

A Path with Heart

A Nonviolent Communication & Social Change Telesummit



Alan Seid

A Toolbox for Sustainable Living and Cultural Transformation

This is a transcription of one of the interviews from A Path With Heart, the 2013 telesummit on Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and Social Change, produced by Alan Seid of Cascadia Workshops and the Blackbelt Communication Skills Program. More than 1600 people from over 40 countries registered for this event. Each call had live listeners and a question & answer period.

Alan Seid (pronounced “side”) has been studying NVC since 1995, worked as Marshall Rosenberg’s Spanish interpreter in South America, and has been a CNVC Certified Trainer since 2003.

Alan works as a coach, consultant, and seminar leader, focusing on working with people who are committed to making a positive difference. Alan is also founder of the Blackbelt Communication Skills Coaching Program and Cascadia Workshops, an internet publishing company.

“As I have been working with people over time, there are really five things that I think change agents need, and I’ve focused on in my work. The first is mindsets, the second one is tools, the third one is skills, the fourth one is resources, and the fifth one is community.”

~ Alan Seid

Alan: Hello everyone and welcome! This is Alan Seid.

We are together here, and this is *A Path with Heart*, a telesummit on Nonviolent Communication and Social Change.

The reason I created this telesummit is because this is a topic whose time has come.

Our planet's life support systems are going through significant stress. At the same time, human society is in an unprecedented time historically.

Never before have there been so many humans on the planet at one time.

Never before have we humans been so interconnected, and starkly aware of our interrelatedness and our interdependence.

Never before has the human family experienced such promise, such peril, and such opportunity.

Marshall Rosenberg's process, Nonviolent Communication, which was named out of a sense of alignment with Gandhi's movement of truth-telling and compassion, is a world-famous, proven, time-tested methodology:

- for creating exceptional personal and professional relationships,
- for offering compassionate understanding to others (and knowing when and how to ask for it ourselves),
- for preventing and resolving misunderstandings and conflicts,
- for speaking our truth in a way that is more likely to lead to harmony than conflict,
- and for creating mutual understanding without coercion.

In this interview series, I'm conversing with NVC trainers for whom I have a great deal of respect and whose work I admire.

On this call, I am being interviewed by one of our fellow trainers, my dear friend Mair Alight. Please keep in mind that we're keeping all the lines muted for now to preserve the quality of the recording for future listeners.

Hi Mair.

Mair: Hi Alan. I'm laughing because you asked me if I had something in my voice and I had a little coughing fit. So I think I'm okay now and I want to interview you, and Alan Seid, we didn't talk about introducing you.

Alan: You know I figured that will come out during the interview here.

Mair: Okay, okay. So I just want to say that I have a great deal of respect and admire the work that you do in the world. So with that why don't you say, what is your story? How'd you get where you are? What went on?

Alan: Yeah. You know, I don't know if we've had this conversation Mair, but sometimes when people ask me my story I start four generations back. Did we ever talk about this?

Mair: No.

Alan: So I've got several books that I'm writing, some of them I've already begun, some of them are just in my mind, they're sort of in the cue, they're in line. And one of the books that I want to write is a much more personal book, and right now the working title is *My Great Grandfather Escaped Prison Dressed as a Woman*, and it's based on a true story. And this great-grandfather was a committed pacifist and when the Czar's army showed up in the Ukraine to get all the able-bodied young men into the army, he said, "I will not raise a gun against another human being, so you can shoot me now or throw me in prison, but I won't fight." So they threw him in prison because he wouldn't join the army and fight their war, and his friends in the resistance eventually got him out with a Romanian woman's passport, and they were able to sneak him out of the country and get him to Switzerland where he changed his name based on his new identity papers. He was fluent in 7 languages. While in Switzerland, about to board a train, he was standing behind a woman and saw her long braid — and he fell in love with the braid. He said to himself, "I'm going to marry this woman." And that ended up being my great-grandmother, and she was...

Mair: Wow!

Alan: ...and she was in medical school at the time which back then was much more rare than it is now. And so I come from a long line of multi-linguists and pacifists and feminists. And I realize that nonviolence and pacifism are different

and I'm not going to get into those distinctions now, but that's part of my background. So this couple, he was a Ukrainian Jew and she was a Lithuanian Catholic, and they had 6 children while they moved from country to country and ended up in Spain. My grandmother was born from this couple, in Paris, but she grew up in Spain. My grandmother ended up marrying a Basque, which is a separate ethnic group from the Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France, and when the Spanish civil war happened they ended up leaving Spain as war refugees and ended up in Mexico. And that's how my mom was born and raised in Mexico.

My mom is one of the biggest influences that I have in my life. I know that Ken Wilber's Integral work has come up a lot during these interviews, and we can talk about that a little bit later on, but you know, one of the things that Wilber points out in his summary of 40 or 50 years of consciousness studies is that one of the ways to describe how human consciousness grows and evolves and develops is that we go from egocentric to ethnocentric to socio-centric to world-centric. So, like, I look at my 2-year-old and it's just me me me me me. And as we grow, we identify with other people *like* me, the ethnocentric stage. And then other people that are my nationality or from my society, socio-centric. And then world-centric: eventually, all human beings. It's more the question of who "we" is and who do we consider worthy of "moral consideration." And so we have these ever larger and larger circles of embrace.

And as I was growing up, Mair — you know my dad was from the States and my mom was from Mexico. And I was born in the States but we moved to Mexico when I was a baby. I always had dual citizenship and I grew up bilingual and bicultural. At home it was English with my dad, Spanish with my mom. I went to bilingual schools from preschool through eighth grade. But my mom always said to me, "Alan, before you're Mexican, before you're American, before you're this or that, you're a human being, and you're a citizen of the world." And so from a very early age I was given a world-centric perspective. Also, growing up as an insider of two cultures meant that I was also an outsider of two cultures, and so I always knew early on there was more than one way to see things because of that. But also I was always encouraged at home to question and to ask why, which got me in a lot of trouble in school because I would have sincere curiosity about why are we learning this, and it was interpreted as insubordination (and I was sent to the principal's office). We had Catherine Cadden's call earlier on education and the educational system, where we go into more depth around some of those pieces, but anyway, you have some of those early influences. I remember when I was 6 years old — this was really etched in my mind — I told my mom about some kids

at school who were teasing the school janitor, the person who cleaned the hallways and everything at the school. And my mom said, “You know, Alan, every human being deserves respect and consideration and dignity whether it's the janitor or the president of the country. *Every human being deserves respect and consideration and dignity.*” And that really stuck with me. So those were some of my early influences.

Mair: So I'm remembering from a previous conversation we had that you went to some kind of... when you were a teenager. You went to some kind of, I don't know if it was... Do you know what I'm talking about? It was a...

Alan: Well, I came to the States to attend a boarding school.

Mair: Aha.

