

Warriorship for Deepening Green Citizenship

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Why use the word warrior ship rather than activist, campaigner, advocate, militant, objector or insurgent?

A warrior is vigilant to protect and defend nature and its ongoing support for our basic needs of life. To us it comes down to how specific our challenge for change is; the methods we use to effect change; how much we still have hope and see possibilities and how dependent are we on others response to sustain our actions.

We choose warrior ship partly because of what it has meant in tribal times and because it is presently owned by the warriors of war. Most importantly because it requires a depth of commitment and courage to face the conflicts we are faced with the truth about the need for transformation beyond the moment, for the future of a life beyond survival.

The warrior ship now needed involves a synergy between the personal attributes and qualities of a person with the circumstances that enables transformative action that is life enhancing. There are numerous ways of being a warrior that centres on courage to stand up for and defend life in all its many expressions. It is not one-dimensional, it isn't focused on warfare rather seeks its elimination and the motives that give rise to warfare.

The limitation of being just concerned citizens is that it tends to only defend individual rights and fulfill responsibilities. Compassion for the wounded, the poor, and refugees isn't enough unless it galvanizes the necessary

resources for challenging the structures that create it. It requires a warrior mentality and emotional courage to challenge the social structures and powerful vested interests rather than picking up the pieces, cleaning up the mess and comforting the damaged and deprived. A new kind of warrior ship based on courage and compassion is now needed that is not born of anger or despair but from a multi generational mountain top viewing that sees what is coming as much as challenging what is. Such long term seeing is inevitably unpopular and runs contrary to the motives and short term vested interest view.

So why do it? Because having a depth of understanding and caring demands it, being privileged enables it, and circumstances are calling. Maybe it comes down to being authentic to one self and ones love of life, especially for our grand children's generation who have no say in shaping the world they will inherit. How now do we speak lovingly and authentically to them if we haven't done what we are called to do?

A critique of old warrior ship

Warriors will always be the few, seeking to change the many.

When we think of warrior ship we think of first people's warriors armed with spears and bow and arrows defending their tribe or village. In more recent times of armies of grey and blue lined up in savage battles and now of warfare from a far, with button pushing of pilotless drones striking out of the silence: A few warriors dead, surrounded by the many civilians, and few knowing the difference between them.

Warfare is no longer between opposing armies in trenches, it is against the planet, against us all, impersonal, abstract and an insidiously invisible enemy. Argued as just wars, with the hindsight of history their clarity of passion in the

moment, quickly fades. War is futile, counter productive; wasteful in ways no one can afford and requires tremendous call upon our capacity for forgiveness, for making enemies into friends. While the death rate has been declining, those who participate will suffer for life from the trauma. War itself is the enemy and distorts our ability for any real relationship with ourselves, each other and the resources we so wantonly use in the interests of destruction.

Globalization and earth consciousness is growing and so is the resistance to warfare, especially in the west. This is evidenced by our declining capacity to cope with even a few losses in comparison to earlier wars of mass slaughter. The Prime Minister attending the funeral of each Australian soldier illustrates the vulnerability to public challenge each time government's rush to support alliance partners.

Radical reconstruction of warrior ship for life

Today there is a growing need to focus on warrior ship for the human species verses the nation state or tribe. We now increasingly have an earth consciousness as well as a national one, even if we are rapidly losing our local village commitments that provide a sense of place, communal intimacy and acceptance This is undermining our will to fight each other and reveals more sharply its madness.

A reconstructed warrior ship guided by Jesus, Gandhi, Mandela, King, should be our guides not an army of generals. Such a non-Anzac heritage approach calls for no less courage, probably more and also a consistency and ethical synergy between the means and the outcome. These guides call us to not lose sight of the humanity even reasonableness of the opposition, at least from their point of view. This involves a capacity to put oneself at risk rather than threaten the other, while challenging them to change and reaching beyond violent, reactive responses.

A warrior's work is to take risks to change citizens thinking, feeling and actions. They are not mere reformers of the moment but act as transformers until we have a culture that is in harmony with the needs of the earth. We need courageous warriors now, as there is a 'hardening' and increasing diversion from needed values in business and social interactions, the change needed is more radical, more transformative.

There are moments for warrior ship every day, for our relationships, for your self, for the earth: Moments to find the courage to speak, to act and not to act when needed and to know the difference. There are big moments that decide big outcomes and there are small moments every day that calls us to find courage, take a risk and reach a little higher, a little deeper. Such as:

- Learning from the courage to experiment with being a warrior for your vision.
- Courage to be exposed and challenged as a learning path to your evolution, to say yes and pick yourself up and say yes again.
- Courage to say no, define boundaries around your mission, your self, when to say enough is enough, setting standards within which you will work.
- Courage to live with and work with the gaps between vision and practice, where you are now, where you were and where you're working to end up.
- Courage to be open to making mistakes and putting the time and research into design, planning our projects so that our mistakes they teach us but don't kill or our projects.
- Courage to openly work with others /self. To be effective depends on our depth of self knowledge- our personal strengths and weakness, an understanding of our weak points and limitations, growing edge, waiting

for the right the moment, if not now the time will come,
the wheel does turn and again.

