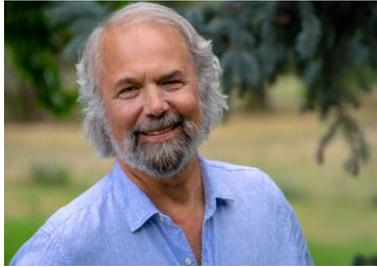


REVERSING THE TENDENCY TO FACTIONALIZE

PULSE OF SPIRIT
MAY 22, 2019



DAVID KARCHERE is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

It can be shocking when you realize how much of your personal experience is determined by the culture in which you are living. The first time I traveled overseas I was a 16-year-old going to Israel for ten weeks. That experience of itself was eye-opening. But the real shock was coming home. It was 1969 and most of my friends were taking drugs of various kinds. I could see a culture with fresh eyes because I wasn't so immersed in it. It was shocking.

The other experience I had was going to Thailand in 1999. I could not believe how different a culture could be. In simple daily interactions love flowed easily in a natural way. When the Thai people spoke it was like they were singing to each other.

We find ourselves in the middle of a culture and it can feel like we're trapped in that culture, victimized by all the facets of it, whether it's taxation or the medical program of the day, or whether it's simply the media.

Even the daily interchanges that we have with people are culturally determined.

Buffy Sainte-Marie is a singer-songwriter from the Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. These words are from her 1964 song "Universal Soldier." They speak of the realization that the individual is caught up in world culture related to war.

*He's five feet two and he's six feet four,
He fights with missiles and with spears,
He's all of 31 and he's only 17,
He's been a soldier for a thousand years.*

*He's the universal soldier and he really is
to blame,
His orders come from far away no more,
They come from him, and you, and me,
and brothers can't you see
this is not the way we put an end to war.*

Such a powerful song! For me, it evokes the passion of my youth, which is inflamed today.

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The Vietnam War was raging at the time, and when I first heard this song I didn't know the answer to the question she was asking. There is a profound challenge in the song. What causes war?

It is so apparent to me, and perhaps to you, that we as human beings have this tremendous tendency to factionalize, to split apart, and it happens in all kinds of ways. And it happens with good well-intended people, as well as with people who perhaps are not so well-intended. It happens certainly at the national level, and that can result in military conflict. The United Nations can help to mitigate this tendency, but we can't say it has resolved it.

Religion starts with something so profound and so beautiful—one person's spiritual awakening that they're looking to share with the world. They look to share that profound realization and the realization becomes a teaching. Those being taught teach others and, before you know it, a teaching that was born over here is in conflict with a teaching that was born over here. Ultimately, there is only one truth to awaken to: a truth of you and a truth of me. And I don't care what religion you are, and I don't care what country you're from, and I don't care what the color of your skin is. What makes you go, and what makes me go, could only be one thing. We're not so terribly different.

There's one reality that makes us. And yet, we not only have different religious faiths.

There is a fracturing within each faith. How many different kinds of Christianity do we have? There is conflict, and even war among Christian denominations. And then there are factions within the factions. This is the Western version of religious factionalism. There is an oriental version as well, with conflict among and even within Buddhism, Hinduism and other spiritual paths.

That's factionalism at a religious level. Anyone who has sought to lead any kind of movement or organization finds exactly the same thing—well-intentioned people coming together for a cause that seems righteous, with a tremendous tendency to break apart.

We have the movement of awakening consciousness in the world today. There is a tremendous centrifugal force at work in our human experience, even in this movement, and we are in some way part of that.

We do, so easily, become part of the factionalism of our culture. It is in American culture. It is in Western culture at large. But actually, it's global in scope. You'd be hard-pressed to find a culture of people around the world who don't have that same tendency to break apart.

So what to do? We're in the middle of factionalization. What is the answer? To reverse it, we have to begin with an attitude of tolerance for other people who are different from us. Beyond tolerance lies understanding, so that we are not just

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tolerating people who are different. We understand their differences. Tolerance and understanding of other people who are different from us can lead to appreciation.

I not only tolerate you; I not only have some understanding of where you're coming from, I appreciate how you are different from me. There is something lovely about it. And, after all, the world would be a pretty boring place if everybody was like me!

Tolerance, understanding and appreciation are so important. But I do not believe those attitudes alone are sufficient to overcome the tremendous centrifugal force at work in human culture that results in the factionalizing of our human experience. What is the counterbalancing force that brings us together? We might imagine that centrifugal force, of itself, isn't bad. But surely there has to be another force at work in culture, or else we will constantly be spun away from each other.

We've appreciated and spoken of the qualities of kindness and care and soft-heartedness, and I do believe that's the beginning of the remedy for us as human beings. The counterbalancing force begins with a softening of the heart, and yet a softening of the heart to what? To each other; to the world around; even to ourselves... But the soft heart has to be offered to the power that brings us together if that power is to be unleashed in human experience. We have to open to the one thing that we have in common, to the One Reality that unites us, which is the

common source of our life. We are brought together by the realization that there is something bigger than you and me, out of which we are created and of which we are a part. It is that reality that gives us life and calls us together.

The biblical parable that tells the story of factionalism is the story of the Tower of Babel. *Let us make us a name...* The story is humorous when you appreciate the silliness of human ignorance. This is a story of ego—a sense of self that excludes the source that we share in common—creating the human sense of separateness.

Join me in the call to open to that one thing that is the inner reality of us all—to soften to it, to crack open to it, to let it in. This is the beginning of the only remedy to factionalization. That One Reality has not only to come into us for us to know oneness and bring oneness into the world; it has to come out through us into the world. That One Reality is Universal Love.

Do you think that One Reality might have something to say in this world? It is the central axis that can hold us together as humanity. That One Reality is our potential. It is our inherent reality. In religious terms, it lives as the reality of God in heaven. That reality does not have the ability to end the factious human experience as long as it is only *up there*, as long as it is only a potential. It has to become more than an invisible reality to

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open to, whether we call it God, Allah, Source, the Tao, or anything else.

We as human beings were made of consciousness—consciousness that has the capacity of selfhood and the possibility of breaking apart. And we are breaking apart all over the place. But that same capacity of consciousness could be an instrument through which the one thing that brings us together could come out into the world in bold and powerful expression. How about being a voice for that? A factionalized human being can't do that. You can't do it if your life is all about you. And I understand that we all need to put food on the table and have a roof over our head and take care of our physical needs. But if you're living a life that's defined by your physical and emotional needs, and that's as far as it goes, you can't be a voice for what brings us together. You can't be a voice for Universal Love and you can't avoid being the universal soldier. Truly, we *are* the universal soldier unless we open to the One Reality that unites us, and then give it expression in the world *for real*.

When some number of us shuck off factionalized consciousness and bare our souls to the larger truth of where we came from and what we are made out of, and then express that boldly and powerfully, courageously, with great heart, into the world, there's an answer. There is a force that counterbalances the centrifugal force in human experience.

Let us not only be eager to accept the gift of life itself. Let us accept the reality of where it came from and the intelligence of where it came from. It came from a reality of Being that is already one. And as we crack open and break open to that, and then we express ourselves from the standpoint of that one inner reality, we are living a different life. We are part of the answer.

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Service from the Dome Chapel at Sunrise Ranch

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