simple logic, using only your and Sagan's words of wisdom as a starting place, and deduce that our MC movement is logically the direction in which society needs to be moving. Starting from inadequate personnel as a constant, logic about providing adequate nurturing goes nowhere. Starting from inadequate personnel as a variable, you simply increase the quantitative value of the personnel variable until the formula works. The isolated nuclear family, stepfamily, and single-parent family context which most people have as their paradigm and context prevents them from thinking of personnel as a variable, however. So most everyone tends to think black and white here and concludes that the alternative is a commune—which has been shown to be unrealistic, too crowded, too lacking in privacy, and very unappealing to most people, including me. Logic generally bites the dust entirely at this point. People simply don't get beyond this point. I've asked people who don't know about Galaxy, so I know.

"But now let's suppose your—or anyone's—mind is NOT clogged up with past conditioning and an isolated family context and you're back at the inadequate personnel variable." (At this point Allen had a special twinkle in his eye and Robert noticed it and smiled knowingly, but went on.) "The simplest logic leads you right to the Galaxy concept—the MC concept. In most resource-employing human situations, people tend to think logically about the needed personnel and materials required to get the job done. Think of jobs in companies, people wishing to participate in a sport, or a piano to be moved. Logic

leads to the simple, obvious answers in such cases. Does the circus ask one or two people to erect a huge tent? Do one or two people try to get a decent game of baseball going? Does one person try to lift a grand piano on his back and haul it in or out of a truck? Notice how well the mind works in these situations. It's nearly as obvious what to do when a mom isolated with her two-year-old is going nuts, in tears, or on the verge of abuse or neglect. And a gazillion sociologists and psychologists—often female—have spelled it out.

"However, a few conservative shrinks, parents, academics and clergy—usually men—have been quite unable to figure it out, and have decided to inform all women that it's their lot to suffer, that kids will be harmed if nonfamily members do care-giving (which is just plain stupid), that the Bible tells them to be isolated with their kid and grin and bear it (which it doesn't), and that they're selfish or bad if they wish to enjoy their lives by getting alternative caregivers (or at least helpers providing temporary respite) in on the nurturing task the way the species and most cultures have been doing it since mankind evolved from apes. Unless women are overwhelmed and suffering—or at least unhappy—they're simply not putting their hearts into their mother roles, or so goes the so-called 'thinking.'

"Some shrinks inform women that they're going to be feeling like harming, killing, or abandoning their kids some of the time, and that's normal, acceptable, and expectable. The obvious fact that one can minimize this with proper respite arrangements or shared caring where people have backups so they needn't scream at or hit kids, or blow a gasket or harm their health from stress—seems not to be very obvious at all to these mostly male 'experts,' or to those fathers who'd be the most likely candidates for respite help for wifey. One can assume *they* want to *avoid* the frustrations driving wifey up the wall, or that they find it unpleasant to give childcare since they end up giving swats or spankings as well as filling with considerable anger and this leaves them feeling either guilty or exhausted or both. So they avoid agreeing to flextime or part-time arrangements that will give 'the little woman' the shared caring option that so many childcare experts support for the good of children and parents alike.

"Many women have bought into this 'isolated mothering' scam, especially when males paint it with religious or pseudo-psychological colors. And many males have exploited women with the self-indulgent fantasy that *since there's scientific proof that the crucial mother-child bonding period of the first six months or so requires mom a lot, then this means that mom is the only proper person to take on any part of any childcare task through the years*, which is patent nonsense. Some of the most together people in history were mostly raised by nannies, governesses, or even nurturing males; some even did their bonding this way, and it worked fine, as long as respite was available.

"Anyway, the problem isn't that molasses is bad or that computers don't work well. The problem is that when you fill your computer with molasses it will no longer compute logically, if at all. Normal lifestyle conditioning is the molasses; our brains are the computer, and the combination has been shown to be severely mind-retarding in relation to wise, clear, objective, insightful thinking. In the absence of brain-retarding factors, the adequate personnel question takes only the simplest logic to solve, and any way you slice it, Sagan's (and hundreds of others') solution of overcoming our lower instincts and drives through **adequate** love and nurturing is the absolute, positive, true solution to bringing out humanity sufficiently so that we act in ways to postpone doomsday forever and make the world work and allow people to become what they are capable of becoming. Allen, his solution, here, isn't just A solution. It's **THE** solution.

"He mentioned in *Cosmos* that 'present global culture is a kind of arrogant newcomer. It arrives on the planetary stage following four and a half billion years of other acts, and after looking about for a few thousand years declares itself in possession of eternal truths. But in a world that is changing as fast as ours, this is a prescription for disaster', as you and Toffler have also been eloquently pointing out for many years. He goes on: 'No nation, no religion, no economic system, no body of knowledge, is likely to have all the answers for our survival. THERE MUST BE MANY SOCIAL SYSTEMS THAT

WOULD WORK FAR BETTER THAN ANY NOW IN EXISTENCE. IN THE SCIENTIFIC TRADITION, OUR TASK IS TO FIND THEM.'

"There's no doubt that he is saying that we should bust our tails to find social systems that would work far better than the amateurish ones prevalent today, so that we could begin a new cultural direction in which overcoming the R-complex through adequate love and nurturing is assured. Let's hope that this new cultural direction and the cultural enhancements that define the best of Third Wave civilization are actually one and the same."

Allen interjected: "The R-complex refers to the lower part of the brain—the reptilian part—does it not?"

"Exactly. Anyway, more from *Cosmos:* 'Here clearly were the seeds of the modern world. What prevented them from taking root and flourishing? Why instead did the West slumber through a thousand years of darkness until Columbus and Copernicus and their contemporaries rediscovered the work done in Alexandria? I cannot give you a simple answer. But I do know this: there is no record, in the entire history of the Library [at Alexandria], that any of its illustrious scientists and scholars ever seriously challenged the political, economic and religious assumptions of their society.' There's no doubt here that he sees our biggest stumbling blocks to be stale, unexamined social paradigms—the beliefs that we think FROM, not ABOUT. It's what wrecked all cultural evolution back in 415 A.D. when religious fanatics came and burned down that Library and with it most of the knowledge humanity had gleaned up to that time. Religious fanatics thought that knowledge was evil—that *everything* except the ideas of the Church was evil. People assumed then, as they do now, that if there is some belief that they feel quite attached to, and to which they have trouble thinking of any alternatives, then it must be that the belief is vital and essential, and discarding it would be a disaster. It never occurred to them then, nor does it occur to our society now, that such beliefs might just be manifestations of the methods and conditions under which early 'learning' was imposed upon the young, and that the feelings they have which make them so blindly adamant about the beliefs have nothing to do with the viability or necessity or truth of their beliefs, but, instead, the ways in which their social conditioning happened.

"Around 415 they burned the Alexandrian Library down. Sagan said that 'When, at long last, the mob came to burn the Library down, there was nobody to stop them.' I abhor the incalculable losses civilization suffered at that time. He stated the same thing in stronger, more eloquent terms in *Cosmos.* How could the people, led by the Church, so fear knowledge and truth as to virtually wipe out everything mankind had accomplished up until that time in a few hours of ignorance, superstition and fanaticism? No one challenged or even examined their society's paradigms. When some bozo donned a 'holy suit' and said 'knowledge is evil and the Church is behind me on this, so get out of the way and let me light my torches and do the will of God,' the citizenry politely moved aside so that 'the evil in the Library would no longer taint society.' If the people had had the ability to think ABOUT their beliefs, rather than thinking FROM them, perhaps some of them would have at least said 'hold on here—let's at least think about this burning idea before going ahead—it's a very major and irrevocable decision.'

"Today one doesn't necessarily get burned at the stake for questioning the activities of fanatics. In fact, if we want to enhance our lifestyle quality so it's beyond the norms and expectations and beliefs of society, no one will bother us, even though it does involve going beyond the parameters of the beliefs inculcated into us since infancy. But I feel that the same thing is holding back society now as was holding it back then: unexamined paradigms that cripple any social evolution. 'Knowledge is evil paganism,' the belief that spelled the end for the Library, may sound like an even stupider belief than 'everyone is supposed to flourish in an isolated, disconnected nuclear family, with no relatedness or solidarity, no parenting knowledge, and often few social supports.' Regardless of which of these two beliefs is stupider, they're both capable of inflicting tremendous cultural harm. This latter lifestyle-related belief is held by people who never seem to notice how the majority of cultures DO NOT share this belief and do not practice

isolated nuclear family traditions; nor have the majority of cultures practiced such, historically.

"What's worse, in spite of all the facts that anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have shared with us about the advantages of connectedness, solidarity and multiple caregiving, the majority of people in the 'advanced' cultures know nothing of any of this and act as though the isolated nuclear family were universal and always has been; and they act as though it has been shown that this type of living was proven to be superior and beneficial, and as though this lifestyle has some sort of special 'holy sanction' from the gods. None of these assumptions are true, obviously. So, all this is my way of saying that our culture is overdue for a paradigm shift, in which MC-type lifestyle enhancement makes life work, and in which the incredible array of symptoms which demonstrate how the above beliefs are crippling the viability of our culture can be slowly whittled away until they're virtually eliminated.

"So what's needed now is not to mount 'experiments' to prove the already proven yet again. Science already has tons of proof for what I'm saying. It's having little effect on cultural evolution. Ever since some of the more naive liberal social engineering experiments of the 70s helped bureaucrats' pocketbooks more than cultural evolution and actually caused more problems than they solved in the long run, people have lost most of their faith in the 'progressive' idea that science would 'save' or even intelligently guide society's progress. Think tanks look like what they are—biased tools of the Culture War that can 'prove' whatever they're asked to prove. The sloppy, half-baked 'science' that such social engineering was based on, and the results obtained from this 'applied science' has given science, the possibility of objectivity, think tanks, social engineering, politicians tampering with people's lives, and even the viability of social knowledge in general a permanent black eye.

"And few will ever forget the social engineering disasters of Stalin, Lenin, Hitler and other bozos of the 20th century. Few if any Americans would pay attention to 'experimental results of social experiments' these days, and fewer still have even the slightest desire to have the social engineers tinker with their lives in any way, shape, or form. What's needed is a wise social movement in which politicians are totally out of the picture and every single movement participant is a person who has heard about an idea he or she likes, has realized how much it will enhance his or her life, and has chosen to go for it. Like you and many others keep saying: a grassroots movement. Eventually politicians will see this excellent and benevolent manifestation of Third Wave knowledge being applied wisely *and voluntarily* and they'll point in the direction the traffic is already moving and say: 'That's a good way to go.'

"Don't worry, Robert," encouraged Allen. "I well recognize the limitations—Heisenberg and otherwise—of trying to reductionistically turn what sounds like an extraordinarily benevolent environment into a bunch of data to be analyzed. But remember, if I decide to play devil's advocate, it's for a reason. If I—or anyone—come out strongly in favor of, or even superficially endorse such an idea, the first thing you'll be faced with is the response 'So how do you know this is a good idea? Who made you cultural guru? What evidence is there that this is the way to go?' These things are unavoidable. What will be your answer?"

"We'll tell them everything I've told you so far. Actually, that's a question I was going to ask you: Based upon what you've heard so far, what IS the best way for others to understand and accept the evidence we've presented? (We have more.) And how should this be presented? You may get seduced into coming and seeing for yourself—but everyone can't do that. How should others be confident about all this? Is it best for us to rely upon the strategy—if you DID happen to check it out and conclude that it was the best thing since sliced bread—of people reasoning that 'since Allen thinks it's great then it must be great, since he's one of the wisest, most knowledgeable, and most objective people around'?

"And allow me to back up that claim. In the entire known universe, whose videos have done the most to help people see where we've been, where we're at, and where we're going more than yours? Whose videos have been seen by the most political and

business leaders for guidance and have opened the door for you to consult with heads of state, Nobel prize winners, corporate bigwigs, and so on? Whose videos have done the most to guide various countries productively and wisely into the Information Age? Whose —"

"Point taken, Robert," interjected Allen. "I cannot think of a better choice than me either, for the spokesperson role you envision. But if I don't find what you're doing to be the best way to do it, or if I find a fatal flaw in your plans, then I wouldn't want such a role, you know. You're right that I've specifically *asked* for people like you two to help postpone doomsday by helping to empower a wise, benevolent, and peaceful reconstitution of civilization. But your plans seem awfully grandiose—"

Glen interjected: "Allen, it's the potential of the miracle called the human being that is the grandiose thing here. We simply want to show them the magic formula for discovering and releasing this magnificence. *They* will do the rest. In essence, then, *we have no plans for the people of Earth. We simply want to tell them something wonderful and inspiring. It is* ***they*** *who will be planning and carrying out wonderful things in this world.* Unlike many religions, we don't believe there needs to be any leaders of sheep, or 'flocks,' as they're sometimes called. We don't believe in telling anyone what they should do or getting politicians to tell them, nor do we believe in leaders making them do something. We believe in inspiring environments releasing the natural loving wisdom of humanity, and with this loving wisdom *they will transcend needing and replace it with being, and then they will make peace among themselves, drop prejudices, begin empowering everyone they meet, and manifest their latent magnificence. It is what people will begin deciding to do and how people will begin deciding to live and love that will be so grand and glorious.* You've asked for humans that care to help empower and catalyze the reconstitution of civilization, Allen. That is a 'grandiose' request. And this—what you're hearing from us—is our 'grandiose' response. I'm using 'grandiose' in the grandeur and magnificence sense, not the pompous or showy sense, and I believe you were also using it this way." (He noticed Allen nodding affirmatively.) "Our MC focus is in creating and communicating a viable strategy for humans culturally transcending the need for all the hate, fear, misery and killing that has characterized civilization for so long, thereby achieving not only peace and weapons reductions, but eventually a happy life for everyone. Idealistic? Yes, but we feel that it can be done—IF we get the right help to catalyze it.

"Sagan, before he passed away, had also asked for humans that care to begin empowering the maturation and transformation of humanity, saying that 'there are large numbers of smart people all over the world longing for an opportunity to make a difference, to help unspring the trap, to make a safer world. We wish to encourage them. . . . We hope that many established scholars, but particularly large numbers of young people, will consider devoting part of their lives to finding the path. In fact there are many paths.' Allen, we HAVE devoted our lives to this, we HAVE found the path—at least the basic foundations for such a path, we ARE encouraged by those words of hope and we DO wish to make a difference. And here we are."

Both Allen and Robert were looking at Glen, who had just made a passionate, fervent statement of his love of mankind and his great faith in their humanity. There was a long, pregnant pause. Allen was quite impressed, so much so that he found himself rechecking his facts: "Glen, you've told me that a couple of months ago you were a normal, angry, frustrated, rebellious, irresponsible fellow. Can the two of you reconfirm to me that this is an entirely accurate statement—not even an exaggeration?" Both teenagers nodded seriously. "You realize that such a change in such a short time seems incredible—almost impossible, right?" They nodded again. Allen was lost in thought for a bit. "So you want my stamp of approval and permission to use my name in promotion?"

"For openers—better yet, your active participation and help," replied Robert. "Since your videos make it crystal clear that the survival of the human species is priority one with you, it's only logical to conclude—like we at Galaxy have concluded—that no projects could possibly hold a candle to the MC project with regards to its potential to unify the world and prevent doomsday, as well as make life on Earth much more about

happy self-actualization and much less about symptoms, struggles, pain, suffering, survival strategies, and conflicts. If you conclude this, then this conclusion would surely lead you toward supportive actions of many kinds. I'm not talking about relocating or stopping what you're doing. I'm talking about also making time for what I feel is the most vital human task on Earth: helping to catalyze making life work so well for people that survival is assured, weapons are laid down, and life becomes a joy for all, rather than just the exceptional few, like us three."

"You're a hell of a salesman, Robert—as are you, Glen," said Allen. "I guess if I did check out your situation and feel that it truly was the key to future survival—by implication—then I'd certainly want to support your efforts all the way and participate in some capacity. But that's a big IF, you know. I don't want to lead you on."

"I feel quite confident that someone as brilliant as yourself will see the implications of all this quite quickly once you experience Galaxy," said Robert.

"Oh, I see the implications all right," said Allen. "If we could empower people's lifestyles to be enhanced in Galaxy directions and the result would be a world that truly works—well, that's something that anyone would be happy and proud to promote with all his or her heart. I've never pictured the Third Wave civilization as quite this benevolent, but I'd surely like it to be. And such a project would have the challenging task of empowering people still in the other two Waves to live better—with more effective lifestyles. Is that the deal then?" Two teenagers were nodding yes.

Glen piped in: "Robert, before I forget: remember that look you had when we both saw that look on Allen's face when you were posing a hypothetical, saying suppose Allen's—or anyone's—mind is NOT clogged up with past conditioning and an isolated family context and he's back at the inadequate personnel variable?"

"Yes," said Robert.

"Is this a good time—" began Glen.

"As good a time as any. Thanks for the reminder. I guess we all know what was going on then," said Robert.

"Yes," smiled Allen, "I was also wondering when he'd return to that, Glen. By the way, what do you think about all this?"

"Well, since there are no absolute frames of reference in the world, I guess I should ask myself 'relative to what?' And of course my only frame of reference is the way things were for me before Galaxy. The difference is dramatic. If a magic wand turned an ant into a human, how would HE feel? All I can say is that, after living there these few months, I've become a very good person. And I like myself now—quite a change from before. As a result of being able to like myself, I now am able to love other people. That is incredible to me. I'd give my life for Galaxy without a second's hesitation. I hope that doesn't sound like a groupie or a cult follower. Nothing could be further from the truth. The thing is, finding Galaxy allowed me to find out who I am—how could anything be more precious than that? Except the learning-how-to-love miracle. But even though this sounds like two different wonderful experiences, I've just recently realized something: Finding myself and learning how to love are the same thing! In the interest of saving time, all I'd like to add to what I've said is this: I'm just bright, but not brilliant like you two. But I'm smart enough to know one thing for absolute certain: Galaxy-type lifestyles, adjusted and fine-tuned for each culture to retain whatever cultural traditions are compatible with MC life, **CAN** turn the world around and make life work. I know that very deeply. But words can never really do justice here. It's the **experience** that says it all.

"Okay, now. Robert—are you sure you want me to run with what I remembered about that knowing look or should you—"

Allen interjected: "I'd like to hear more from Glen. Will that work, Robert?"

"I can't see why not," said Robert.

"Okay," said Glen. "The look Robert had was about the fact that you, Allen, in one of your videos, let the world know some unusual things about yourself and how you were brought up. The look you yourself had at that time was about knowing that you are indeed one of those relatively rare people who filled the bill of a mind that is NOT clogged up with past conditioning from the limitations of an isolated nuclear family context and

inadequate personnel. I'd guess you didn't realize at the time just *how* unusual your upbringing was. I doubt you know many people brought up that way, in a *non*-isolated, nurturing, multigenerational extended family of six strong, wise, together people who were great examples to emulate. I've met no one but Galaxy people who have been brought up in a comparable fashion—and I've met plenty."

"I've met no one with *that* great a background either, except Galaxy people, and I've met even more people than Glen," offered Robert. He looked at Allen. "You couldn't have met many either, right?"

"Acknowledged," said Allen.

Glen went on: "You are one of those fortunate few who didn't have Second Wave isolation, who wasn't limited by inadequate resources, who had adequate nurturing, who was surrounded by lots of strong people who knew just who they were, and your upbringing did not prejudice you—like most people—to view life from an isolated nuclear family context of inadequate, shaky resources. In my opinion, this protected you from most mind mud from inadequate nurturing engrams, and it planted the seeds for the rare type of wisdom, intelligence, and insight that empowered you to see what others could not see and to holistically put all these things together into one meaningful whole that, along with Toffler's wisdom, has given the world its best tool for being proactive about the future and about doomsday. Nothing could ever convince me, after my Galaxy experience, that your accomplishments would have occurred anyway and your background was just a coincidence. It was nothing of the sort—it went a long way in helping you become the person you are. And the way you talked about it in your videos shows that you're quite aware of this fact."

"I am at that. Now, tell me about this MC—microcommunity—concept. What's that all about?" asked Allen. The guys spent nearly an hour on that, discussing it in detail. Then they discussed the methods for getting the word to the masses, and eventually the world, which they'd brainstormed with Stephen recently. In outlining how the media can help to spread new lifestyle ideas with examples to emulate in the form of MC-related programs, Glen quoted from many sources, including a TV Guide article from March 2, 1991, written by Suzanne Pingree and Robert Hawkins, University of Wisconsin communications professors. "Our studies with young children and adolescents have shown that television can teach more than new slang and hair styles: in broad and subtle ways, television presents a picture of how people and society as a whole get along. The effect is to shape 'social reality'—our beliefs about the world we live in. These beliefs help determine our other relationships and behaviors." In summary, there was little doubt that this plus all other existing media would suffice to spread the word about MC life enhancement insights.

Next, they mentioned their affiliation with business guru Tom and PR guy Stephen, and pointed out the parts these people would play. It was already way past 5 P.M. and the guys were hoping they could get in all they had to say before the interview came to an end. But Allen wasn't trying to see them out. He was too intrigued. The subject got around to communication in an environment in which there was an extended family as well as other human resources beyond the normal ones. Allen had been told about the 'Alone' signs and the rules against excess noise, disturbing others, and so on.

"So let me get this straight," said Allen, "people may find the most serene solitude and alone space and creative space imaginable by just staying in their rooms with an 'Alone' sign. No one will disturb them except in case of fire or other life-death concerns. But the minute the signs come down they're free game for being visited?"

Glen replied: "That's about it. People who want to see you will knock and this won't be disturbing because if you needed time alone you'd have your sign up. Of course, you may tell the knocker 'not today, thanks' once the door has been answered."

"We all like each other so much that we enjoy each other's company almost unconditionally," Robert explained. "So we either say 'not today' or 'okay, let's be together,' after a door knock has been answered. In either case the situation is positive. Either you find out someone wants to be with you and you reciprocate, or you put it off for some other day. It's classified as an opportunity. It's a choice point. A choice made

more meaningful by the fact that there are quite a few distinct alternatives available. You may be knocker or knockee. Sometimes you want to be with someone else; sometimes a specific person; other times any of the Galaxy people would suffice; sometimes any of five people would work, according to what you're presently into."

Allen responded: "I'm trying to imagine being in such a situation. I'm playing devil's advocate, now, so please keep this in mind. I get an uncomfortable feeling of being surrounded by people. In spite of my upbringing, I think if all my current relatives and best friends lived in my current house with me, I'd go bonkers. I mean, I like porpoises and giant pandas a lot, but wouldn't like to LIVE with them. It all feels a little close. Claustrophobic. Why not just call them when you want guests? Why be so near each other?"

"I couldn't live in a house crowded with people either," replied Robert. "I couldn't stand that sort of scene. I'd also feel claustrophobic—I concur with your trepidations 100 percent. So a better way to visualize all this is to remember that we're not advocating any replacement for the nuclear and other types of families at all, or any modifications to normal house or apartment occupation patterns and densities either. Quite the contrary. Such family types, or Toffler's electronic expanded family or Dychtwald's matrix family are a great basic MC foundation, with current occupation densities. We advocate no change in that area except those that you and he have advocated. We're merely saying that with mobility, divorce, rootlessness, disconnection, alienation, and isolation so prevalent, the normal isolated nuclear or single-parent family or stepfamily has inadequate resources for nurturing any of its members, so kids and adults alike are deprived of adequate social resources, connections, choices, and opportunities, and the society is so used to this that they've defined it as normal and they have collectively decided to turn a blind eye to the implications of all this, so they do not consider it deprivation or inadequacy. And *normal relationship standards* (nearly opposite to P.E.T. standards) are adding to this deprivation for all concerned. People depend on the boob tube and Facebook superficialities to make up for all these inadequacies. (Isn't it time America decides whether it wants to be a real society or a 'virtual' one?) TV entertainment and social networking are a sort of a cheap and dirty consolation prize that's supposed to help make up for what's missing in people's lives. So people are getting their values from this dumb-box and media-addicted peers rather than from meaningful and nurturing social interactions.

"Parents rarely have the time to successfully compete with this narcissism and hedonism conditioning device, which constantly depicts violence as the way to solve problems; constantly depicts pharmaceutical drugs, tobacco, and alcohol as the way to avoid the inconvenience of troublesome thoughts, feelings, and sensations; and constantly depicts sex as the thing to manipulate conveniently nearby people into simply because an urge has occurred. People can easily do so much better than being run by impulses and killing off feelings on purpose because they're inconvenient! But most don't, for the simple but foolish reason that their neighbors and friends don't. And—you know what? It hardly even matters whether the tobacco and alcohol and junk food industries are allowed to advertise their wares on TV or not. The 'cool' characters in programs that people—especially younger people—strive to emulate are usually depicted drinking, smoking, or scarfing down junk food—or desiring to do so. This is what sells products better than anything else.

"There's no logic whatsoever in saying that whatever most people are doing is adequate or wise just because of the fact that that is what most people are doing, especially in light of the accelerating symptomology associated with families in general, including average, normal families. And yet this is the 'logic' being used. Neurotic, insecure adults are what most people grow into, as you can see around you in this world, or as you can read about in any one of a thousand books—I especially recommend that classic entitled *The Adjusted American*. In spite of this collective blindness, the obvious rational solution here is very arithmetic, very quantitative—here's a case where quantitative leads directly to qualitative—enhanced resources leads to enhanced life quality. And yet no quantitative enhancement we at Galaxy support involves any kind of

increased people density or decrease in privacy. It's all just a matter that in MCs people are happy about who lives in the nearby houses or apartments, not neutral or unhappy. They *like* them. So friendships, socialization, childcare—they are not just more convenient. They're much *better*. People's lives are resource rich, not resource poor like normal lives. Parenting and all other relationships are handled carefully and wisely, supported by the best knowledge, not randomly, ignorantly, and haphazardly handled like with normal lives that use mistakes their parents made as their guides, sadly enough.

"This is all very forest-through-the-trees at first. One wants 'a brilliant solution' to be complex, tricky, and intriguing. Like the part of Einstein's relativity theory that was relatively simple, it wasn't so long in coming because of how hard it was; it was long in coming because such things had never been looked at in the right way. It was a matter of dropping old beliefs that were in the way, and then, with a little thinking, it was just THERE. It wasn't about complex thinking about difficult physics at all—the difficult stuff was the other parts of Einstein's relativity.

"People are usually incredibly conditioned to recreate the lifestyle they were brought up with. Psychologically, it's very difficult to vary much from what they were taught—in spite of your videos' advice to do so to enhance Third Wave viability. So they begin all thoughts and feelings in this area with a built-in acceptance and defense of their conditioned lifestyle and beliefs. The initial evolution of MC stuff by my grandparents would have flopped had it been a matter of trying to evolve Einsteinian physics from Newtonian physics, so to speak. The former is not because of but in spite of the latter. It required dropping the Newtonian context to see it, rather than thinking harder along Newtonian lines.

"The evidence for the value and validity of MCs is much more obvious and persuasive than the evidence for special relativity but has taken even longer than it took for special relativity to evolve, because nothing is stronger than early conditioning, which MC ideas had to circumvent, but physics ideas did not. Babies and young children absorb everything uncritically, like a sponge. It goes in deep and becomes an individual's life context. It becomes one's PREMISE and paradigm. SINCE this is so, THEN whatever. It's why so many people have an easy time rationalizing it when they oppress or kill people with slightly different ideas. 'That person was evil and bad and deserved what he got because he violated the obvious natural laws of the universe.' In other words, 'he went against my conditioned beliefs—my premises.'

"One merely needs to see the instincts of aggression and territoriality in the R-complex as the motivation and preprogramming, while also seeing the profound conditioning of human beings by other human beings during their first dozen years of life, to see the recipe for misunderstanding and war. 'Daddy and Mommy punished me if I did something different from their beliefs. I'm older now, and if someone I meet violates Mommy's and Daddy's beliefs then they also deserve punishment. It's only fair.' This may sound silly, but it's the real reason underlying much aggression. Sagan indicated precisely this in his books, as have many others.

"So all I'm saying is that lifestyle conditioning results in beliefs much more strongly held and much less amenable to logic and change than physics beliefs. Which brings us back to my point: neither my grandparents nor me are Einsteins, but they just happened to luck onto an Einsteinian context for lifestyle enhancement, and my parents, and later myself, were born into situations with the enhanced awareness of an Einsteinian context, so to speak—sort of like a kind of humanistic relativity, if you will.

"The culture is back at the Newtonian stage; it has no awareness whatsoever of the Einsteinian stage, except for the tiny amount that has rubbed off on it from the Galaxy presence and a few fortunate people like yourself who were raised much better. I get no credit for any of this. I didn't figure it out. What I did figure out, though, with the help of my friend Glen, are the IMPLICATIONS of my Einsteinian lifestyle. I was, so to speak, born with an Einsteinian spoon in my mouth. So I'm pretty spoiled. But also pretty happy and grateful about my good fortune and anxious to give something back to the world out of love and gratitude.

"When's the last time someone planned a lifestyle and family based upon actual knowledge, logic, and the needs of the situation? When did you last hear someone analyze what type of caregiving environment would be most likely, logically, to nurture best and fill needs best? Occasionally it may seem that some people are doing this, but that's only until you examine their GIVENS—of which most of them are entirely unaware. Givens such as 'isolated nuclear or other types of families are the only real possibility.' Of course, the fact that a great many of such situations blow up or self-destruct within a few years, because they don't work very well and instead serve to push the buttons of all concerned in unpleasant ways, means that many of these nuclear families will soon be single-parent families or stepfamilies. Many of the remaining lifestyle situations will continue their frustrating efforts at making a dysfunctional situation work by 'trying harder,' but since that doesn't address the true nature of the dysfunctionality, the players in this predictable drama will eventually resort to apathy, Facebook obsession, affairs, abuse of substances, or abuse of each other, and in some cases all of the above. *As the sociologists have been telling us for decades, there's no logic to isolated families being good nurturing environments, especially since the majority have both parents working. The parents can't even successfully nurture each other much less a couple of rugrats.*

"There are piles of statistics proving beyond all doubt that this normal scenario is, on the average, far from nurturing. Read about divorce, suicide, alcoholism, teen pregnancy, teen substance abuse, adult substance abuse, crime and violence and spouse abuse, and child abuse statistics; or family expert John Bradshaw's estimates of 96 percent American family dysfunctionalism and 68 percent sexual dysfunctionalism and 60 million Americans seriously affected by alcoholism and 60 million sexually abused Americans and the majority of men and women having eating disorders and one woman in eight being a battered woman, and the epidemic of co-dependence; or just examine the average character profile of the normal, average, neurotic, alienated, disconnected, insecure American. It all comes out the same. The average lifestyle isn't nurturing well, and as a result, there is a lot of suffering and unhappiness. And now we've got AIDS and designer hard drugs and Internet child predators and oozies in gangs' hands and terrorists and all those other types of things to cope with as well. So people need more nurturing, responsibility, lifewish, insight and compassion than ever, in order for life to work for them. But they are getting LESS. The implications are obvious, Allen. The forecast cannot be pleasant if things continue like this.

"The average person is merely precariously coping with the way his lifestyle is working for him—he's not really liking it (except for all the 'neat junk' he has). He's making do—feeling powerless and alienated from his real feelings. He's using a facade—a set of defenses—as a pseudo-self, and therefore experiencing little if any true intimacy (remember the movie *Sex, Lies and Videotape?)* or connectedness to anything or anyone, even if he has 9000 Facebook 'friends.' Relationship isn't worth the risk of the pain to so many—at least in the numbness of alienation and loneliness there is safety and consistency and absence of squabbles. It's *safe*!

"A good many of the alienated and lonely are married, with children, and still they have no real relationships in their lives. Just manipulations, threats, power struggles, and escapism where you watch TV or trade photos and media links on social networks. It has been shown by research that *lonely people get even lonelier on social networks*. This isn't the way people were meant to be, Allen. This isn't what we were born for. This isn't what the human experience should be about. And it doesn't have to be. I can show you plenty of statistics that support de-isolation of our families and initiating MC-type connectedness. Can you show me any that support the appropriateness of the great prevalence of isolated nuclear families, isolated single-parent families, isolated step-families, and isolated singles living? I'm aware that there is superficial connectedness here and there, and apparent connectedness here and there. But in most of these cases the connectedness, when examined, turns out to be lonely alienation in the company of others, or misery loves company, if you will. No connection. No intimacy. No oneness. (You yourself have stated that isolation is a legacy of obsolete Second Wave thinking.)

"Intimacy is the exception, not the rule. People are not close. Sex is NOT intimacy, although occasionally true intimacy can accompany sex. But this is for the few who aren't very alienated, not the alienated masses. People tend to settle for sex because they think that's about all they can expect. And alienated sex, if you take all the proper precautions about disease (and your partner is not a drug user, and not promiscuous), is relatively risk-free. I'm talking as much about married as about unmarried sex here. Relationship risk is much more scary, challenging, and rare. *Why risk when the TV is **so** temptingly close and convenient?* Relationship risk may get you the genuine human warmth of intimacy, but it's more likely to give you the pain of hang-up restimulation, the resurgence of past needs, fears, or traumas that relate to inadequate parenting, and depression. Most so-called relationships are run by the emotions associated with the pain of past deprivations and relationship errors. This is the legacy of our isolated family lifestyles with helter-skelter relationship patterns and practices, Allen, and I repeat: IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. But if we don't enhance our lifestyles, it can and will continue to be this way. And we'll fill with anger. Which will nearly guarantee we'll all be headed for World War III.

"Any way you look at it, we begin our most important creation—our lifestyle—mired in a swamp of unquestioned beliefs and unacknowledged biases, with no decent logical analysis of what we're doing, but just blind trust that millions of people couldn't all be doing it wrong. (Hitler had millions of followers all doing it obscenely wrong, so where does this logic come from that says that if a lot of people are doing it then it must be right?!) So blind trust doesn't usually work too well. Logically, now, is it any wonder? It seems to me that, logically, the wonder would be if it DID work. And if it did work, it'd be from luck more than anything.

"Anyway, my grandparents deserve some credit for coming up with some multiple caregiving insights many years ago, no matter how they did it; and both they and my parents and uncle and aunt deserve credit for slowly evolving P.E.T.-type rules. And Thomas Gordon deserves great credit for inventing and spreading P.E.T. And people like Louise Hart and dozens of other parenting experts deserve great credit for widely disseminating the vital knowledge about various flavors of democratic, authoritative parenting. Perhaps five percent of Americans have gotten and used this knowledge to give their parenting a quantum leap forward. So again, I'm doing a nice job of dealing with the implications of all this, but I sure don't get credit for it."

Robert took a deep breath and went on: "So with the groundwork hopefully well laid, I'll go back to your question: 'Why be so near to each other?' Simple. To exist as a choice, a human resource, an opportunity for those we care about. And keep in mind that we're no nearer to each other than any other apartment dwellers are to each other, or any suburban house dwellers are to their neighbors, so I believe we can give that one a rest, since it is incorrect.

"Anyway, back to the increased resources idea. A normal, non-MC young child may occasionally get visits from friends or relatives or make visits to same. But if he is like most young people, he generally has to rely upon the human resources available in the immediate environment. This is usually one parent, one baby-sitter, or one sibling. And oftentimes the one looking after him is NOT really available. So kids watch six hours of the boob tube every day—most would rather be acting upon choices relative to a more enriched human environment. And so would their boob-tube-obsessed parents.

"Nurturing? Oftentimes NO ONE IS TRULY AVAILABLE, even though they may be 'present.' People who are supposed to be caring for kids are watching the tube, teaching by example that the TV offers safe, vicarious relationships, while life offers chaotic, dangerous, painful, hurtful relationships, which kids soon learn from watching their parents interact. These pseudo-caregivers aren't available to nurture anyone. Nor are those that are gossiping about their superficial nonrelationships on telephones or Facebook; nor are people who are sleeping, working, and so on. A nurturer must BE a nurturer to qualify for the title.

"The working-mother controversy had a lot of steam on the adverse, conservative side until statistics showed that working mothers were actually NURTURING their kids as

much as nonworking ones, and sometimes exceeding nonworking ones with regards to the amount of 'quality time' spent with their kids. And the fact that the working moms often felt better about their lives tended to rub off on their kids in positive ways. So the 'scam' was discovered. Working moms have a pretty clear conscience these days, now that they're trying to be so much more responsible regarding finding high-quality daycare and preschool and creating quality time for their kids when they're home.

"But while this type of thing, like babysitting co-ops, is moving in a good, healthy direction, a much more important essential is being overlooked. While working moms are proud that they've turned out to be doing at least as good a job as nonworking ones, they need to drop the relative comparisons and take a look at the universals. The question for not only working and nonworking moms but for families and lifestyles in general is not 'am I doing as well as so-and-so?' but 'am I really succeeding at creating a successfully nurturing environment? Is this lifestyle working? Are the kids learning responsibility, respect, compassion, and how to love, think, and understand? Are there power relationships or ones of respect?' True statistics on these subjects would show that many NOs and few YESes are the answers to these questions. In other words, life is not working as people want and hope for. So, Allen, we are close (meaning in the apartment next door) and available because our lifestyle was designed to work, to succeed, to nurture, to help kids find themselves and actualize their potentials. So that should answer your question about why we are close—if we weren't that proximate, our lifestyle wouldn't work.

"Remember that plenty of people live in apartments and don't experience their neighbors as being too close. They are often glad to have people nearby for at least superficial relating. Our configuration where relatives and best friends are nearby is more the norm, worldwide, than the exception. And if one's relatives and best friends are nurturing, the situation is quite advantageous—remember, each family has its own apartment, as in current, normal situations. And each person his own space—which normal families often don't provide, so in this way we are comparatively LESS 'close.' The proximity thing just enhances opportunities for relationship, nurturing and fulfillment. The basic family structures and spaces, whether nuclear, step-parent, single-parent or singles remain intact and unchanged. **We merely add opportunity.**

"You mentioned that if your relatives and friends lived in your house with you, you'd go bonkers. So would I. But yours don't and mine don't so who are we talking about? I agree that filling up houses, like people do in some communes or some types of student housing or ghetto housing, doesn't make for a good environment. That's why our MC policies are as much against such configurations as you are. Let's agree to agree on that: no house-loading, communes, ghettos or other forms of crowding. Crowding produces aggression which produces violence or at least stress. I should reiterate that the Galaxy configuration is simply normal nuclear families living in normal apartments in a normal apartment house. There happen to be several single people living in individual single-person apartments as well. No hippies, swappers, punkers, dopers, smokers, or weirdos are involved. We're very UNradical, and we average out to half way between liberal and conservative. There would be no more reason for you to feel claustrophobic or crowded in Galaxy than you would in your own home or in any apartment you might have anywhere. It's no different.

"When I was discussing the MC concept, I covered various configurations. People living in suburban block houses would certainly not feel any different in that regard either. If they started up an MC, there would be no change in the way their families occupied their homes. Duplexes with two families would stay that way. And so on. So we need to see here that we're not talking about losing privacy, space, or solitude. *As a matter of fact, the use of central childcare and/or elder-care hubs will actually INCREASE the potentials for privacy and solitude beyond the normal range, if desired, as well as the potentials for relationship.* So with regards to privacy and solitude, we're talking about adopting procedures that empower these things more than ever. The only physical change, and this is optional, will be the possible addition of covered walkways between houses or some other connection device. Some condos and new, community-centered,

modern housing already have the appropriate protected interconnections; most motels, hotels, and apartments do too—or something close to it. With ordinary block houses, some MCs would need interconnections; others would not. I think the reason your first reaction was fear of crowding is that you consider your present situation rather optimal and wouldn't want to change it, and so you immediately got 'claustrophobic' and 'invaded' upon hearing the word microcommunity which sounds very 'together-ish.' Might that be accurate?"