Alan: My family stayed in Mexico, but it was my dad's side of the family that suggested I go to high school in the United States. And I was open to that and I thought I would try it and see if I liked it or not, and I ended up staying in that high school. But it was during those high school years that I had probably two of the most significant life defining experiences. You know, at the age of 16 I was reading Carlos Castaneda and J. Krishnamurti and Wendell Berry, who is a farmer, philosopher, professor, poet. Wendell Berry was a huge influence on me, and when I was right around 16 — 16 or 17 — I remember just having kind of an awakening around the state of the planet and realizing that I had a choice in that moment, or this is how I perceived it back then, I had a choice in the moment to intentionally be part of the solution, or be part of the problem. And I chose that I wanted to be part of the solution, and then I realized in the same moment that it was not enough to preach to people or sermonize to people, I had to change my life and really lead by example. And so it was at that moment that I made the decision to research all the best practices that I could find for how to live in harmony with the planet and with each other and within ourselves. And this was pre-internet so, you know, that research was a little bit harder to do. I guess nowadays it also has its own challenges in terms of too much information and how to filter out what's less valuable for us. So when I was 16 or 17, that really started me on the path that I'm on now. I wanted to research best practices, and if I couldn't find them I would have to create them. That was one of the pieces. The number one...

Mair: And so was the question that was really alive for you: what could you do to live a congruent life?

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: ..and then how could you maximize your impact or your influence?

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: And on who?

Alan: Well, the human species.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: But you know, I don't think I had this languaging then, but it was really: how can I be the most powerful positive change agent that I can be to help us as a human species start to turn it around? I mean, you know it's going to take all of us to really start to shift things in the positive direction that we want to see. So then a couple of years later I had another experience that I describe as an “aha!” moment. That was also a freak-out moment because I had the following insight: I was 18 and I realized that I had been in school since I was 5 and that my schooling was preparing me to be, basically, a replaceable cog in the machinery of an economic system that was destroying ecosystems and indigenous peoples all over the planet. And I wanted no part of that, I did not want to enter the rat race and do the 9-to-5-‘till-you-die. I just did not want to do that, and so I committed when I was 18... I committed myself to getting out of the rat race before I got in it, and to finding a different way. And you know I fantasized about a lot of things that weren't really viable or realistic, but a few years later the first one, really, of these “best practices” — these tools — fell in my lap. And it was the first “info-product” I ever bought. It was an audio program by Joe Dominguez who was one of the co-founders of the New Road Map Foundation who also later co-authored the book, *Your Money or Your Life* with Vicki Robin. And this was a methodology for how to create a relationship with this energy that we call money, how to create a relationship with money that's clear, empowered, non-stressful and so that money plays a purposeful role in how we want to live our lives rather than our lives being about money, money, money. And implementing that tool when I was 21 absolutely changed my life, and by the age of 28 I actually quit my job and begin a journey where I took a 7-year sabbatical. I took 7 years off, I don't know if you knew this part of my story.

Mair: I knew the 7 years but I didn't know what led up to that, but now... it's making more sense to me.

Alan: Yeah, so I had 7 years between my late 20's and early 30's. So this was 1998 to 2005 during which I spent 7 years full-time, self-directed, researching different tools and best practices, and visiting intentional communities and learning centers and just doing a lot of learning and a lot of research. And it was in the middle of that time, actually it was right before that time, so 1995, three years before I started that sabbatical is when I first found out about NVC. But let me back up a little bit. The financial integrity work from this audio program that later was written up in the book, *Your Money or You're Life...* that “Financial Integrity” work was actually the first workshop that I ever started teaching, in 1994. I became the youngest person on the New Road Map Foundation Speaker's Bureau — so I was on this list of people who would get called to give talks and workshops on this money work. So I was doing workshops on that before I even heard of NVC. So when I first started to learn NVC I thought it was pretty cool. But I think my second workshop with Marshall was when it really clicked for me that when we have big issues like climate change or species extinction or poverty or chronic malnutrition, I mean so, so many issues — when we have these issues that are at a global scope — as humans we're going to be much more effective in turning things around if we have really good skills for cooperation and collaboration. And in that moment Nonviolent Communication became one of my top tier tools.

Mair: Because you saw that, if I'm getting what you're saying, that working with Nonviolent Communication, communication tools are what we need at a global level to effect the change that we want.

Alan: Yes. Well, here's how I see it, and I'll credit Ken Wilber for pointing it out to me in this way, which was, yes, we all need to pollute less and drive less and not add so much carbon to the atmosphere; there are so many things that the Earth needs, that the planet needs from us. But the thing that the Earth most needs is for the human species to get its shit together, excuse my “French,” to get our act together around who are we, what are we doing here, what is our shared destiny together on this planet. And so what the planet really needs is for human beings to develop ways to create *mutual understanding without coercion*. Because what happens so often is that we're pulling in different directions, positive change agents, cultural creatives, changemakers, evolutionaries — sometimes we're working at cross-purposes when we shun other people's work and say, “no, only what I'm doing is the most important thing,” instead of recognizing that there is an

ecology of change agents. There are so many niches and they all reinforce the whole, and we need to support each other's work. So that's a long way of saying, yes, Mair, that in order to turn around really large-scale problems we're going to be more effective if we can develop good skills in cooperation and collaboration.

Mair: At an individual level and at a species level I mean..

Alan: Absolutely, on every level.

Mair: I've heard people say the planet is not in trouble, the planet's been around for billions of years. We may be causing ourselves to go extinct.

Alan: Oh, absolutely.

Mair: And take a lot of species with us.

Alan: Absolutely! Creating a lot of pain and devastation along the way. And yeah, if you poop in your own nest long enough, one day you're going to wake up with it up to your neck. And there are two analogies here. One is the cowboy analogy as compared with the other one which is the astronaut analogy. So for a cowboy it was the open west, the infinite horizon of resources to extract and places to put our waste. Back then the Earth seemed infinite in terms of these things, and so you don't have to give much care if there're no consequences to your actions, which was the perception [ecologically, at least] maybe 200 years ago. But the astronaut analogy is that you're in a closed system, there is no away. When I throw something out, I can't, I don't throw something away, there is no "away."

Mair: Yeah. This may be our nest, but there isn't another nest to go to.

Alan: There isn't, and a lot of people are searching for that and I would rather that we get our act together here and figure out how to preserve and protect and celebrate the life that we have on this planet before we start searching for bringing the... You know, "wherever you go, there you are"...

Mair: How many planets can we use up?

Alan: Yeah, we can bring our immature exploitative selves to the rest of the galaxy, but I don't see that that's going to help much.

Mair: And so what you do is you focus your time and your energy and your skills on supporting and nurturing and sort of instigating change through working with change agents, with other people that are also doing it? Is that it?

Alan: Yes, and it's only because that's who I feel most drawn to work with, and that's where I see the most leverage, is to do what I can to make more of us more empowered and more effective. And as I've been working on this and thinking about it and working with people over time there are really five things that I think change agents need and that I've really focused on in my work. And those are—I'll just name the five and then I'll say a little bit about each of them—the first is mindsets, the second one is tools, the third one is skills, the fourth one is resources, and the fifth one is community. So we need to have mindsets that sustain us and that allow us to be more effective. For example, one mindset could be the willingness to take imperfect action. If I waited until this telesummit was perfect, if I waited until the website was perfect and all the links were perfect and everything was perfect before I started, I never would have done this telesummit. So there are all kinds of mindsets and as you know I had a car-wreck a couple of months ago and walked away and I'm totally fine, but that's the last time I blogged was when I blogged about this thing because right after that I got busy on the telesummit. But before that, as I was writing blog posts the pattern that I noticed was a lot of them were focused on this piece around mindsets. And you know, it's not about whether or not you fall off the horse, it's about whether you keep getting back on. And there're so many different ways that we can impact our mindset through meditation, through yoga, getting enough exercise, getting enough rest... And that's really essential: our whole mindset and perspective. And there are a lot of ways to talk about it. The second one is tools...

