

# AN INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT  
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**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.

While the rest of the world watches with great concern, the United States political discourse has devolved into a highly polarized bout of name-calling.

When there are people who know their unity, one with another, which is ultimately the oneness of all humanity, then those people are in position to take powerful unified action in the world. What we have just witnessed in the American presidential campaign is clearly not people gathered with a sense of unity. Certainly, there can be creative vigorous public debates as well as private ones that exercise the real issues that we face as human beings. But when the debate that ought to be a dialogue and a discourse devolves into divisiveness and the kind of name-calling and display of awful human character we have seen, something has gone terribly wrong.

We are clearly far away from having the kind of power that we ought to have in the world as America. America has military power. Military power is a poor substitute for the power of

credibility, the power of honesty, the power of Universal Love known among people. It is a poor substitute for the power of truth—the power of saying what’s true and speaking logically about the facts. Something is clearly missing.

Practically speaking, how do we as human beings put into practice what is so missing in this public debate and all too often in the private interchanges that we have? What’s necessary from us if we’re to have a real experience of unity and the reality of Universal Love easily shared among us?

There is a very simple skill that is applicable in all our lives and which so often goes totally awry. It’s going awry, certainly, in the American election, but not only there. That skill is the simple ability to carry on an intelligent conversation.

You might think it would be simple enough. And yet on the public scene it’s so horribly missing. And in fact, the media lauds the ability of a

candidate or their surrogate to pivot—to artfully change the subject when a topic comes up that you don't want to talk about. Personally, when someone “pivots” in private conversation, I am apt to think that they are being evasive and perhaps dishonest. I don't think more of them—I think less of them. And it's no different in the public debate.

Of course, the media itself plays its part in the game. Instead of inviting the candidates' ideas about the future of the country, they confront them with accusation and expect them to defend themselves. It is the game of *gotcha* and *the pivot*. Is that an intelligent conversation? Does that help public policy in America? Does that, in any context, help us find our way as human beings?

As we look around the world today and we look at what's happening to us as a race, shouldn't we be highly incited to come together to have an intelligent conversation about our future? I can imagine that several thousand years ago, or even more recently, it wasn't quite so apparent that we're sharing a common destiny as humanity. It looked a lot more like my well-being was dependent on fending off the person in the next valley, or the next continent, or perhaps conquering them. But is that kind of behavior today not horribly antiquated? We are facing global issues that could wipe us as a species off the planet—issues like nuclear weapons, desertification and global warming. In light of those issues, can't we say that the kind of public debate we are seeing is evidence of a vestigial, antiquated mode of thinking and an antiquated, outdated way of seeing the world?

I say humanity has to grow up. That kind of behavior is out of our past as human beings—it's when we were younger and less mature as a race. Today, we need greater maturity as a race. That is what is called for and what is in fact beginning to emerge in our experience as human beings. That new maturity is available to everyone, ready to be embraced.

We can certainly embrace it as we participate in public political debate. But most of us live the great majority of our life in a way that's not related directly to politics. Our lives are led in the context of exchanges with people every day—at work, at home and as we move about our community. In those exchanges, we are either modeling what we're trying to create in the larger world, or not. We're either showing the way, born out of our own personal experience and our own personal practice in the everyday, or we're buying into an antiquated, immature way of thinking, feeling and behaving.

Here is a question that I believe is worth asking. For me, and all of us individually: *What is our ability to carry on an intelligent conversation, a conversation that isn't about me being right and you being wrong?* That it isn't about proving a point? It isn't about putting another person down or trying to elevate oneself. It isn't a conversation in which someone else's opinion is being immediately dismissed as unimportant.

A conversation implies two very important components: speaking and listening. And yet all too often it seems like the ability to truly listen to another person has been lost. So few people truly

listen—not only to what someone else is saying but to what is behind what they’re saying, and who it is that’s saying it.

I’m happy to report that I had such a conversation on the airplane yesterday, highlighting the fact that any interchange with another human being creates that kind of opportunity. It was the kind of conversation that could have gone horribly wrong.

I was given a middle seat on the plane. You know that if you have the letter *B* in your seat assignment, it may not be a good thing. As it turned out, there were two young women, one on either side, Jordan by the window and Sarah by the aisle. Sarah was a young woman going to Moody’s Bible College in Spokane, Washington, and she was a very deeply believing traditional Christian, a young woman who was looking to set her life path based on her faith.