"Yes," agreed Allen, "in playing devil's advocate I confess I just let you have it with both barrels of a gut reaction. I purposely kept my mind out of it and just simply reacted. You may need to stress the aspects of life that DON'T change more than those that DO, in introducing your MC concept, Robert. Logically I follow everything you're saying. But homes are about emotions, not reason—as you yourself have pointed out. People are secure in their homes and would consider any change a threat and a reason for insecurity. The uprooting and moving you've spoken of earlier will be a source of insecurity too. Luckily for you, people are used to it—it's a very mobile society so that won't be enough to kill your possibilities for success. Eighty years ago you'd have been in trouble on that one. Now, about interconnections. Suddenly seeing interconnections all over suburbia would be both interesting and metaphorically appropriate—but could it be aesthetic?" Glen whipped out some architectural drawings of possible suburban MCs, done by Galaxy people—mostly Wendy—in the last few weeks. Three covered-walkway possibilities, one of which used glass walls, were depicted. Versions of tiny connecting railways, tree-house hubs, Oriental-looking hubs, and uncovered walkways were depicted also, along with condo, row housing and apartment layouts. Allen perused the drawings.

"These are preliminary sketches done by Galaxy people," said Robert. "The normal environments would get ENRICHED both relative to personnel resources and functionality, just as you advocate in discussing Third Wave improvements over Second Wave obsolescence, and electronic expanded families. The number of potential caregivers for the young and the number of potential friends for both children and adult MC people would increase significantly. Rules and procedures would both give an environment more like that which nurtured the incredible British polymaths. It's the combination of enhanced quantity and quality of relationships that we find so profoundly important (as you yourself did during your upbringing). Either extra friends or nurturer alternatives ONLY, or enhanced relationship strategies and 'Alone' sign procedures ONLY, will improve a situation. But put all four of these together and the combination is miraculous.

"Of course, this all works best if the people in your MC are very compatible. Unlike normal neighbors and normal isolated nuclear family scenes, we're talking about a scene in which people move so they're near their best friends—people move every 5 years these days anyhow. If they have no friends they want to be near, they can use a MC search and match website which Glen is building to network and search databases for compatible people and FIND best friends, and then move adjacent to each other. The other way to go is if the people they are closest to and care about and like are relatives, then have these families move into next-door block houses, apartments, or condos. Or a combination of the two, like at Galaxy. Friends and relatives both. Can you get a feeling now for how *people would not feel more crowded, but instead, more connected—as you yourself did as a child?* (Which any good shrink or social scientist will tell you is what people need more than anything to prevent or cure some of the maladies of their present lifestyles, and they are *not* referring to Facebook connections.)

"We intend to DE-ISOLATE the isolated nuclear, step, single-parent families, Allen, and then revamp their functionality so they don't turn into messes like so many do."

"My God, what an incredible ambition, Robert! 'De-isolate the isolated nuclear, step, single-parent families,'" mused Allen. "Are you biting off more than you can chew?"

"This fellow here" (he pointed to Glen) "and fifteen others besides me are in on this. That's a lot of teeth. Perhaps you'll find something you'd like to nibble on in all this too."

"It's too early to tell—I'm not the impulsive type. I think things through first, as you can tell from my videos," said Allen. "But you've definitely got my attention. I respect ambition, enterprise, clear thinking, and important insights. But what impresses me most is that you CARE that much, so much that you'd embark upon such a quest at such a young age. I salute both of you as benevolent pioneers. Most everyone else your age is just out to see what they can get, not what they can contribute. You're J.F.K.'s dream come true—asking what you can do for your country rather than vice versa. And yet you're wise enough to realize that nationalism is ultimately a dead-end street. Even though you want the MC movement to germinate and expand from a United States epicenter, you realize that ultimately the movement must reach the rest of the world as well. Frankly, gentlemen, I think what you're trying to do is wonderful. I see no major flaw in your basic philosophies and assumptions. And I have no reason to believe that what you've evolved is not the cultural breakthrough I was expressing the desire for all through my videos. I've said that I see the HOME as the center of the new Third Wave civilization, and I predict the resurrection of the expanded family, including more extended families. You've described the best version of this civilizational center I've ever imagined in your MCs.

"Maybe the time has come when a lifestyle has evolved that will give human culture the quantum-leap kick-in-the-butt it so desperately needs. Perhaps the new opportunity for the world to culturally grow out of its stormy adolescence and achieve a modicum of grace and maturity is upon us. Just maybe—just MAYBE—we can close the cultural lag's ominous gap before this dangerous chasm swallows us all with a big nuclear gulp! If that is so—and I hope very much that it is—then my only sane response here, as a human being co-responsible for planet Earth, is 'Where do I sign?'

"So I guess it's obvious then that my hesitations are based upon not being CERTAIN that you have indeed stumbled upon the way out of the cultural darkness—the Nuclear Dark Ages looking for a Renaissance, as it were. On the up side, I can tell, just from the way you gentlemen act and think and care, that you do indeed live in an enhanced environment and have superior relationships. I can also tell that you've the perfect types of minds to tackle the cultural lag dilemma and define the best characteristics of Third Wave civilization: your minds are bold, daring, insightful, ready to see the forest through the trees, resourceful, persistent, confident, compassionate, and best of all, uncluttered by the burden of cultural biases and beliefs that would color or conceal the truths you seek; this was indeed the key in Einstein's Newton-avoiding case—the analogy holds. Perhaps you're the epitome of the perfect Third Wave citizen—the model to emulate, as it were.

"But then there's the down side. We don't need MCs dissected and experimented on in test tubes—your point was well taken. But logic dictates that we at least need data on many diverse families in many diverse situations adopting the lifestyle and recording the results in as noninterfering a way as possible—your Heisenberg point was also well made. If this data defines the MC movement as the unequivocal path out of the darkness of the cultural lag, then everyone will be delighted, and perhaps the world will break down your doors to sign up. What we have here is elementary: it's the difference between saying something is so and demonstrating that something is so. Remember, I'm on your team. I'm cheering for your side. I truly want you to win. YOU know that you've gotten the right answer. Now, how can *I* know?"

"I really believe that if you SEE for yourself, you'll KNOW for yourself," Robert said quietly. "Besides, you can prove anything with data. Every time one doctor proves that sugar is bad, another proves that it isn't. Same with saccharine, medicines, cholesterol, oat bran, fluoridation, smoking, and so on. It depends upon who's paying the researchers. You and I know which side of these issues it's wise to go along with, but when the tobacco industry comes out with 'research' that secondhand smoke doesn't harm bystanders, after the Surgeon General has just published research that absolutely proves that it does harm bystanders, it tends to make the public mistrust ALL research, which, of course, is the tobacco industry's ultimate goal: to get smokers a rationalization that they can live with so they will continue smoking around others based upon 'the

research is ambiguous' baloney. Because if the smokers do quit around others, they'll rarely smoke, since most people are often around other people. I've known since I first smelled, and coughed from, a cigarette at age three—in a restaurant—that it was harmful, disgusting, and upsetting. The cigarette producers know it too, and so does the Surgeon General. But the weed pushers, still subsidized by the government, have all the money—which is the only reason they weren't outlawed as a public health menace decades ago. When CNN informed us in late 1991 that the tobacco interests spend $18,000,000 a year to try to find 'evidence' that smoking does no harm—in spite of the fact that there are decades of positive, irreversible evidence that it is EXTREMELY harmful—it merely reinforced the cynicism we Americans feel toward the realities of data, research, and 'scientific evidence.' Evidence and data are something that those with big money BUY, often at the public's expense, one way or another.

"I think the book *The Idea Brokers*, by James Allen Smith, is on target when it exposes the distortion of knowledge wherein it becomes the slave to political agendas and, boiled down to its basics, this is knowledge being used as the whore of special interests. The more the public becomes savvy to all this, the more cynical they become and the more they tend to substitute pseudoscience for science, since so much of science can be found flaunting its charms in the red-light districts.

"No wonder membership in Evangelical Churches is up—'if we can't be true to science because it has been exposed as a special-interest scam, at least we can be true to a consistent, honest, trustworthy, and honorable tome called "the Good Book" (the Bible).' It's a port in the storm for the disillusioned, alienated, future-shocked people who've been deceived, lied to, and led down the garden path just one too many times. It's something simple and reliable in a word of chaotic, confusing charlatanism. This general cynicism is for all science, but it goes double for social science, because of the liberal social engineering that has led to what conservatives consider the degenerate liberal nightmare of a selfish, entitlement-crazy society obsessed with rights, blind to responsibility, apathetic to morality and decency, and with no respect for authority or religion.

"Back to Smith's book: Look at all the scientists who spend their time on weapons research because that's the only job they can find. Smith presents extensive information on all this. Here, I've jotted down a quote or two; this first one relates to the social scientist 'experts' who helped design the Great Society:

"'Suddenly, their proposals seemed incapable of meeting the test of practical results; and their analyses, it seemed, had not been as rigorous as those of other scientific workers. Even their attempt at mounting "social experiments" that would test welfare proposals and health care systems dramatized the difficulty of obtaining accurate scientific information about controlled social phenomena. In fact, the long-promised (ever-emerging) science of society seemed increasingly to be a mere forensic exercise, a form of political argument disguised as detached scientific inquiry and scholarly discourse. With the ultimate unraveling of scientific claims in the late 1960s and 1970s, social scientists soon found their work variously described as ideological propaganda, a marketplace commodity, or intellectual weaponry. Thus, the vocabularies of warfare and marketing now permeate the language of those who work in Washington's think tanks.' He goes on to describe the breakup of liberalism (which was grounded in technocratic social science) and points out that: '*Knowledge itself seemed to have failed*. And the political consequences proved to be profound as conservatives, holding different ideas about knowledge and its uses, ascended to power.'

"Cynicism about experts expanded once more when the Eastern bloc began its rapid self-destruct in 1989 and no expert had predicted anything. 'In that year, the experts were tried and found lacking,' says Smith.

"The American public's perception of data is that it's something manipulated by special interest groups to lie about their causes. So data is at best ambiguous and at worst indicative of an attempted scam. That doesn't mean that we don't trust Toffler's data if he demonstrates the powershift from coercion to knowledge by statistical evidence, Allen. We do. But no one has anything to gain by questioning him about such

things, because he's the world's preeminent futurist. A few foolish academics who were a day late and a dollar short, reaching similar conclusions, may salve their bruised egos by questioning his credentials or obsessing over some petty detail they think he doesn't have quite right, but that's just the jealousy and pompous pedantry of the lightweight intellectuals who are secretly scurrying to catch up to the brilliance of his enlightened world vision. To those movers and shakers who count—to those people on this globe who are in the know—and I count myself among their numbers, Toffler and you are the ones with the credibility. While others sat on their pretentious thumbs swiveling, you and Toffler were out there hard at work figuring out what we all need to understand in order to not just avoid being run over by the traffic but helping to direct it as well—"

Allen was laughing heartily at this point, so Robert stopped. As Allen settled down, he said, still chuckling: "Sorry, Robert, it's just that your image of pretentious academics swiveling on their Second Wave thumbs was a bit too beautifully poignant to absorb with a straight face. I just may dream of that image tonight. You see what you've done!?" he chuckled, starting to laugh again, and the boys joined in. Perhaps Robert had been a bit too colorful and 'poetic,' or even metaphorical to the point of questionable taste. Allen certainly didn't seem to mind.

Robert went on, once order had been restored: "And it's obvious that that's one of the reasons why I'm sitting here now—*the MC movement needs such credibility*. As it defines the optimal characteristics of Third Wave lifestyles, it needs the validation of the 'father' of Third-Wave-thinking videos: Allen Wilson. And your videos and Sagan's books point out how you're hoping that someone will discover a lifestyle that really and truly works in all senses of the word so that society can discard its diapers and evolve away from Second Wave dysfunctionality. So you *are* the perfect person to tell and get support from when the miraculous discovery occurs.

"But I don't feel that the 'scientific data' route is the way to go here. It would impress other scientists, perhaps. But the general public doesn't change because of statistics. A small percentage of people responded to the 1964 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health by quitting smoking for a couple of months. However, three months later the percentage of people in this country who smoked was the same as the percentage before the report came out. Normally, uncomfortable statistics are repressed, not acted upon. Statistics are pretty worthless as an agent of social change. Society changes because of events, milestones, and evolving new ways of thinking. And all this is communicated through the mass media. In the changes that are purposely caused as a result of some social campaign, we sometimes talk about *social marketing.* I'll get to that later. But, for the most part, the society changes when it is READY to change, when the preconditions are in place, and when a pivotal person or organization makes the right move at the right time. Contraceptive pills, Hugh Hefner, the Beatles, J.F.K., King, Vietnam, the baby boom, the Apollo moon landings and the 60s assassinations—these changed things. Hitler changed things dramatically. But it wasn't statistics that made people follow his Jew-hating insanity. He was at the right place at the right time—Germany was full of depressed, alienated people desperate for strong leadership and the people were psychologically predisposed to looking for a scapegoat for their loss of World War I. They were suffering under a fanatically authoritarian, father-centered family structure so obsessed with obedience that it was the epitome of oppression and negative power. Statistics played no more than a window-dressing part in all this. He *sold* his ideas to the Germans by what he said and the way he said it, and it didn't even matter that some of them were not only unscientific and unlikely but foolish and outrageous as well. Nope. No science needed here; just effective P.R.

"The A-bomb changed things even more dramatically. The statistic of our being able to kill ourselves exactly ten times over if the world's arsenals were released is memorable, but not pivotal—it's still window dressing. The change was from needing to fight big wars in order to have peace and freedom, to needing NOT to fight big wars to have peace and freedom, and, indeed, survival. A nation's miscalculations used to result in skirmishes, feuds, insults, loss of territory, or even loss of sovereignty. Now such

things may well result in the loss of Earth—of the human species itself. That's change. No statistics needed here.

"We Galaxy folks feel that a huge cultural tension is building up now composed of tremendous divorce rates, as well as crime, drugs, suicide, failure of education, rampant dysfunctionality, powerlessness, irresponsibility, alienation and dissatisfaction and fear of nuclear terrorism or accidents or doomsday. The statistics are the window dressing again. People are EXPERIENCING these things. The divorces aren't numbers, they're real people—they needn't be reminded they're doing it—they're busy at this moment crying and abusing substances because of it. That's much more real to them than any number could ever be. The kids are watching the family decompose and they're busy crying, acting out, and looking for some drugs to ease their pain—since they've been told for 10,000 hours from the tube that that's what you do when you feel anything. The real change force here is the tremendous load of tension—a social, tsunami-like force—building up behind the dam of our society. One that needs release. The young try to release it with rap music, gang violence, crack use, disrespect, crime, getting lost in video games and chat rooms and social networks. Older people use prescription drugs, cocktails, conspicuous consumption and escapism.

"None of these strategies are working—they're just temporary distractions from the rising tension. The pressures for change continue to build. Some people are fooled by the fact that there are so many superficial things changing these days. But the lifestyle changes, except for women working, a few good daycare centers and babysitting co-ops, Internet connectivity, computer speeds, and a few more realistic housing types, are mostly in the negative direction—making good nurturing less and less likely all the time. Hence the symptoms. Hence the tensions building. Hence the dam in danger of bursting. Half of today's marriages will end in divorce; most families are dysfunctional; most relationships fail. This can't go on indefinitely.

"Someone is going to have to be at the right place at the right time and germinate a pressure-relieving change to help the society get its act together so the dam doesn't burst. If no one does, then the change that eventually comes won't be a pro-establishment maturity step and quantum leap forward of benevolent cultural transformation, but an anti-establishment change of polarization and radicalization and rebellion that may actually burst the dam entirely.

"The writing is already on the wall. People who can't have a satisfying life within the parameters and restrictions of our present culture are either going to become drug lords or try to tear down the establishment and rebuild it. Or they'll run amok—like the high school massacres of the late 90s and the other tragic school shootings in 2012. Or they'll start terrorizing us, like in the Oklahoma City bombing, the Unibomber, or in the Atlanta Centennial Park bombing. There are places—mostly ghettos—that live mostly on welfare and drug transactions. These places will explode someday. But even places where poverty and crime and crowdedness aren't the main issue are breeding disaffected, hostile youth, or mind-numbed media, video game, iPhone, and Facebook addicts. Some will do the drug thing and kill themselves off. Many of them will be 'taking some of us with them,' as the saying goes. If you draw a graph of the last sixty years you'll see what I mean. If things move in the direction they're moving now for much longer, many of our big city pressure cookers will explode. We'll have to become a police state to cope—look at Columbia and now Mexico—where will they end up? They let it get out of hand for too long. We could end up as the next Bosnia.

"If everything keeps going where it's going now, life is going to end up unacceptably dangerous and insecure for the average citizen. If you've read Louv's *Childhood's Future* or *America II* or Reich's *The Work of Nations*, you'll recall the profound significance of the upper crust in our society moving in droves to the security of walled enclaves. Notice that today's radicals have oozies and high-tech explosives and computer knowledge. They're not like 60s long-hairs with peace signs, flower power, chants, free love and Woodstock. As you yourself have pointed out and warned us about.

"We all watched in horror in March of 1991 as a gang of police officers beat a black guy—Rodney King—half to death and the police chief—Gates—later acted like it was

all business as usual. This was on a home video that someone just happened to be filming. How many similar incidents had come before this that were NOT filmed?

"There are hundreds of portents that speak loud and clear to us cultural activists, and all with the same message: The culture's out of whack, so if we don't take rational, insightful steps to get it functioning reasonably well again, it will radicalize and polarize. Iran keeps looking more dangerous by the day. What are they up to?

"Ours isn't the only place that's getting frayed at the seams and showing danger symptoms. More and more people may conclude that this country needs tearing down and rebuilding because it's degenerated too far to fix with Band-aids and corks and baling wire—in other words, it's gone beyond the reach of normal political solutions and elections are jokes: choosing between which of 2 losers will sell us out to special interests while lying to our face. What's the point? Allen, this really is true. It *is* beyond political solutions. If leaders would use some of our weapons-buying money for urgent domestic concerns, we finally could at least give the *appearance* of having medical, childcare, drug-treatment and educational bases covered for the American people. But money allocation or reallocation is simply not the answer. The bucks would help treat symptoms, mostly. Where's the prevention? Where's the cure?

"You cannot BUY family functionality, deradicalization, depolarization, reconnection, cultural functionality and social contentment. The conservatives' belief that 'throwing money at such things is not a cure' is well-founded (although it's occasionally better than nothing). Just consult history. Social engineering in the 20th century was an unmitigated disaster. The range of social problems with effective political cures is quite limited. So we are faced with the choice of either trying to *pacify* the symptoms by the use of dollars, or *eliminate* the symptoms by wise changes in lifestyle. Changes that, in the long run, don't COST money—they SAVE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

"No one's going to buy our way out of this one. We either MATURE out of it, or we succumb to it and decompose as a society. You've been a major spokesperson for our society maturing and transcending our cultural lag for decades by dropping Second Wave anachronisms in favor of Third Wave transformations. I say the best way to use Third Wave knowledge is to go way beyond Second Wave mass-man contexts of believing that the political money relocation solutions are the key. Better knowledge and Third Wave contexts supporting this political manipulation is going to be only a stopgap component of America's solution. I say it will help a bit but that *the main component of America's ticket out of its sociocultural slump, its cultural lag, its rampant dysfunctionality, and its Culture War polarization will be using the key Third Wave ingredient—knowledge—in a way that's very different from anything any social engineer and would-be political savior ever considered. We do NOT need to concentrate our efforts at this time on applying this knowledge in political contexts so that politicians well be well-guided to pull America out of its cultural slump. This looking for political saviors stuff is simply desperation, and it has no hope in making a seriously benevolent impact.*

"The current pseudo-representative democracy that's actually set up for the special interests and designed for the mass society isn't going to help—it will mostly be in the way. As you've said, we need to rely on empowering all citizens with adequate knowledge to be able to participate wisely in democracy, and then we need for such citizens to, as you say, cease looking for a knight on a white horse. That's the Hollywood solution, the liberal solution, the Second Wave solution, the mass-man solution, the social engineering solution of the political salvationism mindset. It's the problem more than it's the solution. What we need now, as Toffler said, is to 'place strategic pressure on existing political systems to accelerate the necessary changes. Without this tremendous pressure from below, we should not expect many of today's nominal leaders . . . to challenge the very institutions that give them prestige, money, and the illusion, if not the reality, of power.' He said we need the 'reconstitution, not merely of our obsolete political structures, but of civilization itself.' He said 'we have a destiny to create.' And, to 'place strategic pressure' we *must* use grassroots movements.

"And he's right. But let me define some of the details of how this overall needed context of his—and yours—will have to be applied as we move from generality to

concrete act. Let's put politics aside for a bit. You've been clear that the politicians will not lead but follow—they'll be running to catch up once effective grassroots movements have done what they need to do. They'll align themselves with the will of the people once the special interests see that the direction of the movement is our destiny and it would be suicide to get in the way. And that's because, as a rule, the direction of the politicians is dictated by special interest money more than people concerns. So the reconstitution of political structures you call for will not be the cause of the American cultural renaissance to come, but it's *effect.* Politicians will be some of the last to climb on board the train of cultural transcendence. But climb they will. So, as I say, we need to put politics aside for a bit.

"I've outlined the MC movement as the particular grassroots movement that will initiate the needed cultural transcendence. I've outlined the needed nurturance practices, parenting practices, neighborhood practices, and so on. And the needed relationship standards. I've outlined the needed attitude that place matters, that rootedness and community and social cooperation and childcare cooperation (which has *always* existed in human society except for during the latter part of the Second Wave) *all really matter very much*, as you've noted in discussing the electronic expanded family. The new cultural perversion—the idea that these things are old-fashioned—this must be turned around ASAP. Facebook is an exceedingly impotent substitute for true, well-functioning community. It's almost a caricature of community, even though there *are* a few positive uses one can make of it.

"Mobility and technological self-sufficiency and materialistic abundance have duped many into imagining that isolation and alienation from others and virtual living through TV shows and social networking is somehow a viable lifestyle, and somehow true democracy can be sustained in such an outrageously alienated cultural nightmare of narcissistic, hedonistic schizophrenia. This is a dangerous illusion. Our best social thinkers about democracy, whether Eberly and Bellah from the right or Slater from the left or you from the middle, know that democracy cannot long survive such a context. You dovetail with literally thousands of social thinkers in your warnings against isolation. National isolationism is truly a serious error as you, Reich, Naisbitt and others have warned. We need global contexts and global citizenship and so on, and to keep in line crazy leaders like the one in Iran. But this issue actually pales in comparison to the dangers of social isolation at the individual, family, and neighborhood level. Those who really *get it* about what sustains democracy, like de Tocqueville, Eberly, and you, may or may not be persuaded to believe that the Internet can aid some of democracy's communication and centralization weaknesses and that virtuality is sometimes a culturally beneficial reality, but that would never precipitate in any of your brilliant minds the naïve generality that direct human solidarity and connectedness have become somehow passé or worse: irrelevant. You know, and have so stated, that the Third Wave needs some of the connectedness and rootedness found in First Wave civilization and lacking in Second Wave society. You're right. However, it needs much more. And the MC movement is the overall concept embodying these other needs of an optimal Third Wave civilization.

"As you've said, we need to rely on empowering all citizens with adequate knowledge to be able to participate wisely in democracy. But we—the grassroots civilization reconstitutors—don't need to even think about the political aspect at this time. It's premature. The politicians do need to think about this stuff—and soon—and Toffler's *Third Wave* and *Creating a New Civilization* outline how. Let's hope they read them like Newt Gingrich asked them to. Let's hope they get it and respond. But us 'reconstitutors' would be well served not to get the cart before the horse here. Unless we can revamp the sociocultural scene in Third Wave ways first, political manipulations will be simply a distraction, and as naïve as the TV addicts who sit home around election time wondering if any of the bozos trying out for office will be knights on white horses this time and 'save' us, or if the corruption and alienation of America will again be manifested as another Second Wave apologist is shooed into office by powerful special interests who care more about their wallets and maintaining the Corporatocracy and the Oligarchy than about our American human civilization.

"And those TV addicts—most American consumers—will have only themselves to blame when democracy comes crashing to the pavement like those fanatic psychos hoped the World Trade Center would do in the 1993 bombing but then the 9/11 terrorists actually did this, to everyone's horror. Democracy is NOT simply another TV entertainment entity to be enjoyed during one's leisure time with beer in hand. And it's not a given or a right. It's a privilege to be enjoyed by the responsible, the vigilant, and the civic participators. It thrives only if viable and vigilant society, culture, lifestyles, communication, community, connectedness, and relationships thrive. And there's the rub. Such a thing as all these things thriving is only a memory—a fantasy for blind and deaf nostalgic conservatives to indulge in as the social institutions crash around their ears.

"We've never gotten these perfect; there's always been *some* weaknesses—even a few serious ones. But today's cultural symptoms speak louder than any voices could ever do: There are *rampant* weaknesses now! Most of these nonthriving entities are unbalanced, dysfunctional, or even *sick* in some way at this point. And yet everything that's needed for them to thrive is contained in the knowledge in the individuals in this very room. They *could* thrive, gentlemen. We know what to do. We have the most balanced power around, as you say, Allen, with large amounts of wealth, military power, and knowledge. Good for us for this good balance. But it's not enough. We need a balanced culture, balanced lifestyles, etc. We need a culture of human wisdom, humanistic compassion, and wise lifestyles supporting wise, thriving relationships. What we have is a culture of symptoms. We need the culture to thrive, not just the economy and national power balance, both of which are also in trouble. There are a thousand reasons for this but I'm sure we all know them already.

"Without question, this failure to culturally thrive is a manifestation of Second Wave ideas blowing it for us when America desperately needs a Third Wave revamping. But it's more than that. It's everything we've said since we sat down here, Allen. Toffler asked for people to '*help create the consciousness needed for man to undertake the control of change, the guidance of his evolution,' so people could 'reach out and humanize distant tomorrows.'* This failure to culturally thrive, then, is a need for the rehumanization and reconnection of most Americans in a viable way that finally gives them a life they feel works other than materialistically and a lively, active heart that makes them care enough about their fellow humans to reconnect with the goals of the Founders when they established this nation in the first place. We've lost a lot of what's best about the American experience, but we cannot regain it with a return to the past, or a return to churches, or a return to the nostalgics' Ozzie-and-Harriet wet dreams, or a return to the First Wave. The only possible viable option in my extremely-well-considered opinion is to reconstitute civilization in the Third Wave direction as you've generally outlined, and to do it in the context of MC movement cultural transformation or something equally as viable. I cannot even imagine anything even *nearly* as viable much less equally viable—can either of you?" Two heads shook negatively.

"If you think I'm overstating my case about the incredible disparity between the way it mostly is and the way it COULD be, I'd like to again invite you to Galaxy. *That lifestyle represents the way it could be and should be, if lifestyles were designed according to need rather than according to tradition and conditioning.* Perhaps from where *you* stand (your lifestyle) things look only mildly chaotic and messed up—especially in view of the amazing lifestyle that nurtured you and gave you an optimistic heart, and in view of that wonderful family of yours you've introduced in your videos. But how many *other* people do you know that have experienced life this way? Don't answer—few Americans would have much trouble answering such an easy question. From your inspiring life's perspective, others are not doing very good. And from my lifestyle's perspective, people are barely even becoming a SHADOW of what they could become. My lifestyle has been a miracle from the get-go. But in normal lifestyles . . . wow! People are hardly maturing or evolving at all. There's very little compassion or understanding. There's depression, repression, oppression, and escapism everywhere. There are few lights in the darkness. Responsibility has degenerated into opportunism and ambition has degenerated into raw selfishness. The leaders continue the ugly legacy of devising ways

for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer, further polarizing and alienating vast segments of the population, and further aggravating the Culture War. These segments will necessarily turn anti-establishment for mere survival, if things continue. Perhaps the days of U.S. 'Contras' aren't that far off. I don't think I'm overreacting.

"Our country has a well-established precedent for getting caught napping. While we dozed, Nazis wiped out millions and millions of Jews. While we slept, Japan prepared for Pearl Harbor (this is the same country that we can't even compete with today regarding TVs, copiers, and electronics). While we napped, Russian missiles were sailing for Cuba. During a snooze, Iraq took over Kuwait and set hundreds of oil wells on fire and set loose the biggest oil slick in history. Again snoozing, we've lost control of the Iran nukes-acquiring situation. Sure, we eventually stopped that maniac Saddam, but not before Saddam caused billions of dollars of infrastructure damage, environmental damage, economic damage, emotional damage, and death and destruction on a grand scale. Maybe we've napped long enough.

"Polarization and alienation and disaffectedness precede all civil wars and factional skirmishes. For the U.S., the clouds on the horizon are not about conflicts with other nations this time; they're about blindness and lack of insight leading us deterministically into a situation where the dam bursts and everyone stands around blinking afterwards, looking at the rubble and devastation, asking 'What happened?' One way of seeing it is to forecast that if the people's lives are unsatisfying, they'll turn to conspicuous consumption even more than they do now to fill the emptiness in their lives. According to this win-lose nonsense, the corporation bigwigs should be glad that people's lives aren't happy. But the corporation bigwigs' lives aren't qualitatively different from the consumers—they can just buy more stuff, because they're richer.

"Worse yet, as the young continue the current trend of being less and less prepared for the requirements of tomorrow's jobs, and the dissatisfaction and alienation and polarization continues, they'll eventually get mad at 'those that have' and at the foreigners and immigrants that get the good-paying engineering and programming jobs that American young people are unwilling to prepare for, and they'll start thinking about bringing down the rich and the powerful, or at least take some serious drugs to help them forget their woes—and serious drugs, unless we legalize them, take serious money to purchase. Which comes right back to the Have-nots wanting and needing to take from the Haves to establish their version of 'social equality,' or to pay back mommy and daddy for not filling needs adequately—it doesn't matter which, it comes down to the same thing in the end. Let me ask a question: If no one does anything about lifestyles not working and things keep getting worse and worse, and still no one responds with anything but political rhetoric (like the 'War on Drugs') and token economic pacifications, how long do you figure it will be until the dam bursts? You've said that people will fight back when they're pushed against the wall. Most of the underclass and some of the lower class and middle class feel that way now. It's not only crazy survivalists and cultists that are getting ready for the big fights when the Culture War goes ballistic and the Have-nots decide they cannot wait any longer and the domestic terrorists figure it's the time to make their move because the underclass and Culture Warriors are making theirs so they'll be the ones getting the blame, so the FBI won't be Ruby Ridge-ing or Waco-ing them—they'll be too busy. So how long before the dam bursts?"

"I'm really not sure," replied Allen. "Certainly such an unstable situation couldn't go on indefinitely. I've said it plenty of times before: *people eventually rebel when their lives stink*—in fact, you could summarize all of history in those seven words. In this country, we seem to vacillate between liberal and conservative administrations as a way of keeping things from getting too far out of balance. If it begins to feel like a police state and the little guy's getting stepped on often enough and badly enough, we move more toward liberalization and the welfare state; then when such things as inflation, child pornography, spoiled kids, falling church attendance, too much concern for criminals' rights and too little concern for victims' rights, school shootings, homicides done by kids, Internet child predators, and crime in general gross us all out, we swing back to conservatism and law and order and a push for tradition, school prayer, and flag-respect

laws. This back and forth balancing act isn't that far from what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they wrote our constitution.

"On the other hand, what we all find ourselves saying about this political and social seesaw routine is: it's a lousy system, but no one has come up with a better one. Of course, as my videos keep reminding everyone, we're simply not going to get away with a Democratic or Republican remedy, a liberal or conservative remedy, or any other kind of Second Wave solution this time around. Such things will no longer work. It's not just a 'lousy system' that needs a backwards swing on the liberal-conservative pendulum this time. The system is not merely in need of another Second Wave fine-tuning this time. Voting for someone different won't cut it, nor will a new tax, a new program, or even a new party this time. We won't social-engineer our way out this time, and an attempt to launch another Great Society program under another name or pacify the Have-nots with another minimum wage increase is simply not going to work. To prevent the dam from eventually bursting, we'll actually have to actually start empowering the Third Wave ideas I've mentioned so often. We'll actually have to have the peaceful members of society start reconstituting the civilization according to its many Third Wave needs—a bloodless change, or the less peaceful members that you've been talking about will decide to 'reconstitute' in their own way—through bloody rebellion. When you have nothing you have nothing to lose, and so on."

Robert responded: "I go along with that, politically. I'll keep, and be faithful to, the present system, since I have no better political or governmental idea. I'm a bit of a flag-waving patriot too—you should know that about me. Remember, when I'm talking about the system self-destructing, that it's the opposite of what I want. I'm very pro-establishment. I WANT the system to work. I want to halt the forces of system decay. I'm quite conservative, loyal, and responsible and respectful in that area. After all, America is the wonderful country that allowed my forebears the freedom to create Galaxy so that I could be the happy, grateful fellow you see before you.

"But what I'm saying here is that no matter which party is laughingly referred to as 'in control,' the lifestyle situation and all the sad statistics that manifest the present cultural symptomology are continuing to deteriorate. Neither party can cure this. The necessary answers transcend the liberal-conservative continuum. The cultural decay is occurring at right angles to that continuum. Sleight-of-hand and political rhetoric can't make a dent in this one. It's too monolithic; the dysfunctionality is at the roots and in the foundation. It actually will take massive lifestyle enhancement—luckily at very little economic cost, so politicians will love it. But the good news is that it's all win-win. Both parties win. All classes win. All factions win.

"Everyone wins but the shrinks, as they'll be dealing with fewer victims of the unworkable lifestyles, in the long run. But they're not about to bomb MCs the way militant fundamentalists bomb abortion centers. Shrinks have been concerned with their unfortunate failure rates and their inability to help many types of people and problems for many decades. And of course the answer to the mystery that keeps evading the more orthodox of them has always been there for all to see. It's obvious. Dealing with lifestyle symptoms by trying to 'cure' each family's scapegoat (or most flagrant symptomizer) is as silly as trying to fight a war by shooting nothing but the enemy leader's speech writer! But let's not forget that symptoms are essential. They tell us what kind of a disease we're up against. If you lived at Galaxy for a month, and then lived for a month in a normal, dysfunctional family, you'd see what wasn't working right and why, in nothing flat. Kind of like a computer graphics XOR (exclusive-or) subroutine in which one graphic superimposed on another makes all similarities vanish and shows only the differences."

Glen spoke: "I'd like to reiterate that the differences are mind-blowing. Within hours one gets this awesome insight about what life can actually be like if it's set up right. And the more you see the potentials and realities of such a place, and such people, the more you see the truth of what has happened and is still happening in the dysfunctional lifestyles. There's nothing like a pygmy seeing Wilt Chamberlain to make him reevaluate limits and possibilities—"

He was interrupted: "Okay, I'll go! I'll go!" exclaimed Allen. "I can see that I'm going to be tormented for the rest of my natural life by you two if I don't go along with this," he joked. "You guys are either very stubborn or you think that your quest is terribly important —"

But he was interrupted as well: "Both!" exclaimed the guys, simultaneously. At this all three laughed.

"How about next weekend?" asked Glen.

"Well, I had plans, but they were not very important—a very minor appearance I was dying to get out of. This dovetails nicely with my true intentions and wishes." They proceeded to make plans that would be much like those of the Stephen and Tom weekends. Allen continued: "You know, there aren't many people who could have made me agree to endure a boring plane ride after just meeting me. Certainly no TEENAGERS. You guys are still nineteen, right?" They nodded. "I thought so. So do you have the magic touch or what?"

"What." This again came from both of the guys at once. They all laughed again.

"Incidentally," said Robert, "where exactly do you stand with regards to Fritjof Capra's view of the shift from the mechanistic to the ecological paradigm?"

"We're in essentially the same position, on most issues," Allen responded. "The criticality of the first part of the 21st century, the survival of the planet being at stake in the successful transition from the old paradigm to the new, the challenge of creating sustainable societies—social and cultural environments in which we can satisfy our needs without diminishing the chances of future generations, the need for a massive campaign of public education and dialogue, the need for action-oriented think tanks, the interdependence of all people, species, and matter on the planet, and the assertion that the various groups that are trying to aid the paradigm shift and restore the ecological balance need to work in harmony with one another, so that we get the needed holistic approach from these so-far-nonaligned groups. We cannot be effective if we don't work together on this goal."

"We're in perfect agreement on that, then," said Robert.

"What about Willis Harman's version of the new worldview?" asked Glen.

"Refresh my memory, Glen," Allen requested.

"The author of *Global Mind Change*. He's sort of a radical version of Capra—Robert and I have discussed both these guys. He says we're living through one of the most fundamental changes in history. Along with all the Capra-like stuff about paradigm shift he adds his own twist: the transpersonal and the esoteric. Like the world needing to change to a transcendental monism worldview in which mind gives rise to matter. He seems to consider that to be part of the ecological paradigm that the world is starting to adopt. Robert and I feel that this philosophically radical view is one of the polarizing elements in the movement toward the paradigm shift. It will be divisive and cause factionalizing. We feel that holding such views should stay part of the personal cosmology of the various individuals in the movement, and that these views should not be introduced as part of—especially NOT A NECESSARY PART OF—the shift from the mechanistic-reductionistic to the ecological-holistic paradigm. Robert and I, for instance, have no such beliefs, but are 100 percent behind the new paradigm shift. There are, however, several insights in Harman's book which are to his credit, in my opinion. The intense effects of childhood conditioning, the huge global threat because of the difference between the 'Have' cultures and the 'Have-not' cultures—which is beginning to be realized everywhere because of the global village effect, all the best ecological insights about what's happening and what's needed, the incredible power of a group or culture changing its mind, the need to redefine global development, the utilization of a 'peace' context rather than a 'war-avoidance' context, and so on. Robert and I could add one important thing to this last issue. Although a 'peace' context rather than a 'war-avoidance' context is certainly a step in the right direction, there's a missing element. We touched on it when we discussed the *Gaia* book. Care to hazard a guess here?"

Allen answered: "Why not? I'd say that you fellows feel that we should consider the lifestyle which predisposes people toward war, so that instead of trying to cure the

disease of hostile personalities trying to express themselves, we instead opt for the preventative measure of precluding the formation of the hostile personality in the first place. I'd certainly prefer that approach myself, as long as it was concomitant with the other approach, so all bases were covered. You guys sure get down to root causes, don't you? Your holistic approach is what medicine, physics, psychology, therapy, sociology and economics are all headed for, as they gradually adopt the new ecological paradigm. And none too soon, either. Medicine, under Big Pharma's thumb, trying to find a pill to cure everything—as a basic approach, as well as waiting until people show flagrant symptoms before advocating attention to health concerns—this has gotten close to ludicrous in the past decade. Especially the rampant drugging of kids! Economics based upon the reductionistic, infinite-growth ideas of the old paradigm have proven themselves just as hopeless. These are exciting times, gentlemen. The shift we are seeing is going to do wonders with our greenhouse effects, ozone layer gaps, acid rain, deforestation, and pollution. My biggest fears, of course, are always dominated by the question: Will it be in time?