...Go ahead!

Mair: Can I ask you a question about that, about mindsets?

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: Because I'm hearing you listing that first and when I look at your list, tools and skills and resources and community, it's sort of a circle that comes back around isn't it...

Alan: It is.

Mair: The last thing a community is is what nurtures and supports you keeping the mindset.

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: It's going to actually support you in sustaining yourself and supporting others.

Alan: Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, there's so many mindsets that we have that deflate us or disempower us or cause us to be depressed, and there are so many mindsets that help us have more energy and sustain ourselves just day-to-day. I was just reflecting, one of the blog posts that I wrote was about, I think the title of it is "I'm Already Dead," and it was this meditation that I was doing connecting with how finite my life is, how short it is, not out of a morbid interest but out of a sense of being connected with reality, and also in a way that's more empowering. And so I was visualizing just a larger context in which my life is so brief, and imagining that it's a done deal, I'm already dead. And in that meditation what I've been able to access a couple of times is an altered state where all fear drops away, because if I'm already dead I have nothing to lose and that fearlessness is so powerful. Anyway, so yeah, the mindsets are essential and all five of these do reinforce each other. So I think you're right on with that. As far as tools, and this is the second one of mindsets, tools, skills, resources, and community, one of the things that the New Age Movement has given us is hundreds of great tools and thousands of crappy ones. And so it's really tricky, and I'm using shorthand NVC because it takes too long to unpack it for me right now with where I want to go with the conversation so...

Mair: You just mean ones that don't work as well.

Alan: Yeah...

Mair: ..or don't work at all.

Alan: Exactly, exactly. My need for effectiveness is not met when I implement them.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: And so that's been a big, big part of my personal work, but also of the service that I offer for the people that I work with is being a filter for the really

good stuff that I've found over the years. And there are lots of things that are amazing that I don't even know about or that didn't speak to me as much in the moment, so I'm not claiming to be the authority on this by any means. All I can share is what I can see from where I am on my path...

Mair: You're your own authority and you're willing to share what is true for you.

Alan: Absolutely.

Mair: What's worked for you.

Alan: Yeah. And so I put Nonviolent Communication in this category of tools now. Dominic Barter said something interesting in his interview about Nonviolent Communication as "not skills"... and you know we (Dominic and I) debriefed afterwards and we eventually arrived at an understanding of what he meant by that. And he understood how that could be misunderstood by some people who hear what he said, because Nonviolent Communication has these two dimensions, there's the model and the tools and skills part of it, but there's also the consciousness and the intentionality and the mindset part of it. But just for ease, you know, I'm really putting it in this category of tools along with the Financial Integrity work that I mentioned earlier, along with Permaculture Design, along with Ken Wilber's Integral work, and several other sets of tools. So the reason that I also have skills on the list is because having a tool is one thing, being skillful with a tool is another thing. It's not enough to have a good tool, we need to put it into practice and become more skillful at using it to have better and better results.

Mair: And I think I remember this, that you teach a lot of these skills like Permaculture, Integral Theory, Nonviolent Communication with your "Blackbelt Communication" program. Is that...?

Alan: Yeah!

Mair: You've got a bunch of stuff that you teach.

Alan: Yes, so...

Mair: And people can sign up and learn from you or with you about...

Alan: Absolutely. I've been studying Nonviolent Communication since '95. 1999 is when I was asked to become certified, which I completed in 2003, so I've been a certified trainer for over 10 years in Nonviolent Communication, but I don't see myself as an NVC guy. I see myself more as a “toolbox” guy — and NVC is one of those tools.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: And yes, you know most of what I've done with Permaculture... I live on 25 acres and we're doing some permaculture projects here, and our neighborhood is a hundred and sixty acres, and we're working on an eco-village project at the neighborhood scale. And we're trying to get like-minded, like-hearted friends to come and help us buy up the neighborhood. So if there's anyone hearing this live or on the recording and you're looking to live closer to nature and in community, there are several 20 acre parcels for sale right on my road. So this is a project that people could get involved in potentially, and then there are a lot of the things like, for example, the Integral work. There's a course that I did for NVC Academy that's available both on NVC Academy and on the NVC Marketplace and that's a guided tour of Ken Wilber's Integral model and I'm relating it to Nonviolent Communication throughout that course. But you know really, Mair, it's only been in the last four years that I decided to really own the fact that I'm an entrepreneur because I have a family to sustain. I'm the breadwinner for my family and so I needed to really learn. I think I'm psychologically unemployable.

Mair: Oh! That goes back to the asking questions in school, doesn't it? The research you did finding out things through your life.

Alan: It's so hard for me to think of myself having a job with a boss.

Mair: Uh-huh.

Alan: And you know there's nothing wrong with that, I don't think that's my path as much as running my own thing from the property where I live. I have young children and I've had a lot of invitations to travel and I wanted to travel less, so the internet became an obvious vehicle for me to do my work. And it's really only in the last four years that I've started to develop how do I share what I have to share, and really I decided to focus one topic at a time, so I've really only focused on Nonviolent Communication in terms of getting the content out there and sharing what I have to share. And eventually over the next few years I'll be putting many of the other pieces of content that I have out there. I love working

with people directly, my coaching clients, for example. I had a friend recently hire me to be his business coach because he sees what I am doing business-wise as a direction that he wants to move in. So that's kind of a new area for me is to work in that way. But going back to these five things, mindsets, tools, skills..., then resources. Resources could be financial resources, they could be people resources, they could be informational resources. It's not necessarily just financial resources.

And then community is absolutely essential. We are social beings, we have agency but also communion. We have autonomy but also interdependence, and like you've pointed out earlier, community is what can sustain us, it's what supports us, it makes life so much more fun, so much more rich. I've lived in several forms of residential, intentional community, but I also see that community is something that we can create all the time. So if I'm standing at a bus stop and I strike up a conversation with someone I don't know I'm creating community, and there are lots of concentric circles of community. So there's a larger community where I am in the area where I live in Washington State where I have so many people that are so dear to me, and I feel like I have the image of being held, it's like a container. And I wish that for all of us. And intentional community has been a big theme during this telesummit, and I really think that intentional community is one of the growing edges for our species in evolutionary terms. Evolutionarily, it's a growing edge to know how to live well with each other and cooperatively and collaboratively. So those are the five things that I've focused on with change agents, with the big focus on the tools and the skills.

Mair: Would you say something about this telesummit, like you've created or co-created, you have over sixteen hundred people that registered for this, right?

Alan: Nearly, nearly sixteen hundred. [Note: The number surpassed 1600 shortly after this conversation was recorded.]

Mair: Nearly sixteen hundred, what kind of, well what... What's my question? Is about your intention in doing this project, what's your hope for the purpose of it?

Alan: So the primary purpose was to be of service, and you know, social change is such a huge, huge topic for me. It's so important to me and I see NVC as contributing largely. Now I had no idea the kind of response that I was going to get. It really surprised me and I'm thrilled.

Mair: Yes.