The conversation turned to *And so what do you do, and what is your life about?* Perhaps, like me, you’ve been in conversations like that with religious people, which didn’t go well. But in this case, there was a quality of listening, back and forth. There was a quality of real interest in the other person—what they were thinking, how their life was going, how their faith was leading their life. And so we had an intelligent conversation. We had a chance to talk about what we believe, and how it’s the same and how it’s different. We walked away knowing something about each other deeply, feeling the heart of the other person. We walked away in a spirit of respect and honoring of the other person’s path.

That can be rare in the world in which we live.

Something comes along with having an intelligent conversation, something that is necessary for it to happen, and then generated out of it. It is the field of one heart between two people. That happened for me in this conversation with Sarah and Jordan on the plane. If you go into a conversation with an open-heartedness and an intention to offer, through the conversation, a warm embrace of the other person, the likelihood of having an intelligent conversation is raised dramatically. That is so largely missing, not only in the public political debate, to which we are a witness, but in the private exchanges between people every day.

Author Nancy Kline has done wonderful work on creating a thinking environment, documented in her book *Time to Think*. One of the most important teachings she offers is to show appreciation for the people that we’re with. She’s found that groups of people think better together when they appreciate each other.

Appreciation is a matter of the heart, but it is also a matter of what we say. *I’m grateful you’re here today. I’m grateful for the opportunity we have to create something together, to think together. I’m glad that you landed up on this seat next to me in the airplane and we had a chance to talk.*

When we share deep heart with another person, we are connecting with the one heart of all humanity. An intelligent conversation is not only fed by that heart, it also increases the experience of it.

Carrying on an intelligent conversation is practical work that's necessary for anyone who wants to bring the power of oneness to the world today. Spirituality by itself, without the ability to carry on an intelligent conversation with other people, does not provide for the future of humanity. Spirituality that isn't practically applied in our interchanges with other people lacks substance.

What I find is that even well-meaning, well-intentioned, high-minded spiritual people sometimes don't get this. And so they self-sabotage, either individually or together, because what they often don't realize is that these antiquated ways of relating to other people are patterned into our psyche. In a moment when we're not thinking about it, those patterns take over, and then we become like one of the candidates in the American presidential election in our individual lives. The tone of our voice changes; the quality of our thinking changes. We begin to think that we're right and they're wrong.

It's being put right in our face that the old, adversarial mindset doesn't work. We should cease expecting it to work, I think. I'm grateful that there are people around the world who are waking up to this. We, as people who are becoming an embodiment of humanity growing up and maturing and coming of age, have a chance to come together—not trying to come together in the context of polarized national political parties. The only way we come together is in a context that transcends the polarities of the world in which we live. We come together when

we acknowledge and honor the context in which we are already together.

We are coming together as human beings in the context of our common global destiny. We are coming together in the context of our common spiritual origin.

I'm here to relate to anybody, anywhere, who is ready to come into an intelligent conversation at a higher level than the polarities of the world in which we live; anybody who is willing to acknowledge our oneness as humanity, understanding that we each have our own unique part to play in that oneness—anybody, wherever they are, of whatever religion, nation, color, background, or even belief.

We are maturing as a race, and it's just in time. Crisis accelerates maturity if we let it. We are being drawn together by Universal Love, the creative power of the universe.

When people come together and function in this way, it is a game changer. It is a world changer. Finding ourselves drawn together in this way, we can feel the profound uplifting, transforming power moving through us. But that doesn't mean that as I sit here now I could tell you just how the world will be changed. I don't know what is going to happen. But that doesn't mean it is not happening.

I've seen enough of the evolutionary power of humanity at work to know that's true. We don't know who's going to talk to who, who's going to meet who. We don't know how all that's going

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to shift and change and come together in this next level of our collective maturity. But I know it *is* happening and it *will* happen. We're not meant to know all the ins and outs of how it's going to constellate. We're meant to know that by carrying on a simple intelligent conversation with the people in our lives, and then building the field of that intelligent conversation, we are coming together in one field of spiritual reality. We find we are already connected in the spiritual

dimension of our Being. And then we are in position to take unified action from that place; not necessarily the same action all at once. But harmonious action that carries the great power of oneness into the world.

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