"By the way, I'm glad you pointed out the dangers of factionalizing the paradigm shift by lumping together the esoteric with the ecological. The cult and superstition and ESP aspects of some of the New Agers may just keep many important people unsupportive of the paradigm shift just when we need them most. Some New Agers—the mainstreamers—have no interest in such things, so joining these people in the ecological shift will be unthreatening to the more traditional, conservative elements of society. But the others—the esoterics and the radicals—represent the danger of stigmatizing the whole ecological shift as too metaphysical and weird. Which it is NOT. The fact that there happens to be a radical fringe to this movement shouldn't taint this movement any more than fundamentalists ought to be seen as abortion-clinic bombers or gun-rights advocates ought to be seen as terrorists. It's an erroneous stigmatization—an illogical association. And guess whose interests are served when environmentalism in general gets lumped together with the fringe radicals so that environmentalists are seen as radical crazies? Those of big business and industry—those responsible for the anti-environmental phenomena we call pollution, acid rain, endangering species, and so on. Megacorporations are using the logical fallacy of guilt by association to avoid economic responsibility for the ongoing damage they are inflicting on our world.

"I confess to being slightly—only slightly—concerned with Capra's radical potential. He's managed to steer clear of the potential associations with the more radical fringes of the paradigm shift. He's even pointed out the frauds and exploitation characterizing some of these 'cash-in-on-the-New-Age' groups. A wise move. But on the other hand, Capra's counterculture past as a Berkeley and European hippie may have given him a few more radical urges than he realizes. I haven't really seen any evidence of this, except for possibly his choice of terminology in places in his books. But I think we should stay awake to the possibility that Mr. Capra may need to be reminded that the paradigm shift and the ecological movement belong to the whole world—our survival may depend upon the speed of adoption—and therefore it's critical that the more conservative and traditional are not knocked out of the picture by carelessly chosen phrases, too much ridicule of current administrations in his speeches, overemphasis of his counterculture mystique, and so on. The main thing here is that the paradigm shift needs UNIFYING, integrating influences, not—as you've mentioned—polarizing ones."

Robert responded: "Capra is saying that one of the biggest challenges to the old, mechanistic paradigm is the feminist awareness coming out of the women's movement. There's a natural affinity between women and ecology. When we could afford to be a world of aggressive, combative, demanding, expanding, growing, male-dominated people and nations, the old paradigm gave us the pioneering and conquering spirit, the persistence, and the courage needed for the job. But the world needs a different type of people and nations today. Cooperative, intuitive, synthesizing, responsible, ecological, compassionate, and holistically-oriented people and nations are needed. These are feminine characteristics, which is especially appropriate because each of us needs to begin thinking of ourselves as the world's mother—we either begin mothering and

nurturing our planet or we kill it off, and ourselves with it. The Gaia Earth-mother-goddess image is indeed the proper one for the biosphere at this point in history. Recall that prior to around 1000 B.C., the evidence seems to say that in most societies the Earth-mother-goddess image prevailed in spirituality, religion, and myth, and actions were aligned with this matriarchal cultural format. Since it can be seen that the world is beginning to revert back to that stage again, some people may say that we're going backwards and that is regression.

"But this black-and-white thinking leaves out many important facts: (1) The dominant patriarchal cultural formats which have guided cultural evolution through all its growth, expansion, inventions, improvements, and progress in the past 3000 years also led us through murders, tortures, crucifixions, inquisitions, witch burnings, Hitler, the nuking of Japan, bigotry, racism, materialism raised to the level of a religion, the KKK, death squads, rampant alienation courtesy of the industrial revolution and technology-precipitated mobility, and the arms race and the threat of annihilation at any moment. (2) If we feel that we need to expand and grow any more, then instead of murdering each other and grabbing one another's land and possessions, we could always try building space colonies and settling other planets. The galaxy has plenty of room for pioneers. (3) The Earth will no longer support the patriarchically-aligned obsession with dominance, control, cancerously-uncontrollable growth, and irresponsible exploitation-at-any-price mentality. The world shows many very severe symptoms of having had about all it can take of the mechanistic, bigger-is-better and more-is-better paradigm. The pollution, toxic and nuclear wastes with no place to be stored, deforestation, ozone layer gaps, AIDs epidemic, drug use epidemic, glut of cars on the world's highways, greenhouse effect, and loss of usable soil all say a lot about what our future will be like if we don't realize that we must 'balance the yin and yang' in our relationship to our planet. The pendulum swinging back in the ecological direction after all these years of reductionistic exploitation will be a healing, spiritual, cooperative, compassionate time for our planet. If this doesn't happen, there will not BE a future. Almost every wise thinker alive today agrees with this—it's simply a fact."

"Agreed," said Allen.

Robert continued: "Toynbee says that when a civilization is on the descending part of its life cycle, it loses inventiveness and flexibility. But creative minorities appear on the scene and are the leading edge of new innovations that give the civilization a chance at avoiding the deterministic course of its decline. The creative minorities may be able to transform some of the old elements into a new configuration before the civilization disintegrates, allowing the process of cultural evolution to continue, but in new directions, and utilizing dialectical synthesis.

"A thought just occurred to me. Will the shift to the ecological paradigm be the prerequisite to the success of the MC movement, or will the MC movement be the prerequisite to the success of the ecological paradigm, or will they complement each other, and harmoniously work together? I never thought of this quite that way before. Anyone?"

Glen responded: "I say the shift away from the mechanistic paradigm will be very difficult for people brought up in the lifestyle of the modern family, with its emphasis on competition, its win-lose oedipal motivations, its worship of materialism and technology, its rat-race slugfest with others for the best jobs and best parking places, and its keeping up with the Joneses."

Allen responded to that: "Precisely. The essence of the current modern lifestyle is identical to the essence of the mechanistic paradigm: win-lose. On the other hand, the essence of the ecological paradigm is win-win. In the former we conquer and control and enslave nature, other countries and other people. In the latter we cooperate with nature, other countries and other people, recognize our interdependence with them, and nurture them. In other words—your MC ideology."

Robert put in: "Well, you guys have underlined nicely the fact that the transformation will be rocky and like pushing a car uphill. But the question remains: Which comes first, the MC chicken or the ecological-paradigm egg?

"Does there need to be an answer?" asked Allen. "I'd be comfortable if the two of them worked together hand-in-hand, with exquisite cooperation."

"That's a good point," said Robert. "However, there's a part of me that says that the MC movement has to set the stage for the new paradigm to succeed. In 1990, 76 percent of the American public labeled themselves as 'environmentalists.' Polls showed that the public thought the business community's record on pollution was dismal. But the car companies and heavy industries were still dragging their feet. And the average person still wanted to do only what didn't inconvenience him or cost him anything. N.I.M.B.Y. If he didn't have to go out of his way, he wanted to be an environmentalist. This is not a paradigm shift. It's a way to pass the buck—it's okay if the laws force the guy down the block to adopt costly, inconvenient ecological measures, as long as they don't do that to us. Priority-wise, environmentalism still takes a back seat to profits, convenience, and general conservatism. When the paradigm actually shifts, people will be willing to bite the bullet, and do whatever it takes for ecology to succeed.

"And it gets down to what you correctly surmised about Glen and my attitude about the missing element in the 'peace context and war-avoidance context' question: Lifestyles contain families which instill in people worldviews, personalities, motivational patterns, and above all VALUES. A selfish, alienated, competitive materialist is unlikely to transform into a cooperative, responsible ecologist. An individual is a reflection of his society and society is a reflection of the individual. A spiritual society full of materialists, or a materialistic society full of spiritually compassionate people—either of these are oxymoronic contradictions in terms. We vote for politicians with cosmetic approaches because we have cosmetic values and cosmetic commitments to ecology. He's doing what we want him to do. And that is to superficially pacify our guilty consciences about the way we're wrecking the environment. It is my opinion that the paradigm is sort of stuck in neutral gear right now waiting for us to go from the engagement ring on ecology's finger to the wedding ring and marriage-vow commitments. Could it be that in spite of all the environmental sound and fury, we're finding out that we're not, after all, truly in love?"

Allen responded: "So you believe we're at an impasse, one not our leaders' doing, as they're merely expressing the will of the people—or, in this case, the lack of it?"

"Yes," replied Robert. "Some may say the ecological paradigm has gotten a good start, and it continues to gain adherents daily, so why worry—everything is on track. But I say that there is a limit to how far up the ecological track a society can go when its people are fundamentally NOT ecological people.

"I'll give an analogy. Remember how people have periodically squawked about the potential of television to be a culturally beneficial medium instead of an escapist wasteland? The networks then complied and gave the public what it wanted. And what happened then is that no one watched the culturally and educationally beneficial stuff. So the networks went back to scheduling the junk. THAT is our situation regarding ecology, at present. And since the impasse is based upon the disparity between people's fundamental, actual values and the values that they hold superficially but are uncommitted to, in both cases, I feel the ecology thing will move ahead only slightly as it waits for the oncoming MC movement to create the context for a fundamental shift in values. When people LIVE the new paradigm, they will embody the new values because their commitment to them will be unshakable; their successful lives will be based upon them. The difference here then boils down to one factor: commitment. What makes people committed to something? Finding out that it works—that it makes them happy or fulfilled. That's what. When the MC movement allows people to feel true being and true oneness with people, as opposed to just deficiency and needfulness, they will start experiencing true oneness with life, with each other, with the environment. This, then will be the prerequisite for ecological VALUES rather than merely spouting ecological WORDS.

"Watching an opera when one enjoys the TV show *2 Broke Girls* a lot more, but one cannot admit it to oneself, isn't much of a solution to the TV wasteland, nor is it an action based upon commitment since forcing oneself to watch something out of guilt and indirect self-acceptance motives is a far cry from commitment to something that one has

found very enjoyable. Obviously, a more reliable cure for the TV wasteland problem could be found in the concept of lifestyle enhancement, in which one's human potential develops more, so that one's TV desires reflect this added maturity and sophistication. With a sufficient number of people at this level, ratings for more mature TV fare would rise until such fare could be offered indefinitely.

"Similarly, recycling cans and bottles on trash day but continuing to vote for politicians who choose corporate profits over corporate environmental responsibility—this is no commitment to ecology, since the latter has the most environmental impact. Will this ever change, in a non-MC society? Nope. The forces of the old paradigm, flashing their values like so many nude dancers at a strip bar, are too strong and entrenched. It will take social dynamite to get both the public and the corporations to insist upon environmental responsibility. The type of dynamite that allows people to shift from being part of the ecological problem to being part of the ecological solution—the MC lifestyle—in which needs are filled, parenting WORKS, people are de-isolated, reconnected, and psychologically and socially empowered beyond their wildest dreams. People whose lives work that well don't need greed- or guilt-based pseudo-values and pseudo-commitments. Their commitments to the environment, each other, their MCs, their communities, their countries, and their world would be as unshakable as are the values of the three of us. This country used to have a lot more people in it with strong moral values and commitments. And it can again. All we have to do is to create a context—an enhanced lifestyle—for such things to germinate and grow.

"Commitment. You've created mass protests at the nuclear test sites, in favor of a global ban on nuclear weapons testing. Everyone knows how busy you are, but you did these things anyway, along with all the videos you keep making. These protests couldn't have been convenient or easy. But you did them anyway. This, to me, is what commitment means. You've communicated directly to the president, the military and defense establishments, and nuclear, peace, intelligence and disarmament departments, groups and committees of all sorts. You've communicated to the world the dangers of nuclear war and nuclear winter. It has helped to change the world.

"Sagan's booklets *To Preserve A World Graced By Life* and *Give Us Hope: An Open Letter To The President Of The United States—For The Sake Of Our Children's Future* are peace commitments in writing that you popularized in your YouTube videos. He asked the President to give us a dream for our country's future—a dream worthy of collectively aiming for. As history has shown, he failed to do this, in most ways, using empty rhetoric where leadership was needed.

"You and Toffler and Sagan advocated, like Albert Einstein, 'a change in our way of thinking.' You advised leaving the Cold War and the arms race behind and getting rid of most of our nukes, and using the money saved to confront many of our pressing national and environmental problems. You pointed out that it's time American politicians quit telling everyone what a great country we live in. It's time instead for us to begin transforming our country in 'great' directions so the greed, corruption, pollution and apathy are changed into compassion, cooperation, concern and a clean environment.

"The other booklet I mentioned confronted the realities of avoidance of nuclear war, and ended up asking that we all **encourage bright young people to consider this issue and help find innovative and imaginative solutions.** As you can see, we WERE encouraged, and we DID help find the needed solutions. It was people like you, Thomas Gordon, Fritjof Capra, Richard Louv, Abraham Maslow and Philip Slater—to name just a few—who encouraged people like us.

"What do you think about the idea that if you, one of the most respected and listened to people in history, became a strong grassroots leader *outside* of the political sphere, you could champion the most successful special interest group in history, eventually. You already ARE doing that, in a way. You're a peace movement leader, a disarmament leader, an environmental leader, an anti-SDI leader, an anti-nuke-testing leader. But I suggest that the thrust of what we have been discussing today is pointing in the direction of there being a desperate need for a high-powered, wise, respected person of your caliber to help lead the country, and eventually the world, toward the adoption of

the MC movement as the core of this 'innovative and imaginative solution' you've been alluding to for over 20 years in your videos. I don't think there is any need for you to get political, now or ever. Instead, I believe that THE POLITICIANS WILL END UP BEING FORCED TO FOLLOW YOUR LEAD OUT OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR WHAT YOU SAY AND DO. In other words, not leading the country in the direction that Allen Wilson is pointing would end up being political suicide. (What a delicious thought!)

"Actually, it's not as though the politicians don't WANT to lead the country in good ways or don't WANT to help people get their lives together or don't WANT to create peace and happiness on Earth! All along the problem has been that the SYSTEM, itself, doesn't support such transformations—in fact the system is set up to prevent meaningful change. The only real change we've had in decades, besides a massive debt build-up, is a massive transference of wealth from the poorer to the rich.

"But if the people become united behind a unifying principle as profound as actually enhancing their lifestyles so that their isolated, alienated lives change almost overnight and become happy and full, then the politicians will have to either go with the flow or be dumped. And guess which they will choose?! And who can argue that this is the most patriotic thing that could happen? The will of the people is finally heard and acted upon, like the Founders of our country wanted from the beginning, and the politicians are finally responsive to the best interests of the people instead of merely to corporate special interests, the defense industry, and the military-industrial complex's power elites. This would be the re-Americanizing of America. This, indeed, would finally be a reason to talk about 'this great country of ours' which presidents love to do—as if they're the ones that made it great! Imagine it: politicians who can use that phrase and mean it (knowing full well that it's only *partly* true, since it's partly a corrupt, floundering oligarchy), but what's more important: they will even be part of the reason that it is so! Curiouser and curiouser . . ."

Allen had a look of intense concentration on his face. There were some new potentials here he hadn't seriously considered—some of which were a bit scary. The word commitment was tying all this together. Robert was right. The new paradigm wouldn't really be adopted unless the context and commitment were present, and such context and commitment arise out of lifestyles that engender responsibility and integrity, not out of political squabbling and sheep voting for candidates with the best ads. The transformation must be from the bottom up, and the leadership wouldn't and couldn't come from the politicians, but from people like himself, who would guide the hopes and dreams of the grassroots MC movement. But—was he ready for all this? This was just too sudden. He needed to do some private thinking on it, he knew.

When the silence indicated that Allen wasn't ready to deal with some of these issues at this time, Glen decided to risk a change of subject: "Maybe we'd better let that cook for a bit in everyone's mental ovens. Okay with you guys?" He received two nods. "Robert, did you want to mention a systems analogy? We talked about that a few days ago—remember?"

"Yes. But why don't you take a quick stab first."

"I'd be in over my head —"

"Let's see what happens. I'll catch you if you fall," assured Robert.

"Okay . . ." said Glen, "Fritjof Capra cited Stan Grof as a source of research, ideas, creativity and wisdom. Capra wrote in *Uncommon Wisdom* that he'd learned from Grof—and confirmed it with R. D. Laing—that mental illness symptoms can be viewed as 'frozen' experiences that need to be completed in order for healing to have a chance. This, of course, goes against psychiatry's current trend of helping patients cope by administering drugs, rather than giving patients the opportunity to work through their problems. Sometimes they *have* to go the drug route, for various reasons, but often it just helps them become eternal patients, with controlled symptoms—no healing here. Both guys say that mentally ill behavior, even of psychotics, is not hard to understand and aid with therapy if viewed in the social context from which it originates. If viewed reductionistically as an isolated event, then it is just so much gibberish and doctors and nurses tend to pump patients full of drugs to 'handle' such patients. So the systems view

—also the holistic and ecological one—is where patients are viewed in the context of the system in which they exist—their social environment. We should recall here that Capra has been one of the most vocal advocates of the systems view in physics. And Capra applied this view to all other disciplines. And he's not alone. Each science has its systems advocates—I don't know if they refer to themselves that way or not.

"But back to physics. Reductionism doesn't get physicists very far at the subatomic level. Particles, like people, can only be understood in the context of their surroundings. You don't and can't deal just with a particle, but only with the symptoms of where it was and the probability of where it will be. And you must constantly take into account the particles that it is interacting with—its relationships. Its system. Like the particle-wave paradox, things at that level of reality are not very straightforward. So, like Gregory Bateson, one of Capra's mentors, Capra learned to look for the 'pattern which connects' rather than the isolated characteristics of isolated particles. This is very analogous to what Laing and Grof and lots of other shrinks have been saying about therapy, psychiatry and sociology for decades. Psychological variations are a product of the combination of how the people in a person's environment relate to him and how he marshals his inner resources to cope with the challenges of his social context. Of course, there are genetic predispositions to consider too, but these aren't relevant to my point.

"The oppressive, depriving, neurotic or schizogenic 'patterns that connect' people in less nurturing environments are quite different from those that connect people in nurturing environments. In simple language, the way you're treated by the 'system' of people around you has an ENORMOUS effect on the way you will turn out, psychologically. The vast majority of people in prisons were abused children, and the vast majority of people in mental institutions have undergone emotional abuse. This is a relationship context. And a systems one. So in holistic medicine, and in the systems view in psychiatry (Laing and Grof) and in economics (Hazel Henderson), people have taken their systems cues from physics (Chew, Bohm, and Capra) and from their own intuitions.

"Having said this, I'm recalling that Robert and I were talking about how MCs fit into this context. Mom as virtually the only source of nurturing in a family is an intense context for a kid to live in—or a mom for that matter. There are some positive sides, but the dangers of the intensity are serious and many. A small minority of kids come through with flying colors—the parents are kinder and more insightful than most. But, in general, the stumbling block in both how families relate to their individuals and how communities relate to their isolated nuclear and step and single-parent families is the same one we've been seeing in all the various sciences we've been talking about: the mechanistic, reductionistic paradigm involving the concept of isolated people, particles, units, families, etcetera. Any additions, Robert?"

"Yes," Robert replied. "We need to think of transforming the reductionistic view of isolated families to a systems view of close-knit yet separately-living families in subcommunities—the kind Reagan and other traditionalists used to get all nostalgic and gooey about—and I AGREE with them!—and we need to think of transforming the reductionistic view of isolated individuals with few social resources in isolated families to a systems view of connected solidarity within an enhanced-resource MC context. This is a paradigm shift to the ecological-holistic worldview that parallels the biospherical view in which interdependency and interconnectedness are the essence of reality. Oneness is the ultimate reality in physics, spirituality, biospherical reality, and now, finally, family and community. This is a step of cultural evolution and maturity—to resist it is to resist tomorrow, the future, and ultimately and inevitably, survival."

Glen offered: "I was just remembering that, since most of what we're talking about is parallel to the wisdom and insights of Capra, as expressed in his main three books, *Uncommon Wisdom, The Tao of Physics,* and *The Turning Point,* it would be good to notice 'where this guy is coming from.' How has he been empowered to see what others could not see and to holistically put all these things together into one meaningful whole? It happens that he, like you, Robert, and you, Allen, was brought up in an extended family with lots of nurturing and choices; it was close-knit and without any serious deprivation, according to the accounts Capra has given. Capra is a spiritually

compassionate, extremely wise person, who feels responsible for the world working. As are both of you. Gentlemen, this is NOT a coincidence!"

Robert spoke (with notes visible—he liked quotes to be accurate): "To sum up, regarding Capra and the paradigm shift, here's a Capra quote: 'At present there is no well-established framework, either conceptual or institutional, that would accommodate the formulation of the new paradigm, but the outlines of such a framework are already being shaped by many individuals, communities and networks that are developing new ways of thinking and organizing themselves according to new principles.' I believe the MC movement IS that new framework. Any comments?" Allen and Glen shook their heads.

"I respect all sciences," said Allen. "I'm eclectic. Recall how much I used historical contexts and alluded to political, anthropological, sociological, psychological, and even economic disciplines when I needed them in my videos. But I see where you're going with this. Relax, Robert. I realize that if the rigid standards of the natural sciences were to be applied to the lifestyle area and parenting area, it would either result in never getting acceptable results or it would take forever. Besides, the P.E.T. area has already had decades of acid tests. From what you say and from my own experiences it came through with flying colors. And the evidence for the advantages of enhanced resources relative to nurturing and childcare are SELF-EVIDENT, as well as backed by countless wise people everywhere, as well as studies, according to all I've heard.

"By the way, some of this I already knew, in a limited way. I called for *enhanced environments and enhanced nurturing of infants* decades ago, as you yourself have pointed out. I've personally tried out P.E.T. principles and consider their effectiveness a fact. I called for, specifically and urgently, a more workable social arrangement, and implied I'd get behind such a thing; this all happened many years ago. And you've been talking for quite a while now, and from the time you first mentioned it until now I've pretty much concluded that even if Galaxy wasn't a reality, years of scientific test groups regarding MCs, as a prerequisite for anything, would not be viable or fruitful or necessary. The wisdom upon which the MC movement will be based is simply not in question. It's on solid ground. It's on MUCH more solid ground than the unhappy experiments called the isolated nuclear family and the other types. As a matter of fact, strictly as a scientist, I'd have to say that MC lifestyles are based upon solid, proven, supportive evidence, good sociology, good psychology, thousands of years of successful 'experimentation' in hundreds of cultures, good intuition and wisdom from our wisest people for decades, and your wisdom and intuition—which I highly respect. And my acceptance of the wisdom of such lifestyle improvements is based upon my own logic, intuition and wisdom, which is considerable, if I am to believe my reviewers and fellow cultural critics and leaders.

"An analysis of the experiment regarding isolated nuclear families shows a statistical failure, even though perhaps two to four percent of families—your estimates—sneak by with little dysfunctionality due to uncommon social and psychological **resource richness**. I too have been seeing, reading and hearing the symptomology statistics for a couple of decades—which is one reason why, many years ago, I called for a replacement for this inoperable, accidental, social construct. As a cultural critic, I simply HAVE to reject this lifestyle experiment once a decent candidate appears on the scene to replace it, which obviously has happened. A social scientist isn't worthy of the name if he turns a blind eye to the facts due to any personal biases, whether or not they were heavily conditioned when he was in his childhood.

"And remember, I am no stranger to the idea of variable manipulation, which may also involve **resource enrichment**—the foundation of MCs. It's the basis of the social scientist profession. Scientists, to turn experiments from failures to successes, manipulate such things as polarity, charge, intensity, quantity, concentration or dilution, and pH. They either keep changing variables quantitatively until the experiment starts to work right or they find out that new variables must be introduced. And social scientists manipulate both social and knowledge resources until they get positive results. Both happened in the case of your Galaxy lifestyle. Increasing choice, responsibility, natural consequences, caregiver availability, parenting method validity and provability,

connectedness, community, friendships, relationship quantity and quality, and respect for private space were very simple steps to take, but very powerful ones as well. The formula worked, the equation balanced, and the experiment validated the new variable concentrations.

"But even if your forebears hadn't actually created Galaxy, one can see that much of the problem—the reason normal 'adjusted Americans' stuck with a lifestyle that was failing most of them—is simply about bad habits and worse semantics. 'Normal' = good; 'not normal' = bad. Isolated nuclear and other type of isolated families are normal and therefore good, and therefore all other types must be bad. Society has choked on that type of ignorance long enough. Also, many TV programs or political speeches or church sermons or whatever imply that most people live in traditional families with Mom, Dad, and a couple of kids and that Mom stays home and cooks, when in truth this is the exception (probably no more than ten percent of families are like that and we're down to 7% if we insist on exactly 2 kids). The 'normal' home has a working mother, and there are millions more unrelated-couple lifestyles and singles lifestyles around (if you combine these two types) than nuclear families, according to what I've read. (Most people still think—at least subconsciously—that nuclear families dominate the scene.) However, if one believes the false impression coming one's way daily (sometimes by design, oftentimes by omission) then one gets a false feeling for the type of lifestyles one is surrounded by, for what is 'normal,' and for what 'most people are doing.' In such a case it's not easy to see clearly just how *limited* one's neighbors' nurturing resources, parenting resources, and family resources are, and just how isolated the few individuals occupying each house or apartment really are. And this made it easy for a flop—a failure—to go right on being the lifestyle of choice. It wasn't the nuclear family part of it that was flopping—that part was on track. It was the isolationist part.

"But since getting a true picture of the way things were for most people was so unlikely, people didn't realize just how isolated they and their neighbors were, how their lifestyle differed from the 'good old days' when there were a lot more close-knit communities, how this clashed with the sociological knowledge that hundreds of societies the world over had collected up for hundreds of years, how these isolated family experiments were negative deviations in historical perspective, how they were severely limiting the odds that their family would make it—given the perilous absence of resources, how choosing mobility over community was a covert choice for the American Dream to fail, and how 'going where the money is' often meant going where the community isn't. Also, no one could see behind doors and become aware of just how ineffective most families' parenting efforts were.

"There's something big happening here, and yet the social critics and commentators merely noted it in passing—it seems it was even too big for them to see clearly. Kind of like people mostly just accepted the concept that: 'Of COURSE we have to pick up and move when there's a promotion or transfer—we want to be SUCCESSES, don't we?' And therein lies the problem: they chose economic success, but, simultaneously and unbeknownst to them, they chose lifestyle failure. We needed a lot of wise people to warn us. People of vision and foresight. Perhaps such people spoke but we didn't listen. In any case, any warnings that happened obviously went unheeded. More than anyone, it was our political leaders who failed us. We've had decades of them leading us toward greed and short-sighted decisions of all kinds (the main goal of which seemed to be *to further the economic success of corporations and the politicians themselves*), resulting in the S&L scam, the huge debt and deficit, and a generally immoral society. And democracy is giving way to oligarchy, like you've mentioned. This would all make the Founding fathers turn over in their graves.

"Materialism has become a religion and an obsession, and everyone from presidents to shrinks to teachers to counselors encouraged us all to make decisions based upon this obsession. So does this mean that we don't CARE if our society works right or degenerates into a dogfight? Or does this merely mean that we care but we are totally ignorant about what makes societies work and that the entire American Dream has merely been a lucky accident from the start? Is it really true that no one knew that

dollar-worship would end in disaster? Without a doubt, books considered the classics, as well as all holy books, contain the type of wisdom that would warn any society of the dangers of dollar-worship. Perhaps this is why the late Allan Bloom's tome *The Closing of the American Mind* is so insistent upon today's society needing the wisdom in the holy books and the Great Books—the classics. He wants us to find the moral wisdom to drop greed and materialism and lead a wise, prudent, thoughtful, ethical life. Who can argue if this is his point? In Sunday school they teach that Christ chased the money-lenders out of the temple—would he have chased Jim and Tammy off the airwaves if he were around back when those two clowns were broadcasting? I think he might! But back to the point: Why didn't people see the writing on the wall when the symptoms began going wild and the family self-destructed?

"I, myself, like Toffler and Sagan, merely called urgently for a new social construct, a social arrangement that more closely answered the needs of the people. One based upon wisdom and knowledge, not random luck, guesswork and determinism. It was a scientific thing to say, for him, and an activist's call for action, for me. But due to my great upbringing, I had an inkling of what life would feel like if and when anyone ever figured out how to set it up wisely (it would feel just like what your Galaxy and MC scenarios make me feel like when you describe them). But I didn't know how to get from here to there. It all comes down to a Maine joke: You can't get there from here! Yes, I knew I'd had it good and was happy and ambitious, but I didn't realize at the time what had caused this. But as a result of talking to you guys, I know now. Thanks!

"I was over here making YouTube videos when it looked like our futures were all being sold out by short-sighted politicians and it was all going the wrong way. But I'll be damned if I could come up with the obvious solutions that you and your forebears did. Nor could anyone else I knew or ever heard of. Like you say: it's the forest through the trees. And I'll also be damned if I actually thought that these videos were going to change the way the politicians kept blowing it, although you can imagine just how much I deeply *wished* that they would change things."

"I've viewed your videos many times," said Robert. "You really do care a lot, Allen. I could feel it then and I can feel it now. It's why we're here."

"I can see that, Robert. I truly can see that. We're on the same team. But I *called* for it to be done while you helped it *get* done—this solution—this new social construct—this VIABLE, well-thought-out lifestyle that can be predicted to work even without experiments; there's no shaky ground, no weaknesses. At least for the general foundations. I may yet come up with a weak detail or two. We social scientists are devilishly good at such things. But, anyhow, let me go on, here:

"It occurs to me that your MC construct has something old (the respect and responsibility and connectedness and community context of old, traditional lifestyles), something new (P.E.T. has only been around since the 70s), something borrowed (many other cultures have been enjoying the conspicuous advantages of multiple nurturing for centuries —or even millennia), and something blue (the planet will again be this color if the ecological paradigm is empowered to replace the mechanistic paradigm by the power of MC-movement healing). I'm not sure—could this mean that the MC and the American society are ready for a marriage ceremony? I think it could—we'll see, fellows. You're doing great, here, but you're not about to catch me being impulsive. Not that I'm not sold on the wisdom of the MC thing. Like I say, you're presenting solid stuff, here. It's unlikely that there will be many theoretical hang-ups or even any groups silly enough to define themselves as people who 'disagree' with all this. ON WHAT POSSIBLE BASIS? Who can disagree with wanting the society to work, the world to work, the family to work, relationships to work, and for compassion and wisdom to replace hate and fear?

"Actually, the hairy part of your whole movement is getting it off the ground, not showing that it's based upon wisdom. The wisdom, I say again, is SELF-EVIDENT. Like you say, it's forest-through-the-trees.

"Everything that's happened in my life points to the wisdom of enhancing resources and options relative to normal families as something that's not only right on but overdue as well. And much of what I've read points that way too. Even some of what

I've put in my videos does. I agree with you that such a simple concept could be inferred from my videos. And multiplying P.E.T. benefits and lifestyle resource enhancement together and getting an exponentially superior result makes mathematical as well as sociological sense to me, Robert. In fact, I'm starting to wonder why *I* didn't think of all this. But of course, the reason is best expressed with that one nasty little word: paradigms. As you've already pointed out. It takes a lot to get oneself past those things. A bit of pondering rarely does it. But the experience of talking over all this stuff for a few hours has been a real paradigm dissolver for me. Thank you for that.

"So, to reiterate, my doubts are mostly coming out in areas regarding implementation details and visible weak spots regarding minor details, not in the area of theoretical soundness of the ideas. I can FEEL they are right. I can INTUIT it, without much effort. The logic is irrefutable. But going from idea to practice can sometimes be a big step. So, let your test tube worries subside. The MC movement is not about that. It's about great strategies, great presentations, and great people, and finally, great MCs, great lifestyles, great lives, and great evolution.

"By the way, as I've been talking I've been noticing that I've referred to the isolated nuclear family strategy as a failed experiment. There's something about this that feels unfinished—I believe there's something bigger going on here and I was feeling it, but I was just not saying it. Let's see: MC experiments, isolated nuclear family experiments—hmmmm . . ."

"I think I know, Allen," said Robert, looking mysteriously pleased. "Want me to take that and run with it for a minute?"

"Sure, Robert. Go ahead."

Robert did: "Well, to be honest, this is the next thing I was going to say. Earlier, I let you jump feet-first into the logical assumption that MCs are an experiment that will need testing. It's the first thing that would occur to anyone—especially a social scientist. Because of the paradigms of everyday life, most people have an automatic context in their lives which is based upon seeing everything from the basis of the isolated nuclear family—the normal American lifestyle, for better or for worse—even though most people's families do not have this configuration. But this paradigm blocks clear thinking.

"Another reason you might have wanted to apply the word 'experiment' to MCs is that I quoted you and Toffler regarding the need for social experiments that would work better than what we have now. You naturally would then be wondering if I knew of an experiment that really worked. I said MCs (which Galaxy is a shining example of) are the viable social form the world has been seeking. I said all this in the context of having 'discovered a viable experiment.'

"Now, I wasn't trying to be misleading. But I did very much want that (the misapplying of the word experiment to our MC concept) to happen FIRST in our meeting. It set the stage for what I'm about to say, and for what I believe you were just now intuiting. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

"Having said that, I'm just going to come right out with it. Here it is, in all its simple, obvious, and yet forest-through-the-trees glory:

"One. The flat-gradient-nurturance-based family tradition (multiple caregiving) has been and is the custom of choice in a majority of cultures, past and present. Our country's present steep-gradient-nurturance strategy (mother-only or one-person-only, steep-gradient choiceless caregiving) is the exception, not the rule. As a matter of fact, the multiple-caregiving tradition is tens if not hundreds of thousands of years old, if we are to listen to the anthropologists. It is less of an 'experiment' than is fire, houses, agriculture and writing. Should we test the 'house' concept to see if it is better than standing out in the rain or huddling in a cave? I think not.

"Two. The flat-gradient-nurturance-based family tradition has been judged by history, and by mankind, as a rip-roaring success. It works. Period. Experiments about it would merely demonstrate the ignorance and naïveté of the experimenter—they would in no way reflect upon this well-established tradition. I've personally communicated with Dr. Ronald P. Rohner, a Stanford-educated anthropologist and professor, about this matter. He's one of the top men in his field, in my opinion, at least in this area. After decades of

research and field experience, he is now in a position to see just how valid is my claim that steep-gradient nurturing is a recent, shaky experiment, and one that is mostly failing as a viable lifestyle. He said that, generally speaking, only some industrialized nations and some third-world countries trying to model themselves after industrialized nations **do not** have multiple caregiving. And most of the rest of the nations DO have it. Margaret Mead and many other big names have said the same thing. George Peter Murdock is one such name. He told us decades ago that only in a small minority of societies do nuclear families stand alone (isolated). In the great majority of societies (140 out of 187 at the time, which is 75 percent) for which sample data is available, nuclear families are in clusters—sometimes very MC-like clusters. These families maintain close ties with each other. Many of these cultures have been succeeding nicely socioculturally for centuries. There's no isolation—they'd consider foolish any family that socially isolated itself, regardless of their Facebook utilization. The realities of living and parenting and labor dovetail with the close-knit ties between families and usually produce the natural response of multiple nurturing.

"Three. The steep-gradient-nurturance-based family experiment is mostly recent, and based upon its performance statistics, very temporary. It shouldn't have even lasted as long as it has. I could discuss this issue too, but we already did, so there's no reason to. The main point is that it is, as you pointed out, Allen, a failed experiment. And yet it hasn't been replaced yet. There's a HUGE cultural vacuum where this replacement ought to be. We cannot consider stepfamilies and single-parent families as replacements because all they are, mostly, are the wreckage of nuclear families gone awry. When we toss this MC thing into that vacuum, you'll hear a benevolent explosion as the gap fills with great urgency. And based upon the track record of flat-gradient-nurturance options compared to steep-gradient-nurturance ones, it's astonishing that anyone would be confused about what the replacement will be.

"Four. The ISOLATION experiment, the DISCONNECTEDNESS experiment, the COMMUNITYLESSNESS experiment and the NEIGHBORHOODLESSNESS experiment are all mostly recent, failed experiments as well. Desperate obsessions with social networking are the wreckage of such experiments. So it's not only steep-gradient nurturing that gets bad marks here. Like with the transformation from steep- to flat-gradient, our society needs to transform from these other experiments back to the tried and true traditions, with centuries of incontrovertible cross-cultural proof behind them, the traditions of connectedness, viable neighborhoods and viable communities.

"Notice something here. The MC ideas are based upon tried and proven traditions that haven't been experiments for many centuries. On the other hand, the isolated nuclear and step and single-parent family, with its disconnectedness and steep-gradient nurturance, is based upon recent unintentional experiments that were actually side effects of industrialization and mobility. (You said all this yourself a few minutes ago.) What I hope you're noticing is that the MC foundations contain no experiments, whereas the normal, isolated nuclear family lifestyle today is nothing BUT an experiment (except for the nuclear aspect). And since it has failed, I can't help but ask these 'experimenters': WHEN ARE YOU PEOPLE GOING TO ANALYZE THE RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT, FORM A CONCLUSION, AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS?!

"In other words, why should we be on the defensive trying to 'prove' already-proved MC ideas, and why should representatives of normal isolated nuclear families be on the offensive regarding our 'experiment' when, in truth, the reverse should be the case?

"I therefore state the following: From now on, from this day forward, the representatives of isolated nuclear families are going to be put on the defensive regarding their infamous failed experiment, while MC representatives will be on the offensive, charging these other unfortunate representatives with the hopeless task of trying to prove the viability of their hopeless lifestyles. Allen, earlier in our talks today you had it in reverse, but now you've straightened it out. THIS is where you were headed a minute ago. Am I right?"

"Exactly. So you wanted me to go through this reversal, then? This was planned?" asked Allen.

"Only by myself; Glen was not a co-conspirator. I wanted you to experience the bias from the paradigm you hold in this area solely because you live in a country which has isolated nuclear families as its social context. The idea that we accept failed experiments as viable while we challenge positively-proven and validated lifestyles to perform experiments to prove themselves is, of course, ridiculous. And it is precisely this logical flaw that you were tripping over, until you began to intuit and realize the inconsistencies involved."

"Guilty as charged, Robert. One question that arises for me, however, is this: Since you've dealt with all aspects of the MC except one, let's put that one through this same acid test now. To regurgitate, here's what we have up until now: MCs go with the proven in all areas, while isolated nuclear families go with the hopelessly failed experiments, so MCers aren't the ones on the defensive needing to experiment to 'prove' something. Granted. Any representative of isolated nuclear families, will be, in an argument, asked to provide evidence of viability—and possibly asked to go conduct an experiment in order to get this evidence (as if the myriad social symptoms today were not sufficient evidence of the hopelessness of such a quest). Granted. But what of the P.E.T. component of your plan? Parents have been using authoritarian methods—with a bit of permissiveness thrown in now and then when they get guilty for being too pushy—for centuries. If they didn't work, why weren't they dumped? If something else was better, why wasn't it found? (Actually, I know the answer to this, but I think we'd better confront this apparent inconsistency in your analysis.)"

