

JOIN A REVOLUTION OF TENDERNESS

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT
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JANE ANETRINI is a coach and teacher of Primal Spirituality. She assists people to find their own inner wisdom, strength and vitality. Jane is a Doctor of Chiropractic who has been practicing for over 35 years.

These are critical times. Many people are asleep and don't realize all that is out of control or falling apart. Some people are partially awake and are fearful that anything they do may make things worse, so do nothing. Anyone who realizes we are in a crisis has the potential to do great creative things. Are you waiting? A friend once told me, "Don't ever waste a crisis!" Critical times call for greatness. They call for change and creative thinking.

Often individuals don't believe they are the ones to make a difference. They believe there are no other options. Or they are standing there, waiting for the smarter ones, the greater ones, to step in. "I'm not as gifted as he is." "I don't know how to do what is needed as well as she can." "I will look arrogant if I step in and help." "I will wait for someone else, who is better qualified."

Meanwhile, no one is doing anything! Which may be why you are there—you are the one!

The crisis may be that no one showed up to make breakfast, or it may be that your community is trying to tear down another rain forest to put in a shopping mall. You may be just the right one to do the job. After all, you are there seeing the need. Stepping in could be a powerful act.

Recently Pope Francis spoke these words:

We have so much to do, and we must do it together. But how can we do that with all the evil we breathe every day? Thank God, no system can nullify our desire to open up to the good, to compassion and to our capacity to react against evil, all of which stem from deep within our hearts. Now you might tell me, "Sure, these are beautiful

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words, but I am not the Good Samaritan, nor Mother Teresa of Calcutta.” On the contrary: we are precious, each and every one of us. Each and every one of us is irreplaceable in the eyes of God. Through the darkness of today’s conflicts, each and every one of us can become a bright candle, a reminder that light will overcome darkness, and never the other way around.

To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naïve and ignore the tragedy humanity is facing. Hope is the virtue of a heart that doesn’t lock itself into darkness, that doesn’t dwell on the past, does not simply get by in the present, but is able to see a tomorrow. Hope is the door that opens onto the future. Hope is a humble, hidden seed of life that, with time, will develop into a large tree. It is like some invisible yeast that allows the whole dough to grow, that brings flavor to all aspects of life. And it can do so much, because a tiny flicker of light that feeds on hope is enough to shatter the shield of darkness. And then there will be another “you,” and another “you,” and it turns into an “us.” And so, does hope begin when we have an “us”? No. Hope began with one “you.” When there is an “us,” there begins a revolution.

Powerful words. “No system can nullify our desire to open up to the good, to compassion and to our capacity to react against evil, all of which stem from

deep within our hearts.” No system can nullify your desire!

“A single individual is enough for hope to exist, and that individual can be you.” The revolution happens because enough people say yes to being that individual. He goes on to say:

The third message I would like to share today is, indeed, about revolution: the revolution of tenderness. And what is tenderness? It is the love that comes close and becomes real. It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen also to the silent cry of our common home, of our sick and polluted earth. Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart to comfort the other, to take care of those in need.

Tenderness is the language of the young children, of those who need the other. A child’s love for mom and dad grows through their touch, their gaze, their voice, their tenderness. I like when I hear parents talk to their babies, adapting to the little child, sharing the same level of communication. This is tenderness. . . . This is the path that Jesus himself took. He lowered himself, he lived his entire human existence practicing the real, concrete language of love.

There is a crisis in this world and it requires a revolution. A revolution of tenderness. A revolution of caring. I think this is such a powerful message. As we awaken to the crisis, we realize that there have been parts of us that might still be asleep. There may have been times where we haven't cared or have been afraid. When we are partially awake we start paying attention, but at times we become timid or we become more cautious. We may decide not to do much of anything for fear of hurting or making a mistake or doing it in a way that we will regret in the future. We may be afraid of caring too much.

One must take a step. I can guarantee you're going to trip over your feet, and you *are* going to be a beginner. And you will learn how to be yourself and bring your gift in a powerful, magical way. But you can't do it by doing nothing. You have to participate as the self you are, bringing what it is that is yours to bring. *"Each and every one of us is irreplaceable."*

There are times when I know there are people who are better at things than I am, and so I've held back, thinking, "This person should really step in, because they would be *amazing*." And so I do nothing, or I wait until this person *realizes* they're the amazing one. I've been in those situations where that amazing person never steps up and nothing happens. No one does anything. And if I am the one there, realizing that there's something that could be happening, I might very well be the one who has something to deliver. That doesn't mean

this other person might not have done it better or been more amazing, but no one's stepping in to do something, so I have to reveal *myself* by doing it. When I do I bring my credibility, my magic, and my gift into the situation.

We used to have a choir here at Sunrise, and there was always at least one soprano who was better than me. At one point in time that soprano moved, and I was thinking, "Finally, I'll get to be the lead soprano." And then some little girl decided to move to Sunrise Ranch. She had an *amazing* voice, so it was not to be. She was a powerful singer. And I realized how much I was holding back my own voice because I believed others were better than me and my voice didn't matter as much. It was the beginning of my learning not to be afraid to be a beginner, to participate fully as myself in the present moment. That led to my realizing I may not be the best one, but I am the one saying yes, here am I.

Anybody besides me try to learn how to water-ski in their forties? Whoa...yeah, that's a graceful sight. Beginning things when you have not done them before, at any stage in your life, will not look graceful. You will not be an expert on your first try, no matter what it is. I can tell you now, I never got up on those skis. But I tried; I always wanted to know how to do it.

As the Pope said, to start a revolution it takes an individual with possibility in their heart. When is the time to stop holding back? There

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are many people who are frightened because they are half awake. How do you inspire them to wake up and give their gift? Try a little tenderness. I've had more than my share of blessings come by the words of another person who didn't even know their impact. They said the right thing at the right time that cracked open my heart and let me feel safe, cared for, and inspired. Many of those people I didn't have a chance to tell that I know there is sovereignty in each of us that is backing these gifts that we have to bring. Not only backing it—it animates the revelation of ourselves through the giving of it. If we're not bringing these gifts, we are not bringing ourselves; we are not offering the opportunity for change in the midst of the crisis. The revelation of yourself is a gift and begins the revolution of tenderness. We become the means for what is possible.

I know I have missed many opportunities in my life to bring tenderness. It may feel risky to do so, but what is clear to me is that it is a greater risk not to. In every circumstance it is a powerful act to bring tenderness and compassion. You can bring your unique gift with tenderness and compassion. The revolution starts with you.

If we're holding back because we feel somebody could do it better or we don't want to do any damage, the revolution will fall on the shoulders of those bringing their gifts. Your gift is unique, precious and important. It may be the thing that turns the crisis around. The revelation of yourself cannot happen without you stepping into your world and bringing your gifts.

Jane Anetrini
janetrini@emnet.org
Sunrise Ranch
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