Alan: But yeah, as of this morning, we had 1,580 active registrants, so that's the people excluding the people who signed up and then unsubscribed, the people who cancelled their registrations. So active registrants we had 1,580 this morning. And so the first intention was to be of service, and the other part of that, too, is because I am the person financially responsible for my family. It's a way of creating more of that flow in my life as well, so it was definitely a business move and I want to be totally transparent about that. I've done a "180" on marketing. Marketing used to be a "four-letter word" for me. It was a dirty word and I had a lot of aversion to marketing and I could not make any sense of it, but now I understand that marketing is about empathy and it's about being of service. And if what you do is like medicine for some people, then if people can't find out about it then who cares? So if what you do really does serve others then you have an ethical obligation to become good at marketing.

Mair: It's that word market isn't it? Like do you bring your goods to market so people can see what you have to offer? Or do you sit at home thinking, oh, I have all this stuff, but I don't want to try and sell it to people? I mean it's..

Alan: Yeah. A lot of this goes back to that mindset piece because...

Mair: Yeah!

Alan: Because we think a lot of us still have beliefs and sometimes unconscious beliefs like "money is bad," "people with money are bad people," or "they're greedy," and I think it's much more complex than that. You know, the founder of Permaculture, well there were two founders, but the person who's most popularized it, Bill Mollison, in one of his books, which is the Designer's Manual, which is a big sort of textbook looking book... in the back of it he has a whole section on economics and money, and in that book he says that money is to social systems what water is to natural systems. Money allows for the flow of information and resources and the connections, but it also follows from that that it can't just be about just more, more, more, more, more because then you end up with a flood where a flood isn't natural. And one of the things from the financial integrity work, one of the things that that work really helps people to find for themselves is *how much is enough*. So it's not about more, more, more, and it's not about less — it's about what's optimal, what's enough. I think it was in the Tao it says, "Neither those with too much nor the ones with too little are happy, but those who have enough." So we have a lot of mindsets around money, around income, around resources. There's this whole set of mindsets that we could call "holy poverty." If somebody has taken a vow of poverty that in some way is part

of their spiritual work... for example I have a friend who became a Buddhist monk and has no possessions, not even the robe that he wears is really his. You know that's fine, that's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about are the kinds of mindsets that are disempowering. I'm talking about the kinds of mindsets that keep us from being able to be of service as much as we could be. You know, this website Mair, I paid out of my own pocket a couple thousand dollars to get this website up and without knowing if I would break even. But having those resources allowed me to create the telesummit, so I think that we need to look at what is enough and what kind of a difference do we want to make. I think we are more effective, we can make more of a difference, if we're not in the constant struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle.

Mair: And so your purpose for this telesummit was to be of service...

Alan: Yeah!

Mair: ...to get together people who could listen, people who could interchange information, connect, build a community, a global community which I think we can say you've done with almost sixteen hundred people and over 30 countries. And so here's this group of people that are mobilized or at least curious about being a social change agent or actively in their lives at least, within themselves. I think it was Jori Manske who said she considered it to be social change if she changed her inner way of looking at the world and organizing, and if we do it in community it just exponentially empowers everyone.

Alan: Yeah, yeah!

Mair: And so what's your goal or what do you see ahead, out of this?

Alan: Well let me be transparent again.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: I did not know if a hundred people would show up.

Mair: Ahhhh.

Alan: I did not set out with the intention of this will be a global event, "we'll have people from all over the world," that part surprised me.

Mair: Aha!

Alan: That part stunned me and delighted me.

Mair: Yes, that much interest and something about you creating that flow, that connection, that with the website and with the work that you've done to get the information out, to invite people... so you're in the marketplace saying here's something that you could participate in.

Alan: Yeah. Here's the doorway. And I think it was essential to make it free to participate and to make everything as affordable as possible. I mean that was really part of my goal, so in terms of what's next if it were up to me that would be great, but it's not up to me and it's even better that it's not up to me. It's up to all of us, what do we want to create out of this. I personally, I don't want to lead it. I want to see other people step forward and you know fill those gaps or those pockets. I would love to see us have a global conference on NVC and social change or something. I don't necessarily want to see us getting on more airplanes to do that so I don't know what that could look like. I really have no idea Mair. I mean, in terms of my personal work, I had two big projects this year and the telesummit was one of them, and then this October I'm leading a 4-day NVC intensive with myself and three other trainers. One of them is Karl Steyaert who was one of our guests earlier in the telesummit. One of them is an independent trainer named Cat Zavis who is a close friend who lives here locally where I live, and she's also part of the telesummit. I'm doing an additional prerecorded interview with her and with Rabbi Michael Lerner, both of them on the same call, and I'm really looking forward to that. The fourth trainer that I have as part of the what I'm calling the Blackbelt Communication Skills Retreat this October is Kathleen Macferran who is also someone I consider a good friend, and she is also a [NVC trainer] certification assessor. So that's one of the pieces that she and I have talked about is finding a way to integrate people who are interested in my training program and my coaching program. The NVC which I'm calling Blackbelt Communication Skills, and I can explain that in a second, how to connect participants in those programs to who wants to become certified, how to help them you know get on that certification track. So that's the next thing for me personally this year is this retreat at the end of October, October 23rd through 27th, and that will be in Washington State, and anyway, anyone who is curious about that can let me know...

Mair: So if they actually want to know more about the Blackbelt Communication Skills program, for instance, which has a link to this retreat, they could go to the Cascadia Workshops website. Is that where they can go?

Alan: Well, if they want to learn about the training program and the coaching program?

Mair: Unhuh.

Alan: Yes, actually the link at the bottom of my information box takes people to BlackbeltCommunicationSkills.com, and that's no hyphenation, no punctuation, just BlackbeltCommunicationSkills.com. And that takes people to a series of free videos, and toward the end of those free videos is where I let people know, I say, "Well, if you like that free training here is a place where you can really go in depth." And that provides the whole curriculum beginner to intermediate to advanced, via video. I also give people the MP3's and the transcriptions. In the telesummit, "level four" has a bonus, that's the training program and that's like a scaled down version of the coaching program because you're just getting the training. So the coaching program additionally has two calls a month, one is a Q-&-A/Coaching Call and the other one is a Practice Group Call, and Mair, you've been involved with those and I know that participants are really loving your participation in that.

Mair: Yeah! So I just want to say for people who would like to experience more depth and connection and support in building skills and solving your conflicts and deepening into community, I highly recommend this program. Yeah, it's where I send people actually when they ask me, if they don't want to work with me, they can work with me and you and have all this community of people as well. I highly recommend it.

Alan: Thank you, Mair.

Mair: I love it.

Alan: But I want to be clear, I think I created some confusion because these programs are named so closely, so the training program does not include the calls, the coaching program does. So it's sort of like...

Mair: Two separate...

Alan: ...Yeah, one is a more robust and a more enhanced version, and the other one is just here's the training without the support and as much learning community. But the cool thing about the coaching program besides the calls is that I do give people two tickets, so two basically tuition waivers, for the Blackbelt Communication Skills Retreat whether it's the one in October or a future one. This is, right now I'm having a...my too-much-self-promotion radar's going off so I'm wanting to...

Mair: You're talking about social change and what people...this is one thing and it's something that you're actively involved and alive in and so I'm really not thinking of it as promotion but more as information.