Glen replied: "Mind if I try that one?" The others shook their heads. They didn't mind. Glen took the floor: "People never washed much, centuries ago; bad hygiene was rampant. No one had knowledge about germs, and people died from diseases many times as a direct result of bad hygiene. But they didn't know that's why they died early. They thought people were SUPPOSED to croak in their forties. I submit that the fact that people all practiced the same kind of hygiene wasn't evidence that it was 'working' for them. It was merely evidence of an accepted tradition. Normal parenting is in the same boat. The evidence of how bad it works is all around us. People need to see proof that something better has been discovered before they'll change. Millions of people in dozens of countries have done some of this changing, through P.E.T. And there are over a dozen other MC-acceptable *authoritative* parenting methods in addition to P.E.T.—such as Winning Family Lifeskills—that have been going stong and growing as well for decades. Millions more families have adopted these and found them a great improvement. (*Authoritative* parenting is the win-win, democratic parenting method that offers to families a clear alternative to the win-lose, discredited practices of authoritarian and permissive parenting.) But the marketing of parenting that works ten times as good as what the people are now doing has never gone big-time. That's where the MC thing comes in.

"As far as this concept of 'experiment' goes, I think that bad hygiene could be looked at as an experiment that proved nonviable while good hygiene proved viable. Similarly, I believe that authoritarianism DID prove itself viable when people were into subsistence farming or collective hunting and gathering; and yet, since industrialism has split families into individuals no longer working as a unit for a common goal, and since democracy is the accepted philosophy of the West, the value of authoritarianism has disappeared. And here in the Information Age and Third Wave, it's even more obsolete. But society, with its predictably stubborn and deterministic lack of insight and foresight, has not seen this clearly yet. The authoritarian experiment, viable for past times, is nonviable for current times. The necessity to move up the Tofflerian power triad from force to knowledge in the Third Wave has become self-evident. And yet most parents, teachers and ministers still believe in spanking, nagging, punishing, and other anchronisms. It is still being taught in fundamentalist camps, much to their kids' detriment.

"Every time conditions change, cultural strategies, no matter how tried and true, have to get filed under the heading of 'experiments' again. But, because of the paradigm phenomenon (in which beliefs become contexts from which we think, therefore effectively precluding future examination of the context itself), we fail to examine our beliefs and hesitate to change them. Few cultures ever refile their paradigms under the heading of 'experiment' when conditions change. And that's why conservative and liberal elements of all societies are always arguing. This applies especially to the divergent factions of the Culture War. It applies to the current political paralysis in our country due to ideological polarization. It's not so much a matter of change versus status quo—things ALWAYS change and everyone knows it. (Change is the only constant in the universe.) It's more a matter of timing. Conservatives say change slower while liberals say do it faster. One great thing about our MC trip is that it'll bring happy-tears to the eyes of conservatives as they realize that we are going to help things UNCHANGE." Robert and Allen looked at each other quizzically.

"Say what?" retorted Robert.

"That one went by me," said Allen.

"Well, Allen, remember in *The Cosmic Connection* when Sagan said that there needs to be some way to preserve the adaptive elements of cultures as they transform for various reasons? Remember how he pointed out that as cultures emulate the West they sometimes lose good traditions as they adopt bad ones? He even said that as we search for a better social form—one that finally WORKS, after all these centuries of strife—we should examine some of the traditions being abandoned because the very thing we need may currently be getting dumped by some society trying to emulate the wealthy West. Remember?"

"Yes. And?" asked Allen.

Glen continued: "Unchange. What else would you call it when we go back to what we used to do rather than going forward to the new and scary or staying with the status quo?"

"If it's negative, go with 'regression.' If not, try 'reversion,'" suggested Allen. "I'll admit that 'unchange' has more character, however. I believe I'll remember it for future use. It's very colorful. Do go on."

Glen did: "In other words, I'm trying to point out that when a culture conducts an unwise or blind or unintentional experiment such as the isolated nuclear family one, and then sees the error of its ways and jumps right back to what came before—something that worked better—this isn't really like what *change* is like, nor is it like status quo. It's unchange. Or, since there's no such word, I'll take your suggestion and go with positive reversion. Like when Polynesians with flat-gradient nurturance and zero child abuse tried steep-gradient nurturance because of industrialization and then ended up with lots of child abuse. They needed to form MCs in their towns and 'revert positively' in the nurturing tradition area, regardless of their new housing arrangements. Unfortunately, emulation of the West has its price: you get the bad with the good.

"Anyway, we're in a situation analogous to the Polynesians. We cannot backtrack about industry or technology. But there's no reason we can't 'revert' when it comes to nurturance patterns. Look at the symptoms. Can we afford not to unchange? Let conservatives say that we tried a bad change and then abandoned it and went back to the *old* status quo. Is that a good context for the conservatives to hear when they go for our MC trip or what?!"

"Works for me," said Robert.

"I'll buy it," Allen put in. "But you'll have to deal with the less informed among them that believe that the *Leave it to Beaver* family type is what's been around forever."

"I hear you, Allen." Glen went on: "Resistance to change is a strong theme in your videos, just like it is in Toffler's books. He said that the rate of change is so extreme that people are future-shocked into being alienated from their own society. The powers that be resist change, as do the elderly. And yet adaptive change, just like with biological mutations, is needed for cultural survival. We eventually do change as a culture, however, when things screw up bad enough. And that's where we're at now, as the

cultural symptoms show so painfully. We're evolving from a Second Wave to a Third Wave civilization but are so nervous about it that we attempt to hang onto Second Wave ideas and strategies—for the sake of security—even if they aren't working. And of course the 'security' we hope for eludes us as the obsolete ideas and strategies fail us.

"So whoever comes up with the best replacement for whatever's failing, and markets this idea effectively, will get the privilege of ushering in the replacement. But fundamentalists are saying a lot more *for* authoritarianism (out of lack of knowledge and out of conditioning—no evil intent is in evidence) than P.E.T. and other authoritative parenting methods are saying *against* it. We're outnumbered. And yet authoritarian and permissive parenting are both failed experiments. Our society MUST move on, just as we moved from bad hygiene to good. Our health, and inevitably our survival, is at stake.

"So I can't say P.E.T. and the other authoritative trips, like the other MC concepts, has been proven for centuries. They've all been proven only for decades. But keep one thing in mind here: authoritarian and permissive parenting methods have clearly been invalidated for quite a few decades, now, and their underlying concepts have either been disproven or at least—in authoritarianism's case—shown to be valid only for past—or perhaps military or emergency—circumstances."

Allen spoke up: "That's pretty much the answer I would have given to our little problem. So in our present circumstances, then, the old parenting methods have become experiments, and these are failing; but P.E.T. and these other democratic parenting methods like Winning Family Lifeskills, after decades of proof and—(how many studies?) —"

"Over sixty," said Glen.

Allen continued: "After decades of proof and over 60 studies, P.E.T., specifically, and authoritative, democratic parenting in general are no longer the experiments. They are succeeding and from now on can be on the offensive, while authoritarianism and permissiveness (and the all-too-common practice of mixing the two together) are failing and from now on are to be on the defensive. They, I say again, are the experiments. Is that about it?"

Robert replied, while looking at his notes: "Bingo. I concede that there are authoritarians out there that—probably with Bible in hand—would define 'success' in terms of kids obeying commands. A failure is a kid who doesn't. An authoritative believes in democracy in relationships in general while an authoritarian believes in democracy in political structures but patriarchal, autocratic controls from adult males to women and children. They're still giving this admittedly self-serving strategy the benefit of the doubt because of passages in the Bible and because it got modern civilization to where it is today. They're still rugged individualists, Colonists, pioneers at heart. And their conscious motives are benign and above reproach, usually. They want to keep those things that 'made America great.' Their hearts are in the right place. Now if only they can get their minds to follow. Cutting down a heck of a lot of trees without replacing them once made America great, as did careless mining, as did killing hostile Native Americans. They aren't arguing that we keep up *these* policies, are they?

"I believe it will take the success of the MC lifestyle among authoritatives to get many of these patriotic authoritarians to reexamine their positions. They simply won't be able to keep their heads in the sand anymore once the results they get with their methods are contrasted with those gotten by the MC people. They'll love the results they see and will want to get in on it.

"By the way, I think we need to add another Tofflerian morsel here: 'Third Wave civilization turns out to have many features—decentralized production, appropriate scale, renewable energy, de-urbanization, work in the home, high levels of prosumption, to name just a few—that actually resemble those found in First Wave society. We are seeing something that looks remarkably like a dialectical return.' Prosumption is consuming what you produce, and dialectical refers to the Hegelian concept of an idea generating its opposite, or antithesis, and this thesis-antithesis continuum generating a synthesis. The Third Wave seems to be 'preserving the adaptive elements of the culture as it transforms,' in his words, but doing so by (partially) representing a synthesis between

the First and Second Waves, which were at opposite ends of the continuum in many ways. The Tofflers see Third Wave society as more humane and ecological than Second Wave society. The kinder and happier flat nurturance gradient in First and Third Wave society and the harsh and faulty steep nurturance gradient of Second Wave society comprise a case in point."

"You wanted to say something about social marketing, Robert?" asked Allen.

"Yes. Are you familiar with it?"

"Not very. Do we have time for a consideration of it now?" asked Allen.

"How about I'll just make a brief summary?"

"Go for it." said Allen. "My God, listen to my vernacular—see what happens when I hang around teenagers?" he teased, winking at Glen.

Robert took the floor: "Well, using as my main source *Social Marketing,* a book by Philip Kotler and Eduardo Roberto, I've tried to put our project into a more formal social activism context in which the success of the MC movement is dependent upon how well we do our social marketing. SOCIAL MARKETING is a strategy for changing behavior. It combines the best elements of the traditional approaches to social change in an integrated planning and action framework and utilizes advances in communication technology and marketing skills.

"I've previously talked about how test groups and resultant statistics are simply not going to cut it, here. You've agreed. Let's look at smoking. There are those in the scientific community that feel that the significant reductions in smoking in the last 40 years have been due to the research statistics. They forget that there were plenty of damning statistics in 1964 when the first Surgeon General's report came out. *They didn't work. But what has worked is social marketing.* The statistics themselves do nothing until the message surrounding them is marketed. The more the media and Surgeon Generals marketed and continue to market the anti-smoking message, the more people quit. The health statistics just give the marketing campaign a foundation to stand on—they don't 'cause' anything.

"Applying this to lifestyle inadequacies, we can see that decades of negative statistics about family breakdown and the ill effects of isolated families and anachronistic parenting strategies haven't really caused new habits to arise. People need to hear and understand a solution, and then have it marketed to them wisely and sensitively. It's the American Way. There are far more statistics that support the MC concepts that we've advocated today than there are statistics about the health effects of smoking. But there are large, conclusive amounts of both. The difference here is that there's been large-scale nonsmoking marketing, but no marketing about the MC concept.

"Thomas Gordon, for example, wrote a book in 1989 called *Teaching Children Self-Discipline.* He cited study after study that proved beyond doubt that punishment produces massive amounts of cultural symptomology in this country, and it actually causes the behavior it is meant to prohibit. But after showing conclusive, research-confirmed proof and publishing it in a book, did the culture drop its misguided, erroneous ideas about punishment? No. It so happens that the more militant of the fundamentalist groups are marketing their 'dare-to-discipline' ideas much more successfully than all parent effectiveness groups combined are marketing their ideas about how punishment (and power-based, authoritarian relationships in general) causes much of the crime, substance abuse, violence, child abuse and psychological symptomology it purports to eradicate. The facts seem singularly irrelevant here. What counts is marketing funds, knowhow and actions. The fundamentalists use Biblical passages as their only real claim to legitimacy, and even though Gordon and others have found plenty of Biblical passages that support the nonpunishment position, the fundamentalists find it convenient to ignore them.

"Allen, the way the majority of parents in this country use violence to control and manipulate their children is a national tragedy of immense proportions. The research and studies prove it. The amount of potential that is being killed in our populace each year is awesome. The amount of neurosis and suffering we are foisting upon our kids FOR ABSOLUTELY NO OTHER REASON THAN IGNORANCE is a national disgrace.

"A good way to think about all this is to acknowledge that all kids are born geniuses, and that all this violence, punishment, hate, fear, manipulation and mystification de-geniuses them until they become stupid, so stupid that 30 percent cannot even make it through high school (these are the ones with the most fear and punishment in their lives and the least nurturance—but then I guess this is probably obvious to you). And these people end up robbing, raping and instilling fear and anxiety in the rest of us (when they're not in prison). THIS WHOLE THING IS AN INCREDIBLY STUPID NATIONAL TRAGEDY. I feel sick to my stomach just thinking about it. Most people simply think all this is inevitable and hopeless. But the three of us know better, Allen. Why in God's name should it be inevitable that we beat our kids stupid, threaten them to fearfulness and manipulate them out of their identities? Because ignorance is inevitable? Hogwash! We can do this MC thing and wipe out much of this cruelly harmful ignorance in one fell swoop! Isn't it time that this country confronted the things that are killing it?!

"How we treat children is far more important than most people think. Thomas Gordon said that in the just-cited book on discipline and Alfie Kohn is another parenting expert who has studied and written about the discipline thing. He concurs completely with Gordon. And guess who one of Gordon's sources is? It's Sagan, Allen. Gordon was citing the study Sagan cited in his *Cosmos book,* a cross-cultural analysis of 400 preindustrial societies. The ravaging effects of punishment, authoritarian parenting and negative-power-based relationships in general are clearly shown in an unequivocal way. The connection was proven. No room was left for doubt. And yet did the publishing of *Cosmos* get people to stop this type of ignorant, harmful behavior? No, a couple of years later Reagan himself advocated on national TV that we bring back punishment, discipline, and power-based relationships in order to stop delinquency and disrespect and kids going bad. IF REAGAN HAD HAD ONLY A MODICUM OF ACTUAL **KNOWLEDGE** ON THE SUBJECT, HE'D HAVE REALIZED THAT IT WAS HIS SO-CALLED CURE THAT WAS CAUSING THE PROBLEM. The jury was in. We knew what was the right and wrong way. But this guy gets his mouth moving rather than his brain and he legitimizes, validates, and encourages the dare-to-discipline movement right there on national TV. That was marketing and it led to lots more marketing. And their side is on the upswing, while the side Galaxy and Tom and Gordon and Kohn and I stand for goes relatively unmarketed. Is this society nuts or something? Is it trying to commit suicide? Has everyone totally lost all respect for knowledge, science and critical thinking? Did Reagan really run the White House based upon astrology, as was rumored? Are we headed for another Dark Ages? Will there be anyone ready to stop them *this* time when they 'come to burn down the libraries' as happened in Alexandria—due to incredible ignorance—a few centuries A.D.?

"Most people who examine the issues I've just raised throw up their hands and indulge in hysterical, black-and-white thinking. 'Well, if we don't keep them in line with this authoritarian strategy, we'll end up as permissives who spoil their kids and have their kids walking all over them, so we simply have no choice!' Nothing could be further from the truth! LET ME STATE THIS ONE MORE TIME, SLOWLY AND CLEARLY FOR THE WHOLE WORLD TO HEAR: WE TOTALLY AGREE WITH THE AUTHORITARIANS THAT *THERE IS NO WORSE PARENTING METHOD THAN 'PERMISSIVENESS.'* IT STINKS. PERIOD. THERE, I HOPE THAT'S SETTLED! THE THING THAT THEY KEEP MISSING, HOWEVER, IS THAT DECADES OF RESEARCH AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES OF ALL TYPES FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE HAVE PROVEN, AGAIN BEYOND ANY POSSIBILITY OF ERROR, THAT *THE AUTHORITARIAN METHOD IS JUST AS HOPELESS AS IS THE PERMISSIVE METHOD!*

"I REALLY WISH THE WHOLE WORLD COULD AND WOULD HEAR THE FOLLOWING, ALLEN: THERE IS A *THIRD* ALTERNATIVE! IT'S CALLED P.E.T. AND AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING SUCH AS WINNING FAMILY LIFESKILLS, AND THEY HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR DECADES AND HAVE HAD PLENTY OF STUDIES DONE ON THEM AS WELL. THEY WORK! THEY TRANSCEND PERMISSIVE *AND* AUTHORITARIAN METHODS.

"What all this means is that those who keep trying to polarize the issue into a simple either-or, permissive-authoritarian dichotomy are doing everyone a great disservice and causing great social harm. What such people should do, since I don't wish

for Galaxy to become a zoo full of rubbernecking gawkers, is to meet some of the people Gordon already knows, sons and daughters of parents who learned the skills taught in P.E.T., and students of teachers who learned in Gordon's *Teacher Effectiveness Training* how to manage their classrooms democratically and treat students with respect and get respect in return. Gordon says: 'Believe me, these youngsters are impressive.' And they are. I myself have seen the difference between P.E.T. and non-P.E.T. kids. (And this applies to kids raised with Winning Family Lifeskills and other democratic, authoritative methods as well, of course.) I too am impressed by the difference. They don't act a bit like the smart-assed kids raised permissively, nor the angry, hateful passive-aggressives and active-aggressives raised by authoritarians. They act like what BOTH authoritarian and permissive parents hope in vain that their kids will act like: respectful, responsible, intrinsic rather than other-directed, democratic rather than tyrannical, willing to talk and think rather than threaten and fight, and cooperative rather than selfish, hostile and self-centered. And—oops!"

"What's wrong?" asked Glen.

Robert responded: "I promised a brief summary of social marketing but I guess I got sidetracked and carried away. Sorry, Allen."

"That's okay. You made some very important points. Why not go on with your marketing summary now?" suggested Allen.

"Okay. Apple Computer, Peter Pan peanut butter, Toyota—the reason their products sell isn't that they're good. (Is a pet rock 'good'? They once sold well, decades ago.) Products sell good because they're well-marketed. 'Good' helps a little, but the critical factor is the marketing. All businesspeople know this stuff. Non-businesspeople, like two of the three of us, often don't. So I'm making sure that we have this basic knowledge here—that we are in agreement on the basics of 'Marketing 101.' Social marketing is the strategy for selling a social product. That product is an attitude or behavior change.

"Smoking was and is sold as a cool, sophisticated, 'in' behavior change. The marketing was and is relentlessly sophisticated and intense. The masses were putty in the hands of the marketers—people never knew what hit them. *Anti-smoking disease statistics from the Surgeon General failed*. However, *social marketing of the anti-smoking message worked.*. You saw a lot of the anti-smoking messages if you watched much TV in the last several decades. (Glen told me this—I wasn't watching that much TV then, nor are either of us now.) The bottom line is that the anti-smoking forces had to realize that the same tactics that could sell people on smoking could sell them on anti-smoking. From then on, things began to work. The only reason it's a somewhat limited and slow process is that the tobacco industry hasn't decreased its marketing; it's stepped it up like crazy—why should they care if cigarettes kill nearly 400,000 tobacco-consuming people a year, when they can turn new smokers—teens—on to smoking with their marketing?

"Over half of men smoked in 1964; almost a third of women did. This averages out to a bit over 40 percent of people smoked. In 1989 the average went to under 24 percent. The success of anti-smoking marketing has saved hundreds of thousands of lives. I'm sure that you, like me, wish that everyone would—or could—quit, for everyone's health, but the point is that GOOD social marketing works. The interesting thing about ciggybutts is that there is social marketing occurring both for AND against it all the time. And 24% (I've also seen 21.4%) are unable to resist the cancer stick ads and the fact that TV and movie role models are often paid to smoke onscreen—and kids and teens are vulnerable and especially other-directed and cannot resist the temptation to try to look as 'cool' as their role models. Most teens are learning who they are and seriously doubt their 'coolness' so they hope the rebellious coolness posturing of this defiant act will make them seem cooler. Most of us, of course, see them as ANYTHING BUT COOL. They look very foolish. Choosing to get lung cancer and other stuff is just about the stupidest act imaginable. But the point is that BOTH social marketing efforts work good.

"And we've done Faith Popcorn's Discontinuity Trend Analysis on the MC idea here and it looks like an on-trend idea from that perspective. It also looks good from the

perspective of the The Seven Satisfiers of Success, as outlined in the book *The Decision Makers*, by Robert Heller. This is in addition to looking good from the perspective of the book already mentioned: *Social Marketing.*

"In marketing the MC movement, we don't anticipate anyone fighting us. The movement is very win-win. Everyone wins, so why should anyone want to oppose us? So we can be in a much better position than the anti-smoking advocates where Big Tobacco is fighting the public service announcements all the way. The social marketing experts have all concluded that social marketing works, and that mass media appeals, when effectively planned, can inform, motivate, and lead to sustained healthful behaviors and lifestyle changes. The critical factors are good planning and effective implementation. When it turned out that Brooke Shields sometimes smokes both offscreen and onscreen, the anti-smoking public service announcements she did looked silly and hypocritical. That was an example of bad planning. On the other hand, the 1980 Brooke Shields Calvin Klein jeans commercial was a roaring success for both Klein and Shields—it was an example of good planning.

"Sometimes the social marketing campaigns very definitely need famous, charismatic, respected people to either kick them off, offer ongoing support, or both. It depends upon the social product. The MC movement is one of the types of social 'products' that needs this. One can reach that conclusion either intuitively or by reading social marketing books. MCs need the legitimacy of association with the best and wisest people in our country.

"Well, I said I'd summarize, so let me just add that the *Social Marketing* book also contains info on which 'target-adoptor segments' try out the new innovation just to be different or for novelty or just because they're very open-minded and like to see if something works better than what they presently do (2.5 percent)—they're called Innovators and are first to 'adopt,' and are critical because we use their positive experiences in marketing, testimonials, and to influence public opinion and sociologists and parenting experts. There's info on which segments go for the intrinsic value of the innovation (13.5 percent)—they're called Early Adopters and they're opinion leaders therefore very critical. There's info on which segments are imitators (34 percent). There's info on which segments are joiners (34 percent). There's info on which segments are traditionalists (16 percent)—they're last to 'adopt.' Also, the authors explain how one manages social diffusion by controlling various factors so there is rapid takeoff, rapid acceleration, maximum penetration and no dropouts. So the bottom line here is that this is the lingo we'll need to hit the investors with, along with a sophisticated marketing and business plan—Stephen can help wonderfully here. What do you think?"

Allen responded: "Sounds like you've done your homework and that you're being realistic about the business aspects of the MC movement. Good job, Robert." He stretched and then looked up at the clock.

"Well, it's getting to be time for me to go home and eat. I'd catch hell from my family if I brought home extra mouths without warning. But I'll tell you some great places to eat. Where are you staying?" They told him and he recommended a restaurant. "Now that I think of it, my wife ought to meet you. She's done some YouTube videos on childhood. She'd be intrigued by some of your nurturing ideas, I'm sure. However, her schedule is stacked solid both this weekend—including tonight and tomorrow—and next. Hmmmmmm. Another time, I guess.

"Before we go, fellas, I want to ascertain one thing. It's about communication. You've given me a detailed description of MC life—at least the Galaxy MC. But even though I now realize that you've enhanced human *connectedness* and there's no crowding, which my initial bias told me, and even though I understand that privacy and alone-space and choice and 'Alone' signs make an inspiring environment, combining the best of relationships and the best of solitude, I still don't see how you can conveniently, efficiently, and without disturbing anyone, communicate in a way that works. It's like if you want to know all the choices, you have to do a bit of disturbing—which would create annoyance."

"Since we don't experience any communication problems, it's hard for me to know exactly what you mean, Allen. How about you, Glen? Do you see what he means?" Robert asked. Glen shook his head NO.

Allen continued: "I'll give examples: Someone is disabled or sick and can't leave his room to see 'Alone' signs on doors. This person calls someone he wants to be with, but violates an 'Alone' sign in the process. Even if you make agreements among one another ahead of time to avoid 'Alone' sign violation, how can anyone predict what he'll be into hours into the future? I presume your answer to this would be that one must be extra nice to the sick or disabled, which may involve sacrifice, including having one's alone space violated."

"That's fundamentally correct," said Robert. "But we know each other so well and care for each other so much that it doesn't feel like sacrifice. It feels like doing what we enjoy doing most: nurturing. A tiny sacrifice like that is merely an expression of caring."

"But would you expect that degree of harmony, understanding, and compassion out of the ordinary people who would occupy future MCs? I realize that they'd evolve and mature considerably as time went on, but at first your MCs will be populated with normals. Would it work for them?"

"I—I never thought of that, but I still feel people that like each other enough to form an MC will make allowances for others' physical problems," said Robert, with a worried look on his face. Glen squirmed uncomfortably in his chair.

Allen continued: "It gets worse. You represent one third of the people, statistically, by being in an apartment. Two thirds live in suburban or other regular houses. It sounds grossly inefficient to me—correct me if I'm wrong—to have people calling or texting each other all the time to find out what others are into. If the MC really is highly connected, the phone traffic, whether voice or texting, would be considerable and highly disturbing. A person into playing Monopoly might send out an email to 10 or 20 MC members and bother everyone but one person, who wanted to play.

"Even if each person had his own line, the ringing would be abrasive for all. I realize that older people would have cell phones, but only 56% of tweeners 8 to 12 have them (in 2012), which gets much less as you get even younger. A bit less than half of 2 to 8-year-olds have ever used smartphones or iPads. Most of these younger people would have to either have to use loudly ringing land lines or use parental phones or parental computers for texting. In a normal family, it would not be too annoying to disturb Mom by having her get a text from 7-year-old Sue, but once there are a dozen kids and a dozen adults, the combinations of people wanting to know what each other are doing would explode, as would the annoying calls, ringing land lines, and annoyed parents. Even kids would get annoyed from the phenomenon the critics call 'over-sharing.' And there's no way to replace ringing phones with Facebook—people don't go there often enough for that to be a reliable and secure conduit for often time-sensitive needs and desires.

"But much worse than that would be the alternative: foot traffic of various people traipsing back and forth all the time—walkways or no walkways—people intent on not disturbing people with 'Alone' signs up. So they clomp through a house to see if a friend has his sign up, after bothering a different person just to answer the door and let them in. The way I see it they'll violate a lot of people's space and tranquility—something I highly value, by the way—either by phone or in person. The attempt to communicate will be oppressive here, however unintentional. They'll either clomp away or ring away the warmth of their welcome."

"People not wanting calls turn off their phones," said Robert.

Allen continued: "That works fairly well if each MC person does indeed have his own phone and line. Society is definitely moving in that direction anyway. Maybe you're just ahead of everyone in that respect. But it's not an ideal solution. Especially since most 3-to-8-year-olds do not have their own phone and line—so they'll have to bother others. Also, regardless of people's ages, just because a phone is turned on doesn't mean that caller and callee are into the same thing at all. Most of the time, the desires won't match that well so there will be unintentional bothering. Galaxy is about the *advantages* of more

connectedness, which myself and all good sociologists and psychologists would agree are good. What about the *disadvantages?"*

"But isn't what you're saying true of normal lifestyles right now?" asked Robert. "People, especially teenagers, are always calling each other and planning and scheduling things. It's the nature of the beast."

"Yes," admitted Allen, "but MCs are supposed to be 'what works'—the ultimate —'A' number one. I find the prospect of all that teenage babbling and planning and chaos and confusion distracting and even headache-promoting. Even with a phone in his room, a teenager often doesn't close the door. Nor does he talk softly. And take the situation of babies trying to sleep and being disturbed by phones or people trudging in and out of homes—especially in the evening.

"One way of saying all this is that more general connectedness will result in more general chaos, disturbances, ringing, clomping and ultimately tears and unhappiness for some. Especially for less attractive or shy people who don't get much in the way of visitors. They'd feel that the others' social successes were being rubbed in their faces. And little ones will need more caregivers in an MC, if you really allow caregiver choice. But there's no way for people to know ahead of time what they'll be into (nurturing needs or not, in the children's case). And a kid wanting to be with someone else may be too young to call over and see if someone wants to nurture. So might not the present nurturer be stuck with a lot of MC-disturbing calls or clomping at the child's request?

"I know you said the toddler will toddle to the next house. I foresee a lot of disturbance and distraction in that case. Even if the covered walkways were in place, it gets down to a big caregiving job getting much worse as caregivers go from watching a kid in a designated place to playing not only musical places but musical caregivers as well. There may be trouble in paradise, gentlemen. A crack in utopia. A hole in heaven. The more you accelerate connectedness and choice and communication, the more you create environmental chaos which distracts from or even prevents successful relatedness. What you need is NONINVASIVE COMMUNICATION. But I'm not sure that's doable. And if the communications remain invasive, I'm not sure that successful relating—or even the MC itself—is doable. I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you this stuff."

"But—but we DON'T have any problems like that at Galaxy, Allen," protested Robert, sadly. "Honest we don't."

"I believe you, Robert," encouraged Allen. "But I have trouble believing that the normal families of the world won't have these problems. You were born with an Einsteinian spoon in your mouth—your words—in a remarkably nurturing and benevolent environment. I don't know of anyone else who was . . . . . okay . . . . . mine was pretty good also. The rest of the nation went to the 'school of hard knocks,' as it were. Compared to the rest of us, you're spoiled silly. Not that I don't like you—I do. You're by far the nicest and smartest 19-year-old I've ever had the honor to meet. You manifest having been brought up in an extraordinarily positive environment. But one's environment, as you've been saying for a few hours, conditions virtually indelible beliefs into one, when one is young. I think some of your beliefs are putting 'rose-colored glasses' on you when it comes to predicting how normal people will react to future MCs. I don't feel you've successfully addressed the question of chaos from invasive communication and clomping around checking others' statuses. Why, in order to be a noninvasive communicator in such an environment, you'd have to be a veritable mind-reader. And you know from my videos how little patience I have for ESP baloney.

"But in spite of all that, I really love your MC ideas and think you're probably really close to a quantum-leap, social-cultural breakthrough. And I surely hope you achieve it. Do you realize the immense positive impact that enough MCs would have on the environmental problems? With people meeting most of their social needs without the need for an automobile or mass transit, due to the concentrated social-need-fulfilling potential of MCs, the pollution level would drop wonderfully.

"Just think of the reversal of both ozone-layer destruction and greenhouse effect. There'd have to be quite a wide acceptance of MC lifestyles, of course. But I figure that in the following cases there'd be dramatically lowered use of internal combustion engine

vehicles: (1) visiting relatives and friends; (2) driving around ('cruising') because of boredom due to unsatisfying and inadequate social connectedness; (3) virtually all baby-sitter- and daycare-related driving—usually daycare outside the MC would be unnecessary; (4) almost all driving and drop-ins with the purpose of seeing whether or not friends want to do certain things—you'll be so near them that you won't have to use a car for this, although you're sure to be OVERusing phones and shoe leather; (5) MCs will support faster development of cottage industries and work-at-home situations of all types, with a dozen or two people with common interests located on one block or in one apartment building.

"The situation would be very ripe for collective ventures and home businesses of all types. And since the Tofflers and Naisbitt and other prophets say that this is already the direction things are headed, you've discovered, with the MC, a way for it to all happen much faster and more benevolently—a 'kinder and gentler' future. (There's nothing kind or gentle about rush hours!) Except for the major flaw of invasive communication, I think you've got the best candidate for the needed cultural-lag-fighting quantum leap of cultural transformation that I've ever heard. I salute the both of you.

"Perhaps MCs will be the ultimate common denominator that empowers international peace and cooperation. Perhaps MCs will allow the human species to come out from under the cloud of constant nuclear threat. Perhaps ultimately even terrorists will be too fulfilled and nurtured due to MC-type lifestyle enhancements to have any reason to be obsessed with hate and murder any longer. Nothing—absolutely NOTHING—would please me more! So what do you think, gentlemen?"

The guys were in very chaotic states. The conversations had taken some totally unexpected turns, and at least one of those turns they had been totally unprepared for. They'd been caught with their pants down. Each had silently resolved that they wouldn't be caught that way ever again. The MC thing was too important. Allen had said he'd visit Galaxy, but he'd also given them a logical reason why (in spite of what Galaxy was like) the MCs populated by normals might fail. Allen had found a fatal flaw. It had shut them up, embarrassed them, made them feel foolish, and they were now feeling quite speechless. Why argue? They had no response! This was stressful. This was agonizing. To have come so close . . .

"Well?" repeated Allen.

Robert responded: "Is there a chance we could have a phone number which we promise not to abuse? We don't have a return flight until tomorrow night, and who knows what will happen between now and then? Is there a chance we'd be able to talk a bit more if we get somewhere with this communications dilemma? Our minds are reeling at the moment, obviously, but then necessity IS the mother of invention—" Allen's face looked sympathetic.

"Here," said Allen, writing the home phone number on a piece of scratch paper. "I'll trust your discretion, fellas."

They made their polite goodbyes, standing up and shaking hands and saying "it was nice to meet you" and all that good stuff. But, to be honest, their minds were miles away. There was trouble in paradise, a crack in utopia, and a hole in heaven, and it was blowing their minds. They took a cab back to their motel and then ate a gloomy and depressing supper in the nearby diner, ignoring Allen's recommended eating establishment. Then they went back to their motel room. Each of them laid back on his own bed, staring at the ceiling. They had an urge to call home to Galaxy and holler "Help!" But they didn't.

Chapter 17

"Cudgel your brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating."
—Shakespeare

"It is one thing to show a man that he is in an error, and another to put him in possession of truth."
—John Locke

"Surely human affairs would be far happier if the power in men to be silent were the same as that to speak. But experience more than sufficiently teaches that men govern nothing with more difficulty than their tongues."
—Spinoza

"There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream,
Scarcely even a howl or a groan."
—Lewis Carroll

"It is wise to be silent when occasion requires."
—Plutarch

"In silence man can most readily preserve his integrity."
—Meister Eckhart

"Error is a hardy plant; it flourisheth in every soil."
—Martin Farquhar Tupper

"Well-timed silence has more eloquence than speech."
—Martin Farquhar Tupper

"The great tragedy of Science—the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact."
—T.H. Huxley

Robert, after an hour of memorizing the marks and stains on the ceiling, was the first to break the silence. "What happened?" he asked weakly.

"I was about to ask you the same thing, Robert."

"Did we mess up? Did we blow it?" asked Robert. The questions were coming from his heart more than his mind. He felt like a child that had been caught trying to pass himself off as an adult. He felt exposed. But the worst part of it, beyond any consideration of his personal discomfort and embarrassment, was the negative implications all this had for the world's MC potentials.

"Is Allen a meanie or what!?" blurted Glen. Robert had no answer. His logic was in the middle of a nose dive, and it certainly FELT like Allen was indeed a "meanie." However, in another part of his being he doubted that that was an accurate evaluation of what had happened. He knew that the problem wasn't with Allen at all. It was with them. They'd blown it. They hadn't been ready.

Robert suddenly got very angry. He punched his fists into the bed and shouted: "Damn it, Glen, I can't stand this crap! I can't stand lying here like a jerk, feeling sorry for myself! What can we do?"

Glen replied: "Well, first we should calm down and then we should logically analyze what happened, and then we should realize that a hell of a lot is at stake here so we'd better forget about sleep and start doing some heavy brain-storming."

"Okay, damn it. I agree. So what the hell happened!?" Robert still wasn't very calm, but at least he'd started the ball rolling by asking the right question.

Glen attempted to answer: "I think we just got hit with an A-bomb of critical thinking. The kind that's essential to the scientific method. The kind that's the forte of scientists and social thinkers, and since he happens to be a leading social thinker, I guess you could say we've been forte-ed, if not sautéed, half to death. A scientist is looking for the truth, so is skeptical and always looks for the flaws in the theory and the fly in the ointment."

"And the trouble in paradise and the crack in utopia, damn it to hell!" exclaimed Robert.

"Would you BEHAVE? We don't have time for that crap," complained Glen.

"Sorry—I—I've never felt like this before. I guess I'd better wise up here and begin sublimating all this junk into constructive thinking. It's just that it all makes me feel so damn —"

"Stupid, helpless, naïve, exposed, and foolish," Glen continued the thought. "But let's acknowledge the majorly bummeracious feelings and quit dwelling on them like dweebs. Let's do some thinking, Robert. Let's deal with our dilemma!"

"Okay. Um—thanks, guy. You're being very—well—anyway I appreciate your understanding and maturity." Robert took a very deep breath, and then let it out with a big "whew!" Then he said "Okay now where were we? Oh yeah, we were sautéed by Allen. And he did us a favor, too. Starting up MCs and having things go sour would make what we just went through look like a tea party. But how could we have been so dumb and so blind?

"Let's see now. . . . Let's back up for a second. People in isolated nuclear families normally take only a minimal amount of advantage of the fact that there are lots of others in the neighborhood. In the midst of lots of potential close-knit ties and great connectedness, they settle for a couple of superficial friends, an occasional squabble with a parent or sibling or spouse, a monthly visit with granny, and a lot of loneliness and TV and repression and escapism on social networks, and sometimes alcohol and drug abuse, as well as suicide, promiscuity, and so on.

"And adults divorce and remarry time after time, always thinking the reason that it's not working is that they married the 'wrong person' or that they are just inherently 'bad' in some way. Such conclusions are, of course, incorrect. It's the inoperable lifestyle that's tripping up most of those marriages, leading to child abuse, spouse abuse, depression, substance abuse and alienation. It's the lack of sufficient successful connectedness and solidarity and oneness with other humans, a lack so serious that they blindly pin ALL their relationship hopes, dreams and fantasies on their partners. A recipe for disaster, if there ever was one, and escapism on social networks where they can pour out their woes and disappointments to others at least helps them feel listened to—a good thing—but it does nothing to deal with their woes or revamp their inoperable lifestyle or create the kind of deep connectedness needed. The poor spouses were raised in an inoperable lifestyle themselves, and don't really even know what deep connectedness is or where to go for it, so they pursue easier to succeed at goals like materialism.

"The neurosis-producing forces of the steep gradient of nurturers has taken its toll. The culture has foolishly given them the idea that one person can be another person's sole answer in life. Totally unrealistic demands are the first symptoms of such erroneous conditioning. This leads quickly to bitter disappointments and fights and depression and often abuse of kids, abuse of spouse, abuse of self, abuse of substances, or a combination of these. Only an MC would allow such people to have their cake and eat it too, regardless of how many of these concepts they had conditioned into themselves. They'd soon learn that there are lots of ways their social needs can be met and that a spouse was never meant to be the sole source. Every type of relationship that starts with such a belief FAILS. A mother puts all her hopes in her kids—she'll wreck 'em. A father lives through the successes of his son (rather than living his own life and just appreciating whatever his son does and loving him no matter what the son chooses). Soon the relationship kills the life in one or both of them, depending upon who has the guts to exit the relationship and how.

"Spouses are meant to be sole sexual and romantic need-fillers for one another, but NOT the major source of friendship and connection to society and to the world. As most other cultures know, or at least knew. But not ours. Such ideas derive from choiceless, mother-centered childhoods where overdependence and overwhelm are the rule—but our culture is so used to this that it accepts it as 'natural' no matter how badly it works. There's nothing like a strongly conditioned BELIEF, and the resulting paradigm, to make a person blind to a failing relationship, to smothering, to ontological interference and to neurosis induction. Putting kids in daycare or with babysitters a few hours daily changes nothing except to make the kid try to cope with even fewer needs getting filled, and the kid gets even more clingy and overdependent. And yet, as we've seen, the cure for all this mess is so simple!