Warrior ship it is about standing up as a mountain as much as it is about methods of doing so. It is as much about self-managing the warrior as it is challenging the other. Finding ways of being alone to reflect and draw on ones beliefs, roots and wisdom in order to face the pain of conflict, uncertainty of outcome or consequences of our actions!

Warriors are the storm troupers for deepening citizenship by confronting personal areas of denial and the vested institutional interests and their false legitimacy. Warrior actions force these vested interests to come out of the shadows, to defend their position, versus leave it as the established taken for granted order. The coal mining industry is a good example, as now it is seen as polluting and dirty and not so long ago it was a taken for granted monopoly and a necessity. Terrorists do this in an extreme way by using dramatic indiscriminate violence to awaken awareness of injustice that of course contradicts an ethical means and ends synergy.

Bringing together concerns for ourselves with those for the Planet.

How to bring together concerns about ourselves with concerns for the world? How to grow in a way that the interests of oneself are in harmony with the interests of other people and the planet? We want to care for both; we need to, yet we often experience them as separate and in conflict with each other. The linear response that 'I will care for the world and when its ok I will look after myself' or 'when I have got myself together I will then look after the world' is a demonstration of a fundamental disconnect. As a

consequence both will suffer. Whatever belief or dimension we start with, it is essential that we address this disconnect.

Warrior ship needs to leave behind the idea, that energies are spent for something, that is separate from oneself, that one cares and acts only for other people. To not engage in the wellbeing of the earth as an ongoing and integral expression of us, is to join a frog slowly boiling to death without awareness or response. When we begin to act for our larger ecological Self, then it matters to us, how we act, as much as what we act for.

For example, a white community organizer in a Fitzroy crossing Aboriginal Outstation interviewed commented that, Aborigines make it quite clear that supporters should not expect thanks as reward. If you are here, it is because you want to be here.

What is the catalyst for involvement? Where does our desire come? Why the commitment to a particular cause and not others? Is it out of compassion for our own suffering, which has generated compassion for the other? Many of those who act for the long haul have experienced suffering themselves, which has engendered an empathetic identification with others. Such suffering can also act as a bridge across differences such as wars which see mothers on both sides sharing a fear of sending their sons to war.

Do we act on behalf of others because identity, meaning, even happiness comes with not being self-centered? It appears that we need the other person to provide us with the opportunity for self-transcendence. This may enable us to be connected to a larger world through which we can then look back at ourselves and see who we are and our place in the whole picture. It may be as a consequence of such self-awareness, that the person you help is no longer perceived as entirely separate, but part of oneself. Actions then

originate from what needs to be done to be in integrity with oneself. Bridging across the differences then becomes the journey.

Personal power, cooperative action and nature connections

How can we find the strength and wisdom for a lifetime of struggle for transformation? Can victory be in the path not in the act, decision or outcome? Do we need heroes that shine brightly and who are prepared to inspire and models the caring and actions required to sacrifice for the larger purpose? Do these heroes help us to find our courage?

If we put our heart, mind, body and soul into warrior ship without acknowledging the benefits for us, it can lead to burnout. For example, our activism is more likely to become sustainable if it includes fun and a sense of theatre. If Self-interest is the dominant partner, isn't paternalism the inevitable outcome?

Warrior ship for the earth mirrors in our own life struggles. However good our actions may be, we are rarely the self sufficient, self-actualized individual, the super Self. We are rarely a Christ figure or a Martin Luther King; they probably weren't perfect anyway.

We are therefore forced to be reflective and take time out. This involves looking at our perspective and opinion in any conflict before looking at the other perspective. Inner work such as meditation and therapy are part of ways to empower us to face up to our contribution to the divisions. Recognition of our imperfections generates humility that protects us from being the sacrificial self as our source of identify and recognition. Such humility is essential in order to not only listen but to hear others, human and non-human.

Individuals usually seek change when emotions and/or patterns of behavior are sufficiently troubling to demand clarification and modification. Alternatively, an event may force change, such as the loss of a significant person, unemployment, or serious illness. A lesson from the fatalism of the east is however about acceptance of our limits to personal change. When and how to accept and when and how to challenge are vexing questions. Views will always vary on how far we can shift our personal patterns. These views are at least partly dependent on where we are in our life cycle and our experience in the struggle for change.

Present strategies for personal change are geared towards an excessive degree of personal responsibility with insufficient reference to social circumstances and one's relation to place. Look within first but don't stop there. You don't have to be perfect to be an effective warrior.

