Shadows of Peace

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Abstract. Patterns found in large-scale conflict are repeated, like fractals, in community and organizational conflict, in interpersonal conflict, and in each of us individually. In a sense, the larger conflict exists holographically within the smaller unit. This relationship parallels concepts from quantum physics, chaos theory, Taoism, and other spiritual and philosophical traditions. On a practical level, conflict resolution practitioners can improve their ability to understand a conflict, to facilitate it effectively, and to transform it by first discovering all of the parts or roles of the conflict and the tensions and feelings that exist between the various parts within themselves. This is often difficult to do because even seasoned conflict professionals tend at times to have difficulty seeing themselves in a negative light, or difficulty in seeing what C.G. Jung called the "shadow." Conflict practitioners can use the laboratory of their own professional and personal relationships to discover these roles and tensions and their associated rank, power, and privilege issues by closely following signals (nonverbal body cues, linguistics, synchronicities, their own sensory experience, etc.) and discovering the deeper meaning and underlying motivations that often lies hidden behind them. In practice, this requires developing an attitude of openness to deep democracy: a belief in the importance of the feelings, experience, and visions of others.

Keywords. Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation, Deep Democracy, Peacebuilding, Process Oriented Psychology, Process Work, Worldwork.

Introduction

If we can develop concepts of the relationship with our enemies and allies that prevail in time of peace, perhaps we can learn to reactivate them in time of war.

—Vamik Volkan [1]

This paper presents one blueprint for developing an awareness-based approach to and capacity for conflict transformation that can be applied to the facilitation of relationships, organizational dynamics, conflict resolution, and diplomacy. This approach emerged from a process-oriented paradigm: a methodology that is based on awareness of our inner state of consciousness and somatic experience, tracks the patterns of group and interpersonal dynamics, and various metaskills [2] such as compassion and eldership.

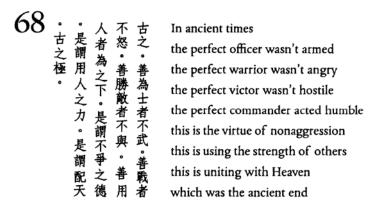
¹ In the classical Jungian sense the shadow refers to negative aspects of the unconscious and is thus considered to be a racist term because it associates darkness with negativity. However, in a process oriented context the shadow is as valuable as any other region, no matter how well illuminated, but often the worth of those things that are hidden in the shadows is not seen because of the blinding hypnosis of the mainstream's powerful light.

1. Fractals

The peace process we all aim for will not necessarily be a result of the mere signing of a treaty or agreement. It must become a matter of our everyday lives, so that peace settles and lasts and becomes supported by everybody. We therefore have to give peace all the required care and preserve it and promote it.

-King Hassan II of Morocco

Problems that confront us as individuals in our daily lives reflect the same patterns and themes with which society is struggling. The patterns that are found in large-scale conflict are repeated, like fractals, in community and organizational conflict, in interpersonal conflict, and within each of us intra-psychically. In a sense, the larger conflict exists holographically within each smaller unit. The mathematics modeling these relationships parallel concepts from network and chaos theories, quantum physics, Taoism, and other mathematical, spiritual, and philosophical traditions.



From Lao-Tzu's Tao Te Ching [1, p. 136]

Daisaku Ikeda (founder of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy and Soka University) writes of the importance of "synchronic solidarity with all present life, diachronic solidarity with future life, and solidarity with the life-struggles of the past" [3]. Achieving solidarity with life, with the struggles of the past, and with the future is apparently an enormous accomplishment if the level of disconnection we collectively exhibit is any indication. And yet, on a feeling level we are extraordinarily sensitive creatures. Even though we are not always aware of what we are experiencing or of the underlying motivations behind our behavior, it is clear that many aspects of human behavior are closely patterned by social interactions, societal conflict, and non-local phenomena. People act differently depending

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² Non-locality refers to two spatially separate processes that appear to be linked.

on the environment they are in; patterns of social interactions and conflict alter our moods, states of consciousness, and behavior.