"People need sufficient connectedness, relatedness, choice, and alternatives, and I do NOT mean Facebook. Although it's possible to use social networking to support or supplement an already existing deep connectedness, social networking won't create it. People need to have enough relationships that fill enough needs to make them secure. They need to choose who they relate to so they learn to be responsible for their actions and relationships. And they need good relationship practices—as with P.E.T. When people don't get what they need—what I've just said—they begin to symptomize their lifestyles not working. Their lifestyles were set up as a result of past conditioning, not as a result of logical thinking about how needs could best be filled. My grandparents did some of that rare type of thinking—maybe by luck—but anyway they did it. Result: Galaxy!

"But Allen's got us by the short hairs. Our scene is way too exceptional. We're all 'spoiled,' in a way. Our benevolent communication habits ARE different from what we can expect new MCers to adopt, at least at first. Let's face it: our plans NEEDED the social critic's touch! And we got it. We got sautéed. The down side is that he figures that invasive communication would preclude the whole MC concept from working. The up side is that he thinks that if we solved that, then we may be on top of the key concept for the major quantum leap of social transformation so desperately needed right now. Glen—damn it there HAS to be an answer! We have got to do this!"

"I'm with you all the way, buddy. If it can be done, then we are damn sure going to do it!" exclaimed Glen.

"Where were we?" continued Robert. "Oh yeah, isolated nuclear and other types of families. Why do the people stay so isolated? Because people don't like people much any more. Sure, they get obsessed with getting indirect self-acceptance on Facebook because they don't accept *themselves*, but this merely pretends to be true deep connectedness, while its hidden function is distracting people from their emptiness and emotional pain and loneliness, as well as escapism. They didn't get their needs filled as they grew up in a normal lifestyle that didn't have anywhere near the optimal amount of nurturing human resource choices. So they're ambivalent about relationships. So they don't attempt deep IRL relationships as much. And the ones they have don't usually lead to need fulfillment, but to disappointment instead—so they feel that relationships are a bad risk. And in view of what I've mentioned about the misguided all-eggs-in-one-basket strategy, how could they be anything else? People expect, because of what happened to them when they were young, despite the best possible intentions of parents and baby-sitters, that relationships are more likely to lead to pain than to satisfaction. There are a few people, though, who have relationships that are at least somewhat rewarding. They often don't live that near to such friends. I mean, what are the odds that you'll move right next door to the people you're most compatible with? So you're either inconveniently far from your friends and don't see them often enough, or you settle for people you're not really compatible with but who happen to live down the block or in the same apartment building. This is a good, time-filling, escapist relationship that you form, but it doesn't really fill any of your needs for the deep connectedness and solidarity humans need. It's about escapism, avoiding stress, nonconfrontation of true feelings, coping, and just having someone to do things with so you can pretend you're not as lonely as you feel you are underneath. Why else would peers in groups so often feel obliged to use alcohol and drugs as a common denominator? What they want is deep

human connectedness and nurturing relationships that fill needs. What they settle for is escape, oblivion, delusion, acting out, thrills, and filling emptiness with activity.

"All this is not the recipe for a lifestyle with long-term survivability, so it means the culture, in that form (what Sagan and Allen call rubbery and hand-patched), won't have long-term survivability. The bottom line for cultural survivability, the major criterion for success, is ultimately whether it fills the needs of its citizens. You can pretend to do it (communism, for example) and get away with fooling people for a bit, but ultimately the needs must be filled for things to continue. Galaxy solves all the problems that I've mentioned. We lucked into it. It's the major concept needed, as even Allen admitted. There are enough nurturers, enough choices, enough human resources and connectedness and solidarity. This lifestyle could last forever. Because it fills needs wonderfully and its people are happy, inspired, and grateful. It's what everyone would want, everywhere, if they could only get in touch with their true feelings; if they could only choose to have this. But it's not there to choose. It's unchoosable. They can't have what works. They have to settle for the least oppressive variety of something that doesn't work.

"Oh yes, there are cultures that fill needs better than our country, have happier and less neurotic citizens, use extended and stem-family configurations and multiple caregiving to insure need-filling and family success, and to some degree, cultural success. I say 'to some degree' because in the end many of these are more primitive cultures that get 'modernized' and they, against their better judgment, adopt Western traditions and lose much of their emotional and social need-filling potential. A nasty downside to the global village.

"But think of the basis of Western society, now: capitalism. I'm not trying to knock it, but let's admit it: When social needs, emotional needs, relationships, connectedness and solidarity needs are well filled, the tendency to fill emptiness with conspicuous consumption is seriously attenuated. In other words, capitalism depends upon incomplete emotional and social need fulfillment in its adherents, as does advertising. Must it necessarily? I don't think so. People could just as easily buy goods and services to enhance their MCs as to fill emptiness or as status symbols. These emptiness-filling needs are the needs that advertising targets. As long as they keep selling things, why should they care if they have to switch targets to actual needs rather than neurotic needs once MCs are everywhere?

"So anyway, in the case of developing countries, it makes sense that as cultures lose emotional need-filling potential, they gain the potential for their citizens to blindly follow the dictates of materialism. They begin to use things to pacify the emotionally deprived—and the neurotic cycle commences. People in these 'developing' countries can buy more, eat more, and have a better house. They can even start up a car and pollute their once-pristine air. It's the price of progress, as they say. Is the 'progress' worth the price? I don't think so!

"And that, of course, is where the MC comes in. It allows developing nations to retain human connectedness as they modernize. They can fill psychological and social needs and fill physical quality-of-life needs simultaneously. Why trade one for the other and get a bad deal? Why should they end up as the victims of industrialism and/or materialism? The MC allows modern nations to have their cake and eat it too by adopting lifestyle enhancements that will allow them to be as fulfilled psychologically and socially as they are materialistically.

"This can work, Glen. Damn it—I KNOW it can work! We're simply going to have to fill that big pothole in the road and then continue on our journey! And let's remember to thank Allen for pointing it out to us. He did it because he wants our MC movement to work. We know it from his videos, and from what he told us, buddy. He would dearly love watching the world get its act together. When you get right down to it, who the hell wouldn't?! And if we can fill the pothole, I think he'll want to help with all this. What do you think? Are you with me?" asked Robert.

"You got it. 100 percent. All the way. So how do we fill that damn pothole?" he asked.

"Beats the hell out of me."

"And me."

"Let's analyze this, then," suggested Robert. "What we have is the need for noninvasive communication. Clomp clomp ring ring, cooling the warmth of welcomes and ultimately the viability of MCs. Even if we can make things work in apartment houses, in two thirds of all scenes—the suburban blocks—the communication problem would wreck the peace. Let's boil it down: If people live in a suburban MC but don't relate more and have deeper levels of connectedness, nurturing and need-filling, then they are not really in an MC at all, because such things DEFINE an MC. But at least they'd have relative peace and solitude and, let's say, a handleable amount of invasive communications. But if we greatly accelerate communication necessity because of all the nurturer or friend choices, and the plans and schedules to be created and continuously revamped and rearranged, and higher levels of connectedness and relatedness, we increase chaos and disturbance and alone-space violations by that same amount. In a phrase, invasive communications, as Allen has warned us, is indeed our problem. That's the pothole. So let's fill the damn thing!"

Glen responded: "Allen said that in order to be a noninvasive communicator in such an environment, one would have to be a veritable mind reader. I don't see how that can help us though. We're not about to learn how to do that."

"True enough."

"I mean, that's why people use telephones: because they AREN'T mind readers," said Glen. "But telephones are invasive communicators. Even though you can turn them on and off at will, they still will bother lots of people. With normal, isolated, unconnected nuclear families, they bother people a little. As soon as you de-isolate them and have them be very connected in a close-knit microcommunity of people, they will bother people a lot. It's almost like we can't really have our cake and eat it too. Peace and isolation. Or chaos and connectedness. You can't have it both ways.

"These days people can lower the chaos levels by use of texting. In an MC, people could set their phones to vibrate, and when telling others of their current status, they'd often tell the whole MC, or selected people, via selecting multiple destinations. All this also applies to emailing to update statuses, including the selecting of multiple destinations. This seems to reduce audible chaos. But I see a problem, Robert. Would YOU want to receive 200 texts or emails daily as 24 to 40 people communicated what they're into? I believe we're both smart enough to see that people would quickly stop reading these oppressive messages, which would lead to people ceasing to send them, so damn it we're right back where we began!"

"A very good analysis," encouraged Robert.

"And a very depressing one. So let's look at how Galaxy works in spite of these inherent difficulties. How would you analyze that?"

"The trouble with me is that I was born into my situation. As Allen pointed out, I'm spoiled. My beliefs about how people act are too much rose-colored by my past. Maybe you should be the analyst here," suggested Robert.

"Okay. Let's see now. You guys (and now myself as well) treat each other superbly. Before your actions and words there's always a microsecond of contemplation, making sure you're being kind and considerate to the others there. This is true consciousness, and it's wonderful to be in such a thoughtful environment. You basically come from a position of responsibility and benevolence in everything you do. You modify the way you fill your needs so that they don't invade others' space, privacy or peace. Such people could make any system work—even anarchy. There needn't be laws, because all people's needs have been filled so well that no one needs to act out through crime, abuse of people or substances, by being insensitive, inconsiderate, or lacking in compassion. People, as miraculous as it sounds, intrinsically FEEL LIKE and WANT TO care about each other and be responsible for each other at this level of responsibility. It's where they're really at. It's the best possible level of connectedness in which collective compassion and responsibility result in individuals whose growth and awareness and

humanness is incredible. Walking into Galaxy is like striking the mother lode, only it's not gold, but concentrated humanness that is struck. It's the 'mother of all lifestyles.'

"But here's the point, Robert. When MCs start up, they'll initially have normal, egotistical, selfish, needful, inconsiderate, irresponsible people in them, not Galaxy-like people. Much as I hate to admit it, Allen is right. They won't be that sensitive or responsible or compassionate. They will do a LOT of invasive communication. The situation will be as much worse than what they had in pre-MC days as it will be better. They will not STAY selfish and irresponsible if the MCs work right, of course, but they'll begin that way. The problem is that if invasive communication stops MCs from working right, then we have a catch-22 situation. The bottom line here is that Galaxy communication works so good because it's Galaxy-type people doing it, not because our MC communication is set up superbly. Galaxy communication is set up better than most, however, what with 'Alone' signs and P.E.T. rules. It's just that these two do not suffice to evoke great communication from normal neurotics, whether in MC situations or not. Our communication technology needs to take one small step for communication, and one giant step for MC-kind."

"All that being said, where's the hope?" asked Robert. "Will all new MC people try out their new life, reel from the chaos, and stand around blinking, asking what Clara Peller used to ask in that burger commercial: 'Where's the beef?'?"

"I'm afraid they might," admitted Glen, "but that's all the more reason why we'd better fill that damn pothole—quick!"

"Yeah, that damn pothole," said Robert, gloomily. There were a few minutes of silence as the guys tried hard to think of something to say that would encourage them or at least lighten things up. Silence reigned, since nothing came up for them. Finally Robert said: "Well, then, let's you and I go along with that old adage—I forget who said it—that if you can state the problem clearly enough you're half way to solving it. Let's state the requirements of the solution—the specs of the answer, as it were. By the numbers, now, what are the characteristics? I'll start—and I'll jot them down as we go:

"Number one: noninvasive," said Robert.

"Number two: reads minds," said Glen.

"Number three: probably silent," added Robert.

"Number four: allows communication between any two MC members," added Glen.

"Number five: perhaps it'd be even better if it allowed communication to or from everyone at once—of course this is getting more and more impossible . . ." Robert tapered off.

"Number six: let's you know what others are into," said Glen.

"Number seven: doesn't clomp or wake people up or disturb people or ring or get overheard from the next room," said Robert. "It can substitute for that. Like mind reading it can allow you to check the status of what someone else is into from another room or another house, without having to disturb anyone. It substitutes nondisturbing communication in place of disturbing communication."

"Number eight . . . I don't know, Robert. It's either invasive like a telephone or it is impossible. Even if a telephone were silent, it's far from ideal. It wouldn't allow you to find out anything except about the person you called. Ideally anyone would be able to learn what everyone else in the MC is into. And we've already seen why sending and receiving a gazillion texts or emails would suck big-time. Invasive is not just about noise."

"So where does that leave us?" asked Robert.

"In Never-Never Land, I'm afraid," said Glen. "No such thing exists."

"Thing? Are we talking about a 'thing' here?"

"Well," said Glen, "since mind reading is out, we must replace telepathy with one of two things: either a verbal communication method or a technological one. Walking around telling everyone where you're at really sucks wind. So does announcing it on that dubiously progressive voice enhancer called the megaphone. Nothing could be more intrusive than the microphone and speaker—it'd be chaotic—even worse than telephones.

Radio or CB is out, as is closed circuit TV, for reasons of noise, invasiveness, and chaos. And the darned things only deal with one person's status at a time, unless—"

"Unless what? You—you're not thinking of computer bulletin boards or Facebook, are you? Glen, think of the last time you looked at Facebook. Facebook News Feed for example, which is a very long page mostly filled with stuff like video and photo links, irrelevant comments or wisecracks, and event announcements. Anything more substantial and meaningful would get drowned in drivel and can you imagine 24 to 40 people all loading everyone's news feeds and walls with communications? I really don't feel that social networking of this type is going to be helpful—just like the 'drowning in texting' point we just discussed. Even then, PCs are expensive, complicated, and hard to learn to operate. And since a lot of what this is all about is for toddlers and children with regards to their nurturing options, if it were a thing—if our answer were a thing—it would have to be very, very simple to operate and understand. And there is no such a thing. PCs are a far cry from our requirements here."

"But—but—computer bulletin boards seem like they're so close to what we need here, Robert! Damn—so close and yet so far! How'd you read my mind on that, anyhow?"

"Your face lit up as you said the word TV, so I thought of you being a hacker hunched over a laptop and figured that's what your light bulb was about," replied Robert.

"Damn," said Glen, in consternation. "Maybe we've bitten off more than we can chew after all."

"Let's both stare at my list here and think about it for a bit," suggested Robert. They both did so. Nothing came up. Glen decided to get his mind off it for a bit, to see if that helped—doing something unrelated often helped when he had a tough programming problem to solve. So he grabbed an old magazine off the table and started to flip through it. Robert laid back on his bed and examined the ceiling again, hoping an answer would materialize. Fifteen minutes later he was startled by sudden shrieks of laughter from Glen, who was on his own bed now, continuing to peruse the magazine from the prone position. Glen got up with a war whoop, grabbed Robert, and polkaed him around the room, loudly singing *We're Off To See the Wizard, the Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* Robert went along with it, smiling in spite of himself, and wondering if Glen's elevator had quit going all the way to the top. Once the chaos was over, they heard someone pounding on the walls and warning them to shut the hell up. The walls were, after all, quite thin. Once Robert had Glen sufficiently quieted down, he asked him who the wizard was they were off to see.

"The Wizard Allen, of course," said Glen.

"Oh. Of course."

"We'll have to wait until tomorrow, though. It's past midnight already."

"Oh. Of course."

"You're repeating yourself, Robert."

"Glen?"

"Yeah?"

"What the hell are you so pleased about?"

"Look," said Glen. He pointed to a cigarette ad on the back inside cover of the magazine.

"Somebody's pushing coffin nails to ignorant citizens again—so what else is new?" asked Robert, cynically.

"Look harder." The ad had a sports theme. There was a basketball hero and a cheerleader with pom-poms. Actually, the picture was focusing more on her built-in set of pom-poms, capitalizing, as usual (and with subconsciously responded-to symbolism, as usual), on the fact that neurotic Americans relate to the cigarette in the same way they're obsessed with breasts: as a symbol of their struggle to meet their unfilled needs, which are carryovers from insufficiently nurtured childhoods. Cigarettes and nipples have similar diameters. Anxiety originating from unfilled needs is usually the target of exploitation, whether a company is selling a product with the aid of breast symbols or not.

As Janov and most well-informed shrinks have known for decades, the struggle to symbolically regress to your childhood and try again to get mom or dad to love you is what drives most people some of the time and some people most of the time. These people are usually attempting to get their lovers or spouses to be their mom or dad and take care of them, in many ways. And of course it doesn't work. This is called, classically: "the struggle." It's THE motivator. And the ad people know it. They take advantage of us mercilessly (of course, they don't have any choice—they have to do it to remain competitive and get results), restimulating old needs and then somehow managing to perform sleight-of-hand and substituting their product for the mom/breast/love at the last second. The marketing departments hire ad agencies that can sell the most "cigamoms" by manipulating the minds and past-deprivation-pain engrams of the most suckers; and considering the "pom-poms," this last expression is used in every sense of the word . . .

"Well?" asked Glen.

"Well what?" asked the exasperated Robert. He was tired and confused. Glen pointed to the scoreboard in the background of the picture.

"See?!" exclaimed Glen.

"A scoreboard. So what?"

"Okay, guy, I can see that you're tired and still feeling the blues, so I'll spell it out. We're out of the woods! Tomorrow Allen finds out who he's dealing with here! I'm calling him in the morning to set up a talk. The pothole, good buddy, is FILLED!"

"Really? Are you SURE?" asked Robert. He was starting to perk up, but was still in the dark. A SCOREBOARD, for Pete's sake? "Quick, tell me all about it. I'm dying here! Fill me in. What's this all about? God—do I ever feel STUPID! I still have no idea about what all this is about!"

Glen spoke: "Okay now, sit down and just listen as good old Uncle Glen lays it all out. Here's the deal: The scoreboard made me realize that it's trivially simple to keep any number of people up to date on the current status of anything at all. And it can be silent, small, dynamic, or whatever. I'm christening my new device the Personal Status Board. Except it's not a real device—it's a software app. There's Wi-Fi here, and while you sleep, I'm going to program a demo of it, using JavaScript rather than PHP and MySQL so I can, for the demo, simulate having a database that gets updated when statuses change without actually having to do it. Next weekend, I'll show the real thing when he arrives, rather than a demo. For tomorrow, I'm just going to update Allen on what we've come up with and tell him I believe the pothole is filled and there are no more fatal flaws in MC plans. Then I'll show him the Personal Status Board. Let's hope he can't pick apart other aspects of our plans. I'm betting against it, though. He himself actually said that this communication bug was the only thing stopping us from succeeding, provided all else goes as planned."

Glen went on to lay it all out for Robert, who, by the end of the discussion, had lost the blues. Just before he hit the sack Robert shook Glen's hand and said he was proud of him and proud to be his friend. Then he told him what a good team the two of them made. When one of them couldn't come through, the other one could. How could the MC fail with such a team on the Galaxy roster? Robert went to dreamland happy as a fly on a meadow muffin. Glen called the front desk and asked for an 8 a.m. wake-up call. Then he whipped out his laptop and started typing furiously.

Chapter 18

"Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

It was ten A.M. Glen had called at 8:30 A.M. and had gotten a one-hour appointment at ten, so they were now sitting in Allen's den. No one else was around—everyone else was otherwise occupied.

Allen had just escorted them to his den, offered them tea, and said to Robert: "Glen tells me that you guys have patched the crack in utopia, so everything is now copacetic. What do you think?"

"Well, Glen gets the credit this time. The little rascal has filled the pothole so quickly and efficiently that one can hardly tell it was ever there. The guy never ceases to amaze me. He wasn't at all like this a few months ago. I truly love seeing what a good effect a good environment can have on people. It gets down to something we like to say a lot at Galaxy: all people really need is a chance."

"That's surely true," agreed Allen. "So what's this latest brainchild?"

Glen responded: "What we needed was something that could really cure the problem of invasive communication. As you said, about the only thing that would solve the problem adequately is telepathy. Well, since that was out of the question, we did the next best thing. Allen, I'd like to present the first A.T. computer app. You've heard of A.I., which is artificial intelligence. Now we have A.T., which is artificial telepathy. It's not about a computer thinking. It's about a computer app to allow you to know what others are into, as well as you letting others know what you're into. I call the app, which I'll patent and trademark in the name of the MC headquarters at Galaxy, the Personal Status Board, or PSB for short." He asked Allen if he could use his computer. Allen okayed it, so Glen sat down and surfed to the web page he'd uploaded his brainchild to. They all looked it over carefully. It was a status board with labeled columns with some made-up names, status codes, and comments displayed, along with a column with the status code meanings. It was pretty simple looking, but intriguing. Lower on the page was a list of 100 status codes, from 00 to 99, with their corresponding meanings in a separate column."

"So you actually programmed this last night instead of sleeping?" asked Allen.

"Yes—but this is just the demo. You'll see the real deal next weekend." Glen went on: "The device we need has to have the following characteristics: Enable communication from any or all MC members to any or all other MC members simultaneously. People need to be able to INDICATE what they are into, rather than call all over, clomp all over, and disturb all over. In other words, people need to be able to DISPLAY THEIR STATUS TO ALL OTHERS IN THE MC, noninvasively, night or day, silently, without the slightest disturbance to anyone. No one has ever gotten disturbed when an elevator displayed 'where it's at' by lighting up the 25th floor indicator (unless they knew that the building had only three floors—THAT would be disturbing!)." They all groaned and chuckled over that one—at least it wasn't an elephant joke or light bulb joke!

"So you could pretty much say that the PSB reads minds," continued Glen. "Admittedly, you do have to, when and if you desire, help it along a little bit by pressing a couple of keys occasionally to update your status when you're feeling that what you're into is changing. And that's all there is to it. Each person would log in and open the PSB page at the start of each day and keep it open or at least minimized all day. Whether accessing the Web from mobile, desktop, laptop, or iPad, each MC person needs to change his status on the PSB when his actual status changes. Perhaps he goes from caregiving to shopping to studying to Net surfing to working to picking someone up to wanting to be alone as his status changes on a certain day. Or if he's lonely he could either put up a 'Want to talk with male' status (or one of the other 'want company' statuses) or he could call someone he wants to be with after checking that that person's status is not shopping or want to be alone or anything else that renders the call useless or inappropriate. No one gets disturbed by all the status changes as they would if people

tried to handle all these status changes with texting to multiple destination addresses. As Robert and I discussed last night, who wants a zillion emails or texts a day as 24 to 40 people let each other know all their status changes? I for one wouldn't read or even open these things. I'd delete them—they'd be experienced as oppressive. But a 5-second glance at a PSB would tell you what everyone was up to immediately, and you'd be likely to find that someone was into something you're very compatible with. Maybe Suzie's status is 'Want stories' and you love reading to her, so you set your status to 'Will read stories' or 'Will nurture' or 'All is well' and contact her and go read to her.

"Occasionally, people would need a nurturing-related status displayed. It is hard to predict if 'I am being nurtured' would be used when a kid was with his scheduled caregiver—perhaps some MCs would like this. If there are codes a certain MC does not use, they could change its meaning to something different via the admin menu. But for the most part, the MC Scheduler (he surfed to that web page now) would take care of indicating who would be the scheduled primary and alternate caregiver for each kid for every half-hour segment during the day. There would be one meeting a week to deal with childcare scheduling. The caregiving schedule would be like the PSB—you'd open it every morning and refer to it regarding the caregiving you were scheduled to be giving or getting that day."

"I had no idea you'd programmed that already, Glen!" exclaimed Robert.

"Surprise!" he told Robert.

"Glen, you are one talented dude!" exclaimed Allen.

"Yep—and handsome too!" exclaimed Glen. When the laughing died down, he continued after surfing back to the PSB web page. "PSBs would also come in handy during preliminary stages of an MC's formation. People who've just met others and want to be in an MC with them, but haven't gotten to the stage of being ready to relocate yet—these people would want to use PSBs as a way of getting to know 'where their new friends were at' and 'what they were into even if they weren't nearby.' If they saw that someone was into specific things compatible with what they were into, or if someone's status code was of the 'open to any ideas' category, they'd call and then perhaps get together, unless they were too far apart, in which case they could video chat, text, email, or even post back and forth on Facebook.

"Notice how there'd be very little need for exploratory, invasive communications, like phones ringing at inappropriate times, because the 100 possible codes (two digits, 00-99, are possible for each of the MC members) would allow people to be so specific about their personal status that few questions would be necessary to find out what anyone was into. At a glance at the PSB, the personal status of every person in their MC would be known. There'd also be a comment column, as you can see, so you could elaborate on your status if you desired—it would be purely optional. A double zero might be the alone space code. You might still want to use 'Alone' signs though, just for extra security.

"One thing about all this: Think of the oneness and solidarity feelings as you looked at your PSB and knew exactly what everyone else was into. You'd really be expressing yourself, and you'd really be in touch with most (you'd still have some outside friends) of the people you cared about, and you'd all feel really close. And, of course, if you were into very private things and didn't want anyone 'reading your mind,' as it were, that's the whole purpose of the double-zero 'alone' code. It's no one's business but their own what they are doing, feeling, or thinking. But on the other hand, if you CHOOSE (and that's the key word here) to communicate what you are into, then that too is a vital choice—obviously the prerequisite for relationship and connectedness in this world.

"We're striving here for connectedness, choice, and noninvasive communication; for a growth- and security-promoting oneness and relatedness; for an environment in which human nurturing options are based upon the needs of the situation, not upon some arbitrary and deterministic condition relative to any one person's readiness for nurturing or being nurtured.

"We're also shooting for magnificent efficiency, and that will be especially appreciated in our Third Wave 21st century civilization. Your videos give us the futurist's

perspective on why that is, but common sense will tell anyone with a pulse that efficiency with the logistics of relationships will create a lot more time for the relationships themselves—and time is at a premium in the modern lifestyle. What is magnificent efficiency? Think of the time saved when people started using the invention called the telephone, many decades ago, rather than writing and receiving letters—the latter took a whole lot of time. Similarly, think of the time saved when a 5-second glance at a PSB is used rather than a pile of phone calls and playing phone tag in order to find out which of or how many of a half dozen of your friends want to get together and study, play a game, party, shop, or do P.E.T. active listening with you. The 10,000% time savings is a bit breathtaking.

"If people are into studying, nurturing, having feelings, active listening, needing care because they're sick, story telling, getting advice, playing music, partying, shopping, problem-solving, game playing, massage, etc., it barely even requires a confirmation phone call before proceeding with the activity. If people are into needing rides, getting together for a meeting, creative projects, tutoring or being tutored, planning a big meal, going to a movie, or playing a certain sport, this requires more communication by the most convenient means.

"PSBs do not eliminate the essential communications. They merely eliminate the needless chaos, confusion, inefficiency, misunderstandings, frustrations and time waste inherent in the fact that in normal communications one has no idea what others are into when they contact them. People's needs being in harmony is the exception rather than the rule. The PSB will change that so that those people in a microcommunity into similar things will be able to detect others similarly inclined in a few seconds rather than in ten minutes of phone calls in which the majority reach voice mail and answering machines so the actual communication process takes hours or even days to complete.

"I believe this will do the job, Allen. And I'd like to thank you for pointing out where we were weak. It has made us stronger. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude. You may even have saved the whole MC movement. If there was ever any doubt in our minds about the value of skepticism and rational, scientific analysis, and constructive criticism, that doubt is now history. Thanks!" Glen stood up and walked over to Allen and shook his hand warmly. Then Robert did the same, expressing his thanks as he did so.

"You're very welcome, gentlemen. I hated to rain on your parade last night, but I didn't see any good alternative. Besides, it was my way of putting sample Galaxy members into a test tube, and using chemicals and litmus paper to see what made them tick—did I just mix metaphors? Sort of a test—to see what you're made of. I'm a person first and a social critic and scientist second. But anyway you had a fatal flaw that needed attending to, so you needed what you got. I really did want to extend to you guys the opportunity to experience a critical analysis to see if you could come out of it stronger and more prepared. You passed the test with flying colors. I really wasn't sure you'd be able to pull it off. I, myself, like Robert, was unable to see any potential solutions. I can see why Glen is the one who came through on this one. He's the one with the computer programming background of the two of you. And he's the one who has experienced invasive communication most of his life and therefore was in a good position to have a feel for what he was up against. I'm betting that Robert's Galaxy background had kept him apart from such experiences all his life, so he had trouble thinking about such things clearly. Like trying to think in a foreign language, I'll bet.

"The thing is, Robert, conditioned beliefs and traditions that happen to be benevolent CAN get in the way of clear thinking as much as beliefs connected to inoperable lifestyle practices. Basically everyone is egocentric and ethnocentric and believes that the way they were taught is the standard by which all things should be measured. So when beliefs try to color thinking, or prevent it, it's hard for any of us, no matter how well-raised we are, to be objective and not biased in our beliefs. And your beliefs about benevolent and noninvasive Galaxy communication, due to your upbringing, made it hard for you to think clearly about expectable invasive communications when normal people start MCs in the future—you hadn't experienced much of it at all. I'm smart but I couldn't think about Glen's website creation and especially his programming—

it’s as greek to me as the invasive communications are to you. Once you both started brain-storming on it, Glen quickly recalled the way things had been for him in pre-Galaxy days, and he was able to think clearly because he was coming from experience. Invasive communication was too much of a theoretical construct and too little an experience for you. It's good you teamed up with each other, gentlemen; you complement each other well.

“By the way, have you ever seen a Piccaso cubist painting? The artist often analyzed the subject from many different viewpoints and reconstructed it within a geometric framework, the overall effect of which was to create an image that evoked a more holistic sense of the subject, with less bias due to seeing something from only one point of view. Although Glen generally thinks in optimal terms—A.K.A. Galaxy terms, when he thinks in non-Galaxy terms, he becomes a powerful asset for the MC project, able to see things missing in normal Galaxy perceptions. Think of the two of you integrated together into a more holistic and systems perspective—it’s quite Capra-esk, as it were. The only way to get more holistic than cubism is to go for holograms.”

“Thanks, Allen, for your comments” said Robert. “The great team attribution is exactly what I told Glen just before we hit the racks last night.”

“I'd like more details on your PSB, if you have any,” requested Allen.

Glen nodded approval and then continued: “People will refrain from changing each other's codes—each person is master of his own personal status code. The only time an adult will enter either a younger or older child's or sick person's code is if and when this assistance is requested. If a baby's code is entered, it should be by the current caregiver, who mostly just puts in ‘Want nurturing’ or 'I am being nurtured’ or ‘All is well' or 'Alone sleeping' or whatever type of codes are appropriate. Remember, PSBs have 100 possible status codes: 00 through 99. Here they are:” They perused the codes he'd put on his PSB web page for people to refer to.

Alone	
00	Alone (do not disturb)
01	Alone thinking
02	Alone with someone
03	Alone creating
04	Alone sleeping
05	Alone studying
06	Alone exercising
07	Alone feelings (sad or lonely or depressed)
08	Alone feelings (anxious or confused or fearful or upset)
09	Alone feelings (need help)
Nurturing	
10	Want nurturing
11	Will nurture
12	Could nurture
13	I am a scheduled caregiver
14	Sick - need care
15	Sick - have care
16	Want stories
17	Will read stories
18	Want massage

19	I am being nurtured
P.E.T. or Other Authoritative Parenting Activity	
20	Want P.E.T. training
21	Will train re: P.E.T.
22	Need to do problem solving
23	Will help problem-solve
24	Need active listening
25	Will active listen
26	Doing authoritative parenting activity - not P.E.T.
27	Want help with discipline
28	Will give help with discipline
29	Doing P.E.T. activity
Talk or Play	
30	Want advice
31	Will advise
32	Want group discussion
33	Want to talk with female
34	Want to talk with male
35	Want adult company
36	Want child company
37	Want to play
38	Want to play game(s)
39	I am in meeting
Coordinate MC Activities	
40	Let Us Coordinate MC party
41	Let Us Coordinate MC big dinner
42	Let Us Coordinate MC all-MC meeting
43	Let Us Coordinate MC MC projects
44	Let Us Coordinate MC music
45	Let Us Coordinate MC creative projects
46	Let Us Coordinate MC activity - open to possibilities
47	Let Us Coordinate MC movie in theater
48	Let Us Coordinate MC DVD movie on TV
49	I am in MC coordinating meeting
Coordinate Outside Activities	
50	Let Us Coordinate shopping - food
51	Let Us Coordinate shopping - clothes
52	Let Us Coordinate shopping - other
53	Let Us Coordinate going to library
54	Let Us Coordinate going to concert
55	Let Us Coordinate going to movie

56	Let Us Coordinate playing sports
57	Let Us Coordinate seeing sporting event
58	Let Us Coordinate exercise
59	Let Us Coordinate other
I Am Out	
60	I'm Out at school or daycare
61	I'm Out at work
62	I'm Out at shopping
63	I'm Out at library
64	I'm Out at entertainment
65	I'm Out with friends or date
66	I'm Out at hospital
67	I'm Out at vacation - out of town
68	I'm Out at doctor
69	I'm Out at other
Want Ride	
70	Want Ride north - A.M.
71	Want Ride north - P.M.
72	Want Ride south - A.M.
73	Want Ride south - P.M.
74	Want Ride east - A.M.
75	Want Ride east - P.M.
76	Want Ride west - A.M.
77	Want Ride west - P.M.
78	Want Ride motorcycle OK
79	Want Passenger(s) - I will drive
Study or Projects	
80	Want help with project
81	Will help with project
82	Want tutor in music
83	Want tutor in math
84	Want tutor in science
85	Want tutor in languages
86	Want tutor in English or literature
87	Want tutor in history
88	Want tutor in taxes
89	Will tutor
Custom Codes or Mobile	
90	Need pet caretaker
91	Am texting
92	Text me

93	Am emailing
94	Email me
95	Am IMing
96	IM me
97	Surfing the Net
98	Writing a letter
99	All is well

"Predicting needed status codes like that is interesting," said Allen. "Your meanings are very insightful—they may even work as is for MCs. I'm sure the MC standard codes will get even more useful and dynamic as they are adapted to the specific interests and activities of each MC's members by the act of the administrator editing them. All this demonstrates that all kinds of invasive communication can be avoided in the heightened connectedness in an MC, without much difficulty, with the simple utilization of A.T.—artificial telepathy. Choice without chaos, communication without ringing and clomping, connectedness without confusion, oppression, or invasion. Ahhhhh—the miracles of technology!"

"You'll see a working version on Friday, instead of a demo," promised Glen.

"By the way, will little ones be able to use a PSB and opt for alternate caregivers and such?" asked Allen.

"I see it this way," said Robert. "Here are some examples of usage:

"A block of homes compose an MC. Each of the six homes on the block contains an open PSB web page on a desktop computer in the front hall. Johnny is five years old and needs attention but his dad is gone and his mom is busy with the ironing. He could follow his mom around and talk to her. She happens to be one of two or more scheduled people responsible for Johnny at the moment. In a normal scene the kid can play in his room or pet the cat or perhaps even go watch a kids show on TV. But he has no alternative caregivers at all; he can't choose to be nurtured if he needs it and mom isn't into it.

"In an MC, however, although a caregiver MAY choose to do other things while caregiving, he or she WILL be available to truly nurture the kid if the kid indicates he needs it. That's an MC agreement. If he says he needs undivided attention, the ironing ceases. If she has too much to do to devote this attention to Johnny, she shouldn't be a scheduled caregiver. Perhaps the 'walk around putting clothes away and come back and iron some more' situation will be combined with nurturing in a way the kid will like—the kid may be taught things and allowed to participate. It's up to her to make the experience an enjoyable learning experience. But the kid won't hear 'I'm too busy' if he requests undivided nurturing attention. She may even hold him, if he wants. Because that's the definition of the priorities of the situation. The caregiver may be caring for a couple of other kids as well, and the bottom line here is that this situation is pre-defined by agreement and the kid's needs are priority one. The reality principle may enter the picture as a kid waits his or her turn while another kid gets some attention, which may sometimes even happen in the central caregiving space. But he WON'T be rejected. And sometimes two or more kids will get attention at the same time, such as with stories, collective cookie preparation and baking, or whatever.

"But it's essential that there be times when the kid gets undivided attention all for himself—like when he gets tucked in at night, which can be expanded as need be so he gets a chance to say all his feelings. All this can be handled well if an MC's parents care about their kids and set up procedures and agreements revolving around the necessity of need fulfillment. It would be too much to expect any one person to be into nurturing children all or most of the time. That's why the caregiver schedules shift. People try to rotate such schedules as much as can be done, and schedules are purposely set up so

that whoever is the most into nurturing and whomever the kids WANT TO BE NURTURED BY THE MOST are assigned to do it the most. It's possible that a few MC people might want to do a whole lot of it, and barely work otherwise, or have part-time jobs and nurture a lot of the rest of the time, and get a certain amount of compensation from others, if that seems appropriate. If that is what the kids tend to choose, it's fine. The major criteria here are: (1) Are their needs being filled well?; (2) Do they manifest clearly that their needs are being filled well?; and (3) Are there alternative caregivers available for the kids to choose when they want?

"Now, back to Johnny. The ironer would provide individual attention and nurturing at his request in an MC. (It often requires only a few minutes to nurture an insecure little one back to security and happiness. I know. I used to do it in my parents' home.) But suppose Johnny simply prefers an alternate caregiver now, regardless of what Mom, the current caregiver wants? Before you decide that Mom ought to be able to decide, remember the movie *Nuts* where the star's frequent past sexual abuse made her act out enough to seem nutty, and then consider that abuse statistics vary from 10 to 50 percent, depending upon whose research you read. If a kid can't choose, then people with a need to vent anger and hate, originating from earlier abuse that they themselves suffered, will abuse—will choose this abuse *for* him. The short-term answer to abuse is to allow kids to choose who they're with. The long-term answer is MC prevalence, so that no one wants to abuse because no one had things happen to him in his childhood that predisposed him toward being an abuser.

"So, back to choice. Can Johnny choose to be nurtured by an alternative person or not? If not, it's not an MC, and Johnny will not learn to feel responsible for his choices and actions. So let's say it IS an MC. People like each other, so there's a 95 percent chance that someone's status code displays 'available for nurturing.' Besides, in a real MC, like Galaxy, whenever there are young people around needing nurturing, there are always *two* people assigned as caregivers. One would be the primary and the other the alternate caregiver. One may be ironing, it's true, but only as long as that fits with the needs being manifested by Johnny. (This only applies if Johnny chooses caregiving from that person; if he chooses it from the alternate then he has no effect upon what the main caregiver does or doesn't do, of course.) Anyway, of the two assigned caregivers, one or both may be nurturing more than one kid. One or both may be doing something like gardening or ironing, but only as long as it doesn't get in the way of true nurturing and the kid assents to it.

"As every caregiver knows, kids vacillate from playing alone to needing help with something, to wanting to learn about or help with something the caregiver is doing, to wanting to be talked with or read to or played with or held, and then back to wanting to play alone again. Nurturing is happening when the kid is allowed to explore the MC safely, play, help, learn, be loved, relate, and be alone according to the kid's needs. There's no reason that the caregiver can't be doing other things at the appropriate times in all this, which often means MOST of the time, but NOT when the child needs special attention and this activity interferes. If that doesn't feel right to a prospective MC parent, then that person should ask himself or herself why he or she had kids in the first place. Also, it's been shown that one of the reasons that people don't 'feel right' about completely nurturing their kids is that they are experiencing a feeling which tells them that it's not fair because they didn't get treated that well when they were kids so why should their kids get special treatment? Such a person needs counseling, or he or she will wreck kids—laying on kids the trips that were laid on him or her. It's a familiar power game—you were once at the dirty end of the stick, so now you're dying to experience yourself as the person at the clean end, poking the dirty end at others. After all, this is one of the 'privileges of being an adult,' isn't it? Kids will not choose such a person for nurturing—even if it's his own mother. Kids are smart. Again I say it—choice IS the critical issue here! Kids need good nurturing or they get wrecked. You do a half-assed job of it—you get a half-assed kid.

