



Think OutWord

A Peer-Led Training in Social Threefolding

“I’m the same as I was when I was six years old...
and oh my god I feel so damn old (I don’t really feel anything)...”

- Modest Mouse

Dear Friends,

Often I’m astounded by what passes as common sense today. A few weeks ago I heard a leading environmentalist say that large-scale geoengineering (changing the planet to offset climate change) might be necessary because science has shown that “behavior modification” (changing ourselves) is almost impossible. ...Really? Have we not changed radically over the centuries and millennia? And at the personal level, am I no different than I was as a child?

What is worse than such a static, unchanging image of man is the image itself. Everywhere it is assumed that man is little more than a ravenous, self-interested consumer and that his natural state is as Hobbes described: “nasty, brutish and short.” Indeed, this is the foundation on which our economy is built. But it’s wrong. Man is not only interested in himself and when he pretends to be, other people starve. This is a dangerous game. In reality, Brotherhood is the guiding principle for economic life. Sure, the profit motive is real, but we must be clear: it’s merely a driving force. Ideals are different. Our forefathers knew how power and privilege gnawed at the soul of man yet simultaneously they recognized as “self-evident” the twin truths of Freedom and Equality. Today we must do the same with Brotherhood.

How? Definitely not by empowering the government to take over economic affairs. Instead, by clearly seeing man’s whole nature and the dynamic life processes at work in all communities, by coming together out of true caring and friendship, and by finding the strength to create living forms that can embody our evolving ideals. Basically, by changing our own consciousness and relationships – by “being the change we want to see in the world.”

This is what Think OutWord strives to do. Our main focus is on young people because we’re young and we see our peers becoming jaded and cynical. There are already too many heads in the sand. We can’t afford to let anyone else nod off into the dreamy illusion of “there’s nothing I can do...”

If you've received past letters we've sent (or our quarterly eNews) then you have a sense for how we work. Till now we've focused mainly on education, organizing 4 to 6 training sessions per year on different aspects of Social Threefolding. We did the same this year, though the quality of the training has become noticeably different as we begin to understand things better and experiment with new forms (you can catch a glimpse of some of those sessions in the accompanying Year in Review).

By far the most important change this past year though has been within the group itself. Three people (Sarah, Peter and I) started the training almost two years ago. This past year eight friends joined us to form a Core Group that can collectively carry this impulse. These individuals are extraordinary (hopefully we'll have short bios on our website soon). Finding our way of working together has been by far the most important aspect of the training for me.

The other major development this year is the creation of a paid position within Think OutWord. The Core Group recognized that to steward this work properly we'll need to financially free up individuals to take up specific aspects of it. This year I applied and was hired as a part-time Creative Director, for which I'm receiving a small stipend. This is obviously awesome news for me. That said - I'm planning to pass this position on within two years. What is important about hiring me, I believe, is that it shows other young people that they can find the support they need while still working for their ideals, that they can commit themselves to a spiritually-informed activism and the world will recognize its worth and support them.

I thank you for all your support - past, present and future. If you would like to pledge support for the entire year please let us know what amount you would like to give and how often. And if you want to know about what we're doing this upcoming year and when please sign up for our eNews on the homepage of our website.

Thanks again,

Seth Jordan
(on behalf of the Core Group)

Please make checks payable to "Hawthorne Valley Association", with "Think OutWord" in the memo, and send in the enclosed envelope. All donations are tax-deductible.

*For more information visit our website at <http://www.thinkoutword.org>
or contact Seth Jordan at seth@thinkoutword.org.*