



“Pulsed by Earth and Universe toward a new stage of growth, we are waking up to the realization that we can become partners in creation . . . As ancient peoples have always known, the story is bigger than all of us yet desires our engagement, our love, and our commitment.”

---Jean Houston

Dear Friends of New Possibilities,

I am inviting you to participate in one of the most important programs in the world today. It is a program that prepares you to be part of a new profession – that of Social Artistry. It meets this year from July 28th until August 6th 2007 in Ashland, Oregon, and will be one of the most powerful, evocative, useful and wickedly entertaining programs you will ever experience.

Let me tell you how this program came to be.

Many years in the field of human development and social change have allowed me access to leadership in many countries and organizations. Now, my role as Consultant to tUN Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme permits me and my associates to bring state of the art development strategies to many developing countries. My purpose has always been to enhance human capacities in the light of social complexity so as to bring vision, innovation and creative solutions to social issues at every level of society. Thus I have worked with presidents and paupers, leaders of major corporations and the local spokesman for a village of lepers. I have trained astronauts and worked with untouchables in Southern India. This is to say that the field of Social Artistry which I represent is one that is inclusive and relevant to all members of virtually all societies.

My work with leadership all over the world has convinced me that too many of the problems in societies today stem, in part from leadership that is ill prepared to deal with present complexity. This is not just a matter of inadequate training in the realities of global change, but even more tragically, a lack of human resourcefulness, leaders living out of a field of awareness that is both limited and limiting in their abilities to deal with the world as it is today. Worldwide, societies are crying for assistance in the transformation of their citizens, organizations and institutions. But sadly, the preparation of leaders who can rise to this challenge is hampered by training that leaves the greatest of the students natural resources unexplored and insufficient. The leader, like most of society, emerges as a highly compromised version of what he or she could be. And the state of the world reflects this in a most dangerous way.

Leadership today is caught uncertain and unprepared in the face of too much happening too quickly. Few have been trained for the task of dealing with the complexity and the chaos of today’s world, while at the same time the usual formulas and stopgap solutions born of an earlier era, will not help us. As Albert Einstein reminds us, the consciousness that cre-

ated the problem cannot be the same consciousness that solves it.

This limited consciousness has created the plethora of problems we face today and our leaders must be trained to address them. And yet, many sense we face an impossible task and feel overwhelmed and inadequate when it comes to stopping the flood of world-destroying problems or to growing beyond our personal limitations.

Yet, we remember seeing the picture of the Earth from outer space for the first time. To many of the Earth's peoples, seeing our planet floating in space activated something very deep within each of us. Suddenly we realized that we belonged to a much larger unity of life and of peoples. After seeing that picture of Home, we began to cherish the whole planet, not just our particular part or nation. We began to understand that one part of the world can no longer dominate the others through economic or military strength. We glimpse the birth of new ways of using our common humanity and its various cultures. We see that we need a gathering of the potentials of the whole human race and the particular genius of every culture if we are going to survive our time. The complexity of our times requires a greater and wiser use of our capacities, a rich playing of the instrument we have been given. The world can thrive only if we can grow. The possible society can become a reality only if we learn to be the possible humans we are meant to be.

As we confront the challenge of leadership in such challenging times we must ask ourselves: What kind of training do we need to develop the skills that will cope with a world in which so much can go wrong? The need for training programs for leaders and facilitators on a worldwide basis has never been greater. To date, we have developed a number of programs, seminars and intensive work with the United Nations Development Programme and UN Habitat in Asia, as well as a graduate degree program to educate, train and develop social artists prepared to create a better society. By 2006 these intensive trainings aimed at enhancing human capacities so as to better solve issues around the millennium development goals and decentralization have been given in Albania, the ten island states of the Eastern Caribbean and Kenya, with delegations from Uganda and Tanzania and the Philippines. Under the auspices of UN Habitat and City-net we gave an intensive seminar in Nepal in March, 2007 to leaders of many Asia countries. In these trainings the participants learn to develop a wide range of their human capacities using state of the art strategies in providing leadership and creating innovative solutions to address critical issues relevant to both their respective societies as well as the global arena. The core of all of this work is the summer program in Social Artistry meeting this year in Ashland, Oregon from July 28th until August 6th 2006.