Alan: I agree. And I've had a lot of requests for more information about other pieces. By the way, I had two requests come in with regard to today's call. One of them was from Raj Gill, and I'll see if I have her. This is from her email, she says, "One request if there is a space for it on your call please, share my deep gratitude for your work and for all the people who joined the telesummit to learn and explore social change and NVC." So that's from Raj Gill, and then the other request that came in was from somebody who's enrolled in the telesummit who says, "I probably won't be able to ask a question on the call, so if you get this please explain a bit more than you have below." And that's in the email I sent this morning about level four, especially the Blackbelt Skills Training program, so I think I've done that.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: And I'm really open to more questions if people have them, but I think the thing that I want people to hear is that I love this work, and I love working with people who have a dual commitment, who are committed to their own path of service, of contribution, of making a difference. And the other commitment is that they're committed to their own personal development, their own personal growth, being the best person they can possibly be. And if somebody has that dual commitment then I am so excited to work with them or collaborate with them or even just connect. So that's who my message is focused toward. If they're just into personal development but they're not interested in making a difference in the outer world, I'm not that interested. If they're just interested in making a difference but they think that they are at the peak of human evolution and they don't have any more learning and growing to do, I'm not that interested.

Mair: [laughs] The peak of evolution. Yeah!

Alan: You laugh Mair but you know it's one of the Achilles' heels of the environmental movement in the United States: people thinking "other people should see it my way. I don't need to change or evolve or transform I'm perfectly fine, thank you very much. If everyone else saw it my way then the world would be like heaven on earth," and I think that's a big blind spot that a lot of people have.

Mair: Oh, here. I just see Wes joined the call and I'm just wanting to put him into our main room here.

Alan: Oh, thank you.

Mair: Yeah, it is and that is part of what you're saying about the five...what change agents need is the first thing is to give up, if I'm hearing you, the idea that other people need to change and get on my bandwagon, get on my perspective because they're the problem.

Alan: Yeah. You know one of the things that I talked about earlier, Mair, was the influence that my mom had on my life, and I have so many great stories of things that she shared with me that really stuck with me. And one of those was she, when I was a kid and I would ask her like, what's the purpose of life. I'd just come up with these questions, and she said, "Look, the purpose of life is learning and growing, that simple." And what I love about that is that if you dedicate yourself to lifelong learning and growing, then other things become clear in the process. As I continue to expand my awareness as an end in itself I become aware of other ends, of other purposes for life, of other possibilities. I think it was the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore who said, and I'm going to paraphrase because I don't have it committed to memory, "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and I saw that service was joy."

Mair: Yeah! If you're chasing happiness it will always be in front of you and somewhere else.

Alan: Oh yeah, you know, I'm not a spiritual seeker anymore.

Mair: You want to say more about that?

Alan: I used to consider myself a spiritual seeker, and at some point, I don't know when that happened that stopped being a driver for me. I'm not a spiritual seeker,

I'm a spiritual finder. It's like it's here now, it's not outside of us. It's not anywhere else. When you read Zen poetry it's so poignant, the hear and now-ness and the simplicity of the dew drops on the grass, the birdsong in the tree, stars shining. That's all, that's it.

Mair: The child smiling.

Alan: Anyway, yeah...It's here now. So now, before we get to the end of this hour I have a reading that I'd love to read, what do you think about that?

Mair: Yeah, I like it!

Alan: Now this is a few paragraphs, but it's something that a good friend of mine who's work I really admire and respect, who's part of my local community here, he sent me this out in an email a couple of weeks ago and I thought, "OH!" when I read it.

Mair: So before you read it do you want to tell us why you're going to read it, like is it inspiring to you? What's the impetus for you sharing it, would that be revealed in reading?

Alan: Well... I think that will be obvious.

Mair: Okay.

Alan: I think that will be obvious and if it's not, ask me when I'm done reading it.

Mair: Okay.

Alan: It's just a few paragraphs, and it's two sides of a page almost, and it's from a book edited by Kathleen Dean Moore and Michael P. Nelson. And all I have is the printout of the scan that he sent. I don't even have the title of the book, but those are the two editors of this book, Kathleen Dean Moore, Michael P. Nelson I presume that one or both of them wrote this piece, and it's a section called *Ethical Action*, and this piece is titled, "How Can We Protect the Flourishing of All Life." So this is it:

If it's true that we can't destroy our habitats without destroying our lives, as Rachel Carson said, and if it's true that we are in the process of laying waste to the planet, then our ways of living will come to an end some way or another,

sooner or later, gradually or catastrophically, and some new way of life will begin. But how can we even begin to protect all of the Earth's flourishing life. The job is unimaginably big in the face of a catastrophe on the scale of global warming. What is the use of trying? The answer may come from scientific studies of other devastations. When Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980, the ash-laden blast leveled forests for dozens of miles around. Scientists thought it would take dusty centuries for life to spread in from the edges of the rubble plain, but now, only 30 years later, the mountain is carpeted in moss and purple lupine, and laced with the tracks of deer and fox. What the scientists learned is that when the mountain blasted ash across the landscape, the devastation never touched some small places hidden in the lee of rocks and trees. Refugia, scientists call them, places of safety where life endures. From the refugia small animals emerged blinking onto the blasted plane, and from a thousand, ten thousand, maybe countless small places of enduring life, meadows returned to the mountain. This suggests that if destructive forces are building under our lives, then our work is to create refugia of the imagination. Refugia: places where new ideas are sheltered and encouraged to grow. We can create small pockets of flourishing, and we can make ourselves into overhanging rock ledges to protect their life so that the full measure of possibility can spread and reseed the world. Doesn't matter what it is, if it's generous to life, imagine it into existence. Create a bicycle cooperative, a seed-sharing community, a wildlife sanctuary. Write poems for children, sing duets to the dying, tear out the irrigation system and plant native grass. Imagine water pumps, dig a community garden in the K-mart parking lot, learn to cook with the full power of the sun at noon. We don't have to start from scratch, we can restore pockets of flourishing life-ways that have been damaged over time. Breach a dam, plant a riverbank, vote for schools, introduce the neighbors to each other's children, celebrate the solstice, write a story in an old language, slow a river course with a fallen log. Maybe most effective of all, we can protect refugia that already exist. They are all around us. Protect the marshy ditch behind the mall. Ban poisons from the edges of the road, save the hedges in your neighborhood, boycott what you don't believe in, refuse to participate in what is wrong. There is power in this, and attention that notices and celebrates thriving where it occurs, a conscience that refuses to destroy it. These acts will be the wellspring of the new world. From sheltered pockets of moral imagining and from protected pockets of flourishing, new ways of living will spread across the land. Here is how we will start anew. Not from the edges over centuries of invasion, but from small pockets of good work shaped by an understanding that all life is interdependent and driven by the uniquely human gift, practical imagination, the ability to imagine that things can be different from what they are

now. Your calling, philosopher Frederic Buchner said, is at the intersection of your great joy and the world's great need. Go to that place, do that work.

I think it was probably obvious now why I chose to read that.

Mair: I see, and I see why you didn't need to explain beforehand. Would you reread the very last sentence?

Alan: Absolutely. "Your calling, philosopher Frederic Buchner said, is at the intersection of your great joy and the word's great need. Go to that place, do that work."

