



Raising the Consciousness of the Human Race

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It is now time that we, the human race, take a hard look at ourselves and start making some decisive choices. Choices about our present situation – what are the core values of our civilisation? – what do we want our future to be, and how we get there?

We are a relatively young species that has moved its way through the stages of hunter-gatherer, agriculture and industrialisation, and is now embracing technology, including artificial intelligence, at an increasingly rapid pace. Yet for all our culture and technological know-how, we continue to demonstrate behaviours that are more associated with a primitive and immature species than they are an advanced and highly evolved one. In this context, ‘highly evolved’ refers to a species whose society and actions first and foremost operate from a foundation of Love and care for self, others and the environment. In addition, it is a species that understands itself as an organism and provides the conditions in which it needs to flourish. The descriptor ‘advanced’ refers to the use of technology that supports and enhances its civilisation, and acts in a harmonious relationship with its environment.

Clearly we are struggling to make this transition. Yet while Love is surely the fabric on which our society is based, to borrow a phrase from the 1960s, ‘We don’t seem to be able to get it all together’.

So the question is, why? – and what is obstructing us from making this much-needed evolutionary step?

Doubtless there are a number of contributors, but personally I think the largest one is actually right in front of all our noses. It is in fact a huge elephant in the room that collectively we have all failed to identify as being responsible for so much of our behaviour.

So what is it? It is our inner need for bonding and connection with each other. This is the elephant in the room, and the core of so much of how we react and respond to each other. And the perceived quality of our inner connection in the moment often determines whether we react positively or negatively as a result. Therefore it not only has a direct bearing on our individual interactions but it also has an effect at the collective level, too. For we have framed our preparation for society, and arranged that society itself, principally in relation to practical, economic and intellectual factors.

The emotional and relational part of our psychological experience has not been encouraged, and is largely excluded from public discourse on any meaningful scale. In my view this is the major problem that is preventing our transition to becoming a more conscious, wise and demonstrably loving race.

Neither do we give sufficient attention to teaching verbal communication and linguistics. This is strange, to say the least, considering how much we rely upon speech to inform meaning and our subsequent behaviour. Therefore it is hardly surprising that we are still violent and immature when we do not actually recognise what is responsible for and triggering many of our negative reactions.

It is a self-evident truism that you cannot resolve issues effectively if you do not know what you do not know. So my proposal is that in order to become a more highly evolved race, the whole tribe needs to be made conscious of the relevance and importance of directly expressing our more vulnerable emotional and relational experience when helpful to do so. In addition, there is a need for encouragement in the use of compassionate, intentional verbal communication, which can play a vital part in creating understanding and mutually beneficial outcomes for all. When called upon, this would give us the tools to start dealing with meaningful day-to-day human interactions at what you could call the 'correct' level.

A big claim. So on what basis do I make it? Let me first give a little background before I elaborate on my hypothesis. I specialise in couples counselling using Emotionally Focused Therapy, am trained in family mediation and have studied dispute resolution as well as pragmatics, which is a branch of linguistics.

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) is an empirically validated form of couples therapy that has published outcome and success-rate data (International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy, n.d.). It helps couples over time recognise that the interactions that are causing them to experience difficulty are in effect a result of distressed emotional and relational bonds.

Repair and resolution of their issues can take place when each partner over time feels secure enough to access and learn to share their vulnerable fears and needs in such a way that it elicits comfort and reassurance from their partner. When this happens it results in a

corrective emotional experience for both, and they feel acknowledged, validated, cared about and, most importantly, loved. This then re-establishes a sense of personal and team closeness, and a climate in which differences can be resolved and repaired.

EFT draws its knowledge base and application from a mixture of humanistic, person-centred, systems theory and, last but not least, attachment theory. Attachment theory is a relatively new part of the psychology field, and our understanding of our own psychological nature, that was initially developed by John Bowlby, a British psychologist and psychiatrist around the mid part of the twentieth century. In its earliest focus, it very much centred on researching and understanding the needs of infants for caregiving (Bowlby, 1988). However, latterly this expanded from the 1990s into the development of an understanding that all human beings, from cradle to grave, are biologically wired up to function optimally when we have access to a consistent and secure emotional and relational experience with significant others. For most infants and young children, their parents fit this role as the primary caregiver. In adults it is typically our spouses and partners, although family and friends still play an important part for most of us.

So this gives a short introduction to my professional background and current work, and references the emergence and development of attachment and its importance to the human being. Now let me expand my view as to why the human race collectively becoming more emotionally, relationally and verbally skilled and connected can make such a big difference to the evolution of our species.

First, it is obvious to me that what I am witnessing in the reactions and responses of couples to each other, and what helps them reconnect and fix their issues, are not just confined to romantic relationships. In many ways couples are a microcosm of human relating in general. Bonding is bonding, and it turns up everywhere and in any kind of human interaction or relationship, however brief or fleeting. You are walking down a busy pavement and someone you never knew a moment before bumps into

you, and when you turn around expecting an apology and they swear at you, your inner ‘attachment grid’ just lights up in a millisecond.

So our bonding response is universal (Johnson, 2019), and what is more it is constantly appraising our moment-to-moment experience of the world and giving us feedback. This can largely be said to be unconscious until some interaction with the outside world is meaningful enough to alert us internally and it intrudes into our conscious awareness.

