

Interbeing

Paradigm Shift – Charles Eisenstein

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Talking Points

- ❖ We are all apart of the same story. The Story of the People, the Story of Interbeing, the Age of Reunion, the ecological age, the world of the gift.
- ❖ Eisenstein gives us the principles of the new story: (71)
 - That my being partakes of your being, and that of all beings. This goes beyond interdependency—our very existence is relational.
 - That, therefore, what we do to another, we do to ourselves.
 - That each of us has a unique and necessary gift to give the world.
 - That the purpose of life is to express our gifts.
 - That every act is significant and has an effect on the cosmos.
 - That we are fundamentally unseparate from each other, from all beings, and from the universe.
 - That every person we encounter and every experience we have mirrors something in ourselves.
 - That humanity is meant to join fully the tribe of all life on Earth, offering our uniquely human gifts toward the well-being and development of the whole.
 - That purpose, consciousness and intelligence are innate properties of matter and the universe.
- ❖ The basic principle of the new story is that we are inseparable from the universe. Our being shares in the being of everyone and everything else. Why do we hurt when we hear of someone else hurting? Or damage to nature, like mass die-offs of the coral reefs? It's because it's happening to us, our extended selves.
- ❖ Eisenstein says, "our desire to help is not coming from a rational calculation that this injustice or that ecological disaster will somehow, someday, threaten our personal well-being. The pain is more direct, more visceral than that. The reason it hurts is because it is literally happening to ourselves." (71)

- ❖ “The science is beginning to confirm what we have intuitively known all along: We are greater than what we have been told. We are not just a skin-encapsulated ego, a soul encased in flesh. We are each other and we are the world.” (72)
- ❖ It seems our world and the majority of people in it are in denial of our interconnectedness. Few of us would actually do harm purposefully but when you think of the connectedness of our actions in the world it’s there.
- ❖ How are our possessions made? What type of working conditions do those workers work in? What kind of footprint are we leaving behind?
- ❖ It’s hard to imagine we live in a “sea of pain.” I myself feel pretty good right now, as did Eisenstein when he wrote this article, but I’m also consciously carrying the weight of the truth.
- ❖ Is our consumptive behavior just a way to escape the pain that is everywhere? “Running from one purchase to another, one addictive fix to the next, a new car, a new cause, a new spiritual idea, a new self-help book, a bigger number in the bank account, the next news story, we gain each time a brief respite from feeling pain. The wound at its source never vanishes, though. In the absence of distraction—those moments of what we call “boredom”—we can feel its discomfort.” (72)
- ❖ Did you feel any contempt or smugness when Eisenstein described people “running from one purchase to another”? This is also separation. He describes “The transition we are entering [as] a transition to a story in which contempt and smugness no longer have a home. It is a story in which we cannot see ourselves as better than any other human being. It is a story in which we no longer use fear of self-contempt to drive our ethics. And we will inhabit this story not in aspiration to an ideal of virtuous non-judgment, forgiveness, etc., but in sober recognition of the truth of non-separation.”
- ❖ Our desires are substitutes for what we really want. Advertisers play on this all the time: sports cars = freedom, brands = social identity, pretty much everything = sex, etc. Eisenstein also says you could view “sports hero worship as a substitute for the expression of one’s own greatness, amusement parks as a substitute for the transcending of boundaries, pornography as a substitute for self-love, and overeating as a substitute for connection or the feeling of being present... even the behaviors that seem to exemplify selfishness may also be interpreted as our striving to regain our interbeingness.” (73)
- ❖ What about the endless pursuit of wealth and power?
- ❖ The wound of separation is unique for each of us and we each seek different ways to cope. We cannot judge each other for the way they choose to do so.
- ❖ “The new Story of the People, then, is a Story of Interbeing, of reunion.” (73)

Resources

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