Mair: I'd like to say what comes up in me when I'm hearing you reading that.

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: I was looking, for some reason, I ended up on the United Nations website, they have something called global broadcast for September 21st International Day of Peace. And there's a 24/7 peace television on there, and Marianne Williamson was talking about you don't have to know what you can do, but if you show up for whatever it is that needs to be done then because you showed up, what your part is to do will be shown to you.

Alan: Yeah!

Mair: So it's not like going out and finding whatever. I think that's what that was talking to, the intersection. Being aware of what is moving me and what is there to be done and then doing it. Yeah, I wonder if you would like to just shift from this reading to the question and answer or comment part, because I'm guessing this stirred things in people that they might like to...

Alan: I'm eager to connect with people on the call.

Mair: Alright then, let's shift there. And anyone who would like to make a comment or ask Alan a question, just press 1 and then we will call on you.

Alan: Give me feedback, too, what you think. I see a hand up here. Hi, Phil.

Phil: Hello, it's Phil Kingston from Bristol, England, and it's lovely to speak with you both again. And I followed this series with admiration and excitement and I've

been really fired up by this presentation by you Alan, and I see so many creative examples of social change. But I want to ask for something more, namely an economic perspective which matches the big picture of the destruction of earth's ecosystems. Now what I say may be difficult to hear by those of us who benefit materially from the processes of this destruction, and there are probably few of us who can say we're not involved in that. For example, I have an occupational pension which comes from investment in companies which are big players in the destruction of ecosystems. Now, the bottom line is, I want to say is that an economy which is predicated upon growth is not compatible with a finite Earth. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the current human population is using the Earth as though we have one and a half earths. We in Britain are using it as though we have 3 Earths. That can only be done at the expense of future generation and other life forms. So Alan, when you ask, how much is enough and the human population passed that level in the 1970...

Alan: Go ahead, go ahead.

Phil: ...this absolute necessity for a different economic model, sometimes called a steady state economy, I think needs to be our primary debate, because without this, so much of what we are really struggling hard to do with, many different system levels, will I see it be overtaken by climate change and other environmental disasters. And I just wonder how you feel about what you hear me say, Alan, and what it meets or doesn't meet in you.

Alan: Oh, it meets so many needs, it meets so many needs, Phil, for camaraderie and shared understanding. I've been a long time student of alternative economics, ecological economics, and as soon as you mentioned steady state economy, I was about to mention it. And so there's an organization I'd like to tell people about called the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy, C-A-S-S-E, and their website is steadystate.org. And we're on the same page, Phil, completely, and we could do an entire telesummit just on sustainable economics, everything from alternative economic systems like LETS systems and other kinds of barter systems and alternative currencies, all the way to alternative financial models, to how do we shift our tax structures so that it's not just a way for governments to generate revenue but also a way for them to incentivize businesses that are good for the planet and dis-incentivize businesses that are bad for the planet. We could do a whole telesummit just on this topic and I love what you have to share.

Phil: Oh! Thank you, Alan. I'm very, I'm deeply touched by what you say, and I wish you so well in your work.

Alan: Thank you, thank you. Absolutely. Herman Daly, D-A-L-Y, people need to read him. Hazel Henderson, Paul Hawken has written books. I'm looking at a whole bookshelf of books I have just on this topic. So yeah, anyway, the ecology of commerce was the Paul Hawken book I was trying to think of. So this is crucial, what you're bringing up is part and parcel of everything that we need to work on.

Mair: So I have a question maybe for Phil, maybe for Alan. This is Mair. If someone is awakening to what you're saying and they're an NVC person, say they came to this call but this is a whole new concept and idea, what would you suggest they do first as a first step?

Alan: Go ahead Phil if you want and then I can answer.

Phil: No, no, no. I'd like you to go ahead.

Alan: I think Mair it's as simple as just taking ten minutes, go online and seeing what's out there. Looking at some of these authors that I've mentioned, Herman Daly, D-A-L-Y, Paul Hawken, H-A-W-K-E-N, Hazel Henderson, those are three that come to the top of my mind although there's so many others. And what we can do is connect with what we're drawn to, tune into what's alive in us and if any of these areas draw us, because it's really about, like in that reading, the world's deepest hunger AND our greatest joy. So we know that there's so much important work out there but it's not all my work to do.

Mair: Yes.

Alan: That's one of the mindsets, it's all important but it's not all my work. And so I think people just need to tune into which parts of it they're drawn to and just keep learning and growing and exploring and getting involved and connecting and, you know, the path will be revealed as we walk it.

Mair: Yes. Thank you, and did you have something to add to that, Phil?

Phil: Yes. Thank you, Mair. It's really important, and none of us are surprised when we read this stuff on the web, we experience the immensity of it. And particularly when it begins to challenge the growth economy we will be

overwhelmed and we may experience despair about the amount of challenge that faces us and to acknowledge that that's happening to us, and that we need a lot of support in working it through and being with others. Thank you.

Alan: Yes.

Mair: And I just want to say that I looked at your...you were on a previous call and mentioned that you had gone into the Barclays Bank in Bristol, England, along with 3 other people, grandparents, and then I looked at the YouTube video that somebody videotaped you all doing that. You were there for 4 hours occupying Barclays Bank asking them to divest themselves of coal investitures right? Wondering if you have something to say about that adventure and what's happening out of that.

Phil: Thank you, Mair. Yes, as Alan was describing earlier we enter these things without having any clue about the outcome. But that's been a very rewarding experience in terms of spreading the word, connecting with many other people including yourself. And there are two aspects. The nonviolent direct action is more and more what I am called to in the sense that so much of our correspondence with politicians and businesses doesn't seem to work. Somehow we need to, I believe, attract attention to the destruction that is going on. And the other aspect is the fact that we are grandparents, and I think this is a common link with so many people in our world who share the same sense of responsibility. Thank you.

Mair: Thank you. Thank you, Phil, and do you feel complete with what you've offered? I'm seeing there's another hand up from someone.

Phil: Yeah, I'm very grateful for the time you've given to this. Thank you.

Alan: Thank you, Phil. Thank you, and before we go to that other hand, Mair, part of what Phil was sharing stimulated for me an experience that I had that relates to effective activism. I was appointed by our county executive, this is years ago now, to be part of a citizens advisory committee that was looking at a 20-year plan for the area in which I live. The plan was truly comprehensive and involved all land use policy, economics and jobs, utilities, roads, everything... in a 20-year plan. And I want to give you, now this is not directly a response to anything you said Phil, this is just something separate that was stimulated for me, but that I think could be useful to people and it highlights how NVC skills can be so useful. I've got lots of these stories and I wish we'd had more time, and I'm happy to

share more of them depending on people's interest, but I just want to contrast these two approaches to how people would show up at these meetings. So here we are, an advisory committee, advisory to the our government, our local government, looking at a 20-year plan. So imagine person A shows up at the meeting and says, "I think you should add a policy for bike lanes or bicycle trails connecting all of the communities in our area." That's person A. Now person B shows up at the meeting and says, "I think you should create a policy for bike lanes or bicycle trails connecting all of the communities in our area, and I've drafted how such a policy could be worded in one paragraph. I've made copies for every member of the committee and for members of the public here. I've made extra photocopies of this policy, and what I'd like to know is if anybody on the committee could tell me what are the biggest obstacles that they see to something like this passing?" Huge difference! Huge difference because people who are in those positions of power, whether it's running a bank or whether it's part of the government, there so many interests pulling at their attention, clamoring for their attention, wanting them to take action on different things that if you craft... if I'm on one of these committees and you actually take the time to craft what a potential policy would sound like, we may just adopt it, as-is, with no changes, or maybe we'll tweak a word here or there but you've made our job so much more easy by spoon-feeding it to us. And then your clear request also gives you information and allows us to think about it in a different way. So that's just one example of how we can use NVC skills really effectively in different kinds of situations. So who was next, Mair, in terms of hands?