Finally, what are social artists? They are individuals who continually work on themselves so as to be humanly skilled to provide consultation, leadership, and guidance changing paradigms, values, legislation, laws, and structures of their societies. What is it about Social Artistry that is different from the facilitator or catalyst of societal change? Given current need in a time of whole system transition the role of the social artist takes on dramatic and

complex forms. What follows is a description of the social artist in the 21st Century, and the skills necessary to accomplish their agenda.

The Social artist is able to move between cultures, with the ability to enter each others belief systems, cultural styles, energizing stories and rituals. They learn to be informed on world issues in the context of different cultures, and not just from the point of view of a particular nation or policy. The social artist has the tools to help people to work in collaborative networks and move away from hierarchies and power structures. He or she is one who helps cultures and organizations move from patriarchy to partnership, from dominance by one economic culture or group to circular investedness, sharing and partnership.

Additionally, the social artist is the one who presents a model for a constantly learning society. As a paradigm pioneer, the social artist is able to see trends and the emergence of new patterns out of apparent chaos. He or she demonstrates that different times require a revolution in management styles. The social artist shows even the most hierarchical and bureaucratically based organization that the inevitable movement in a world as complex as ours is to circular organizations. The successful new or renewed organizations will look like a series of circles everywhere. The social artist creates and uses effective multifunctional groups pulled out from all levels of the pyramid and formed into clusters, task forces, or problem solving teams.

The social artist will be able to help members of the culture or organization to preserve the genius of the culture even as they move it into the new story. In business for example with mergers and acquisitions slapped together, and in countries with huge immigrations coming in to upset the given cultural styles, the new story has to do with appreciating the diversity and complexity of the 'new brew'. This means deep appreciation and cross cultural understanding of the stories of the representative cultures, be it the Maoris and the Anglos in New Zealand, or the stories that inform the several corporate cultures that have joined in a merger. Together they make for a whole new story. Often the larger picture or story will help the movement out of a static reality. This is where the consideration on an overarching story or new myth is of the greatest importance.

This so-called new management model is really an old method, one that has been practiced with success in native and aboriginal cultures around the world. The beauty of a multi-windowed task force is that it gives each member multiple frames of understanding. Multiple frames, many participants, mutuality and connection--an ad hococracy rather than a bureaucracy--lead to solutions that are of the moment and that work for the times. With these techniques, the social artist helps groups focus on what is emerging collectively as the vision, the mission and guiding principles behind the new culture.

For some social artists it may be important that they learn the appropriate skills of fundraising, skills vested in integrity and in the boldness of their mission. Essential to the social artist is the art of interpersonal relations, finding ways of crossing the great divide of

otherness, stepping out of stereotypes and into seeing and honoring each other deeply.

The social artist is proficient in working interculturally as well as adapting the best strategies of one or several cultures into the culture or community of their principal focus.

With the entire spectrum of historical social development at hand and with the present move towards planetization, all cultures, regardless of where they are socially or economically, have something of supreme value to offer the whole. For example, many members of European-derived cultures reveling in technique and objective mastery are sadly lacking in the depth of spiritual awareness and psychological relationship found in indigenous cultures. If the genius of so many cultures could be brought together, as is now happening, the current crisis of social breakdown and moral disorder can be transformed into the creative symbiosis of the coming world civilization, allowing the findings of each culture to seed the others, while preserving and enhancing its individual cultural style and differences.

So, friends, what I have given you is the short explanation. Read on the various topics on Social Artistry offered in this website and decide whether you wish to be part of this extraordinary experience. The work will be experiential as well as cognitive, wickedly entertaining and very evocative. It will have music and dance, high theatre and be a whole lot of fun, it will bring you into a whole new concept and way of being of service in the world. So many of you reading this may have been involved in leadership in many ways, some have undoubtedly been very successful. What is offered here will be a new order of catalytic leadership that will allow you to make a difference in profound ways?

Warm regards, Jean Houston