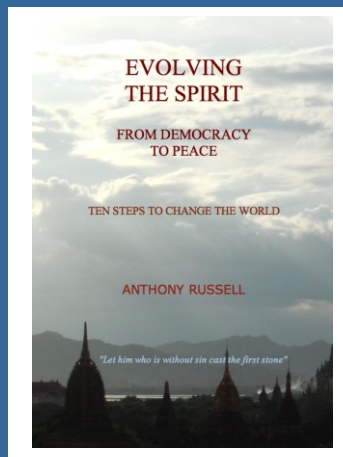


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EVOLVING THE SPIRIT – FROM DEMOCRACY TO PEACE by Anthony Russell

Synopsis

This is a book about peace and how we can reach it as individuals and in the wider world.

It supports the theory that peace is a spirit that starts with each of us, proposing ten steps to achieve it;

The first is a mind stretching exercise to make space and appreciate the complexity of the world. The second describes the fundamental significance of breathing to human endeavour. The third considers listening as a discipline and what it can achieve. The fourth is about becoming centred. The fifth shows that this focus gives us the power to heal with love. Then the sixth talks of respecting and why it matters. The seventh is about forgiving, on which perhaps the book pivots. The eighth considers how to find resolution to conflict. The ninth is about true leadership; what it is and isn't and the final step discusses peace itself.

There are many themes that are considered through the book. Some of these are mentioned in the Quotes (www.evolvingthespirit.com/thebook.htm) and in the Charter (www.evolvingthespirit.com/thecharter.htm).

But here are perhaps some of the more contentious issues:

- The great religions of the world have a core belief system on which they all agree and that is arguably all that matters. Otherwise, religions have consistently grown from single enlightened voice to rampant polytheism.
- In a culture preoccupied with the material and the visual, the 'spirit' of 'content' is under constant threat to 'form', where the former can easily depart the more obvious manifestation.
- It is a powerful understanding that if we change our position even marginally, then all around us must alter theirs. Then a peaceful approach to coexistence can 'ripple out' into the wider world.

- The modern consumer society encourages individuals to feel powerless observers but this is an illusion and all can participate in changing the world.
- Love is not a commodity; therefore it can be given freely without loss of 'stock'
- Though we may be called to judge rather than be judgmental, judging motives is always dangerous.
- We do not need to earn trust but when given freely, it is one definition of civilisation.
- There are no just wars, only a total breakdown of civilisation.
- Empires know only violence and to respond in kind is to fight as they understand best. Therefore (as believed by M Gandhi), faith should be placed in the free will of the people.
- To ignore the existence of 'free will' is to abrogate responsibility, either from oneself or from that section of society demeaned by the assumption of incapacity.
- Children's understanding is constantly underestimated in a society obsessed by their innocence.
- Society is schizoid ('Do as I say not as I do') and the development of schizophrenia may be one type of coping mechanism in the face of a nurturing that appears incomprehensible.
- Society "vilifies" sex in an attempt to break the human will.
- Wisdom comes from breadth of knowledge and not specific expertise; a problem for a medical culture still fixated on cures for symptoms in body-parts.



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