Mair: Oh, it was Jacki.

Alan: Hi Jacki.

Jacki. Hi. Can you hear me? Hi.

Alan: Hi.

Jacki: So I have an actual question this time, not just me ranting. I was wondering after all this research that you've done, if you have kind of a vision of how a socioeconomic system for human beings would function ideally?

Alan: Well, the shortest answer I can give you is no. Because that's going to be so dependent on how things evolve and what direction we're able to take things and also how quickly are we going to be impacted by the triple threats of peak oil, climate disruption, and economic instability. So one of the things that I do see,

Jacki, is that we'll be able to create different concentric circles of self-sufficiency from a very local scale to a regional scale to, you know, larger regions nationally, internationally. And whatever it looks like we're going to need to find ways to restore human communities and be able to sustain our technological economic base in a way that does not undermine the Earth's life-support systems. And what that looks like, who knows, but the only thing we do know is that nobody knows how this is going to play out. But one of the things that we get a little bit rigid in our thinking around is, for example, the transportation system is really different in many ways from the communications infrastructure. So it could be that in my area, perhaps, maybe cars stop being part of the norm and maybe we go back to horse drawn wagons, but maybe those horse drawn wagons have wifi on them. Who knows?

Jacki: Yeah. I totally agree. I'm just like looking from what you just said about bringing a fully written proposal to the table.

Alan: Yeah.

Jacki: And I just, I feel like the activist community hasn't really done that as far as like, there's all these people who want to do something.

Alan: Yeah.

Jacki: But they don't have a framework to do that, especially economically.

Alan: Absolutely! I agree, and I think steadystate.org is leading that in a large way.

Jacki: Right!

Alan: The Center for the Advancement of Steady State Economy and some of these other authors are certainly in communication with each other, and I would look at organizations like the New Road Map Foundation, newroadmap.org. So if there's another place which is actually, where I'm leading the retreat this October called the Whidbey Institute. And Whidbey is W-H-I-D as in dog, B as in boy, E-Y, W-H-I-D-B-E-Y. And their website is whidbeyinstitute.org, and they have a conference actually, it just happened in March, called the thriving communities conference 2013, local living economies. And there's some really cool videos, so go to whidbeyinstitute.org later, not during this call, and you can look at some of the things from the thriving communities conference. I think you're right, what we

have in terms of that picture of what the future could look like, we really have some broad strokes but many, many, many of the details are not filled in. And that's going to take time from all of us doing the work in our own places.

Mair: I'd like to jump in there about that. I'm remembering, I don't remember if it's in this series that someone was referring to Buckminster Fuller, that one of the things he said was, rather than spend energy trying to tear down or revolutionize what is, create something that works better to meet human needs and the other system will just fall away, because people will be doing the new thing. They'll be involved in what is working.

Jacki: Absolutely. That shows that there is a viable alternative that's not just, "Hey, this works, but it actually works better." So they will actually out-compete the current system.

Mair: Yes, yes! Naturally, organically.

Jacki: Yeah!

Mair: Yeah, yup.

Alan: Thank you, Jacki.

Jacki: Thank you.

Alan: Yeah, and I think that's what we're doing, those of us that are part of this telesummit and all of the discussions that have been happening is we're creating what's going to be next. When what's unsustainable plays itself out, there's something there.

Mair: Yeah!

Alan: So that's the good news and the bad news of un-sustainability, the bad news is it's not sustainable, but that's also the good news.

Mair: I see David put his hand up.

Alan: Yes. Let's hear from David. Hi David.

David: Oh yeah, hello. Hello, how you doing?

Alan: Great, thank you.

David: Thanks for having the conference. It's been very educational for me because I'm just trying to learn NVC and how it relates to people and how it relates to communities and such. It's been very enlightening.

Alan: You're very welcome.

David: So it's interesting because one of the tenets of NVC seems to be that somebody else is responsible for their own feelings, emotions, whatever thoughts. I'm not responsible for them. I'm encountering somebody who has a lot of anger and I tell them, "Hey, look. I'm not responsible for your anger." So let's say for instance there was a situation where they might be yelling. So they're yelling and then I kind of go into the formula, you know, "You're yelling right now, and I'm feeling very scared, I'm feeling very almost kind of hurt, and because I really have a need for safety, stability and warmth, and so I need for you not to yell right now."

Alan: Wow, I bet that backfired.

David: Yeah, because what happened was they replied to me to the effect of, "Well, I'm not responsible for your emotions. So if I'm yelling why don't you just change the way that you feeling about me yelling."

Alan: Yeah yeah. Well, I can see how that conversation's going nowhere fast. So were you wanting some input in terms of the NVC skill level how it could apply to that situation, is that what you're wondering?

David: Yeah. Kind of wondering how you would first specifically in that [situation], but also generally it seems kind of, and I'm not saying contradictory, but it seems kind of interesting that I'm saying you're responsible for your own feelings, but then at some point it seems like when I go to the request part of the formula that I have to ask them for something..

Alan: Right, right.

David: You see what I'm saying about that?

Alan: I do, I do. And this gets into there's at least 3 different NVC teaching points that you've brought up. So the first has to do with I just encourage you to think about it as a toolbox rather than a formula. It's a set of tools that you have in any moment and rather than a formula or even a technique, because we do have the technique side and the actual model, but the other dimension that is equally or more important is the consciousness and the intentionality of it. So if you're entering the conversation trying to get the person to stop yelling or trying to get them to understand what's going on for you, that's different than going into the interaction with the intention to create a high quality of connection out of which mutual understanding would happen, and out of which you'll be able to resolve it. So that's the first piece: I would encourage you to reframe the formula piece and to think more about the consciousness and the intentionality. Then the technique side gives you some skillful means, gives you ways of potentially making it more effective. But here's the second teaching point around what you're bringing up, or curriculum pieces, that one of the biggest limitations of NVC is our own skill level with it. And one of the things that we learn—and boy, you know, I'm still learning this too and sometimes I find myself surprised that I thought I'd gotten NVC to be second nature and yet sometimes the old habit patterns runs so deep—and that would be empathy before honesty. So when you're sharing, “When I notice you yelling, I feel scared because I have a need for...” That's your honesty, that's your self-expression. And one of the things, one image that might be helpful for you, David, is like a plastic tube or a poster tube between us. We can call it “the tube of communication.” So you're trying to get your point across, you're putting your scarf into the tube, and I'm trying to get my point across at the same time, I'm putting my scarf in the tube. What happens is the tube is clogged, connection isn't happening, neither one of us is hearing each other. So if I can take my scarf out, I'm not suppressing my truth or repressing my truth, I'm just putting it to the side long enough for the other person to get their point through, get their scarf through the tube. So one of the insights of this is that *the other person is more likely to hear you out if they feel heard first*. So to the extent that you can, rather than being in the honesty mode, being in the empathy mode and try to with a spirit of curiosity, try to really understand, really *get* what the universal human need is. Now they may have completely misunderstood your intentions and completely misread a situation, and you'd like them to understand that, and something that Roxy Manning said, the way she phrased it that I really enjoyed which was, “differentiate between intent and impact, between intention and impact, and attend to impact.” So the other person got triggered around something and you can attend to what their needs are. I offer them that compassion and understanding without having to agree with them, without having to see it their way, just giving them the experience of, “Oh, okay, David

