



EMBODY

By Sossity Chiricuzio

Perspectives

Embody - We need to learn

by Sossity Chiricuzio, PQ Monthly

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The planet cries for us. I've heard it since I was a small child, quiet in the night. The planet cries for us because we are so broken. Because we lash out, and gobble, and posture, and are enduringly stubborn. Insistent on our own pleasures, our own power, our own image.

Selfish.

Entire species lost. Water full of plastic and waste. Mountains shredded into minerals. Skies burning away.

But we like our engines. We need to get there fast. We like those toxic colors and scents cooked up in the lab. We've gotten accustomed to the flavors from every corner of the world. We prefer to eat only the soft centers, but still don't share the rind. We prefer it disposable. We prefer to do it all our way.

We can't be bothered to gently explore, gathering the medicine and food. We can't be bothered to seek out visions, preferring explosion filled fantasies instead. We can't be bothered to remember to say thank you. Not to the creatures we consume, nor the plants. Not to the dirt, or the wind, or the water, or the stars. Not even to each other.

Of course, when I say 'we,' I mean human beings. But we do not create ourselves equal. We do not all forget, and plunder, and mistake autonomy for authority. We do not all settle for this violently bright playground we've tried to turn the planet into.

'We' is tricky.

The opposite is 'they,' and we know where that leads. War, famine, rape, crusades, torture, slavery. We've done it. We still do.

We find reasons. We invent them. We turn them into religion, and politics, and tradition, and commerce. There is always a reason to take what we want, no matter who else needs it. No matter the sacredness, or the science, of leaving it be. No matter the value, inherent, that never sought our covetous approval.

We that takes is almost always white. We that takes is almost always wealthy, or at least comfortable. We that takes is almost always able bodied; is almost always male; is almost always the spitting image of what has been forcibly defined as normal. We that takes is already calling me a traitor, a radical, a troublemaker, for saying so.

We don't like to hear the truth.

We need to learn.

We have an enormous imbalance of power and resources and rights. Of quality of life, of safety, of access, of respect. And being white means that I am part of the we that takes, born into it, no matter how much I push back against it, no matter how I try to break the lens of privilege. I cannot forget it, or be complacent in it. I cannot refute it, or gather good deeds like gold stars. I have to recognize it, watch for it, own it, and move forward in unlearning it.

And that's the least I can do.

The world needs more. We need more. We need to learn to actually be a part of the growth, to value transformation more than comfort. We need to be ready to actually share, and not just the scraps. We need to release our white knuckle grip on control and let ourselves be absorbed into the ferment. To shine like one star in the sky and not a neon sign. Standing alone as monuments to ego and bootstraps is killing us. Those ideas are false idols. Are make believe. Are poison.

We have to commit. We have to transform.

There are humans who are spending their lives trying to survive and dismantle our corrupt police states and political systems; to protect the planet and the creatures on it; to knock down walls of ignorance and hate. Who are trying to save us all from ourselves. Almost always people of color. Almost always poor or working class. Almost always survivors of generations of oppression and exploitation. Almost always vilified and dismissed and locked up and sent away if not outright murdered.

As for the rest of us? Donating money is something, but it's not enough on it's own. Having friends that are different than ourselves is something, but it's not enough on it's own. Voting liberal is something, but it's not enough on it's own. Petitions aren't enough. Yard signs aren't enough. Occasional volunteering isn't enough.

The world is trembling under the pressure of our taking. The very ground under our feet is shifting in

pain. We are the breaking point.

Can we survive ourselves? Can we finally expand our definition of 'we' to all humans? Can we stop gouging lines in the ground and calling them logic? Can we learn to find joy in giving, and do it even without witness or praise? Can we come to understand that none of this belongs to us anyways?

None of this belongs to us.

We have taken the gift of life and turned it into an ugly contest, and 'we' never intend to let 'them' win. This is not living. This is consuming without compassion, and scrambling to survive. Somewhere between new awareness and old knowledge is a way to actually be 'we.' Somewhere between science and simplicity. Somewhere between our gut and our heart.

We've given too much credence to our brains, twisty and layered and indoctrinated as they are. We need to pay attention to the hollow places inside us and learn to recognize resonance again. We need to learn how to define human as another creature on this planet, and not the image of god. We are not made sacred by standing on top of everything else. We are barely sacred at all anymore.

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