"To confirm what I said about ironing (or other chores): If you take a kid to a daycare center and all the adults do is housework, watch TV, blab on phones, and sleep,

regardless of kids' needs, would you feel it was nurturing or a rip-off? The latter. So why is it any better if that's how moms or other caregivers define 'nurturing'? And of COURSE Mom needs to do these things, but not at Johnny's expense. If she cannot put something off when he needs her to, she needs to get herself replaced as caregiver by getting him with the alternate caregiver, and while Johnny is with the alternate caregiver, she needs to locate a replacement for herself so Johnny again has choices. Now, more PSB ideas:

"Let's say Johnny prefers an alternate caregiver. He is likely to be in the hub's childcare center and the alternate caregiver is likely to be there too. If not, he can go to where that person is or perhaps get that caregiver to come to the hub. But suppose he prefers an unscheduled nurturer? He finds an 11 or 12—Will nurture or Could nurture. If he's too young to read numbers, he gets his caregiver to look for him, but it's essential that little ones are helped with code recognition just as soon as they're able to grasp it. The codes show that someone is available to nurture. He doesn't randomly ring ring or clomp clomp and disturb everyone in the MC. He may simply go there (depending on his age) via covered walkway, caregiver escort, walking down the hall, or whatever. Or he may phone or have someone phone the available person and see if he or she wants to come to where Johnny is or would prefer to nurture elsewhere in the MC. Perhaps there will be separate codes depending upon where you prefer to do the nurturing. These are some of the issues to be refined later. Anyway, Johnny decides to go to Uncle Bud's place, or neighbor Julie's place—maybe she's only 14. At this person's place, the caregiver is a nonassigned nurturer so Johnny's doing a bit of what Galaxy people call 'adventuring'—there's a risk. The risk is that the nurturer may not want Johnny there as long as Johnny wants to be there, or they may be in incompatible moods or just unable to communicate. Either may terminate the relating anytime and the other knows it. Perhaps Julie's idea of nurturing doesn't work for Johnny or Uncle Ben needs a bath so badly that Johnny dislikes being near him.

"If an escort back to the assigned caregivers is needed, Ben or Julie know it's their responsibility, because of their choice to display a 'will nurture' or 'could nurture' PSB code. Galaxy-type apartments or covered walkways in suburbia could hopefully circumvent this necessity, not that it's an unpleasant one. But ADVENTURING was a key growth- and maturity-promoting aspect of Galaxy life. The adventurer knows that the situation will be run by the person he or she adventures to, not the adventurer. In Galaxy, kids would think that any door with no 'Alone' sign on it was fair game to knock upon. In suburban MCs, kids will simply check for codes. Johnny and all other suburban kids will learn which codes to look for as soon as they can distinguish them. They won't even have to understand what a number is. Distinguishing symbols is the key skill. Then, if they're very young, they'll have a caregiver phone an available person or they'll get an escort. If a kid is too young to verbally say who it is he wants to be with, but he toddles down a walkway to a certain house, then as soon as child monitoring devices say that he's outside of a door, the caregiver in charge of the kid can look at the codes of the people in that house. If none are open to new things or open to caregive or ready to nurture, then the caregiver can ignore it, but if there's a potential nurturer at that house, the caregiver could call that person and alert him to the opportunity. This avoids the clomp or ring hassle, since only one open to such an opportunity gets exposed to it. Unless this particular MC lets little ones ring when adventuring even though no one's status looks open to it. This may be okay as long as no Alone (do not disturb) or Alone sleeping or Alone feelings (need help) codes are displayed—the caregiver should confirm this before the adventuring starts. As soon as the kids are old enough—the younger the better—to begin responsibly updating their own status codes, they'll no longer need to rely on caregivers to help with that, but caregivers will be careful to watch for inappropriate codes during all adventuring. But entering specific codes will be one of the ways the kids get extra caregivers or friends to come over to the current caregiving situation and play, nurture, or whatever. Ben and Julie may see a 10 code (Want nurturing) and decide to be that nurturer. Hmmmmm—what code should be displayed if a kid has a situation that's already satisfactory? Perhaps 03 for Alone playing or code 99 for All is well."

"Will everybody update codes reliably? Especially young people. They're notoriously irresponsible," said Allen.

"Yes and no," answered Robert. "We'll have P.E.T.-type natural consequences happening here wonderfully. If people are inconvenienced by Johnny's irresponsibility regarding code update, people will cease acting upon his codes. He'll learn that people are repelled by irresponsibility or 'fraud'—displaying one thing when you feel another. The whole code thing is an *opportunity* for greater connectedness, more fun and more choices. It's no unconditional guarantee. You reap what you sow. GIGO. This is as it should be. Of course, it will be one of the major tasks of all caregivers to introduce their charges to the wonderful opportunities of the PSB—it's kind of a free ticket to a greatly enhanced world of broadened and deepened opportunity, and by that I mean quantity and quality. But they'll learn both sides—the up and the down side. They'll learn responsibility quickly, I predict. All Galaxy people did. A kid choosing a signless door was making a choice and taking responsibility for his choice, and if all he got was 'not today,' he took responsibility for that too—after all, he'd CHOSEN to adventure. No one told him to. A similar thing will happen in MCs except there will be fewer episodes of 'not today,' since the potential host has DISPLAYED his welcome mat, as it were, so fewer people who are not into things will get disturbed. So kids will have it better, opportunity-wise, in MCs than in pre-PSB Galaxy, because of PSBs. At least, that's theoretically true. In reality, it'll take the world a bit of time to catch up." Robert winked at Glen, then went on:

"Another example: Mary wants help with her math homework, and enters a Want tutor in math code after not seeing a Will tutor or Will advise code displayed. In 20 minutes Sue calls and offers to come over and help. Notice how the situation had no clomp and ring invasiveness as she sought out this help. So anyone near Sue's room could have seen that Want tutor in math code, remembered that Sue liked to do that, and informed Sue of a tutoring opportunity. Sue wouldn't necessarily see it herself. When people like each other, they communicate with and help one another. Sue wouldn't necessarily even have to have a code Will tutor displayed. Perhaps Sue has Will advise or All is well displayed. She still might get the Want tutor in math code pointed out to her. If she has Alone with someone or Alone (do not disturb) or Want tutor in languages or Want to play game(s) or Let Us Coordinate MC music displayed, no one would bug her with others' Want tutor in math statuses. Again, there could be exceptions. She may have told people in her house to always tell her if they happen to notice when certain specific codes appear. The important thing here is that she gets what she wants—what she chooses—and that her relatedness and connectedness is greatly enhanced by the combination of MC rules, P.E.T. rules, and A.T.—PSB technology.

"Of course, this doesn't mean that Mary won't simply call Sue and ask for help with math, rather than using the PSB in the process to signal her needs. She might well do this, if past experience has proven Sue's willingness to help. But the difference in this case is that she'll check Sue's code before calling and not bother Sue or others needlessly. Sue may be gone (and her status would reflect that) so Sue's siblings would get disturbed without PSBs, or Sue may need alone space, she may be exercising, or she may be with someone doing active listening.

"I imagine that the 100 codes, which we'll begin experimenting with on a real PSB in a few days, will be so refined and sophisticated and dynamic and functional by the time MCs really begin blooming that all 100 codes will have gone through testing, refinement, and enhancement until some of them will be nothing like what Glen threw together. There are probably plenty of concepts, situations, and needs I've completely overlooked. But once the codes are validated, they'll become like a special MC *language* that kids will learn even before they learn to talk coherently. Incidentally, all 100 codes and their meanings will be posted underneath all PSBs at all times, like the one I demo-ed. There will also be 'dictionaries' with very specific usage rules. There will be acceptable variations. One MC may be into, collectively, completely different things than another MC. So there may be local usage variations, analogous to 'plane' meaning something you fly in, or a flat surface, or a level of existence. Local customs will determine much—the

critical thing is that the codes succeed for the MCs using them, which is another way of saying that the 100 codes must be the 100 needed most by a given MC. Local variations won't cause problems, because people won't move very much anymore, so they won't have to endure code variations. And variations won't be that extreme—all MCs need nurturing, playing, studying, alone space, etcetera.

"Speaking of moving, when I think of leaving Galaxy for the meanness and alienation of the outside world—well, it's not a happy thought—so at most I'll go out and start my own MC some day. But not being in one? Forget it. I'll always live in one; no 'fall from paradise' for me!" Glen had a digit of contribution raised. Robert nodded.

"Here's an example: Mr. Brown has been feeling lonely and alienated for two days. He's been giving himself alone space for several hours each day, solitude which he hoped would help him recognize what was going on with him. It hasn't worked. So he's wishing he could express his feelings to another human being. Before he joined an MC he used to simply drink away his cares and then feel even worse. This profile fits millions of Americans. Now he is becoming used to the idea that human connectedness is vital and helps him feel more alive and whole, so he enters an Alone feelings (sad or lonely or depressed) 07 code or a Need active listening 24 code, and within 30 minutes there are two separate people who display a Will active listen 25 code, and he also receives a call. This little account points out that it was some version of alienation and disconnectedness that got him drinking in the first place, so reconnecting him to humanity is a great first step. Additionally, handling the negative feelings wisely and openly can be the ticket to self-awareness. Also, it's a way to stay off the bottle by expressing one's feelings to other caring people when the old 'get drunk' urge comes up. Actually, this is an anecdote relating to the dad of an old friend of mine. He actually managed to substitute human contact for caving in to the urge to get drunk. He hasn't touched a drop in years and now he's become a counselor of young people—helping them stay out of the dead end of substance abuse.

"I was fitting what happened to him into the MC context. Rather than there being a two percent chance of such a miraculous recovery happening—like in the normal world—in an MC all conditions are set up so that he'd have an infinitely greater chance of recovering and becoming a functioning human being again. The PSB would be a key factor because such people feel that no one cares about them and are reluctant to seek connectedness, even though they're dying for it—literally. The PSB may be precisely the tool to let the Mr. Browns of the world express where they're at and get help BEFORE their bottle urges take them to Loser Street. And yet there's no invasive nonsense like him stumbling around bugging people or him being noisily drunk—a lot of that stuff is just a plea for attention anyway. Why not express direct and honest solicitations for feelings space, attempts that allow everyone to avoid co-dependency syndromes and keep their dignity and respect? A PSB could help him achieve a healing connectedness BEFORE he began tipping them, so we'd have a preventative device, not a curative one. Not to mention that as MCs progress, there'll be little reason for people to go in these degenerating directions in the first place.

"People whose needs were filled and who learned responsibility through CHOOSING when young—these people are never going to end up as substance or people abusers. Remember, such maladies are symptomatic of dysfunctional lifestyles—a good MC lifestyle nips most problems in the bud. I could think up similar scenarios about kids I've known who've been into substance abuse, shoplifting, attempted suicide, and obsessive rebellion against parents. In all cases the PSB will be a key player in reestablishing connectedness, in creating relationship, in expressing feelings, and in evolving the security of solidarity so that what they end up experiencing is not symptoms, but the joy of life. In general, there are lots of advantages to A.T.—many we haven't even begun to think about yet. It really will be a vital tool for the enormous task of DE-ISOLATING THE FAMILY. How many people in this world who went in negative directions would have been able to keep themselves from doing that had others only known how they felt?—something P.E.T. methods enhance wonderfully. If only they'd been able to express what they were going through in some form or other. The MC and

its extra connectedness already go far in the direction of having so many resources as to catch such tendencies before they go too far. But add PSB technology to this! NOW there's a tool that allows insecure, sad, or alienated people to noninvasively EXPRESS THEIR PERSONAL STATUSES and get immediate active listeners, concerned friends, and healing connectedness. In other words, PSB added to MC equals an incredibly effective formula for extremely functional, secure, benevolent, productive, and emotionally healthy and mature living.

"And I ought to know. You see, I myself wasn't that far from substance abuse when Robert found me in the 'gutters of disconnectedness and alienation.' I don't think I ever told you that before, Robert. Did I? But I was pretty down about my life and was thinking up ways to escape through drugs or alcohol or promiscuity, or all three, when you met me. And I have only a normally dysfunctional family. Average, normal, nothing special, as we discovered. The average scene is NOT working, gentlemen. It's more like setting people up for the big fall than it is preparing them for life. I wake up every morning and take a deep breath, hoping with all my being, with all my soul, that the last few months of my life haven't just been a wonderful, long dream. Because if I woke up and things were the way they were, and Galaxy didn't exist, and it was all a dream, I'd be devastated. Now that I know how inspiring and wonderful life can be, returning to the life of depression and cowardice and escape—well, I couldn't bear it—it would be the worst hell imaginable. The relativity of it would be a stone-cold killer. Anyway, those are MY deepest feelings on MC life versus normality.

"One last thing I'd like to point out about the tens of millions of people out there, all of whom are thinking that no one cares how they feel, how they hurt, how the emotional pains of their lives are their own private hells and no one gives a damn—these people didn't begin feeling that way because they wanted to or for the hell of it. They did it because it was a direct consequence of the normal American lifestyle. You don't end up feeling very cared about when you're brought up in that cold, cruel world out there, fellas. Allen, you showed you knew this in one of your videos. Mothers get overbearing and invasive to the point of identity infringement and BELIEVE that they are caring a lot. Fathers live through their kids to make up for boring lives that didn't and don't fill needs, and they too BELIEVE that they are caring about their kids a lot, but that brand of 'caring' isn't really loving or respecting at all—it's just symptoms of relationship failure and nurturing failure that happened when THEY were growing up. So—there's a *reason* people conclude that there's no one they can really talk to. Robert's the first one I could really pour my heart out to. Now I ask you, how big of a chance is there that the average person is going to run into a Robert in his life?"

"That was very insightful, Glen," said Allen. "You're really having a couple of inspiring and productive days here, aren't you?"

"Whew!" said Glen, acknowledging that his mind had been going a mile a minute ever since the PSB thing had come to him. He smiled, slightly embarrassed. The other two smiled back in empathy and friendliness.

"Well, gentlemen," said Allen, standing, "it's been a pleasure. It's 11 A.M. and I must 'toddle down the hall,' as you guys might say, and procure some 'alone space' to facilitate my current research project. I must say that this hour and yesterday add up to some of the most interesting and intriguing hours I've spent anywhere. You fellas have come through the litmus tests with a healthy pink glow. I wouldn't have confidently predicted that outcome. I'm still 'right-braining' all this, of course, and haven't enough data to reach any conclusions about how your amazingly ambitious project will be connected with my future. But this coming weekend may just put some of the missing pieces into the jigsaw puzzle for me. If I deduce any other flaws, I'll let you know. I know you realize that, however uncomfortable it might be, such critical analysis is the cornerstone of scientific progress and, in this case, cultural progress. I've been the devil's advocate so many times I think I'm beginning to sprout horns and a tail. (Golly, I hope no fundamentalists are listening!) But—a project worth doing is worth doing right. Do you guys truly have a 'positive social mutation' by the tail? Are you guys 'at the cutting edge of the future,' and do you have 'an experimental community that works much more

efficiently than the polyglot, rubbery, hand-patched society we are living in,' as Sagan would say, so that 'a viable alternative is now before us,' one that can help the world work? I don't know.

"Those were Sagan's words—they're from *The Cosmic Connection*—and I mentioned them in one of my videos. I mean them as much now as I did in that video, quoting Sagan expressing feelings I too had. The challenge here is about world survival and the method is, simply put, getting our world's act together. Theoretically the MC thing has the necessary elements, or at least most of them. So give me a week to ponder, you take a week to build a real PSB, and I'll see you Friday night."

They made their goodbyes and were off in a cloud of dust as the taxi driver spun his wheels getting out of the driveway. The guys were off for the airport to see if they could get an earlier flight home. They'd pulled it off. Things were going great. But there was a lot of work to do before the weekend. Neither wanted to be caught with his pants down again. It was too unnerving!

Chapter 19

"If music be the food of love, play on;"
—Shakespeare

"There is a spirituality about the face, however . . . which
the typewriter does not generate. The lady is a musician."
—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a Man."
—Chuang Tse

"All this and heaven too."
—Matthew Henry

"I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark."
—Thomas Hobbes

"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be."
—Abraham Maslow

". . . we long to make music that will melt the stars."
—Gustave Flaubert

"And with the morn those Angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."
—Cardinal Newman

"Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.
Music is feeling, then, not sound."
—Wallace Stevens

"Art is not a handicraft, it is the transmission of
feeling the artist has experienced."
—Leo Tolstoy

" . . . an angel sings
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;"
—Shakespeare

It was a foggy Friday night. The Earth seemed wrapped in a blanket of mysterious security, like an infant awaiting its mother's touch. Glen and Wendy were slowly and carefully driving Allen from the airport to Galaxy. Robert was with the other Galaxy people, Stephen, and Tom, preparing a PSB demonstration. After the small talk, Allen asked Wendy what she thought of all this MC stuff. It was a long drive from the airport, so she told him, adult to adult, exactly how she felt about it all. Wendy's glorious humanness lit up the inside of the car like a Christmas tree. He listened intently to the young woman sitting next to him. She had so much to give—it was instantly obvious that the MC movement was the vehicle by which most of this giving would take place. Equally as obvious was how grateful she was that her irrepressible Galaxy friends and relatives had managed to create this vehicle. The Galaxy lifestyle had nurtured well. Robert could

have been some sort of a freak accident, but Robert's cousin Wendy being just as incredibly human, brilliant and giving? No—accidents were not what he was seeing here. As she finished her account of how she felt, he felt an amazing warmth radiating from her. His heart went out to her and he returned her warmth and he looked into her eyes. He was deeply touched. And Galaxy people wanted him to "sign up," or at least add the MC movement to his list of projects. How could anyone ever say "no" to that face, he mused, still hypnotized by Wendy.

And then, as he turned away prudently something suddenly dawned on him: Robert had similar "vibes" and feelings, but he'd (Allen) just had more culturally conditioned fences to hurdle to perceive and acknowledge such things in a young man. He wasn't used to people caring that much about the world or each other. But it was easy to be very open to it where an irresistible young woman like Wendy was concerned. The combination of qualities was incredibly humanly magnetic, and yet all she had done was answer his question honestly. There was no phoniness, no come-hither, no make-up, and no manipulations. Just a secure, loving person, BEING, and communicating with awesome honesty, grace, and beauty. Could a lifestyle actually exist that produced such people regularly—even predictably? It was a stunning thought! He wished his wife were here experiencing this with him. He recognized in this wish a human universal: when wonderful things begin to happen, we always wish to share them with those we love most.

He then observed Glen—a less profound but still recognizable set of vibes and feelings were coming from Glen, who was driving. Even though a new "convert," he'd apparently transformed quickly in the Galaxy environment after coming from a setting of normal neurosis, chaos, and depression. He now possessed some of the feelings and hopes and givingness of Wendy and Robert. And he was obviously extremely pleased about it all. Kind of like a "back from the dead" sort of thing. *My God, are these people actually going to lead our culture back from the dead??!! And maybe even our world??!!* The thought crashed down on him like a building, and yet he was uplifted, not crushed. A tingling sense of wonder ran up and down his spine. It was a new and superior type of high.

The wonderment reminded him of when he'd been a boy looking up at the sky, wondering about the mysteries of the universe. Profound feelings would arise. A oneness and connectedness. The new element here was the possibility of directly and profoundly influencing the connectedness and oneness humans felt for each other. Not that he hadn't done this in his videos. But most of the recipients of this temporary oneness boost were unfortunately doomed to live in connectedness-dissolving and oneness-precluding lifestyles that were basically malfunctioning. It was clear as he basked in the radiance in that car that what he'd known for many years was absolutely true: the human species was nicely evolved technologically, but had barely made any strides at all in self-knowledge, self-actualization, knowledge about nurturing, and how to love one another and make life truly work on Planet Earth. As the two young men had told him in New York, if you do it right, the results are miraculous. He had met only three of them, but he was already convinced of the validity of those words.

So as he, Wendy, and Glen pulled up to the curb at the Galaxy Apartments, he was thinking to himself that he would have a chance to let the world know about the wonders of the *Galaxy.* He'd previously encouraged oneness, explained our connectedness, and helped others to marvel at the potentials for meaning in this world. This new twist amounted to an opportunity to actually help others set up the context for oneness, to actually help others achieve oneness, to live in oneness, and to become oneness. Such problems as ozone layers, pollution, war, greenhouse effects and acid rain would quickly dissolve in a healing biospherical bath of oneness if people went the MC route on Planet Earth. Doubts and scientific skepticism tried to return as he exited the vehicle and began climbing the steps. The immensity of the challenge . . .

"The challenge is so large as to be almost too much to comprehend, sometimes, isn't it, Mr. Wilson?" asked Wendy, very softly and sensitively. He gave her a big hug, with tears trying to form in the corners of his eyes. He thought to himself that that was

silly—he barely even knew these people. But then he immediately realized that even though in similar circumstances in normal society it would indeed be silly, in Galaxy society it was probably par for the course. So he decided to be with it, and found out that he loved the way his heart was ready, willing, and able to participate in his Galaxy introduction. After all, he'd hardly expected a cocktail party full of B.S. and unhealthy consumables! So, flowing with it, he entered the building with Glen and Wendy, remembering to point out to them a printed slogan button he was wearing—a gift from a friend years ago—that said, merely, "Call me Allen."

Wendy introduced him sans title, as per his request. Everyone shook hands with him and attempted to make him as cozy as possible. He hadn't been sitting for over two minutes before he asked who the youngest Galaxian was. Sixteen forefingers immediately pointed at Cheryl, almost accusingly, as if they had all known that's what he would ask. Tom and Stephen had gone that route, so it was not surprising. As a matter of fact, it was simply logical. And they had an expert on that subject in their midst. Of course, Cheryl, suffering as she was from terminal cuteness, wasn't about to let the situation get by her without milking it for all it was worth:

"Yipes!" she squealed, as all fingers pointed squarely at her. First she curled up into a ball on the couch and covered her head with her hands, as if someone were going to strike her. The room contained sixteen straight faces, one scared little child face, and one open mouth. Robert went over to her and tried to "calm her fears," but he had no luck at unballing her. Suddenly she unballed and sprang off the couch and ran around to the side of it and tried to squeeze in behind it—between it and the wall. There wasn't room. She got in to the hips, on hands and knees, but couldn't get farther. Robert kept dragging her backwards by the belt of her blue jeans but she would immediately squirm back in, wiggling her 12-year-old backside in everyone's face.

"Come on, honey, Allen won't hurt you," coaxed Robert.

"No no no!" she protested, the innocent to the last.

"Perhaps I'd better have a chat with the *second* youngest," suggested Allen, not wanting to impose.

"Promise you won't hurt me?" came a muffled question from behind the couch. The milking continued. Sigh . . .

"Excuse me?" answered Allen, nonplused.

"Promise you won't hurt me?" The girl was shameless. Once done with the milking she'd make the poor cows into T-bones, prime rib, and rump roast.

"I promise," said Allen. What else could he say? So out wiggled Cheryl, with a capital W, burning the jeans' "Wrangler" label into everyone's brain like a cattle brand. After extrication, she ran over and hopped onto Allen's lap and she threw her arms around his neck, but insisted on pouting and shyly saying: "Well, all right, but YOU PROMISED . . ." At this he looked around helplessly at the others, and everyone was shaking their heads sadly at her naughty behavior.

"Ever notice how SPOILED the youngest in the family always is?" commented Robert, heroically managing to keep a straight face in spite of it all.

Not a word from Allen.

"Well, you may as well take her to her room and talk to her," advised Robert resignedly. "Like a bulldog, once she clamps onto something she won't let go until she gets her way. Besides, the little brat happens to know karate." Allen's eyebrows raised a bit. He still didn't know what was going on. But his mouth was no longer open, and he'd decided to flow with it. This was indeed a different "Galaxy"! So, in a moment Allen was carrying "the little brat," with her arms clamped around his neck, down the hall to her room. Once they heard the door close, the bulk of the Galaxians cracked up all over the place, many with their hands over their mouths. All were relatively silent, not wanting the other two to overhear.

Two hours later, they came out of Cheryl's room and rejoined everyone. He wasn't carrying her, but his arm was around her. He looked quite comfortable with the relationship now. In fact, he looked like he'd just adopted her.

To Cheryl, the awkwardness, tears, and volatile emotions of transforming from a 12-year-old girl to a woman were not only not an upsetting or confusing time for her, they were a perpetual party. But she loved her Galaxian family so dearly that she unselfishly "invited them to her most enjoyable parties." At least, that's how she felt as she skipped along her vivacious path, playing almost all situations intuitively. The girl could form a relationship with a cloud, or a box of crackers. There was only one way to respond to Cheryl—flow with it and love her. The first one did to keep one's sanity. The second one did because it was quite impossible not to. Male, female, young, old, human, puppy, or parakeet. The girl made connections. She was an expert at it. It was hard for such a person to put up with the regimentation and rules in seventh grade, where she was, of course, a child prodigy. She knew more about people than most people on the planet, and what she didn't know she could intuit instantly, given most any situation. And it wasn't the theoretical claptrap the experts bat around to impress each other, it was the stuff that really counted. Cheryl was a deep person. She was all ready to do her part in the world to make the world work. And all those that knew her knew that she would not only succeed—she'd do it with STYLE. The Cheryl style. She was an original. Allen now knew all this. Allen was very glad he'd come to Galaxy.

"Does she EVER behave?" he asked Robert, grinning. He sat down and crossed his legs in his chair.

"Not that I've ever seen," admitted Robert, "except of course at school. She manages to hold it all—correction—MOST of it in."

"So I've learned. You guys really put one over on me, with all those innocent poker faces," complained Allen, in mock consternation. Then he smiled broadly, and began laughing. "God, what a crew!" he chuckled. Everybody dropped their poker faces and laughed and laughed until their sides hurt.

"I wonder if it's possible to be TOO nurtured, TOO happy, TOO secure, TOO loved, TOO aware, TOO adorable, and TOO confident that the world loves you," mused Allen out loud. "Cheryl, was it a shock for you to find out that the rest of the world wouldn't act like or treat you like these Galaxians do?"

"Nope," she replied. "I did lots of adventuring as a toddler and as a child. I found out that people who weren't my designated caregivers often didn't have time for me or wanted to be with someone else or be alone. So if I needed people to fill my needs securely, I'd stay with the caregiver. If not, I'd adventure. Even as a wee one I could see that it was me who was in charge of whether attention was predictable or not. This made me so secure so quick that all doubts, inhibitions, insecurities and so on just vanished. For me to have inhibitions I have to pretend them, for someone else's benefit, like in public or at school. So anyway, the answer to your question is that when I choose to relate to an outsider, I don't need or expect anything special from them. I just give them the opportunity of being with me and see what happens. If they blow it, it's their loss."

"That's very true," agreed Allen. "You're an experience everyone should have at least once in their lives. Did you turn out different from your sister Wendy?"

"Yes," she answered. "But similar in ways, too."

"You should have met me at age twelve," said seventeen-year-old Wendy. "I was a little tiger. But not quite as outgoing as Cheryl. I guess she's some sort of record-holder in that respect."

"You two really seem to ENJOY people," observed Allen. "And talking. And life. Even a stranger, like me. The isolated nuclear family and other non-MC lifestyles will NEVER produce people remotely like you two. There's not enough connectivity and security, to use the terms you Galaxians favor. Are you fellas a lot different from that?" Allen asked of the younger Galaxy males. Bob spoke right up.

"A lot of oppression would come down on us in the outside world if we were emotionally outgoing or too loving of our fellow human beings. So we have to act in ways our friends can accept. With all the phony-baloney macho stereotypes currently being used as defense mechanisms, we have to tread lightly—and that brings up the danger of being perceived as 'light in the loafers' if we love our friends too much or show emotions or sensitivity too much. So we play the game and tailor our reactions to what can be

accepted by those we're with. You can tell that Cheryl, Wendy and Barbra, as females, didn't have to hold back as much."

Will spoke: "I suppose there's a tendency for us fellas to be more cerebrally centered than the women. I guess that's genetic as well as caused by social prohibitions. I'd prefer to be as emotionally free and uninhibited as Wendy—and I am, too, but only with girl friends or Galaxians. No one else would accept it. By the way, I'd just like to say for all of us that we feel honored that you took time out of your busy schedule to come and be with us. Thanks, Allen."

"You're very welcome. And I'm very happy I did. I'll take time to get to know each of you individually tomorrow. For tonight, 'the time has come . . . to talk of many things, of shoes and ships and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings.' Let me look at my doubts first. Are there any weird trips here? Or sects or cults or religious fanaticism or astrology or Scientology or communism or anything else controversial? Are there skeletons in the closet or relatives that are KGB or CIA or racists or bigots or dopers or pushers or anything else weird, illegal, or controversial? I'm in a position to have to avoid such trips and people into them, for obvious reasons. So how close do any of you come to such things?"

"Will has had two speeding tickets," said Barbra. "And so has Mort. My great grandmother was in a religious commune for a month. Joyce got a 'driving under the influence' ticket once before she came to Galaxy. Cheryl had a cop talk to her for running around the outside of Galaxy naked one night on a dare from me—we're both wiser now. She was only seven; I was eleven and should have known better. She was sure the world was asleep—it was the middle of the night—but a patrol car caught her in the act. Bonnie had a great, great grandfather who was a counterfeiter. She does not 'take after him,' as they say. Aunt Dora was in a car accident once—they determined that no one was to blame. It was caused by deer on the highway. That about covers it, Allen."

Allen responded: "None of that is problematic. Sorry I had to ask, ladies and gentlemen. Anyone not understand why? Anyone need to get the 'B' word off his or her chest?"

(Allen tended to say "billions" with an explosive B much like Carl Sagan used to, which made it a standing joke when either guy was on talk shows or when someone did an impression of either. For a decade and a half, Allen was the only one getting this type of ribbing from people, since Sagan had passed away in 1996.)

The response surprised Allen. It wasn't someone being cute with a "billions" comment. It was everyone in the room singing the word chorally, as a ninth chord. They held it for five seconds, and then the seventh person, Wendy, switched it to a sixth. The effect was quite nice, and Allen learned once more that just when he thought he'd heard every possible wisecrack about the word, someone would come up with a totally new response. Preplanned, in this case.

But they weren't done. Just as she was finishing her sixth, Wendy turned around on the piano stool she was occupying and jumped right into a jazzy but pastoral piano invention all her own, and she sang along with it. The combination was hypnotically beautiful, with delicate harmonies as exotic as they were touching. Allen felt himself drawn into her spirit, and thrilled by the rhythmic but subtle sweetness of her artistry. Only a person full of love could possibly play and sing like that, or compose like that, he knew instinctively. Allen was entranced. He felt loved by the music. It was incredible; it was ethereal; it was WENDY. As she finished, he suddenly realized something: She'd been singing a one-word lyric throughout her piece—the "B" word! Everyone applauded, Allen most of all; he was so touched he had tears in his eyes for the second time this evening. The singing and playing were so incredible that it wouldn't have mattered WHAT the lyrics were. He went over to the stool and waited next to it, smiling down on her, full of affection and wonder, and he was also wondering if she would read his mind for the second time this evening. She did—she stood up and let him give her a big hug.

When they were done, he softly thanked her and said: "My God, that was the most beautiful thing I've ever heard! You must have been practicing it for months. I bet

you composed it yourself, right? It's so—so LIKE who you are, dear lady. You must have had lessons since you were in diapers!"

"Thanks, Allen," she said quietly. "I was just saying that we all love you and we're glad you came, and I feel happy—that Baldwin there is one of my favorite ways of expressing my feelings. And I've never had lessons and I invented that song as I went along—only our chord that we sang was planned. It's kind of like what's in here" (she put her hand on her heart) "goes directly to here." (She held up her hands.) "I'm good at it because I do it often, that's all. Sometimes it's even my alone space. But no one has complained in seventeen years about me monopolizing our together-space lounge. I guess they must like it."

Allen was floored. He'd heard all kinds of music, including that played by the best improvisational artists, but he'd never heard anything quite like this—this music went off the scale of his experience. What did it mean? How could it be? How could anyone "emote" with their fingers with such perfection, compassion, and impossible artistry? Were these people really humans or were they actually aliens? Perhaps the SETI project was redundant! He remembered again that she'd used only the "B" word throughout. That word would never be the same for him again, as long as he lived. From now on it would remind him of what had just happened, and he would feel loved. That was hard to grasp at first. The "B" word would warm his heart with love in the future, recalling an exquisite love gift. There was nothing he could do about it. It was an irreversible event. And Wendy had done that for him, on purpose. The one-time annoyance was never to be an annoyance again. He could hardly believe it, after all these years. But then he remembered where he was: Galaxy. Curses could turn into blessings. Anything could happen here. He knew that now. Perhaps one of them could fly . . .

The next day, after Robert and Glen gave a PSB demonstration to everyone, Allen talked to everyone there, one at a time, alone, including Tom and Stephen. It took all morning, afternoon, and part of the evening, not counting meals. He retired at 9 P.M. in Sam's bedroom—Sam had decided to bunk with his wife Bonnie again, like he had last night, at her invitation. Allen put out the 'Alone' sign and sat alone in the room's easy chair, lost in thought and feelings. He vacillated between these two foci, trying to define precisely where HE was at with all this, now that he knew what everyone else felt about it. The mental-emotional billiards lasted for hours. He even wrote down a few notes at one point. Then he retired and immediately began dreaming about going to Heaven. Singing angels tapped his shoulders gently with magic wands and he sprouted wings that were a combination of transparent, gossamer butterfly wings and Bussard ramjet scoops. The angels told him that he could fly back and forth between Earth and Heaven all he wanted. They'd worked special magic on him, so he could commute back and forth whenever he pleased, even bringing family members with him if he wished. All he had to do to activate his wings and begin to fly was to sing the magic password, and it was—you guessed it . . .

The "B" word!

The next day everyone had a leisurely swim. Then they showered, and ate a nice Bert-prepared lunch, which was accompanied by much small talk and various relaxing topics. Stephen, Tom, and Allen all felt very comfortable around the Galaxian regulars and each other. The whole group felt like one big happy family. Once food was cleared and dishes were washed, it was time for a meeting. Allen called it, and everyone took their places and waited for Allen to speak. He told them about his dream. Everyone smiled. Then he got down to brass tacks:

"Ladies and gentlemen—and angels—" (people chuckled over that) "I think it's time I defined myself relative to the Galaxy and MC phenomena. I've had time to think about it and I've gotten the chance to get to know you people. I understand completely that putting my name up there for MCs is one of your larger strategic needs. And that you'd prefer that I take an active role beyond just endorsement. You all know I don't endorse much. I find few things that feel appropriate to endorse. I endorse things like

peace talks but I have no interest in endorsing products, nor do I want to be bothered by people asking for such endorsements. On the other hand, I myself have already, in my videos, called for and endorsed what you people have attempted and apparently accomplished. A 'positive social mutation' and a bold new 'social experiment' at the 'cutting edge of the future' to quote Sagan, who also called it 'an experimental community that works much more efficiently than the polyglot, rubbery, hand-patched society we are living in' so that 'a viable alternative is now before us,' one that can help make the world work. Logically I think I'm as aware as you are that it makes no sense for me to call for such a cultural and worldwide quantum leap of human evolution (so we can transcend and eliminate the dangers of the cultural lag before it flushes our species right down the tubes), and then not respond when the quantum leapers start up the leaping process. I sort of feel responsible to either support it fully, or, if I don't believe the plan is good, to point out the flaws and hopefully help repair those flaws and THEN support it fully. The only logical reason I'd ignore the whole effort, not even endorsing it, is if I thought it was all baloney.

"As you know, I'm a leading social thinker who likes to communicate via YouTube videos and talk shows. But even though I have a masters degree in sociology and psychology and a graduate degree in futures studies, there was nothing whatsoever in any of my studies to prepare me for meeting you Galaxians—beginning with your genius-in-residence named Robert.

"Hearing Robert lay out the MC plan that first time, and listening to where he was coming from—his heart—his maturity—his wisdom—his oneness with not only Galaxy but with the human race, I was VERY impressed. He'd done his homework, the ideas were sound, but what's more, he was such an extraordinary individual. Scientific curiosity jumped right off the scale in my mind: What could have evolved such a person? The British polymaths immediately came to mind. There was no doubt about it: unless he was some sort of weird, benevolent, social-genetic accident, something big was up. Hopefully the breakthroughs I was hoping for in my videos had occurred. So I didn't hesitate all that much to come here and see for myself.

"And when I found a fly in the ointment and Glen came through with an exquisitely clever solution in half a day—and here was a fellow who'd merely been around Galaxy for a few months—things really began to look promising. But then I met Wendy. I was stunned. It was more than I could ever have imagined or expected. She's only 17—and yet—well, it felt like an episode of *The Twilight Zone*.

"And then you pulled your absolutely merciless and utterly discombobulating Cheryl routine on me—a 12-year-old WOMAN, no less (even if she is camouflaged inside a pre-teen body), and I will never forget it. Obviously it was your intention to have the analytical part of me be put on hold for a couple of hours, and to do that you sicced your big guns on me. She's an impossibility and a phenomenon, and she made me love her so quickly and mercilessly that—well, I admit it—I was way out of my league. I'm not easily shaken, you know. As I came out of her room, ready to adopt her, I was asking myself 'what the hell happened?' So you wanted the analytical Allen to take a hike so that the human Allen would be a vulnerable target, and so that BEING WITH and EXPERIENCE would transcend thought and analysis. And it worked. You had my head spinning and my heart jumping—the thing is, these things had already begun because of Wendy! So you people have a hell of a one-two punch. It would take a corpse to withstand it. And then the music thing—what an exquisite frosting to put on an irresistible cake! My dream pretty much sums up where I'm at with all this.

"Now, it should be noted that you people were never calculating and manipulative—not at all. It is intuition and spontaneity that moves you. You, Wendy, Cheryl—you were all just being yourselves and being natural. Well, it was a new kind of natural for me! I've asked myself since then why precocious little Cheryl was into what she was into. Just as a guess, I'd say that . . . well, you've all heard of Montezuma's revenge. Well, this was Heisenberg's revenge. It all relates back to my very first conversation with Robert. Glen had said that Galaxy was a miracle and Robert had been hesitant about allowing Galaxy or any MC to be analyzed and observed in a test tube. I admit the miracle

attribute, by the way. But what I'm saying here is that he warned me about the fallacy of analyzing an 'observed' Galaxy, because in the act of observing, I'd be analyzing more the effects of the observation than the qualities of the observed. So here we have a playful little girl who, impossibly but actually, also happens to be a beautifully mature and deep woman, and she's been used as Exhibit A several times by people like myself who, following the dictates of obvious logic, are trying to see exactly what the effects are of being raised Galaxy style. So she, in her infinite wisdom, sees Doctor Tom and Doctor Allen descending upon her with test tubes and dissecting instruments. She has to pass muster for the lot of you—a bit of pressure and imposition there, to be sure! So she decides to cooperate and submit to inspection. But she exacts a price. One which I deserved to have to pay! Ladies and gentlemen, at the time the price was being exacted, I couldn't have given you the vaguest idea of what was transpiring—not if you had paid me a BILLION dollars!" Everyone roared at that. He'd "B"-worded HIMSELF, whether accidentally or on purpose. The effect was great fun!