In the long term our capacities to be warriors are dependent on personal stability, which involves more than knowing one's self; it also involves experience of other realities, which strengthen one's resistance to unwanted realities. To build our strength we need to know and honor our roots. From where do I come from? Where is home? How have I been shaped by the places that matter? However, we ask too much of the individual on the one hand and too little of society on the other and if you believe in a third hand then too much of the gods. Sustainable warrior ship is more possible if we recognize that not all is in mine, or yours, or our hands; there is another generation before and after us and most importantly there is the earth's feedback responses.

Resistance also depends on continuous social support from significant others. It is not for naught that solitary confinement is used to break resistance. Resistance can be as simple as switching off the media onslaught. We need to know our capacity for resilience in response to damage and

to use strategies for personal and political regeneration and mobilization. Such as, symbolic acts of planting trees, making connections, loving, rediscovery of hope, engaging in rituals that celebrate life.

Action begins with the recognition, that the individual is part of a larger collective effort. Finding passion and will for rediscovering our larger self within Gaia involves learning to see beyond our cultural individualism that pretends that each is only an individual rather than being an expression that is connected to the diversity of all. Our uniqueness is but a grain of sand in comparison. Finding a bridge to a larger consciousness of Self is dependent on support that comes from the regeneration of human community.

Our social circumstances and our relations with Gaia can be powerful energizers for and support for change. A proposition is that most of us are unable to sustain standing up personally and politically to the dominant paradigm if we are dependent only on human group support. We know just observing trees, enjoying gardening, having pets is healing. Through encounter with powerful naturescapes of sea, desert, mountains there is the opportunity to be reminded of what we are fighting for and to garnish strength in the face of the slings and arrows of misfortune and deliberate acts that undermine ones will and passion to care.

Human influence has not disempowered such places and so they are able to offer a counter balance to excessive reliance upon humans. For example, in an interview with a long standing activist, who when asked how he has been able to sustain his warrior ship, he affirmed the need to regularly go to the mountains to recharge his batteries and reaffirm his calling.

The earth has tremendous power to regenerate in spite of our destructive efforts - just ask the mushroom growing under

the concrete pavement or your local pest or weed. We need to re-learn trust in Gaia's power and in life's ability to empower the future beyond the efforts of a particular group in a particular place and time. This position does not advocate that we don't have to do anything; rather it is an antidote to the other extreme of doom and gloom.

Healing the self and healing the planet is one process. Processes that involve time with oneself are only one part. Importantly it also needs to encompass time with significant others and intimate encounter with powerful nature experiences. These three ingredients are interconnected and are limited in their scope without the others. They have been artificially separated by our society and within our consciousness. To develop a meaningful and intimate synergy with nature requires time out from the daily alienating grind. The power for change is in making connections, as much as in deepening the understanding and valuing of identity as interconnected with the natural world.

For us to become ecologically sustainable will often be a gradual process that for many is painfully too slow. Transformative change is nevertheless inevitable, chosen or not.

Warrior ship for transformation:

We are threatened by too many humans wanting too much, leading to efforts to be dominant without the checks and balances that are essential to ensure the “rights” of all species and ecosystems are taken into the decision making process; At present human will is directed towards seeking to be dominant by restructuring the planet and ourselves and thereby what it means to be truly human.

The need for transformative change for the planet and our species is great but the pressure for change is presently insufficient to enable the needed reconstruction of our cultures, institutions and governance.

To support the planet includes the struggle to sustain humans as part of the earth, as indigenous, as partners still honoring our animal status and our evolving uniqueness. Will we become disembodied and “de-brained” eventuating in the need for machines to do the work of our brains?

The beauty of the need for partnership is that it releases us from an excessive sense of responsibility, which suppresses our capacity to act on what we know to be right and just. This is true for working with other humans as well as with the life forces of the earth. Humility with power is the dance to engage with. Human warrior ship with the earth continues the work of deep ecology activists of John Seed and Joanna Macy. To think like a mountain, to get inside the skin of an emu is vital to release us for being trapped only in our own skins; individual, family, racial, ethnic, class and species skins.

Sensing that we are acting in synergy with our species needs and earths demands is a great support for courage to face the resistance, the denial and hostility that is ever present. It is not enough to know our personal heritage of courage, which has helped source our impulse to find the courage.

Who can I look to now, to support me or us in our seeing, in our action? Sustainable life protecting, giving courage is rarely individually sourced. We need group support. We need to draw directly on the earths' responses to choose our moments when we will have the most impact on our species consciousnesses i.e. to use nature's extreme events and their consequences, to focus on their cause and our solutions.

Moving out of despair into empowerment is often the hardest. It is good that we don't know what is coming nor what hope will be created by our creativity, so let us not suppress our future, our grandchildren's future by merely projecting present trends into their future.