
Lifestyle Changes / Materialising Spirit in 2009

Contributed by David West
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David West's twin brief essays take the reader out of the humdrum trap of the materialist and mental states. His personal experience and discoveries in the first essay seem to ring true universally. In the second essay, written specially for Culture Change readers, David is able to take us beyond mere survival and it's worrisome calculations to enable us to discern between the doable and the truly worthwhile.

Lifestyle Changes

My lifestyle has changed since my luxury days as a managing director of a computer software company. Each day since then seem to have been spent in disposing of baggage, both physical and mental. The epitome of this self-imposed deprivation was the time I spent living alone for eight days in a cave, with the only company being about a dozen bats.

The locals believe that this cave contains a monster, so consequently no-one ever goes near it, even though it is only about an hour's walk from the local hill-tribe village where I lived. I had arranged for my wife to prepare food once per day, and for one of my village friends to deliver the food to a location a few minutes walk from the cave. The first night, my faithful dog stayed with me, but he rejoined my Lahu friend when he returned to the village after delivering food on the second day.

I spent the entire time there in meditation and doing yoga. I learned a great deal about myself, not the least of which was the importance of certain things in life. I learned that without the benefits of society, in this case my wife and delivery friend, I could not eat. I learned that as long as one is sheltered from the wind and rain, then accommodation is not too important.

But after a couple of days, overcoming the sheer boredom was the biggest problem. I had intentionally not taken my spectacles or any reading or writing materials with me, so that I would not be tempted by my old habits of constantly reading and researching. After I had strolled around the locale and absorbed all there was to absorb, I could find very little to occupy my mind. And therein lay my secret - my mind - constantly demanding to be occupied by something, anything really. My body demanded food and sleep, and sometimes exercise, all being short term things that soon passed, but my mind never ceased its demands.

Learning to control the mind is a wonderful thing which most people never even consider. This is the great power of mediation - hatha yoga helps us to control the body, and meditation helps us to control the mind, after which a marvellous thing happens - we begin to discover the missing part of our being - the spirit.

I believe that the human race will move away from the toys of today which constantly keep the mind occupied, discouraging the realisation of spirit, and that the collective human consciousness will become more spiritually oriented.

This is the essence of Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*. By concentrating the mind on precisely and only on what the body is doing and noticing, we avoid wandering off into hypothetical situations where we find all of our fears and worries. These fears and worries become constant, and prey on our mind like vultures. In the absence of fear and worry, we become more open, and more able to sink deeper into the true reality.

Once we have recognised the reality of our spirit, we also realise the true reality of so many other things. Like the abject failure of science, whose precepts are so dogmatically followed, that ignorance of the spirit leads us to spend most of our time in a belief system that is so flawed it is almost worthless.

Having crossed the hurdle of "spirit recognition" we are able to move on in huge leaps and bounds as we familiarise ourselves with our new surroundings - a completely different world hoves into view. We realise the failings of religion, as something that was very valuable in our earlier stages of evolution, but no longer suits non-dogmatic thinking.

Slowly but surely, we begin to understand that there is absolute and total organisation around us, disturbed only by man's lack of knowledge and wisdom. We begin to gain an insight into a truly awesome power that is so far beyond the mind of man and his computers that it creates a sense of humility in human insignificance.

We realise not only that there is significance in every event in our lives, but by careful meditative analysis, we begin to realise what that significance is.

We realise why we were born.

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Materialising Spirit in 2009

(Specially written for Culture Change)

We live in a material world, or so we are led to believe.

But we also inhabit two other worlds, the mental world, and the spiritual world, and unfortunately the latter has been ignored in the hustle and bustle of an overactive material world.

The Culture Change that we are beginning to experience is caused by the spiritual world suggesting that it has its fair share of prominence.

As in any change in a finite world, we have to remove something before we can add something else. We are now witnessing the removal of certain aspects of our material world, demonstrated daily on a scientific basis by the devaluation of all assets in the material world.

If we wish to examine the material world to find areas that may be of no long term benefit to the advancement of the human race, we could start by observing that a "human being" is in fact a "spirit being human". Our physical body, the

source of recognition of our material world, was manifested by our spirit, which through a lengthy and complex procedure involving parents and spirit guides, materialised our physical body and our not-so-physical mind.

Further observation reveals that the era that we are presently leaving has provided us with the evolution of the body-mind link, whereby we have practised using our body to manufacture the concepts of the mind. Whilst there are an infinite number of new concepts that could still be manufactured, we are able to remove emphasis from this area, because we have proven our technical and physical capabilities to ourselves and each other. We no longer need to attempt to manifest every good idea into reality, but can instead be far more selective about the ideas to which we dedicate our energies.

We can draw up a list of priorities, and seriously consider only projects that lie within that priority list.

Our personal priority list could be founded on our basic choice between service-to-self and service-to-others. More and more people are choosing the service-to-others path. There is a need for some kind of organisation to maximise the benefits created by all these people who are prepared to dedicate their lives, or at least certain proportions of them, to helping others.

Maybe members of the Culture Change organisation could consider this need!

We foresee that any list of priorities created by the service-to-others group will include aspects like sustainability, global benefit, designability, parity with nature, desirability, practicality, and lastly expense.

If such a priority list was available, it would be of considerable benefit to any persons who are in the process of life change, which, knowingly or otherwise, could quite easily be all of us.

In terms of sustainability, our first thought will always be centred on survival, not only of our present material body, but also those of our families, friends, societies and the human species as a whole.

If every person who is searching to find themselves is able to access some guidelines provided by those who have gone before, then there will be a greater possibility of achieving a more unified effort. Once desire is unified with effort, then physical materialisation of that desire is inevitable, as proven by the advance in technology and the many creations during our dying 'modern' era.

Anyone seriously considering their personal situation must first decide that they are determined to change. There are only two choices - either to change, or to stay the same, and the latter defeats all known natural laws - so we may as well align ourselves with nature, and welcome the change.

Having done that, the availability of a set of guidelines to help us to determine precisely what we would like to change will be of tremendous benefit.

We can start our self-examination by observing that the early morning alarm clock, the modern era's answer to the

cockerel, disturbs whatever we are doing, and causes us to begin taking conscious action. If we all remain conscious of our actions, all day, every day, we will all behave more often in a manner beneficial to society.

We will desist from our antisocial habits. If we find that we are involved in the promotion, manufacture or service of anything that is not beneficial to society, we will make plans to adopt a more sociable activity for our energies, and the negative aspects of the modern era will gradually disappear.

This will generate a ground-up Culture Change that benefits flora and fauna as well as the human species. Our home planet, sometimes known as Mother Earth or Gaia, will be able to heave a sigh of relief as the stress of the modern era subsides, and nature's efforts to advance become the central directing force for human efforts. Unbelievably rapid progress will be made as soon as man's efforts are aligned with those of nature.

This transition is described in many ways in many revered books, and is prophesied by more than a few of our semi-extinct ancient cultures.

So we see that individual effort, no matter how small becomes a catalyst to huge change.

This leads to an urgent need for the development of priorities of the new human culture, because factors of free will mean that we must be a part of the design of our own destiny, and Changed Culture.

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David West's previous articles for Culture Change are

"Let's not look upon the demise of our financial base as a bad thing"

and

"Socialism with Chinese Characteristics"

David West was born in Nottinghamshire, UK, and has lived in Asia for the last 20 years. After starting and running a successful computer business in Manchester, David drove to Thailand in search of a more meaningful life, and found it. He has written two books, Running a Small Business, and Find Yourself, and now teaches English to students in Kunming, China.