"Okay, so now I'm dreaming of angels touching me with magic wands, empowering me to fly—one of those things I've always been dying to do but couldn't—they were empowering me to have my cake and eat it too: I can have everything and everyone I already do have, but heaven (read that 'Galaxy') besides. And angels. And more love than I can possibly handle. Anyway, the bottom line here is that I found out that Robert was no accident! Nor were any of you. Galaxy works. You people are, without the slightest doubt, precisely what humans were meant to be. And the idea that the world can be full of such people, if we can make the MC plan work, is more than just thrilling; it's actually a miracle—a word I don't use much.

"I ask myself: 'Do I deserve to be part of this?' But the question is at best academic, because there's a much more important fact at work here. You NEED me! I like the sound and feel of that. I like being needed. And I think I have many talents, skills, contacts, and a great reputation all of which can be a wonderful help to the MC plan. So the bottom line—the way I'd like to define myself regarding all this is: I have a great job and a great life and a great family already. I wouldn't quit or trade any of these. But there's no reason I can't add a project and some new friends. You only live once. To be honest, I'm not sure if ANYONE could look you all in the face and say no. It wouldn't make sense. It would be saying no to life and no to the world working. What kind of a 'dweeb' would be that blind and stupid? Thanks for listening, Galaxians." And of course everyone had to play the 'hug Allen' game. No one seemed to mind that the rules were so simple: (1) hug him; (2) you win; (3) repeat steps 1 and 2. Everyone had one common thought as they played their new game: There's no stopping us now!

Chapter 20

"Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true."
—Francis Bacon

"It ain't so much the things we don't know that get us into trouble. It's the things we know that just ain't so."
—Artemus Ward

None other than Nicholas Paul Kingman, the movie star and spokesperson for many humanistically and environmentally significant endeavors, was sitting down with the Galaxians in their lounge. He was not only one of the most popular actors, but also the most sought-after spokesperson and endorser around. He was much wiser and more insightful than most actors, and the one thing that everyone knew about this man is that he only supported projects and movements he believed in and cared about—absolutely NO amount of money could BUY his support for anything. Integrity, talent, and uncommon wisdom are the three characteristics attributed to Nick—what his friends called him.

His favorite author was Richard Louv, the award-winning columnist for the *San Diego Union*, and the author of the critically acclaimed *America II* and *Childhood's Future.* He often used these books as talking points when he addressed audiences, since he was in harmony with their message. Other books he liked were parenting books—he was a spokesperson for several parenting enhancement endeavors. A few of his favorite parenting books were: *Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.)* by Thomas Gordon, *Helping Young Children Flourish* by Aletha J. Solter, *Unconditional Parenting* by Alfie Kohn, and *The Winning Family* by Louise Hart. Obviously, his thinking about nurturing and raising kids dovetailed quite nicely with the thinking at Galaxy.

Tom, Stephen, and Allen were also with the Galaxians in their lounge. Burt had outdone himself with the lunch everyone had just eaten. Nick was present because he'd been invited to Galaxy by Allen, but he had no idea why Allen had asked him to make the trip—except that "it's a surprise" and "I think you're needed here, Nick." Nick got on the plane for no other reason than the fact that Allen Wilson had asked him to and the fact that curiosity would have given him terminal insomnia had he not acted upon this request and found out what the surprise was.

Nick took a deep breath; then he leaned forward in his chair and decided to jump in with both feet: "Why am I here, Allen? And where's my surprise?"

Allen leaned back in his chair, put the ends of his fingers together thoughtfully, took a deep breath, and began: "I feel like saying 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.' Or perhaps 'Four score and seven years ago . . .' But I shall try to restrain myself here, and preclude dramatic overkill. By the way, I'll be saying 'we' a lot in the following presentation. I know you don't know who 'we' are other than being able to see that you are in a room full of people. Be patient. You will soon understand who 'we' are and why we're assembled here today.

"Nick, we've all read Louv's book, *Childhood's Future.* And, to be blunt, we were impressed. There's an uncommon sensitivity, intuitiveness and compassion not found in the works of other social commentators. And you, sir, deserve great credit for getting the message of this book to millions of people. Like Philip Slater and Fritjof Capra, who are not in this room, and like many of the people in this room, you have uncommon wisdom. Mr. Grayson here has it in the area of business wisdom and Mr. Stein here has it in the area of writing and public relations. You already know of my work and reputation or I doubt if you'd be here. There are some other wise people in this room as well but we can get to that later.

"Anyway, for a couple of decades now I've been hoping for meaningful social evolution, for human evolution, for someone to discover what, specifically, was holding humanity back from achieving its potential and what, specifically, could be done to eliminate this barrier and finally get the ball rolling on life. So that individual's lives would

be about growth and fulfillment and joy and love and not about stress, fighting, deprivation and immaturity. I knew generalities about these problems and their solutions, but what we needed were the specifics. When I put in my videos, many years ago, the fact that, as Sagan has pointed out, there is hope because it is well within our powers to substantially adjust the relative role of each component of the triune brain, and when I said that it is precisely our plasticity, our long childhood, that prevents a slavish adherence to preprogrammed behavior, I was saying that if our childhood experience is positive enough, we can transcend the liabilities of our biology, complete with built-in aggression and territoriality. But I also said that our species has hardly any serious theory of social organization and very little knowledge about itself—another Sagan insight which I myself have also had and put in videos. I, myself, had realized that good, loving nurturing was a key to all this, but even though I have degrees in sociology and psychology and a graduate degree in futures studies, I was no psychologist—I had no specifics that would have helped matters any, beyond the idea of adequate nurturing that really did fill needs. I said in my videos, trying to popularize the best of Sagan's and Toffler's insights as much as possible, that the development of broad and powerful thinking is desperately needed. I prophesied that one day there would arise a community somewhere that works much better than what we've been used to. I said that at that time a viable alternative would then be before us. Both Sagan and Toffler have communicated this in books.

"You, yourself, have noted in discussing Louv's books how society is plagued with isolation and disconnectedness; it seems to be unraveling more every day. You yourself have wanted to turn this around and create connectedness, roots, commitment to regrouping and addressing the issues of parenting and the lack of adequate nurturing of children. You've wanted to get people to weave a web of connectedness, like Louv says, to improve family life and the lives of children NOW as well as in the future. You specifically asked that we all get together to reverse the disconnection process—that we find ways to increase positive contact between adults and children. You wanted us to re-evaluate our materialistic obsessions and rework priorities so that the quality of life, not the quantity of consumption, came first. You wanted us to follow Louv's advice to reweave the web of connectedness in our families, neighborhoods and communities to express life-affirming and love-affirming values and a collective commitment to a lifestyle that WORKS. You wanted us to assemble plans that would address all of these concerns effectively so that 'political power on behalf of families and children will follow,' and 'the new web will be rewoven,' as you and Louv both put it. You felt sure that little change will ever take place if we keep thinking that politicians can fix all this by throwing money or rhetoric at it. You specified that what will be required is—and this is my favorite Louv phrase—'grassroots action beginning in the family and extending through neighborhoods, schools, and the workplace.' You have that rare ability to get people to listen, not just because of your star power but because of the way you so effectively dispense essential wisdom, and Louv has the rare ability to see the whole picture and to make a memorable, timeless metaphor that, by so clearly pointing out the errors, can lead each person, in his or her individual way, to visualize what a solution would feel like. Here's the way Louv put it, Nick: 'This is crazy; we're not living, we're doing lunch.'

"Louv wisely did years of research, talking to real people all over the country, in the process of writing his books. That's why they feel so real, and come off as sensitive and insightful. But as we speak, the people of this country are continuing to make the same mistakes with their kids and with each other—apparently, the effects of books are limited. My videos didn't cause people to run out and right all the wrongs either—apparently, the effects of videos are also limited. The problem isn't what we said or how we said it. The problem is that the mediums of the written word and of YouTube videos have limited potential. This is unfortunate, because I REALLY DID want to help turn things around and have the world work. I didn't want to simply say 'Well, I did my part. If they won't listen it's not my fault.' I'll bet big money you feel the same way. Am I right, Nick?"

"Absolutely. I truly would love to honest-to-God help turn it around. No question about it. If I knew how, I'd be doing just that right now! But books, actors supporting causes, or a couple dozen videos can only do so much. And I've a family to support and acting jobs that I must go to and spokesperson commitments. I don't see what I can do beyond supporting great, relevant books that relatively few people read so I feel I need to tell the world about them. I'm not a journalist. I'm an actor-slash-spokesperson. It's what I do. I champion great causes and movements when I'm not acting.

"By the way, I still don't know why you need me or what the surprise is. Anybody want to give me a hint here?"

Allen took a little yellow rubber football off the table and tossed it to Cheryl, saying "Cheryl, care to run with the ball for a bit?"

"Sure, Allen." On impulse she stood up and walked over to Nick and stood right in front of him. She looked deep into his eyes and said, in a soft, serious voice, "We're going to fix it, Nick."

He sat there looking into her eyes. A minute went by. He expected her to continue or for someone else to contribute. But Cheryl had the ball, literally and metaphorically. His mind began racing—What was he supposed to do now? He mentally retraced what had just happened: Allen threw a silly little ball to a little girl named Cheryl, who then stood in front of him and told him they were going to fix it. Fix what? According to what had come before—from Allen—she had to be referring to making the world work. Allen had said that he REALLY DID want to help turn things around and make the world work. And he, Nick, had agreed that he too would love to help turn it around. He'd even said that if he knew how, he'd be doing it right now.

Nick looked at the faces around him. He'd been in countless groups of people over the years. But never one like this. The faces were very different. He looked at them.

Cheryl noticed where he was looking and sat down on the floor with her hands in her lap to let him look around. She continued to look at him. She wanted him to get what she wanted to tell him, but without so many words. She just wanted him to BE with her and get her message. After a bit he returned to the sweet, confident, loving face in front of him. He smiled at her gently and she smiled back, but never for an instant did she let her message waver.

He looked again at the other faces and then back at hers. Where was the symptomology? Where were the stress, cynicism, anger, pain, and the fear? Where were the depression, the alienation, the lonely helplessness? He couldn't find anything like that in the whole room. What was going on here? Weren't they human? He looked again. They were *incredibly* human! His mind went over everything that Allen had said. Then he recalled once more the words of the little girl in front of him: "We're going to fix it." He looked into her eyes again. There was an intense, soul-felt message there. A beautiful message. In fact, it was the most beautiful message he had ever heard. His mind pulsed with the incredible message. This was the most amazing moment of his life. She wasn't saying that they had talked about, thought about, or wondered about fixing the world. No, the message was crystal clear. She was an impossibly confident, soul-mature, radiant, beautiful little girl who was conveying to him the simple fact that THEY WERE GOING TO FIX THE WORLD! His mind reeled. He just *had* to say something:

"You . . . you can't mean . . ." But he looked into her heart and her soul. It was right there in front of him, totally exposed for him to see. She smiled as only an angel from heaven could smile. And then she spoke very softly and nodded:

"Yes." That was it. That was all she said. But that was all that was required. The message had been delivered.

He took a deep breath. He looked around again. She had spoken for all of them, including Allen. He could have spent 24 hours a day for the rest of his life guessing without even coming close to guessing what the surprise was.

And HE was needed here. They needed his help. It was an awesome thought, but it proved to him that these people had really and truly picked up on the spirit and compassion, the longing and passionate hope that he had put in his speeches in which he supported the basic message in Louv's books, speeches which the Galaxians had seen on

YouTube. This same longing and passionate hope was installed between the lines in Louv's book *Childhood's Future.* Nick was moved by their faith in him and their knowledge of his essence. He stood up and was going to gesture for Cheryl to come for a hug—she'd been so open and trusting with him—but she apparently was a mind-reader as well, since he found himself hugging her and he'd made no gesture at all.

As the hugging ended, she asked him in a whisper if he'd like to take a little walk with her. He nodded in the affirmative. He looked around at the others, who were looking at them both with love and understanding, and he knew that whatever she had whispered—even though they hadn't heard it—had their full support. She took his hand and they walked out of the lounge, out of the Galaxy's front entrance, and around the neighborhood. Beside a little creek in a small park near Galaxy was where they did most of their talking. On their way back they encountered an older couple on the sidewalk. The couple seemed to be frowning disapprovingly at what seemed to be a blatant case of robbing the cradle—Nick was still holding her hand. But as they got closer they seemed to recognize her. Their frowns changed to smiles. He and Cheryl smiled back as they passed.

He asked Cheryl: "It's okay as long as they know it's YOU and not just any little girl?"

"People around here all know that I can take care of myself. I've been a good friend to most of the kids for blocks around, including those who are male and 'too old for me.' After seeing the effect I've had on their kids, and even on some of the adults, people kind of put me into a special category all my own. I'm an exception to all their rules and stereotypes. So are Wendy, Robert, Barbra, Will and Bob, but I'm the youngest and I stand out the most in the exception department."

The two of them continued to talk as they made their way back to the Galaxy Apartments. They'd been gone for over two hours. As they entered the lounge and sat down, the meeting that had been going on was put on hold. They had an invited guest.

Allen asked Nick: "Did you have a nice time?" Allen was smiling with more than a touch of amusement. He knew what Nick was going through. He'd been there. Within a couple of hours, one was forced to dump a considerable portion of one's beliefs and assumptions, and one was forced to adopt a new perspective on people in order to accommodate one's inspiring but mind-blowing new experience. And, above all, one's hopes regarding the potentials of mankind and the possibilities for the future were given an indelible boost.

"Some stupid part of me is trying to tell me that I shouldn't be sitting here telling Allen Wilson about loving a twelve-year-old WOMAN who I just met," replied Nick. He was silent for a few seconds, thinking. Suddenly he blurted out, boldly, "The HELL I shouldn't!"

This brought down the house. Everyone was delighted with the sorting-out process that was obviously in high gear in Nick's mind.

He added: "I can't wait to introduce Cheryl to my wife and kids! I think I'll just say, innocently, 'Look what I found.'" Everyone laughed again. He was surely getting into the spirit of things. After a bit more light-hearted chatting, it was time to get serious again. Nick grabbed the little football as if to signal that it was now he who "had the ball."

He spoke: "I didn't get many details on how you plan to 'fix' things. I was more impressed with the source of the words than the words themselves, in my chat with Cheryl. But the words themselves were quite remarkable: You're going to use all media and the most respected and wise people around in a multifaceted launch of a comprehensive social marketing campaign that will allow others to set up their lives so that they finally work. They'll finally know how to nurture effectively, parenting according to what works instead of using discredited, hopeless methods that get picked up from one's parents, friends and the TV shows one sees. Bad habits are contagious because, unfortunately, it is easier to pick up parenting strategies from those around you than to take the responsibility for finding out what works before adopting any strategy. Few people have the wisdom to really question what they pick up randomly (even if it's obvious to all that the method is defective), because—and this is even more unfortunate

than the last item—defective as it is, EVERYONE AROUND YOU SEEMS TO BE DOING IT so this is somehow a confirmation that you are indulging in 'appropriate behavior.' Society will never evolve in the positive directions Allen was indicating earlier if people continue to use such a lame standard of appropriateness.

"And when I'm saying that you people are going to communicate to everyone what good nurturing is all about and how people can set up their lives and lifestyles so that they work, I feel plenty of faith that you will do a good job. It's quite obvious that if good nurturing were equal to gold, then I'm presently sitting in the middle of the mother lode! In short, you guys are the experts and it is entirely proper that you help others discover the best way to set things up to get the type of phenomenal results you get.

"But let me go on. You're embarked upon a wonderful mission. If it works then the planet full of people will someday have the Galaxy story as a major part of its mythology. Religious people will see the terrific strength of the souls and faith of the Galaxy originals. They will see all of this as God working through His chosen instruments. Nonreligious people will see the terrific human spirit and wisdom of you all. Sensationalists, supermarket tabloids and confused individuals may decide that you are extraterrestrials or supernatural or that you're receiving signals from superior beings. Many will try to superimpose old mythology upon new mythology and see you people leading them to the promised land. And there will be cynics who fear change more than they love life, and they'll choose to ignore all these wonderful new possibilities, regardless of how their neighbors transpose their lifestyles in benevolent directions.

"An obvious issue that came up for me right away is the fact that if you people—especially you youngsters in which all this is especially conspicuous—are a new standard of the potentials of humans, then there will be those who will dislike the fact that their lifestyles have been demonstrated to be unquestionably defective. Obviously, any of these people who go in the MC direction will soon quit worrying about feeling uncomfortable about the implications of Galaxian realities, and how it reflects on them. They'll be too busy enjoying the benefits of going from a dysfunctional to a functional lifestyle. But those that cop out—at least initially—will want to create relative comfort in themselves by the use of rationalizations, self-deception, or whatever. 'Those people are supernatural, so this doesn't reflect on me.' 'It's all a Hollywood put-on; those people are actors.' Or how about 'If God had wanted me to evolve that much, He'd have made it happen. But He didn't, so I WASN'T MEANT TO GO THAT ROUTE.' The less courageous people out there are going to cling desperately to such excuses because they'll require such defenses in order to be able to cope." Nick noticed Robert's hand up; he nodded in Robert's direction, and threw the ball to Robert.

"I believe that the social marketing knowledge we Galaxians now have in our possession can guide us well in this area. There will be a breakdown of the target-adoptor segments that will run something like this: 2.5 percent of MC adoptors will be the *innovators,* who adopt because it's new; 13.5 percent will adopt MCs because of the intrinsic value of such adopting which the media (and soon the innovators) will clearly communicate to them—they are called early adoptors; 34 percent will adopt as imitators, who see that it is working and want in on it too; 34 percent will be joiners who adopt because others do; and 16 percent will be traditionalists who adopt when they're finally convinced that the MC has actually BECOME THE NEW TRADITION. There is a lot more that can be said about all this, but it is appropriate that you have the floor, so let me just conclude my remarks with the fact that people hesitated plenty about adopting the automobile (the 'horseless carriage') and the VCRs and the CDs and DVDs and the computer and the Internet, but eventually the society did adopt when the inevitability of it all became clear. The types of defenses and rationalizations you cite always happen when progress threatens to disturb complacency with change. It needn't concern us as long as we can succeed with the innovators and early adoptors by great media presentation with respected famous people on our side (people others are dying to emulate and/or consider heroic, like you and Allen), and then these innovators and early adoptors can report success and get the entire chain-reaction going. Everything you said is quite true, but these things are not a reason for us to panic—they're merely an

accepted and expected part of the process of social marketing and they simply describe the kinds of ways the temporary hesitaters will choose to rationalize their nonadoptor status."

Robert tossed the ball back to Nick, who spoke: "Does he always talk like a college professor?" he asked the assembly at large, winking as he said it.

"Only when he's awake. God knows what he does in his sleep!" kidded Barbra. Everyone laughed. "Just teasing, brother," she added, after the laughter subsided. Robert threw a wad of paper at her, grinning.

Nick continued: "Thanks for the comments and vote of confidence. I hope things really do go that smooth for you guys—"

"We could use your help," Allen put in.

"I'm still processing that issue in the back of my mind, Allen. I know I'd like to help in some form or another, but I guess it isn't clear to me yet what I would do. So I think I'll delay consideration on that issue until some of the fog lifts for me. Sound okay?"

"Sounds perfect, Nick," Allen responded.

Nick continued: "Anyway, I truly hope that what you want to happen does in fact happen, Galaxians. What sane person could want to stand in the way of the society working because parenting and nurturing is finally effective, and parenting resources go from inadequate to adequate, and neighborhoods go from reflecting disconnection and alienation and isolation to reflecting the connectedness and humanness of MCs (which Cheryl told me about)? What sane person would want to get in the way of a process by which our society could become an example to emulate for the other societies on our globe, an example that we would be unambivalently proud of? We ARE an example that other societies emulate, but their emulation is often of pretty shaky, superficial, and hypermaterialistic media offerings. It's not that often something we can feel proud of. While we feel good about the love of freedom and independence and democracy and ambition that we exemplify, much more stressed in what gets exported is violence, crime, sex, exploitation, immorality, sensationalism and narcissism. MC values permeating not only our society but also our media are the perfect answer to this world-shaking problem.

"Why should the U.S. be seen simultaneously as a blight on the globe in the form of a hotbed of violence and immorality, and also as a beacon for democracy, capitalism and freedom? It's analogous to the way we feel about a family of basically decent people who are degenerating in a sea of substance abuse. Is this truly necessary? Must we show such a semi-corrupted face to the world? I'd say that until the MC thing can chain-react (as Cheryl called it), there's little that can be done that will be effective.

"But let me back up here and specify a few concepts from Louv books which I endorse wholeheartedly and see if these ideas dovetail with yours or something needs adjustment on either your side or my own:

"The key issue in his books is affiliation. We all need to feel part of a group or community; it's important for equilibrium and coping as well as inspiration and security. One of the tenets of psychiatry is that if group affiliation degenerates or is destroyed, we're more likely to develop character disorders, depression or violence. Adler comes to mind as one who exemplifies the measuring of mental health in terms of 'social interest.' Note that past decades have seen the breakdown of family, neighborhood and community networks—in other words, social interest has dwindled to be replaced by the obsession to get accepted so obvious on Facebook. I'll Like you if you'll Like me—is this true 'social interest' or the raw plea for indirect self-acceptance, like in the book *The Adjusted* American? We need real selves participating in community with other real selves, not its counterfeit: false selves participating in cyber-community with other false selves. And real selves participating in community with each other makes successful communities, cultures, and civic life. This empowers successful democracy and healthy politics—both of these are in big trouble currently as is healthy character development and good nurturing.

"Industrialization brought urbanization, mobility and alienated, insecure, replaceable workers. The 60s and 70s further eroded the traditional affiliations.

Sometimes black-and-white thinking told us to dump things rather than fix them, and it was too bad. Other times it was like learning to breathe again when some of the people back then got out from beneath the alienating influence of the corporate state, oppressive family set-ups, and sexist and racist treatment of certain segments of our population. People who saw it as all good or all bad weren't paying close enough attention. In *America II,* Louv looked at whether various new forms of affiliation were likely to increase or decrease social fragmentation and isolation. There are many aspects of some intentional communities that make them armed enclaves that defend themselves against crime and any true affiliation at the same time. There are also things about the way they are run that further isolates their members from each other.

"Americans have become resistant to neighboring. They often say they just want to be left alone. This is because they've already become alienated by being brought up in an alienating society and they see relationship as an infringement or bother. It's also because people's neighbors are not chosen. They're random. Cheryl tells me you guys know all this, and you really have all read the Louv books which I hold so dear. Good. So we agree that people naturally don't want to get close with just anybody. But it is the MC concept—as I understand it (correct me if I'm wrong)—that solves this the most effectively. The MC database thing, the PSBs, the MC formations with your friends—this is good thinking, Galaxians. How difficult the implementation will be remains to be seen. But I have faith that if anyone can sell all this, you guys are it. Your platoon's 'point man' alone was devastatingly irresistible!" He looked over at Cheryl who winked and happily blew him a kiss. Most little girls would have at least feigned modesty at such a moment, for the sake of decorum, but Cheryl rarely 'feigned' anything. She was not feeling modest. She was feeling affectionate toward Nick, so THAT is what she expressed.

"The same thing that's wrecking neighborhoods and families is playing havoc with the viability of the political sphere. The isolation and alienation that's at the root of so many of our problems has us virtual hostages to the whims of the politicians, and democracy is no longer working like the founders of our Constitution envisioned. Louv and I both found out time and time again the incalculable value of getting people together to look at how things are going and express how they felt about things."

Nick continued: "The same isolation and disconnectedness that creates political stagnation and family stagnation and neighborhood stagnation and suburban stagnation and intentional community stagnation and urban stagnation kept parents from getting together and learning anything from each other. Parents in general are not aware of what you people know about how badly it is working for the average parent. Parents, unfortunately, usually have this silly idea that they are the *exception* and that other parents are somehow managing to do it all right. They'd realize how ludicrous such an idea is except for the fact that they never talk at a deep enough level with others and find out the truth. It was quite a revelation for many of the parents Louv managed to get together to see the ugly truth. Even those that had purposely moved to planned communities to find COMMUNITY mostly just found more people just like themselves living in a peculiar kind of isolation.

"In Louv's books he talks about germinating a new kind of liberation movement, a family liberation that recognizes the right of families to be connected to each other and the community as a way of assembling adequate resources for the job of nurturing and the need of neighboring and pursuing friendships. Like you, my goal and Louv's goal is to maximize resources so that kids, adults and families have the opportunity to live to their fullest potentials. I speak of the contraction of adult-child contacts as being especially detrimental and I speak of the solution as reworking the priorities in each family so that nurturing is higher on the list, and I speak of a reweaving of the larger environment so that positive contact is even possible. I'll have to confess that your present Galaxy situation (from what I know of it) and your MC concept in general seem like nearly perfect ways of meeting these challenges. I can see potential gaps in the way MCs relate to the workplace or to local educational and political spheres. Louv included some of his solutions to this stuff in his books. But after my actual experience here with you people, I get the feeling that such connections will take care of themselves simply because MC-

inspired people are involved. They will be, above all (according to Cheryl), RESPONSIBLE people.

"Like you people, my solution was to call for a synthesis of traditional and modern family values. The P.E.T. values you all share exemplify the latter, while the responsibility, respect, compassion and multi-resource nurturing values fit into the former category, mostly. What Cheryl told me is that MCs give people the best of the traditional values and the best of the modern wisdom on families and relationships, but they include none of the worst values or ideas of either category. The Louv solutions I've been endorsing are also win-win, although they're not as daring and comprehensive, and there will be parents who feel some win-lose sacrifice as they reprioritize and find out they need to sacrifice more for their kids at times. I can see where that would be less of a problem with your solution because yours is more resource-rich.

"Another issue is avoidance of abuse or oppression. I didn't get a chance to get into that one with Cheryl. I maintain that as the web widens and is rewoven there will be more support for families in general and therefore the main cause of abuse—family isolation—will be reversed. Response anyone?" Hands raised. The ball was thrown to Glen.

"In Galaxy, and in MCs that strictly abide by the parenting guidelines we shall dispense (most but not all of which are right out of P.E.T. guidelines), kids shall experience, from babyhood on, a choice regarding who their assigned nurturer is. If a kid feels bad about the way someone is treating him, he will arrange an alternative right away, and his doing so will have the full backing of the MC. He'll also feel open to telling any of the other adults who also care for him how he feels about being with the offender. The offender will be helped with his problem, and until he can manage to learn to caregive decently, he won't be scheduled as a caregiver. So he may only be related to by the offended child when the kid is feeling generous, and the price of having the privilege of being a caregiver again may be GETTING HIS ACT TOGETHER. MCs, in short, are structured so as to nip all abuse in the bud."

Nick caught Glen's forward pass and then responded: "Your specific solution seems like a more complete one than my general one of web widening. Louv gave some pretty scary child-abuse stats in his books. The percent of victims whose abusers are their own parents is horrifying. I can't promise that a wider web will affect a lot of these situations. But I can say that as a generality the web widening will result in less abuse in the long run.

"On the subject of generational contact, I suppose you guys have read Dychtwald's *Age Wave* and know about the matrix families in everyone's future?" Everyone nodded yes.

"Good! In his books, he pointed out that as a kid he adopted older couples in his neighborhood as surrogate grandparents. But today older couples often move into seniors-only housing and the generations lose contact. I prefer a Dychtwald perspective in which older people are seen as a part of the matrix family, living either in the same dwelling or very nearby. The older people need real roles and relationships just as badly as the families need alternate caregivers. Of course, all this depends on these older people being a positive element in the environment, like the older people I see here at Galaxy. If they bring everyone down, I'm for getting them off to seniors-only housing or whatever. What's the MC position?"

Hazel raised her hand and caught the ball that was tossed to her. She spoke: "I wouldn't trade my place in this family we call Galaxy for anything in the world. I couldn't dream of how my lot in life could be improved. I just feel like the luckiest lady alive! God bless you all!" Everyone waited as she blew her nose and dried a few happy tears. Then she went on: "Caregiving these kids while their parents worked or because the kids chose to be with me— this has been the happiest time of my life. And now that I get to add close encounters of the third kind to my activities, I'm . . . Well I think it's beyond me to express how I feel . . ." She tossed the ball back to Nick, who thanked her.

Joyce raised her hand and made a nice catch: "In case you hadn't heard it yet, we call MC activities for the purpose of helping the world finally work right 'close encounters

of the third kind.' Anyway, our MC idea has a Dychtwald perspective too. We feel that the physical layout whereby elders can either do caregiving in the hub, or get elder care in a separated structure at or near the hub (Dychtwald calls these elder cottages), can solve many problems. Also, each family will be able to decide for itself whether any specific elders would be better off in their homes with them or in separate homes that are still in the MC or simply not in the MC for whatever reason. All the people in an MC must be able to voice an opinion on such things. Remember, MCs are formed when there are a lot of common interests and values of people and the friendships that exist are all high-quality. You could say that the MCs take some of the inevitable Dychtwald family structures of the future—which he calls 'matrix'—and gives them viable guidelines, rules, nurturing strategies, and specific parenting knowledge. Not to mention PSBs as our way of letting technology CONNECT people for once, rather than always causing DISCONNECTION."

She tossed the ball to Nick: "Thank you for that. I'll have to get a demonstration on those software gizmos later. Who is the inventor?"

Glen raised his hand and got the ball: "Allen pointed out a gap in our MC plans and I filled it. It's refining the communication process here and creating more space for feelings and receptivity to be known, and it perfectly complements alone space. But our MC doesn't NEED these PSBs all that much. Things are already going great. It's the newly formed ones which will actually need them, although they're starting to make a few things about communication go smoother. We've been trying out PSBs this week.

"By the way, I'd like to say that I'm really pleased to have you here at Galaxy today. I'll never forget how much it got to me when I saw in one of your spokesperson videos about the neat things kids think about when they go find places of their own—let's call them 'forts'—where they can imagine anything and really find themselves and make choices and be in control of their lives. When you mentioned how important this is and then how so many kids have so much to escape and this is their best way of avoiding a lot of the negativity or neglect that goes on at home, it reminded me of the fort I used to have in a woods near my house when I was only six. I remember how I felt when I was there. I wondered about the world. I had so many hopes, and yet so many fears—and so many painful memories. That video talked directly to the real me and inspired me. It reached Glen. It felt like you are the only other one besides my Galaxy family who TRULY understands. Did Louv get into this stuff as well? Anyway, thank you, Nick."

He tossed the ball back to Nick: "I really appreciate that. Thanks for telling me, Glen." The two men exchanged a look that clearly indicated that nurturance, understanding and validation were occurring in both directions.

"And yes, Louv did get into that fort stuff. Anyway, let me go on to see how the MC context jives with what I've endorsed about Louv's ideas about neotraditionalism. Recall that the political squabbles in the currently-popular 'family values' trends pit the high-tech modernists (usually liberals) against the nostalgic traditionalists (usually conservatives) and thereby paralyze not only political but cultural progress as well. A synthesis is obviously needed and neotraditionalism is at least a candidate. It's arising because of everyone's disenchantment with the rat race and with the hollowness of materialistic obsession, and also because of the sexism found in traditional values that even traditionalists have matured beyond. Also, everyone is now more concerned with values and family life, and is finding the isolationism of modern life nonviable—even toxic—to relationships, family functionality and happiness.

"You know, folks, our country really doesn't have any choice about finding this neotraditionalist synthesis viable: the alternative, as I clearly state in my book, is another generation growing up in a vacuum. And I'm sure I don't have to read the statistics of the resultant symptoms to you people."

Allen's raised hand caught the ball: "I don't see any disjunction between neotraditionalism and the MC context. In fact, the dovetailing is well-nigh a perfect fit. One could say that in both cases there has been a recognition of the paralysis of the polarized factions, and a synthesis of the best values from each of two camps. The more extreme self-righteous fundamentalist or liberal-permissive views are being perceived as the dead-ends they are. The latter now has had a new obscenity created for it—the 'L'

word; the former has had extremist champions who were the height of hypocrisy, immorality and greed even to most fundamentalists. To believe that either of these camps are going to make any more cultural headway is to bet on three-legged horses.

"I'd like to point out one telling aspect of both the MC movement and the neotraditionalist trend. Unlike the polarized components of our culture whose main goal seems to be to prove their rightness to the other, and to win in the all-or-nothing, win-lose mode, the neotraditionalists and the MCers have made a decision to quit flapping their gums and begin working out a viable plan that will get things back on track."

The ball described an arc, then made a gentle splat against the upraised, open hand of Nick: "Exactly the feeling I'm getting regarding neotraditionalists and MC people. They are the web-weavers, the movers and shakers, the put-up-or-shut-up-ers. They are not the spinners of idle dreams and fantasies, nor the participants of fist-shaking discourses with no function save catharsis. One will not hear much from you people that isn't about planning for the society to work. This dedication to improving things through constructive action rather than clever put-down, this is the song MCs and neotraditionalists are singing in harmony. One could say, however, that the MCers have figured out a specific plan whereby all the neotraditionalist goals could be attained. I've figured out some pretty neat strategies myself, as you've all seen in my speech videos. And yet MC strategies and Louv strategies can only complement one another, to my way of thinking.

"In Louv's book he employed the ecological image of a web, but the general image of the circular, interconnected structure of social, psychological, and spiritual health appears in nearly every culture's mythology. To mend our web, we must envision the whole ecology and not only the parts. Cheryl mentioned systems thought and Capra's description of the new, ecological paradigm that's replacing the old, mechanistic paradigm. This is exactly the direction Louv's book was headed. We need to see through children's eyes. We need to imagine what the society and world would be like if it were a more humane environment; then we must imagine what changes would take us from here to there. At the family and neighborhood level, you guys have an incredibly wise and promising vision. I have developed additions to these concepts, including plans relating to schools and places of employment, as well as parent group strategies of enhanced connectedness. Both our concepts are holistic and involve the win-win context of the new paradigm.

"I have said that the isolation from adults that many children feel is acute, painful, and numbing. Kids turn to peers when no adults are available. Instead of getting nurtured they become peer-group conformists, whether in gangs or cliques. They learn early to trade autonomy for the pseudosecurity of enmeshment in a group. This is no way to prepare adolescents to become their own person, but a perfect way to turn them into Facebook addicts.

"Our new housing developments isolate singles and the elderly from families, and families from other families. Ultimately this environmental isolation can promote the pathologies of family alcoholism, mental illness, incest, child abuse and substance abuse. All of these family conditions are marked by secretiveness and isolation from the larger world. To acknowledge and change the isolation of our children, we must first acknowledge and change our own isolation.

"Over the years we've gone from the extended family to the nuclear family to the single-parent and/or daycare family. A large proportion of Americans are worried about this and the fact that they don't like their kids in the hands of strangers in daycare settings. They want to move toward—what? They know that the *Leave It To Beaver* days of the stereotypical nuclear family are over and that going back even further to the extended family days is unlikely. OR IS IT? After studying Dychtwald's findings in *Age Wave,* I think that it is matrix families that can be seen as what society's future has in store, NOT smaller and smaller families, as has been the case up until now. But matrix families, as Cheryl has pointed out to me, are only a small part of the necessary solution. Nothing about matrix families per se will guarantee adequate nurturing or even adequate choice among resources. I'm pleased to say that if the MC proposal really works, ALL

these problems of identity, peer-group pressure, daycare uncertainty, adequate nurturing, isolation and family dysfunctionality will be solved.

"Not to mention the fact that the MC idea is, without the slightest doubt, the closest the traditional nostalgic faction can ever again expect to get to their concept of kids being nurtured at home by their own mothers. The MC idea allows for a lot of this, and for mom's best friends to also help with this nurturing, as well as dad and dad's best friends, and for no more of this idea of our children being raised by strangers. (Both the McMartin trial and the movie *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle* underline the unwanted liabilities of strangers caregiving our kids.) Once this traditional nostalgic faction sees the quality of nurturing, the respect and responsibility levels of the kids so nurtured, the intense involvement of mom and dad at all levels, the absence of the need for kids being trusted to strangers, and the amazing lovability and lovingness of kids so nurtured, I can guarantee that the traditional nostalgic faction will embrace the MC proposal warmly. They've been stubborn in holding out for a strategy that is compatible with their high standards of family values and moral ethics. And it is to their credit that they have done so. Why should anyone have to compromise on their values and morals when something as precious as our families, our lives, the future of our country, and ultimately the future of the world, is involved?

"The high-tech modernists, on the other hand, have been blindly holding up large, impersonal institutions such as daycare centers as some sort of actual answer to all this, rather than as just the stop-gap strategy they are. Daycares wouldn't cause everyone so much gut-wrenching ambivalence if they truly were the ultimate answer to our current social and family crisis. And this same faction has too often looked to government funds for their panaceas. To no avail. Neither Congress nor the President would buy it, because they've seen Great Society ideas tried in the past and they already know they'll flop. Not that the government can't help all these problems economically. They can and should. Support for better health care, childcare, tax credits and so on are helpful policies if viewed and used appropriately. But there is no way that these things are going to be the key to solving the crisis our society is now facing in the area of nurturance, childcare, family break-up, isolationism, disconnectedness, alienation and abuse of people and substances. The MC, on the other hand, shows every potential of being just such a key, realistically addressing root causes and, finally, after all these years of no solution being on the horizon, proposing a way in which adequate resources for adequate nurturing can exist in every environment. High-tech modernists will love the reliance on PSBs for enhanced, nonintrusive connectedness and enhanced self-expression and feelings communication and social planning. And they'll love the way that random, ineffective parenting gets replaced with P.E.T., which, according to what I've heard today, is state-of-the-art with regards to knowledge and proven, effective strategies of relationships, parenting, and communication in general. Cheryl explained how well these guidelines have worked for you people over the years; and how PSBs will allow noninvasive communication even if an MC contains 50 people. I'm impressed!

"Traditionalists who keep trying to say that child-beating, negative power relationships, coercion, and general oppression, all sugar-coated with Biblical self-righteousness, are an answer to parenting problems will soon be confronting with their hearts and minds the difference between their kids and the MC-raised kids. I predict that the difference will be so mind-boggling, the MC kids will so far outshine the oppressive faction's kids in areas of responsibility, respect, lovingness, lovableness, and even general spirituality, that the subscribers of the anachronistic strategies will be switching to MC strategies faster than you can say 'spare the rod and spoil the child.' After all, their punitive parenting has the goal of raising moral, ethical, responsible and respectful kids, not the goal of raising fearful, rigid, neurotic, hateful, resentful brats (which is what they currently produce). And when MCs clearly show that they do the former while oppressive parents clearly show that they more often end up producing the latter types, the jury, as they say, will be in. They'll switch. I guarantee it. They simply need evidence. Or, like Robert said, the traditionalists will simply have to watch others do the MC thing, see that

it works better than anything else, understand that *it has become the new tradition*, and then adopt it like the traditionalists they are.