The variables in the environment can be described as roles, the tensions, communications, and feedback loops that exist between them, and the feelings and signals involved in the interactions. On a practical level this means that as conflict resolution practitioners we can improve our ability to understand conflict, to facilitate effectively, and to help with transformation of conflict by examining the underlying roles, tensions, and signals. We can start by developing these skills in our relationships with our colleagues, friends, family, and community as the relationships exist in times of relative peace. We can use these relationships to become familiar with roles, signals, and feedback loops in our daily interactions and to find the roles and patterns within ourselves. This is often difficult to do. Even seasoned conflict resolution professionals tend at times to have difficulty seeing themselves in a negative light or difficulty in seeing what C.G. Jung called the "shadow." It is often difficult to break with our self-perceptions in order to see those aspects of our persona that are not only peaceful and compassionate but that sometimes are hurtful or even violent. On a more personal level, this suggests that human existence is tragic (in the spirit of classic Greek mythology) [4] in that human beings are influenced by non-local forces [5] they can neither see nor control, that reason and justice are limited, and that traumatic events occur as a normal part of life. We tend to disavow or marginalize those aspects of the tragedy of our lives that are most troublesome or which do not coincide with our normal preferred identity.

We are best at disayowing and unable to see the part that we play in societal, intergroup, and interpersonal dynamics. Conflict practitioners can use the laboratory of their own professional and personal relationships to discover these roles and tensions and their associated rank, power, aggression, and privilege issues by closely following signals (nonverbal body cues, linguistics, synchronicities, their own emotional and physical sensory experience, dreams, etc.) and discovering the message that often lies hidden behind them. In practice, this requires developing an attitude of openness to "deep democracy," a belief in the importance of our own experience as well as the feelings, experiences, and visions of others. Practice shows that groups tend to be more cohesive when various subgroups, roles, or viewpoints are supported to dialogue and interact with the group's dominant views and individuals [6]. However, most people are philosophically against certain roles and at times enjoy "winning" by defeating and silencing other groups or views. This may be fine in everyday life, but a facilitator's one-sidedness can exacerbate conflict. How can we get to know our own one-sidedness and our own philosophical beliefs regarding roles and views that we are against? How can we help conflicting parties to become more aware of their own one-sidedness and their own implicit beliefs regarding conflict, relationship, sustainability, and peace if we do not know our own?

Consider the following questions and notice your own reactions to them:

- To what extent is terrorism an abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation?
- To what extent is terrorism an attempt on the part of an individual or a group to engage others in a transformative and intimate relationship?
- Is there a terrorist role in society [7], and if so, what are the characteristics and functions of the terrorist role?

A polar view maintains that terrorism is not an attempt at engagement, but is a form of tyranny. Either way, through considering these questions and engaging in dialogue with others we can get to know aspects of the terrorist and the tyrant as they appear in our own psychology and our own relationships.

Dr. Arnold Mindell, the founder of Process Work (also known as Process Oriented Psychology) who first trained as a theoretical physicist at MIT and then as a Jungian analyst at the Jung Institute in Zurich, says that Process Work aims to explore the tension between polar views more than it attempts to solve conflict. Also, Process Work avoids the pathologizing of behavior, preferring instead to discover the underlying motivations behind initially incomprehensible acts. This approach parallels earlier advances in psychiatry wherein case workers discovered that patient behavior became less disturbing and less violent in part based on the staff's ability to maintain an attitude of openness towards the patient's experience, avoid pathologizing labels, and support a degree of interconnectedness with them [8]. The challenge of conflict facilitation is to discover and unfold the underlying meaning and unconscious motivation behind even the most violent behavior and to find within ourselves—even if only to a very small degree—the same tendencies.

2. Deep Democracy and the Shadow

We have wars because we aren't aware of the aggression, violence, and hurtfulness involved in our daily interactions.

—Mindell [9]

Linguists maintain that information is "a difference that makes a difference." A signal that does not have meaning to us does not make a meaningful and noticeable difference and so fails to convey information. It is a difference that does not make a difference. Furthermore, we marginalize or fail to notice many signals in communication because the signal does not carry a readily intelligible meaning, because we do not understand the meaning associated with a particular signal, or because we fail to understand when we are at an edge (the meaning lies in the shadows of our own psychic experience).

