

The Necessary Shift in Human Consciousness – The Renewal Foundation

By Peter Hawkins & Giles Hutchins

This short paper aims to share our emerging thinking to date. It draws on information gleaned from the Inquiry process so far, including findings from the December Inquiry and ideas in development.

Ahead of our next Inquiry with ‘millennials’ in April, we felt it useful to share our emerging perspectives, based on the inquiry so far, and being transparent about the foundational backdrop this on-going Inquiry is set within.

In these times, we are facing unprecedented challenges, at personal, group/team, organizational and systemic levels: hyper-change, global interconnectivity, profound human inequality, suffering and migration, climate change, rapidly increasing biodiversity and habitat loss, exponential growth in human population coupled with an increasing percentage being elderly, pressure on finite resources, prevalent economic volatility and uncertainty, and increasing social tensions the world over.

How do we enable ourselves to reach beyond a sense of powerlessness, fear, frustration and negativity in these times of challenge?

How do we choose to invest our ‘proactive-hope’ in order to enrich our emerging futures?

All of us invest hope in myriad ways such as conscious non-action, praying, protest, activism, political initiative, perhaps even investing in messianic hope for a saviour or cataclysmic event. The Renewal Foundation chooses to invest ‘proactive-hope’ in the co-evolution and learning between our human and more than human worlds and in actively participating in the evolution of our individual and collective human consciousness.

In late 2015, a group of leading writers - thinkers-and-doers convened at Barrow Castle, Bath, UK for a weekend Inquiry into this ‘necessary evolution of human consciousness’. The Inquiry was initially held within the triage of the three fields of Sustainability, Spirituality and Individual/Team/Organisational Transformation. A synopsis of the findings from this Inquiry can be found on The Renewal Foundation website.

For Millennia Human Beings have learnt how to flourish in and with very different local ecological niches. Now in the 21st century we have created one globalised interconnected ecological niche and we have not yet learnt how to flourish and co-evolve with and in service of this more than human world. This one niche has been created by an unprecedented exponential rise in human population (trebling in 65 years), a rapid growth in human travel and migration, creating an interdependent global economy, and the growth of the internet and global communication interconnectivity.

We are now one global, inter-related human family experiencing increasing volatility, tension and upheaval. Our human family has the capacity to become more participatory and more co-evolutionary (enhancing and enriching the regenerative potential of our human communities

and our more-than-human world). The Age of Industrialisation and Mechanism has given way to the Age of Networks. It is notable that a 'logic of living systems' is being embraced more widely across social enterprise, organisational development, trans-personal psychology, team dynamics and leadership methods. It feels like we are on the cusp of forming a roadmap to the emerging Age of Wisdom, whereupon we humans live up to our name as *Homo sapiens* (wise beings).

But none of this is true as mere words. These words only become truth if they are picked up and turned into living processes that influence a beneficial difference.

We do not think that 'technology' is 'The answer', to the great challenges that face our earth and species, but it can and does enable acceleration in human consciousness. Each generation experiences an increasing capacity and facility for utilising technology in this regard. With that in mind, a group of 'millennials' actively involved in personal-organisational-social transformation have been invited to Barrow Castle, Bath, UK for a weekend Hackathon aimed at exploring and prototyping the application of multi-media technologies for catalysing this 'necessary shift in human consciousness'.