"On the other side of the fence will be the liberal permissives whose parenting has often resulted in self-centered, selfish, narcissistic, spoiled brats. Once the P.E.T.-using MCs have shown beyond a doubt what P.E.T. itself—according to Cheryl—has shown beyond a doubt, which is that permissiveness is just as hopeless as authoritarianism as a parenting technique, then the jury will be in and more liberal people will quit the miserable, thankless, frustrating task of raising disrespectful, irresponsible kids. They'll no longer have to ask themselves—after they've raised a family and it's too late to turn back—why in the world they ever thought they wanted to be parents when there is so much frustration and so little satisfaction. Instead, they'll be enjoying Galaxy-like MC satisfactions and asking themselves: Why in the world didn't anyone come up with this marvelous lifestyle decades ago? And, of course, they did (according to Cheryl), but it was only applied to raising people contained in this room. Only now did you guys decide to spread the wealth. Cheryl has told me about your close encounters of the three kinds. I love it! I see what you're doing and why. But why did you wait to spread the wealth? And who among you decided this all of a sudden and why?" Wendy's hand was up. It was soon filled with yellow rubber:

"That's a good question, Nick. You've met everyone here. But let me reintroduce a couple of people." She stood up and motioned for Robert to stand up. He did. "This is my cousin, Robert Peterson. He invented this whole MC deal. And he did it with the eager help of this gentleman:" She motioned for Glen to stand. He did. "This is Glen Andrews. He is Robert's co-conspirator as well as being the PSB inventor, as you've already learned. Glen has been a part of Galaxy for only a few short months. But he illustrates to all of us what sudden exposure to MC environments and people can do to the heart, soul, identity, goals, and mind of an oppressed but eager human being.

"Robert, on the other hand, has been with us from the beginning. He determined that the close encounters of the first and second kind, which Cheryl has explained to you, were simply insufficient. We'd always known it, underneath. And we'd always spent our spare time helping others. But these close encounters of the second kind were not all we desired. We wanted the community, the city, the state, the country and the world to work as well. And Robert is the kind soul who voiced, for us all, our most profound hopes, our deepest feelings. He brought these longings out into the open for us. We faced them and, although we felt overwhelmed with the immensity of it all as we did it, we all agreed to have our collective major goal be close encounters of the third kind, wherein we could help the country and eventually the world have the love, joy, meaning and understanding that we enjoy here. The reason it didn't happen sooner was that we simply couldn't figure out how the country, much less the world, could be made to really listen to us." She and the others took their seats as she tossed the ball back to Nick.

He spoke: "I see. Thank you. I think I understand now. Let me look at daycare for a moment, okay? I've said from the first that daycare is no panacea. It can work, but it must be better. It must be different from what is currently taking shape. I'll remind you that I've talked to an awful lot of people. Good people. As has Louv, who also wrote about it—and I loved endorsing what he wrote. People knew what was needed and they told me and Louv. Here's what they said: Parents must get a chance to be more involved; parents who must work need time off work now and then to participate in their kids' daycare; the most important thing is not to convince more companies or the government to provide daycare but, instead, decrease the need for daycare; it works much better to have the caregiving happen in one's neighborhood (like in MCs) so as to preclude the need for playing taxi all the time and so as to create a viable, real, honest-to-gosh neighborhood in which people relate to people and there are close-knit relationships and sharing of nurturance duties; daycare quality needs to be better; we should be able to know more about and even learn to like the caregivers who care for our children. The bottom line: Creating daycares as a way to cover up the symptoms of isolation and overprogramming of kids should be dealt with by fixing the isolation and

overprogramming itself, not by creating institutions that will further our isolationistic tendencies."

The ball sailed over to Mort and he made the catch: "I can't recall the context in which you are using the word 'overprogramming.' Could you elaborate?"

The ball sailed back to Nick: "Of course. Overscheduling. Making up for one's guilt about not spending much time with one's kids by getting them music lessons and getting them into every sport or other extracurricular activity one can find. This precludes kids from really having childhoods. Many of the kids I talked to were 'playing' all kinds of sports but they complained that there was never enough time to play. They didn't consider their sports activities playing. It was just another programmed activity. They apprehensively saw their childhoods slipping away from them. Some parents even programmed their kids' time at home, telling them when to do their homework, when they should do their music practice, when they should go out and play, or when they could see TV. While I can sympathize with parents who keep their kids away from all the sex and violence and bad examples to emulate on the boob tube, I think you can see what's missing here—"

"Choice. And respect for a kid's ability to make decisions. And lack of private time for the kids to play or just be," put in Mort, after raising his hand and getting the ball, which he proceeded to return to sender.

Nick went on: "Exactly! It should be a crime to boss a kid around all day. Or to rob him of his childhood. No wonder so many turn to drugs or alcohol later. And a kid who manages to find time to sit down to enjoy a TV show isn't likely to get much comfort. The mind-programming in the commercials, and less overtly in the shows themselves will be inculcating values centered upon materialistic obsessions and eating junk food and using chemicals of some kind every time the kid feels a slight discomfort. And the programs will elicit anxiety, fear, frustration or anger, but they will not elicit warmth, love, inspiration or understanding. And with the exception of a couple of rare programs, they will not support the playfulness the child seeks nor the types of learning the child needs. The three most heavily promoted product groups in the U.S. are pharmaceuticals, tobacco and alcohol. Only one of these has been thrown off the airwaves. None of them have been dumped from other modes of advertising. Some of the alcohol ads are targeted at youth. And here's another telling comment on our consumer culture: When kids (the ones Louv and I met as we traveled around the country, separately) spoke about alcohol or other drugs, they'd often talk, almost in the same breath, about their sense of isolation within their neighborhoods or schools. This was true of poor, rich, or middle-class neighborhoods. Too much of the childhood environment conspires against the emotional health of children and families. The absence of neighbors and kin is one of the biggies. It's great to see such a complete and yet relatively simple solution to all this in your MC philosophy.

"Between 12 percent and 22 percent of our nation's kids are suffering from some type of emotional or mental disorder. We all know what is going wrong that is causing all this. All of us in this room understand the root causes. But there isn't that much focus on these issues. Counselors talk about academic performance, not emotional well-being. We set it up so that kids will get into trouble and then abandon them in correctional institutions that have no real programs of correction; they're warehouses. There are more college-age black men in jails than in school! I've said that the biggest need is to focus on how we can prevent so many emotional problems from occurring in the first place. And again, this is where you guys excel. You have the most comprehensive strategy for dealing with this issue I've ever even imagined. And it's none too late. The ugly symptoms of family dysfunction are increasing.

"Karl Menninger said that 'If we don't find a way to prevent the painful abandonment, abuse, and exploitation of children, we will spend the rest of our lives building mental hospitals and prisons.'

"Louis Harris, after studying the results of a poll which learned that most people believe that most kids are unhappy, live in inadequate neighborhoods and get poor educations, had this to say: 'It is plain that the American people are ripe and ready for

leadership to emerge that will call upon them for some sacrifice to make it possible for government and the private sector to take action at last on behalf of children.' This was in 1987, and things have only gotten worse since then, except that Clinton at least tried to nudge some of this back in a more benevolent direction while he was at the top. Whether Congress is too gridlocked from the Culture War to act on behalf of kids is another issue. However, as you know, our government is mostly just a big, greedy, corrupt symptom—certainly not an answer. We need grassroots action from the people themselves, not social engineering.

"Let me address your multiple nurturing and alternate nurturer stance on parenting, now. I've said that no one raises a child alone and that those that try this are soon entrapped by loneliness and fatigue, and then the kids are all the more vulnerable to negative outside influences. Parenting is part of a larger process, a larger web. It requires various types of support from this web. Like P.E.T. philosophy (according to Cheryl, again), my philosophy is that kids learn by examples to emulate, and if parents have their own act together, they needn't worry about the values of their kids. Direct teaching of values fails, because kids learn what they see, not what they hear. Therefore the ideal would be a situation in which lots of adults who demonstrate excellent values in their lives are around children as an influence. They can kind of gang up on the negative influences from TV sets and the kids their kids meet that have bad values. I've said that in seeking a better family life for everyone, a family liberation movement's specific goal should be to offer children and adults what they most miss: more positive contact with each other. And to weave this web we'll need a more realistic approach to family life in which there is a much greater amount of personal contact among parents and between parents and kids, a degree of exposure to one another that we have not experienced in recent years. And that is PRECISELY, to the letter, what your MC plan entails, I'm happy to say.

"Polarization is here. People who have the means send their kids to the best preschools in the best neighborhoods, read the best parenting books, send their kids to the best schools and colleges, and keep them safe in cars and houses with alarm systems. Perhaps special security guards are on patrol, courtesy of their privileged living standard. But sooner or later their packed-in-cotton kids are going to have to go out and find out what the world is like. They will, sooner than we would wish, encounter the symptoms of the underprivileged, with all its dangers. Will they know how to react? Will the formation of intentional communities that are actually armed enclaves help us fight off the bogeymen for good? Or will it merely help to polarize and dichotomize our population further into the guarded Haves and the angry Have-nots? How different is this from the security strategy of the privileged Communist Party in the Soviet Union (before it fell apart)? Staying separated off from the common person, these privileged people eventually had the wrath of hundreds of millions of the nonprivileged class to contend with.

"Is the strategy of money-grubbing followed by using one's cash to obtain the latest security devices and a safety patrol and maybe a condo in a protected enclave—is this not merely a stop-gap measure? In reality, isn't it a hopeless long-term solution? Won't it eventually provoke a perverse variation on Marx's predictions, in which the working class rises up with oozies blasting against the owner class? Aren't the gangs in L.A. already emigrating to our quiet, peaceful suburbs to spread death, chemical dependency and violence against a society that wrote them off? Isn't there a clear lack of political leadership in this area and haven't many experts been warning us about this for years?"

Robert's hand was up; and then it was catching something yellow: "I totally agree. If you understand the present well enough, you can nearly predict the future. The Tofflers are experts at doing this. You and I both have seen the potential future coming about in the way you've just stated, and for the same reason: We understand the present and what it means and why it is happening. Ideally, this would be the way our politicians would deliver leadership and guidance. But understanding the present seems to be taking a back seat to making the bucks in the current political scene. So we cannot look to

politicians at this stage. We must look to grassroots transformations. The politicians will follow when they find it unavoidable."

He tossed Nick the football: "Now, about P.E.T. I've learned that example-setting stuff through personal experience. It works! Part of what I know about P.E.T. I got from talking to people around the country and from reading Gordon's books. The other part I got from Cheryl. A lot of people I talked to were skeptical about experts and books. Others were open to these things but regardless of whether or not they read the books they had, they rarely tried the books' advice. Mostly they just used the same methods that had been used on them regardless of how well such methods worked. But even though this type of approach obviously didn't get them anywhere, I did find out that they got a lot out of getting together with each other. Louv even went so far as to say that the best experts for parents are other parents, in *Childhood's Future.* But I also said that parent education is one of the things we really need most.

"In actual point of fact, I admit that other parents aren't actually good experts. What they are is COMMUNITY. In other words, what I was saying is that expert advice is less important than a web of community support for parenting and family. As I believe Galaxians have found out. Once they have that, to add advice as good as what P.E.T. supplied could only exponentially enhance an already good situation. One could hardly meet these people here and then turn around and find fault with P.E.T. Whatever they used as a guideline just HAS to be good. My hat's off to Thomas Gordon for inventing P.E.T. I guess it's obvious that I was trying very hard to get people to avoid trying to substitute advice or book-reading or trainings or anything else for what they needed most: a web of support. The statistics are absolutely conclusive that abuse comes from the lack of this web, regardless of what people read. Parents whom I interviewed who were part of any parent networks had kids that turned out relatively okay, while some of those that didn't have networks fared badly in this respect. This all follows simple logic: increasing resources can almost always help you do something better. And you guys have conclusively shown that parent education plus a web of support is the best way to go for good parenting. And your addition of multiple caregivers and choice seems to have made the Galaxy method, A.K.A. the MC method, the optimal possible nurturing environment. Congratulations, all of you!

"You know, parents that just can't seem to create or join parent networks occasionally find that they can use a computer for a kind of parent networking Louv calls an 'electronic back fence.' One USENET (a bulletin board) forum is dedicated to parenting, for instance. There are probably parent network blogs, Facebook groups, newsgroups, chat rooms, etc. In Louv's book one of his comments about such networking was that such contact, though hardly ideal, is especially helpful if it leads to face-to-face encounters and eventually to parent organizing, or even just babysitting co-ops. I get the feeling he was saying something very PSB-like, but I'm not sure—" Glen's hand pointed skyward, then gripped soft rubber. He proceeded to give a thorough account of the history of the PSB, including Allen's essential contribution, the scoreboard in the magazine, the insight, the invention of the PSB and codes to go along with it, their usage of PSBs in Galaxy for a week, and the plans for PSBs to be a key to MC success. Glen spoke:

"People hate rejection. If they know ahead of time that a person is receptive, then they'll risk connectedness more often. PSBs allow this. Also, if people are feeling the need for company or to express their feelings, in today's world they will often keep it to themselves, drink, find Facebook people who will pretend to care only because they expect reciprocal pretend-listening, or go watch TV and get their mind off it, because they feel that no one has time, or that it would 'put someone out' to have to put up with listening to them. So they go without or get the pretense of caring and listening. Here is how I met Robert: I desperately needed someone to talk to, but there was no one so I simply went someplace to sulk and Robert just happened to be there. People are ready to assume that no one will be there for them simply because there is so little connectedness these days. If only the research didn't specifically say that lonely people looking to get less lonely by going to Facebook end up MORE lonely, usually! Your endorsement speech

video on YouTube and Louv's book said it about as good as I've ever seen it, Nick. The web of relationships and connectedness that covers the gamut from friendships to family to relatives to community is unraveling and the resultant symptoms and misery are everywhere. We need to reweave the web. We need to re-evolve the web. The PSB is software technology enlisted to help with this task. Think of it as evolution in action.

"You said that if computer bulletin boards led to parents getting together then they were a very valuable strategy. PSBs do much more than bulletin boards. They'll be extremely helpful in getting parents and others together. But that's just the beginning. They increase noninvasive, sensitive, desired communications but nearly eradicate unwanted, invasive communications. They allow the shy, the confused, the lonely, and the depressed to become connected in spite of their liabilities, since they have only to find receptive statuses—the bigger the MC, the bigger the receptivity potentials. They allow the potential alcoholics to choose the contact which is what they REALLY wanted instead of choosing the alcohol which they did NOT really want. They allow people to coordinate socially with a new tool that will assure a greater degree of appropriateness in the areas of timing, receptiveness, desire, and noninvasiveness. They will assure greater potentials for self-expression, greater degrees of reaching out and risking connection, and, in short, they will guarantee a much larger, more strong and solid, and more lasting web being woven."

He tossed Nick the ball: "Thanks, Glen. If what you say is true, I can't help but think that I want to get a PSB right away. Of course, you've pointed out in your presentation that even though they'll do some good in non-MC settings, it is the MC settings that will allow PSBs to reach their highest potential as a web-empowerment tool. So I guess I'll just have to wait until I'm in an MC.

"Now, let me touch upon something from Louv's book, something that none of the parents or kids I've talked to really said directly when I talked to them. The feelings of the parents and children and daycare providers suggested this vision: *the transformation of childcare centers into family centers* where kids spend time while their parents are working, but which would include parents and other family members as much as possible in daily operations, teaching, and events. Meetings and social activities for the families involved could happen there. Elder care could be included, and other older people could become part- or full-time caregivers at these centers. The presence of parents and grandparents would increase the adult-to-child ratio and decrease parent and child isolation. Daycare operators could shape and market their centers as extensions of the family rather than as replacements. These centers could plug the unhappy hole left by the disappearance of the old neighborhood structure, and they'd become small hubs in the new web. This is what Louv said in his book. I know you also use the word 'hub' for your childcare and elder-care and meeting place, and for your common space in your MC concept, according to Cheryl, as well as considering it the appropriate name for this common-space lounge in which we are now assembled. It's a good metaphor for connectedness images, isn't it? But let me go on:

"In his book Louv figured that schools and private businesses would like to provide these hubs of connectedness, the latter to attract better employees and the former to alleviate the nurturance gap that so deeply undermines so many teachers' efforts. I doubt if I need to remind anyone here that the biggest reason that education is having such a hard time is that kids are coming to school without their needs filled, without basic security, without the parent-child bonds that are what the family is supposed to be all about. So teachers are having to fill in for what didn't happen at home and academic learning has to be put on hold. This was clear in all the education specials I've seen on the tube, and my own investigations likewise exposed this fact.

"Anyway, if all this sounds like MC hubs that are centered in the community rather than in specific neighborhoods, that's because that's about what I'm saying. You're asking yourselves: Why should people have to taxi kids to a hub when they could have it a few feet away? After all, the death of neighborhoods needs to be cured by re-enlivening neighborhoods if possible. And you're probably saying that the hubs are so much more convenient and safe and family-like if a few feet away, and what about the huge potential

to cut down pollution, grid-lock, and driving by the use of in-the-neighborhood hubs rather than more distant ones? I understand all these reservations, and I agree with them. If one can actually do this the MC way, in most ways it'll be better than the community-centered way. But what if MCs don't happen? And what about people who can't or won't relocate? And what if lots of people can't afford to build hubs in MCs? And, finally, what about thinking of the Louv plan as an interim measure, in case the MC thing starts to chain-react (as Cheryl says), but it does so slowly, and there are many who won't get to have MC benefits unless they use Louv's ideas to tide them over while the MC thing is slowly expanding—what about that?" He tossed the ball to Allen, whose face was thoughtful and whose hand was raised.

Allen spoke: "Waiting for schools, politicians, or business owners to act may just be the only thing some people will be willing to do, right at first. So they'll either have hubs in this way or they won't have hubs at all. The option of the MC hub will require the overcoming of a lot of inertia. But then, before we state that all people will be this timid, so the MC movement launch is in trouble, let's remember what the social marketing wisdom says. The majority will procrastinate and adopt a wait-and-see attitude, *initially.* But not the 'innovators.' They'll adopt, then the intrinsic value seekers, then the imitators, joiners, and so on. The initial impact that gets the innovators to adopt is critical. This will be where myself and other famous and respected people will be needed most to lend credibility and respect to the endeavor. The next stage, whereby the innovators communicate (with our help) how they're faring in their MC lifestyles, is the other critical phase. This should inspire the early adoptors. I'd expect smooth sailing after that, as people will be able to clearly see that a truly need-filling, satisfying, and happy lifestyle is at their fingertips—all they have to do is reach out and grasp it. The rationalizations for procrastination and doubt will have all fallen apart by this time. The question for individuals and families will have become very simple: Do you have any lifewish? or Do you still have any hope about your life or have you given up?

"But the community-centered hub as an interim measure is going to be very useful indeed. I believe a lot of people will adopt this. Some, because it's a step halfway in the direction of the larger, scarier MC step, and this will allow non-innovators to do something while they're waiting for the innovators to issue a verdict. Others will adopt community-centered hubs simply because they find school systems and companies open to the idea of supporting nurturance, family values, and the community in order to retain workers (in the latter case) or succeed better with students (in the former case). In fact, I predict that this interim measure will be so well accepted that it will ultimately aid the acceptance and adoption of the MC ideas. Kind of like they'll put their feet in the water and find out 'the water's fine,' and then, slowly, begin diving into the MC sea, as it were. Nick, what your video and Louv's book accomplished not only dovetails with our MC hopes, it actually opens the door for it. There may even be reasons why a small segment of the population will never go beyond the community-centered hub at all. I can imagine some exceptional situations that might hold people forever at that step.

"By the way, I learned when researching for one of my videos that in the U.S., family centers—not necessarily known by this name—come in many forms and are places for all types of people to gather for myriad purposes. Four types of family centers are identified in the United States: school based, community based, culturally based, and faith based family centers. In some form or another they seem to have been around since 1857, but there was apparently an expansion of them in the U.S. in the 1980s. But, unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be very many of them here, although there are plenty of them in Europe." He threw the ball to a hand-raising Mort:

"Let me address the 'can't afford the MC or the MC hub' issue. I'm a banker, so I may just be the proper one here to analyze this issue. I believe that, whereas this could easily be a temporary problem, it will, in actuality, parallel the 'education or prison' issue. Every dollar spent on preschool education saves $4.75 in later prison and welfare costs, and every dollar spent on immunization saves $10 to $14 in later medical costs, and every dollar spent on AIDS prevention will save a small fortune in medical costs later

unless a cure is found. So simple economics dictates that the wise will opt for the cheap preventative measures rather than the expensive curatives.

"The money and time spent on taxiing kids to daycare or to be with friends, and the money that adolescents and adults spend to drive somewhere to get together with their friends, and the billions of dollars our country spends every year dealing with the symptomology of lifestyle and family dysfunction—all this adds up to a mind-boggling total. The drugs, shrinks, criminal justice system, the prison systems, the pharmaceuticals, the alcohol, the violence, the theft, the divorces, the people and substance abuse—the list is endless. The multi-billion-dollar savings that will be realized each year as an effect of MC adoption will MORE than pay for MC hubs and/or walkways, where desired. The MCs, and I can prove it to you on paper, will not create a problem about Where will all the money come from? Instead, the problem will be a politician's dream: What will we do with all the money we've saved?" The ball slapped against Nick's waiting palm like a rubber-banded stack of million dollar bills.

He spoke: "Hmmm . . . I must admit I never thought of it like that." He looked over at Allen and, with emotions obviously trying to ripple the surface of his composure, asked: "So . . . this MC thing just keeps getting better and better the more you look at it, doesn't it, Allen?"

Allen's hand filled with yellow and he smiled at Nick, knowingly, and spoke quietly: "It's why I'm here, Nick. Do you need a break?" Nick nodded. They had snacks while Wendy played for them. She was in a happy but pensive mood, so her styling followed suit. As usual, people found themselves unable to talk while she played. Nick looked spellbound as she played. There was something inexpressibly lovely that they all received from her playing, and each person instinctively knew that he or she wanted to avoid missing any of it or tainting the beautiful heart-sounds with idle chatter. Once the break was over, Nick decided to continue to deal with issues clarification:

"You know, the baby boom statistics and the advances in gerontology have put us in line for a future predicament: Who will pay for the rising social and medical costs of an aging society? Costs are skyrocketing and yet our ability to handle such problems is diminishing. I see the best solution in terms of having capable elderly as a part of the childcare and elder-care system, whether in or out of MCs; additionally, we need to ensure that our kids have the best possible educational and emotional support so that they will be extraordinarily productive adults, ready and able to compete in the world marketplace and help carry the financial burden of the aging society. As I hear from elders here, I see that elders will be some of the best assets we will have in close encounters of the first, second, and third kinds—they'll HARDLY be burdens to be carried! And . . ." Cheryl had broken protocol and hopped out of her seat and hurried up to Nick's side.

She put her arm around his shoulders affectionately and whispered in his ear: "You said 'we,' Nick." He didn't get it. He looked puzzled. Seeing that, she clarified, whispering again: "You said that 'elders will be some of the best assets WE will have in close encounters of the first, second, and third kinds . . .' I don't think many Galaxians missed it."

At first, he looked like he wanted to simply pass off the slip as meaningless. But then he began to look thoughtful. He looked around at them, then at an extremely beautiful picture on the wall, a picture that Barbra had painted for her Galaxy family. He went over to it and looked only at it. Who painted this? was the question written on his face when he turned around. Several hands pointed at Barbra. He smiled at her and turned back to the painting. She had done it since the MC thing had started; he could tell this by the tiny date in the corner that showed it to be only two weeks old. This, then, was how young people responded to becoming part of an MC movement, with all that entailed. The beauty of the picture reminded him of Cheryl.

He'd never forget what it was like to walk with Cheryl, hand in hand, by the little creek at the local park, with her telling him about the MC movement, the Galaxy, and her feelings about it all. The soul of the girl—no, the WOMAN—was totally unprecedented in his experience. He was inspired beyond words. His heart had melted completely. He

wanted everyone he knew and loved to be touched by this person in this way as soon as it could be arranged. It didn't feel like he wanted to go toward Galaxians and away from those he loved; it felt instead like he wanted to give Galaxian-styled inspiration to his beloveds. The Shakespearean quote “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” came to his mind.

He looked over at Cheryl. She moved immediately over to him and gave him a big heart-felt hug. How did she always know? And then his mind faced the answer: She knew because she was a miracle. But that wasn't the part that his mind had had such difficulty facing. The hard part was realizing that the implications of all this—the incredible, profound, mind-blowing implications—were that such miracles were possible for the multitudes. There could be millions of such people! His mind reeled as he thought about it. Tears came to his eyes. He kept his arm around her as he looked back at that picture. It was as deep as the universe, but as loving as Mother Nature was, the day she decided to grace her planet with intelligent life who could evolve, and someday know such joys as Galaxian happiness. How could anyone paint like this? And Wendy's music—it began dawning on him that this was not the way anyone else's music sounded. Only someone like Wendy could do this. Implications started their merciless onslaught again: Millions would soon play like that, and millions would soon paint like that, and millions of Cheryls would soon evolve all over the world . . . war wouldn't know what hit it . . . peace was as sure as the sunrise . . . love would replace hate . . . and then pollution and starvation and biospheric irresponsibility and racism would all be washed away in a loving wave of catharsis and rebirth . . . He turned to face the Galaxians, his arm still around Cheryl:

“So, Allen,” said Nick, with his heart radiating from his face, “you guys still need me?”

Chapter 21

"There will be a time when our descendants will be amazed that we did not know things that are so plain to them . . ."
—Seneca

"The trouble with people is not that they don't know but that they know so much that ain't so."
—Henry Wheeler Shaw

"The vital question today is not whether there will be life after death but whether there was life before death."
—Marshall McLuhan

"The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."
—Omar Bradley

"The difference between Los Angeles and yoghurt is that yoghurt has an active, living culture."
—Unknown

"Television has proved that people will look at anything rather than each other."
—Ann Landers

"Television is a medium because anything well done is rare."
—Fred Allen

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."
—Albert Einstein

"Many men die at twenty-five and aren't buried until they are seventy-five."
—Benjamin Franklin

"Children despise their parents until the age of forty, when they suddenly become just like them, thus preserving the system."
—Quentin Crewe

"Parenthood remains the greatest single preserve of the amateur."
—Alvin Toffler

"Imagine what it would be like if TV actually were good. It would be the end of everything we know."
—Marvin Minsky

"'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.'"
—Lewis Carroll

The Galaxians, over the next few weeks, drew up a statement they wanted MC launch spokespeople Allen, Nick, and Stephen to share with the world. The text of that statement follows:

The hearts of Americans, even in the midst of modern cynicism, are inexorably aligned with the paradigms of romantic idealism. For many years, our hearts have gone out to the on-screen heroes riding off into the sunset with the happy heroines. Grand dreams of married or unmarried bliss and fond hopes that such dreams will be actualized into happy realities have been behind the emotions that often moisten our vicariously viewing faces. The strong love commitment is in place, so now we merely have to let nature take its course as "love conquers all." Or so we think. All of this dedication to love-filled illusions has a lot of power behind it. We are predestined to such blind-faith dedication by the very fact of our culture's attachment to steep-gradient nurturance with its exacerbated Oedipal strivings and future-oriented romanticism. Out of the myriad of cultural possibilities, steep-gradient nurturance leading to romantic idealism is the course our American culture has taken, for better or for worse.

Mixed in with the tears of joy at a wedding of a loved one are two contradictory beliefs. We know the happy couple will live happily ever after. But we also know that they won't do any such thing. The former belief is blind-faith trust in our culture's instilled mythology. The second is a product of reality raising its ugly head and reminding us empirically just how good the couple's chances are. It is customary for couples to allow themselves to get married or at least make a long-term commitment based upon belief number one. It has also become customary to respond with divorce or break-up when belief number one has a bloody head-on collision with belief number two—a belief that has all-too-recently proven itself to be the only belief bearing any resemblance to the truth in the couple's experience. The end result is the danger that "wedded bliss" will become an oxymoron; and perhaps even "joyous love" will suffer this fate.

It's easy to see, upon closer inspection, that mixed in with the tears of joy, above, are tears of frustration and despair. We dearly WISH that life could be like the culturally-prescribed beliefs based upon blind faith in romanticism and love conquering all, but wishing does not make it so. So our emotions are about strongly wishing that what isn't so will become so, and they're also about our frustrations when our wishing is to no avail. Indeed, are our romanticized sentiments merely high-class whimpering on a cosmic scale —a heartload of sound and fury signifying nothing? In reality, many of the would-be romanticists are not actually in the "joy of happily ever after" mode after all, but in the "if only it were so!" mode instead. In other words, they're frustrated about the realities of life. Hundreds of movies overtly carry the "frustration because the illusions are lies and the truths are depressing" message—few if any have extended reasonable ameliorants. If there ever is a message at all, it's the one-word cop-out: COPE.

Having pondered all of the above *in the pre-MC context*, isn't it intriguing to reconsider these dilemmas in the light of the upcoming MC reality? Perhaps our intuitions that *it isn't right that most marriages will end in divorce* have actually been on track all along. And haven't we always instinctively known that coping is, after all is said and done, mere cultural treading water? Perhaps PROBABLE wedded bliss and joyous love, far from being destined for the oxymoron scrapheap, are destined to become realities for the first time since their inception; it's hard to think of a historical period when such things were the rule rather than the exception—leading one to finally understand that they never were the rule at all. Certainly this assertion is accurate with regards to our culture, past and present. What about other cultures? One can only suspect . . .

The bottom line is that, as a result of the MC movement, such things can become probable rather than improbable. One will even know the type of things to do in one's life to maximize the possibilities for love, marriage, family and relationships to work and generate happiness. It will no longer be an unrealistic crap-shoot in which maturation has the operational definition of learning to cope with disappointment, disillusionment and

depression with the least amount of stress, squawking, and morbid obsessiveness. One will be able to choose to install in one's life the preconditions for happiness and fulfillment based upon what is situationally *needed*, as opposed to "doing one's best with what one has" in a normal, isolated, P.E.T.-less family. And after said installation, one will watch this happiness and fulfillment appear and develop with an encouraging degree of predictability. This is about as close to the idealistic possibility of "choosing happiness" or "assuring happiness" as life will ever offer.

The shift to flat-gradient nurturance will not erase the mythologies of romance and marriage and love from our lives. It will revamp them. The benevolence of these changes will amaze the populace. It will be as if someone strained these aspects of our cultural inheritance through a sieve, and the negatives got separated out and discarded. The same can be said for the win-win, all-positive shift to P.E.T.-based parenting.

The new mythology that will accompany these shifts, not wholly predictable at this time except in its goodness, will resemble nothing so much as the soul of Robert of Galaxy, and his perspective on close encounters of the three kinds. Suddenly the pro-me will be pro-world; the lusters after things will be settling for nothing less than the love, relatedness, and life satisfaction that all the things had been designed to distract them from; and romance will be based on not just the eros of the new, the beautiful, and the possible, but the context of dedicated intentionality aimed at mutual growth toward Galaxy-like potentials of human experience, awareness, and actualization.

Neurotic seeking after symbolic parental figures which one cannot ever have, followed by illusion-shattering collisions with reality, will be blessedly replaced with wise and sensitive seeking after, first, a romantic soulmate with which to experience the gamut of love and meaningful relationship; and second, a person with which one can coexist happily within one's MC family—hopefully the same person; and third, people one would love to be close MC friends with. The essence of the difference between the neurotic entry into disillusionment, above, and the successful, MC-based relationship context is that the first is lie-based while the second is truth-based. The former is about what isn't and can't be. The latter is about what is and will be. The risk will still be there, in either case, as will the excitement. Self-actualization and finding out who one is is a constant challenge—with no guarantees. But the deck will be stacked in your favor in the latter case, and against you in the former.

At first one may detect a possible catch-22. Steep-gradient nurturance has taught people that intimacy is painful and dangerous. Maybe people neurotically prefer the lesser risk of illusional-delusional relationships where each blindly seeks what the other hasn't, isn't, won't, and can't. Perhaps if it all got real it would be too scary. Maybe no one will like anyone sans sugar-coating, mask, and costume. After all is said and done, could it be that people will not find the essence of real people lovable after all? Perhaps people are too far gone to take the step from non-MC to MC.

They're caught up in a vicious cycle where the more they receive steep-gradient nurturance in an isolated family context, the more they become fearful about the risk, pain, and danger of real human intimacy, and the more they avoid it and eventually select a mate from desperation, loneliness and social pressure, even though they know next to nothing about themselves, people, or relationships. And of course then they pass on bumbling parenting and bad examples to emulate and steep-gradient nurturing to their young—still blindly using a normal, isolated family context . . . and the cycle repeats itself.

Won't such alienated people feel they WANT the safety of isolation, the independence of minimal commitments, and the illusion of heroic individualism? Won't the kids of such life-hermits continue to choose peers (instead of family) for safe intimacy and continue to do drugs all through junior and senior high school to dull the pain of their dysfunctional lifestyles? (Studies show that daily marijuana use is now at a 30-year peak level among high school seniors. Half of high school seniors have tried illicit drugs. No

one, for the 4,567,634,579th time, knew what it all meant or what to do about it. Other related studies have not raised any people's hopes either.)

No, people won't let their chance go by. People will choose MCs if given a real chance, because the need for human solidarity is profoundly strong, as is the need to find oneself, learn how to love, experience truly being loved, and find meaning in one's life. As the Galaxy saying goes: "All people really need is a chance."

Rest assured that whereas pseudopeople and pseudolove and illusions and delusions get as stale as month-old bread after a while and wear out their welcome like barking dogs—thereby generating some alarming divorce statistics and putting deeper human hopes on indefinite hold, the core-soul-essence of real people, when given the chance, will always bloom and grow under the sunshine of real love. The Being-love symphony is music eternal; the pseudolove song is but a beer-ad's jingle.

There is about to be a contextual shift—one that will dovetail magnificently with the paradigm shift to an ecological-holistic worldview and the shift to the Third Wave. This will be made poignantly clear when people who continue in tired, inoperable ruts that work against their hopes and dreams are forced to ask themselves "Why am I choosing to do this to myself? When all is said and done, didn't I really WANT my hopes and dreams to come true? Or was I merely hoping and dreaming them as an escape or a time-killer? Have I become so terrified of life, and so cynical, due to deprivations and disappointments, that I now prefer the safety of lifeless stultification and shooting up the drugs called TV and cyber-life, to the risk of real life?" Perhaps the confusion and insecurity some will experience as the MC-related contextual shift occurs will push them to reject all the life opportunities entirely. At least they'll begin experiencing that those around them that avail themselves of these new opportunities become happier, more alive, more compassionate, and more aware. This alone will be a great life enhancement —even for these nonparticipants. Hopefully, most of the people in our American culture will see the incredible potentials that the MC movement contains, and they'll allow their hearts and minds, the love of family, and the love of country to guide their enthusiastic and benevolent responses. It's their CHOICE. That's what the new contextual shift will emphasize, more than anything. People may choose to, while not tampering with the parts of their lives that WORK, enhance the parts that are foundering until they also work. Or people may choose to do nothing—merely watching as others' lives improve and theirs don't, as if they'd elevated TV-vicariousness to a religion. Death and vicariousness are both surely more *comfortable* than life. But both real love and real life require risk, change, connectedness, and commitment. To really live, one must *choose* life. It's the prerequisite for BEING.

"To be, or not to be: that is the question . . ." William Shakespeare

Chapter 22

"Perhaps the only limits to the human mind are those we believe in."
—Willis Harman

"Throughout history, the really fundamental changes in societies have come about not from dictates of governments and the results of battles but through vast numbers of people changing their minds—sometimes only a little bit."
—Willis Harman

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
—Margaret Mead

"The good of the people is the chief law."
—Cicero

"God, to me, it seems, is a verb not a noun, proper or improper."
—Buckminster Fuller

"All that is human must retrograde if it does not advance."
—Edward Gibbon

"Blessed are the peacemakers on earth."
—Shakespeare

Barbra and Wendy tutored Cheryl and Bob for a few weeks and then all four took, and passed, GEDs so they could avoid hassles from the authorities about the fact that all Galaxians quit school immediately, including Will ceasing his college explorations. They had better things to do than education. In truth, being around Galaxy kids was more of an education to the kids they went to school with than the school learning they were getting, if one considers what's important in life. Everyone in the Galaxy Apartments was now 100% committed to making the world work, and THEY'D be the teachers now, not the learners.

They all spent a week that included Allen, Tom, Nick, and Stephen, meeting about what was needed to be done and when and who would fill what roles in the MC Movement project. The result was a 20-page outline that started with immediate needs and progressed to long-term needs and goals. Robert headed the MC think tank, Cheryl was assigned to—what else?—human relations, Wendy helped with that and also composed music for the movies and TV shows, while Barbra was working closely with the art directors in the movies and TV shows and blog art, and Glen was in charge of all MC databases, websites and blogs as well as helping Robert with the MC think tank.

Allen had 70 billion dollars more than he needed, so he invested heavily in the MC project—whatever he, Tom, Nick, Mort, and Stephen decided was needed he immediately footed the bill for. It was fortunate that the initial movie, called *The Forest Through The Trees,* didn't have to go through the process of finding investors for the production, marketing or distribution costs—often a frustrating process in Hollywood. Allen just footed the bills. The same happened for the TV shows—no "pitching" was done. Once the networks learned that no advertisers needed to be found for these shows because ads for MC-related movies, websites, software, videos, blogs, books and other MC TV programs would be the only ads happening and these advertisers were already committed, they were very pleased and cooperative with anything MC people wanted. Naturally, once the big advertisers heard about what movie star Nick and billionaire Allen and business genius Tom were up to, they were so impressed that they tried to sign up as advertisers. Mort, in charge of this area, told them that "Well, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is that until MCs are firmly established or Allen's money runs low, you

advertisers will be turned down. But when the MC Movement is firmly established in our society as a grassroots phenomenon and MCs are popping up all over, your ads will be very welcomed." They'd never gotten such a response before and hardly knew how to take it. So for the time being they settled for ads just before or after the MC programs being aired.

Timing is everything. The initial movie, websites, software, videos, blogs, books and TV programs were made, backed by Allen. Leaks happened in a pre-planned way, orchestrated by Stephen, and the launch day approached.

The day of the blitz finally hit. The movie and book hit first. Big advanced publicity had led up to this point, so theaters were packed. The TV series started a week later, and the videos, blogs, and computer programs were released as well—after everyone had had time to see the movie and read the book. The MC-starting instructions, handed out in theaters and inserted into the books, got people to register for the MC Search and Match, registrations came pouring in like gangbusters. Everyone could see that this was a hot idea—by far the best they'd ever heard—and yet it was so SIMPLE. It was truly the forest through the trees. The best, wisest, and most famous people were all behind it, and big money was underwriting it—it HAD to be okay. So the databases filled up, and Galaxy did its thing as the national coordinating center. There were follow-up movies, spin-offs, more TV series, and other media. An MC magazine was even launched, available in print and ezine.

Then the MC formations began. They started out very tentatively—hesitantly. As if everyone needed to hear "Captain May-I" or "Simon Says," or as if everyone was saying what was said in that famous cereal ad popularized in the 80s: "Let Mikey try it." But after the first few dozen MCs began, people lost their hesitancy and millions of families went for it—innovators and early adoptors alike. Realizing that one only lives once, and that it was possible that true happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction were a simple lifestyle enhancement away, the chain reaction began. Once it transformed the U.S., it spread. It eventually transformed the world.

The End