

Setting Limits on our Sociopaths

By Walter I. Zeichner

Why is there war? Why is there greed, hatred, cruelty?

“Why?” is no longer a question we have the luxury of entertaining. What we must accept, because there is so much evidence, is that people are susceptible to greed and cruelty; that through circumstance-driven psychological imprints, emotional starvation or trauma, and for additional reasons too numerous to describe here, some people do not develop a conscience. There are humans who are underdeveloped in the areas of ethics, compassion, empathy. Far too often these people are the ones who are attracted to holding power over others. If we consider world or corporate leader within the last 200 years, including contemporary presidents, generals, prime ministers, CEOs etc., we can see that the majority of these people (mostly males) are prime examples of underdeveloped humans.

Consider that those in power, those moral/spiritual diminutives among us who design the daily slaughters in our perennial wars; those people are in the grip of bloodlust and must be stopped. It is not acceptable for the world to be ruled by the less evolved, and it's time to make that change. Deciding who is and is not fit for power is an age-old dilemma which can easily become a source of conflict. Rather than get stuck on that question in this article, let us proceed with the idea that in order to hold power over life and death, one must first demonstrate empathy, ethics, conscience, and willingness to be in service. Political candidates did, at one time, campaign on these issues. Now, if we look at people like Hilary Clinton, John McCain, Rudy Giuliani etc. we see that they are campaigning on exactly the opposite: their willingness to kill, to appropriate resources, to rationalize and justify anything in the name of ideology.

Take, for example, Dick Cheney, who went with some of his friends to hunt captive birds this week. He and his dozen or so chums killed nearly 500 birds. Hunting has a long and honorable tradition when it comes to feeding one's family and community, but endless wanton killing of fellow creatures is an example of bloodlust, suggesting an inability to empathize with life. If a man's pastime is killing, and his job puts him in the position to kill, he designs and institutes policies of death and destruction day after day for years, do we not say this man is mad? Why would we allow such a person to have power over anyone or anything? Better he be locked away.

What about the people who enable this madness, those craven greedy powermongers in the halls of government and business; are they not equally unfit to hold power? Shouldn't they be held accountable for their part, their cowardly abdications of responsibility? How many “leaders” in our world and throughout history are/have been in the thrall of bloodlust?

Consider parents with an acting-out child. Do we not hold the parents responsible for containing that child? Are, then, we as a society not responsible for containing these bloodthirsty conscienceless people and preventing them from doing more harm?

Impeaching Cheney and Bush (in that order please!) would be an example of our society taking responsibility for these acting out “children” and containing them. That is, after all, part of what the legislators in Congress have sworn to do when taking their oaths of office. That is part of the responsibility most of those in Congress have abdicated. And yet it is critical if some kind of democracy is to be salvaged, or forged in the US, that we set limits on the immature and dangerous. That’s ostensibly why we have prisons.

So far I have only discussed the ramifications of these issues on a national level, but the same concepts hold true internationally, and most important, the entire biosphere is now at stake. If we continue to allow those among us who are least fit to hold power to destroy the environment for the sake of profit, then we shall all (or mostly all) perish, leaving behind a wasteland for our children.

Take heart! We are all able to help bring about changes which will allow humanity and life on Earth to thrive once again. The more people refuse to cooperate with these underdeveloped so-called leaders of governments and industries, the more people choose to take their own power in hand and make solutions by changing how they live, how they treat others and Earth, the more people refuse to allow resources to be pillaged by corporations and governments, the more we refuse entry to the halls of power to the likes of most current politicians, the better chance future generations stand of viability and thriving.

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