One of the obstacles to seeing our shadow is the psychological and emotional trauma that many of us have experienced in the past. We need to understand these patterns of traumatization because they are prevalent in conflict zones as well as in our personal histories. These patterns exist to varying degrees in all of us and can influence the success or failure of peacebuilding efforts. According to trauma psychiatrist Sandra Bloom,

Victims of trauma—particularly interpersonal trauma—have serious difficulties in their ability and willingness to trust other people. Experience has taught them that people are dangerous. [8]

Since trust is critical to good relationships and conflict resolution, it is important that we acknowledge our distrust and understand its roots so that we can manage or transform it effectively. People are powerful and enemies are threatening so there is a need for appropriate levels of self defense. However, many of us have developed difficulty in maintaining trusting relationships at appropriate levels. Even though we may not be aware

of our distrust, we communicate with double signals, which confuses others. On the conscious level we may assume that others are trustworthy but unconsciously our nonverbal signals reveal our distrust and fear. This distrust is often experienced by others as aggression. Problems arise when we fail to maintain appropriate levels of trust and instead project dissociated aspects of our own violent and aggressive natures onto others.

In The Need to Have Enemies & Allies [1], Volkan writes:

Clinical experience indicates that each person tries throughout life to cling to his [or her] own sense of self and identify against whatever threatens his notion of who he is. He is unaware of how he constantly protects and regulates his sense of self in daily life by using various mechanisms, including suitable targets of externalization and their abstracted internalized versions. Just as he is unaware of the intricate interplay of his muscles when he walks until he encounters rough terrain or experiences spasms, he takes for granted his sense of self until it is challenged or injured.

Until our identity is challenged or injured, aspects of this dissociation remain hidden and are often easier to see in others, particularly in volatile conflict. Bloom reports that profound trauma

...robs the self of power and control, but it also steals off with speech and memory and feeling. ...it extorts from us any sense of normal emotion and leaves us instead with wildly swinging and often inappropriate emotional expression alternative with a numbing coldness... [8].

Milder and more normative levels of traumatic victimization and interpersonal abuse often damage the fluidity that is necessary for us to see ourselves as oppressors. That is, we are not able to hear the occasional, inadvertent mean-spirited hurtfulness behind our defensive expression of our own experience. We may not often exhibit the emotional reactivity described by Bloom, and yet, it may be a part of all of us at a more subtle level. Subtle or not, the unconscious expression of a facilitator's emotional reactivity may be felt by the conflict participants as a judgmentalness, an air of superiority, one-sidedness, or at least as a lack of support for them personally or for their positions, feelings, or experience. Aspects of one's own sense of superiority are particularly difficult to identify with. John Stuart Mill wrote:

Men's opinions, accordingly, on what is laudable or blamable, are affected by all the multifarious causes which influence their wishes in regard to the conduct of others, and which are as numerous as those which determine their wishes on any other subject. Sometimes their reason—at other times their prejudices or superstitions: often their social affections, not seldom their antisocial ones, their envy or jealousy, their arrogance or contemptuousness: but most commonly, their desires or fears for themselves—their legitimate or illegitimate self-interest. Wherever there is an ascendant class, a large portion of

the morality of the country emanates from its class interests, and its feelings of class superiority. [10]

It is easy to see this in others, and more difficult to see it as an aspect of ourselves. Yet, there is a common thread in the background of western psychology, physics, mathematics, religion, psychology, philosophy, and indigenous shamanism that supports the importance of seeing the "other" as a mirror of one's self and of recognizing a certain underlying unity. In a sense, there is a "holographic" relationship in which all of the qualities seen in others, or in the field, also exist within me.

A process oriented view of conflict yields an acausal, teleological perspective that maintains that conflict itself has meaning and is actually moving the participants and the entire system towards a relationship of greater intimacy, awareness, and complexity [11]. The conflict field, in this sense, is one aspect of C.G. Jung's collective unconscious, the Tao, or the psychological equivalent of the quantum field.

One troubling consequence of seeing the qualities of the "other" in me is the emerging awareness that if normal people who were badly hurt can begin to react in such violent ways, then so could I. It is easier to protect my self-identification when I enmify others. Better, in a sense, to believe that those other people are bad, violent, and that they are the cause of the world's problems.