When we understand this, not only do we see that over seven billion human beings around the world are daily experiencing attachment cues but that their behaviour and responses are regularly being primed by them. Unfortunately the style of communication, and the reactions and responses when we feel distressed, are often highly ineffective and unintentionally may lead to tension. This is nearly always because we are unaware of, or deep down do not feel secure to directly reveal, what we are vulnerably emotionally and relationally feeling.

So we rely on coping mechanisms and protective surrogates that hide that vulnerability. These include getting angry, attacking, criticising, disagreeing, defending, rationalising, stonewalling, intellectualising and making attributions which are often experienced as judgemental by the other person. These judgements include what the late Marshall Rosenberg, a psychologist and international mediator who created the compassionate form of verbal communication called Non-Violent Communication, referred to as ‘tragic expressions of unmet needs’ (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 149).

The more insecure, disconnected and misunderstood at the emotional and relational level each feels, the more both resort to intensifying the use of the very tools that are digging a deeper hole for them both, and getting them stuck in an increasingly rigid dance. These types of interactions are going on second by second all around the planet, and they are a major contributor to disconnection and the

overall chronic unhappiness that the human race is undoubtedly experiencing at the moment.

So let’s now look at the problem in more detail in terms of how we might begin to start addressing it. The main issue is that the human race tends to speak intellectually in situations when it would actually be more helpful for us to talk directly about what we are feeling. Specifically, what we are feeling emotionally and relationally. In its place, we have become adept in mediating emotion indirectly through advocates and surrogates such as explaining, expressing opinions, and making points and interpretations of what we and others say and mean.

The human race has evolved within a system that has been doing this for thousands of years, and this method and style of response are largely automatic and second nature, operating as a self-reinforcing feedback loop. Unfortunately, it alienates us all from a vital part of our experience and life-force. This is problematic because it is excluding the determining ingredient necessary to enrich our lives and make meaningful connection possible.

So to counter this and to borrow a phrase from therapy, we need to begin encouraging ourselves much more to ‘unpack’ and share the specific emotional and relational part of our response when it is helpful to do so (Johnson, 2019) – to move it from its current relative invisibility in the shadows into the full light of consciousness where it can be revealed and perceived.

So how are we going to do it? Well initially, it seems to me that there are two obvious paths. One comes from top-down information that’s shared through mainstream education and additional means. The other is the modelling of behaviour and communication throughout society that creates and demonstrates emotional and relational connection. This is likely to come from a number of avenues, including stakeholders who have expertise in these and other related fields, thus filtering it into the public arena and discourse through a combination of demonstration and osmosis. In particular, this more comprehensive personal

communication needs to be encouraged in all the institutions that deliver our society, including government, business, science and the media. There can no longer be a division of consciousness where the human qualities of love and consideration are sectioned off into our individual personal relationships, and the rest of society operates from a different value system.

In terms of mainstream education, it must surely make sense from an early age in an age-appropriate way to give the tribe the tools they need to live life optimally. Children would learn directly, amongst other subjects, about relationships, emotions, attachment, intentional verbal communication, dispute resolution and mediation. Learning about these vital life experiences and skills would be valued highly in the curriculum, and play a much larger part in the syllabus than they currently do. Incidentally I do not see this as the actions of an interfering ‘nanny state’, but those of a wise tribe seeding and supporting its members with the tools that are necessary for a full expression of life.

Information and education would also appropriately be ongoing and available through mainstream media and the internet by those professionals who have expertise to offer it, just as knowledge about health, nutrition and other parts of human life is already being disseminated in this way. In my view, for too long we have confined valuable basic information about life that would benefit the tribe within individual specialised disciplines and compartments. It is time to make that information available to the whole species in an appropriate way, and those gatekeepers have a vital role to play in disseminating that knowledge (as, of course, do those in other fields that are important to the human race but which are not part of the subject matter of this specific article).

Naturally there are going to be many challenges in how this is delivered and received, as it is a considerable change from the current status quo. However, when individuals experience in the running of society a more considerate and appreciative regard for their psychological experience and how they feel, I believe they are far more likely to naturally self-regulate their

social behaviour and values in step with those of a highly evolved species. Put the plant in the right soil and conditions, and it will flourish.

So in summary, the human race has been suffering for too long from a lack of consciousness and awareness about parts of ourselves that are vital to our optimal functioning as a loving and highly evolved species. This is most clearly characterised by our human need for bonding and connection. It is time for us all to be encouraged to tune in and express our vulnerable emotional and relational wants and needs as vital contributors of our moment-to-moment experience and expression of life.

The style and method of seeding and integrating this into human society needs to be both top-down and bottom-up. Of course it is a huge task to change and adjust the second-nature response of a whole race, and it will inevitably be gradual, have many challenges, and will take time.

However that task now calls all elders, gatekeepers and vision holders of the tribe to collectively stand up and pro-actively share our knowledge as the time has surely arrived to ‘Awaken the Species’ (Walsch, 2018).

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About the contributor



Nick Haynes is an EFT Couples Therapist in private practice and has a YouTube Channel called ‘Nick Haynes – The Best Kept Secret’ (see <https://tinyurl.com/yd2xmw6y>). This offers educational information about relationships and verbal communication as well as inspirational material for the future of our species.