In his January, 2003 inauguration address, Israeli Prime Minster Amram Mitzna said, "I promised that I would conduct negotiations with Arafat and the PLO no matter how many Jews the PLO was murdering during the talks" [12]. This is a strong statement and causes many people to react for or against the statement depending upon their views. From one point of view, this one-sidedness of the use of the word "murder," especially when expressed by someone with the rank and authority of the Israeli Prime Minister, is itself inflammatory and violent. From another point of view, agreeing to communicate with "murderers" is also one-sided.

... the externalizations and projections we have given our enemy are repugnant to us, so we disavow them and do not want to acknowledge this connection consciously. We feel ourselves obliged to see huge and important differences between us that support our sense of self and of membership in our own group. [1]

Just as projection serves a function in a global context, it also serves a function in a community and individual context. While it may lead to a form of social cohesion among subgroups in the short run, in the long run it leads to war. Many psychiatrists have come to see that

... their patients, through their symptoms, were constantly performing the actions that displayed their own personal tragedies . . . because their transcendence was dependent on a response from their social group, a shared experience of pain that would allow them to find a place back within the human community. [8]

In other words, irrational, emotional reactivity serves a function within the field. Victor Frankl said that an abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal [13]. In a

sense abnormal behavior is an attempt by a member of a group, or by one group within a field, to engage others in a transformative and intimate dynamic.

Volkan maintains that there is a need for a psychological gap between us and the enemy wherein the parties' aggression and emotional reactivity bond them together in a self-energizing dance of intimacy. He describes this gap as a psychological "moat filled with preoccupations with many rituals used to control the ebb and flow of aggression" [1]. He frames a continuum between the "playful" telling of denigrating jokes about the enemy at one end of the spectrum and war on the other. Mindell says that we have wars because we are not aware of the aggression, violence, and hurtfulness involved in our daily interactions, whether playful or not [9].

Developing a practice of using our awareness of these concepts in our relationships as they exist in times of peace requires us to develop an attitude of Deep Democracy [14]. Deep Democracy supports all signals, feelings, and experiences and encourages development of an awareness of the tensions and feedback loops that occur between them. As conflict facilitators we especially have to learn to support marginalized signals, which we cannot yet see, and abnormal behavior, which we do not yet understand, while avoiding unconsciously repeating the cycles of traumatization and victimization by inadvertently siding against one of the parties or experiences. This must all be done while fostering a dynamic that supports change. How the conflict participants respond is in part reflective of the inner experience, beliefs, awareness, and paradigm of the facilitating observer.

3. The Shadow Space

Peace is more difficult than War.
—Aristotle

There is a basis in science for understanding the connection between the observer, the observing paradigm, and the observed and the inner experience and awareness of a facilitator, his or her paradigm, and the group's dynamics. Most of what we know about how systemic or environmental social change affects individuals comes from social psychology, general systems, feminist, and network theories, which have roots in ancient philosophy and physics. Building on Greek philosophy and quantum physics, Alfred North Whitehead developed process philosophy posing a metaphysical general theory of reality [15]. William James and others brought the ideas of process into psychology [16] while Von Bertalanffy [17] developed general systems theory, which extended quantum and process thinking by including cybernetics maintaining that all the parts of any given system interact with each other.

Although the above was a gross summary of the development of scientific thought, we can draw two corollaries from these ideas. First, the behavior of individuals involved in a conflict can be understood only in terms of their relationship to the larger organism within which they are acting. And second, the inner psychic world of a facilitator, no matter how well disguised, can also impact the conflicting parties and their behavior.

How can we begin to work with these macro and micro levels? What tools do we have? What telescopes and microscopes should we use? Mindell maintains that various aspects of personal life, which psychology has referred to until now as dreams, body life, relationship conflict and illness, can be re-evaluated in terms of signals that appear in various sensory-oriented channels—proprioception, kinesthesis, visualization, audition, and compositions of these channels [11, 18-20]. We can begin by developing our channel awareness—that is, by developing an ability to notice signals that we do not yet understand, noticing our tendency to unconsciously assign meaning or projections to the signals and then by formulating hypotheses and testing them in a compassionate way.

For example, I was teaching facilitation of conflict to a group of young Jewish Americans as part of a month long training in democracy, conflict resolution, and leadership. They began a group process with two of the group members facilitating. Their interactions began slowly because until then they had only held group processes on preassigned topics with preassigned roles. I asked them to facilitate any conflict they wanted to, and the first issue they had to work on was to find consensus on what issue or topic to work on.

They formed a circle with people at times moving into different positions within the circle, each of which began to be associated with particular political positions. The dialogue centered on interfaith dating, relationship, intermarriage, and the views of their parents, aunts, uncles, Rabbis, and communities. They noticed a parallel to the issues in Israel and Palestine and the group dynamic suddenly shifted. People speaking for a secular state were in one spot, more fundamentalist people in another, and a third group supported a religious life and community but did not want to impose a religious state onto the system. Groups often shift topics when they collectively come to an edge,³ but I did not yet understand the edge.

The interactions continued with people at times moving out of one group and then joining another as they noticed something had shifted in their own views and feelings. I noticed at one point that all of the people were in one half of the circle and there were no people in the other half. How fascinating! What did that empty space represent? I pointed out the empty space and asked the group what they thought it represented. One of the participants stepped into the empty space to see if she could feel what was there. She spontaneously closed her eyes and went inside for a moment. She suddenly said that from this space all that mattered was her connection with God. Religion mattered only in so much as it helped her to develop that connection. She was no longer interested in external Zionism. Many people joined with her and began to discuss religion as a small pond which is intended to show the way to a greater, deeper ocean.

Not everyone agreed. Some carried the dream of a Jewish State. Others felt differently and the group process continued. Perhaps the issues of Zionism and anti-Semitism can not be solved but a rich process of awareness can develop through addressing them. Society has not solved the problems associated with anti-Semitism and Zionism and any one group can not be expected to either, but some of the participants were deeply moved by the experience. In that moment, dreaming together [21] became more interesting than the

³ An edge is a communication or behavior block that occurs when an individual or group represses something that is trying to emerge.

creation of outer enemies. The shadow and the edge had been to see that the external rules of interfaith dating, the politics of Israel, and even aspects of the externalities of their own religion—all of which were intended to support them in their relationship with God—were all aspects of something that was also preventing some of them from connecting more deeply with all of the different roles.

4. Safety & Power

The people can always be brought to do the bidding of the leaders.

That is easy. All you do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism.

—Hermann Goering

Safety often becomes an issue for groups. We have all been hurt by others, attacked for aspects of our politics, or for momentary lapses in awareness. Mindell asserts that

People feel unsafe if they are not able to defend themselves against others who dominate the communication channels. Ongoing communities need to come to a consensus on what safety means and how it helps some but may impede the voice of others. The topic of safety is always connected to consciousness of abuse, not just in the overt social sense of one person or group using power to hurt another, but in the covert sense of one person or group using a style that obliterates others. [22]

One of the difficulties in addressing safety comes from a human tendency to polarize into positions of victim and oppressor. People from a more marginalized group may tend to see members of a dominate group as oppressors who have all the power to dominate certain communication channels. Similarly, people from the more dominant group may also feel unsafe and unable to defend themselves against the expression of pain and rage on the part of a more oppressed group. They do not feel safe on the streets, in their communities, or in their homes. Hearing a more mainstream person speak of a desire for safety, which is an unattainable illusion for many, may feel inflammatory.

People from the more dominant, mainstream group may tend to see members of the marginalized group as being powerful too and may be afraid of interacting with them due to the increased levels of emotional expression and heat. They do not feel safe either but want to. Often they have increased access to a privileged experience of security, do not understand the anger of others, and are not willing to risk feeling uncomfortable even momentarily. A mainstream or dominant participant's concern for safety may send a message that says, "I'm not willing to feel uncomfortable and do not want to have a relationship with you."

Parliamentary procedure, Roberts Rules of Order, and various styles of mediation and facilitation often support the domination of one style of communication over others. This is perhaps, in part, why so many conflict resolution efforts fail. Some styles of negotiation and

peacebuilding prevent the real issues and the underlying feelings, tensions, and experiences from surfacing and being communicated directly.

But what is safety? Safety is an experience and an illusion that is based on many factors such as gender, race, economic status, rank, ability to speak articulately in groups, freedom to recognize and express one's feelings as well as an ability to defend oneself from verbal, emotional, and physical attack. While referring to the creation of safe space, Dr. Louise Diamond (conflict professional and co-founder of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy) adds:

Safe space refers to the environment—psychological as well as physical—of the dialogue. Only when people feel safe will they be willing to go beyond debate to true dialogue, which involves touching many layers of wisdom and meaning.

If groups in dialogue are in a strongly conflictual relationship, their sense of safety may be enhanced by having an impartial third party present, who can be trusted to facilitate the process and be there should things get "too hot." [23]

But what is too hot? People often experience someone else's expression of feelings of anger or pain as being too hot, and pathologize it as being "extreme emotional reactivity," putting down the "overly" expressive person for being "too sensitive" or for being a "victim." Essentially, they want to keep the emotional heat level turned way down to a conversational style that is within their own comfort zone.

Creating safe space means that people can express their pain, anger, and even rage without being silenced by those with a greater ability to dominate the communication channels by insisting on a more linear style of cognitively centered communications. It also means that people will be protected against being psychologically injured when they are unable to defend themselves against strong emotional expression.

Referring to working with trauma victims, Bloom states that "to create psychological safety, these normative aspects of self-destructive behavior [such as extreme emotional reactivity] need to be consciously, actively, and relentlessly challenged," and that

They must regain, or gain for the first time, a sense of empowerment, an experienced recognition that they can alter their lives for the better, that they can express anger without being abused, that they can relax and enjoy themselves without punishment, that their actions can make a positive difference in their lives and in the lives of others [8].

Part of the psychological theory of the shadow suggests that the intrapsychic experience that we marginalize becomes projected onto the external world, e.g., because people are not aware of their own aggression they expect it in others and then react aggressively against the "aggression" of others. Mainstream people or people from dominant groups often fear more marginalized people because of this and because they fear the retaliation that they know is partly justified.

There is an enormous power in being able to speak out about oppression, pain, suffering, and Truth (Gandhi's Satyagraha). Democracy itself is based on power, and power needs to be supported—but the use of awareness is needed also. All parties of a conflict

need to be supported to develop the awareness and fluidity to see how they are at times victims and at times oppressors and how, although at times they may experience themselves as powerless, we are all enormously powerful.

Speaking out creates all sorts of feelings in everyone. Some are afraid; others are touched so deeply they are moved to tears. In the sense of deep democracy, each and everyone's feelings are important as part of the emerging community awareness process. This process increases everyone's sense of safety as awareness of rank and privilege, power and its abuses comes forward. [24]

The process of engaging in deep dialogue increases everyone's sense of safety, providing that the facilitators and the group act to protect those with the least power to defend themselves in the moment. Learning to sit in the fire of intense emotions is like learning to bathe in hatred. It takes time and practice, an enormous willingness to feel intense pain, to be attacked over and over again, and to learn from each failed intervention. For many facilitators this is a long-term spiritual path. As there are many more traumatized people than there will ever be individual therapists to treat them, so too there are many more people with rigid beliefs and violent tendencies than there will ever be conflict facilitation professionals to work with them.

5. Epilogue

We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.

— Einstein

The focus of this work is beyond the laboratory of academic training environments, whether they are exclusively for professional development or in-country trainings for local people involved in the conflict. And yet, in order to transform seemingly intractable systemic conflict, systemic changes must be made. The system, however, is intangible and can not be manipulated directly. Unlike many professions, the only access we have to the system is through people who are tough to "reach," tough to "transform," and tough to develop as facilitators. A facilitator is not a technician following technical procedures—technical skills and theoretical understandings are important but insufficient because the inner world of the facilitator is very much a component of the work. Even more difficult is the task of developing facilitators into teachers who are capable of furthering the knowledge and skills in others—thereby helping to create a self-sustaining system that can reach large numbers of people in a given community, nation, or region.

Ambassador John McDonald calls for the use of Track-4 "citizen power by the thousands, the millions, to open doors and improve relations at the grassroots level" [25], but this work has to start with each of us individually, one person at a time. It is difficult. It is perhaps a "hero's journey" or a path of spiritual Warriorship, but it is possible. While no one approach is a panacea, deep dialogue may be one of the cornerstones in the foundation of our continued ability to survive as a species.

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

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