gets me. He gets where I'm coming from." So that's the other piece is the empathy before honesty, the *empathic connection before correction*. Now there are a few things that we could tighten up in terms of the actual technique side, like "yelling" isn't exactly an observation, it's a little bit subjective. What's yelling and what's not yelling, and the other person they could become more defensive around that. When they hear that your request was asking them what you wanted them not to do, like "Could you please stop yelling?" rather than telling them what you *do* want. So there're a few things we can tighten up there, but more specifically it's really the consciousness piece. And there was something around the request that when you're saying we're not responsible for other people's feelings, you know there's this paradox in NVC circles. I've seen this a lot where we say we can make each other's life more wonderful, right? It's all about contributing and making each other's life more wonderful, so I can make your life more wonderful. But if you're miserable that's your problem. It doesn't really work that way, so, yes, we're each responsible for our own reactions and for our own interpretations and the feelings and needs that arise from that, and I haven't found it usually serves to say, "Well if you're having hard feelings that's your problem." Even if maybe it is, because that blocks the quality of connection that we're looking for. So now you mention maybe a little confusion on the request piece, like it always sounds like I have to want something from them.

David: Yes, it's kind of like what I'm saying is, since we're saying, "Look you're responsible for this." But at the same time I feel like in the request part of this I have to ask you for something for me to get over. Like say for instance you're yelling. I might say instead of you know, "Can you not yell, can you possibly speak to me in a tone of voice or something that I can be more receptive to?" Or I don't know exactly how to put it, but it just seems like it's contradicting because I'm saying, look you're not responsible for anything that I'm feeling, but I need you to do this.

Alan: Right. Well, yeah that is tricky. That's the difference between a request and a demand. In a demand it's, "I need you to do this..." and it's not a universal human need. I think that part of what is going on there is really distinguishing the need from the strategy, and this is getting a little bit longer into the basics of NVC then I was intending for this call, but basically, when we want our request to come across as really flowers for our table rather than air for our lungs, so if the need and the request overlap, then there's some desperateness that can come out in my request, because the only way my needs will get met is if you stop yelling. But we could, we could have other requests. So we can have connecting requests or other kinds. For example, and this is where imagination, I think

creative problem solving is such a big part of Nonviolent Communication, you know. Right now I would like us to take a two-hour break from this conversation so that I can get more connected with myself and so that both of us can have an opportunity to get some support outside of the conversation and then come back and attempt to reconnect. Will that work for you? So there might...

Mair: I'd like to pause you here.

Alan: Hold on just a second, just a second Mair. So my request is, "Will that work for you?" rather than, I need you to stop yelling. It could be a request for, "Hey, could we take a break?" So there's all kinds of things that we could do. It doesn't just have to be my need will only be met if you stop yelling. Is that helpful David?

David: Yeah that's pretty helpful. Like I said, I mean I just don't want there to be some sort of conflict in me for asking this person to do something.

Alan: Right.

David: It seems like I should be taking responsibility for myself but why am I asking them to do something specific?

Alan: Yeah. Yeah, and sometimes the request is, "I just want to be heard." Sometimes that's all I'm wanting is the other person's attention, so keep working on those NVC skills because I think as you deepen in them and they start to become second nature this stuff is going to become really clear.

David: Okay cool. I appreciate it.

Alan: Thank you, David. Mair!

Mair: Yes. I just wanted to add one thing. I loved what Alan was saying about the steps there and how to move through it. And also another thing is instead of making an action request, that you make a connecting request to find out what's going on in the other person or how they heard you so that they have more confidence that you have your focus on connecting rather than on the action that you want. So it's moving from the sense of "what you want" to "what we want," where we are in the moment. Is that helpful David?

David: Oh yeah, definitely.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: Yeah. Ding, ding, ding, ding, thank you, Mair.

Mair: And I see two things right now. One is that we're at the end of our time together for the formal part of the call, and the other thing is that one more person has their hand up.

Alan: Well, I really want to hear from Anjali.

Mair: Okay yeah!

Alan: And I also promised everybody that we would do some extended Q and A so...

Mair: Oh yeah. Okay.

Alan: If you need to leave, if your time is up and you need to go, you know I honor your path, I bless your path, and I'll leave you with this one expression. Namaste is "the light in me honors the light in you," or "the divine in me sees and honors the divine in you." I learned a different version which is, *Nama-Rock-Steady*, which means "the rock-star in me honors the rock-star in you." Anjali!

Anjali: Hey Alan. Can you hear me?

Alan: Yes.

Anjali: Awesome! I am so grateful to that last caller and to your response and also yours Mair. Yeah, I've been involved in NVC and related things since 1988 and for me especially lately this whole topic that he kind of brought up about responsibility is kind of like the elephant in the living room for me, because there is a paradox. We say in NVC the consciousness is about interdependence, and as I experience life, people impact me. I mean we all do, right? People impact me, we have an effect on each other and that is unquestionable, and there's also so much research right now particularly in the new brain science that is all over the internet and in books. One of my favorites is called *Buddha's Brain* and you know it goes in to how when somebody either raises their voice or they speak faster that it actually triggers that part of the brain where their survival instincts come up. Now it's kind of like validating my sense of something in me is not feeling safe right now and I need to kind of retreat and take care of myself until

we can talk when we're more calm or something like that. That's my reality and so it's kind of like I have had people say to me who just slam their fist on the table because they're so upset about something related to our business and then it's like I'm supposed to be responsible for all my reaction to that, but that's not reality to me. My reality is that we're co-creating the energy in this room and we're co-creating how we affect each other. I mean it's true, so I think there's a distinction that needs to be made about not necessarily responsibility, but awareness, and kind of speaking about it in a different way as I see people use that as a way to really not maybe feel guilty or sad or whatever about their behavior, you know, get off the hook in other words. So I'd love to hear your comments on that.

Alan: Well, I want to hear Mair's comments on that first.

Mair: Well, I would have said something else yesterday, and today what I'm going to say is I for myself, I want to hold myself a hundred percent responsible for everything that I experience around me in the world. I want to take a hundred person responsibility for my part in co-creating whatever's been co-created, so that when someone is "yelling at me" I'm going to look at what part in me holds in this person being mean or obnoxious or yelling or not agreeable, whatever is going on in me that's co-created. That's the responsibility, I can a hundred percent take on myself and then from that place I'm not in the mindset that this other person is part of the problem, that I am opening myself to how I can show up without judgment and blame and hurt and whatever else is going on, that I'm not a victim of my brain science, you know my brain's neural pathways. I'll choose, and I'm wondering how that fits in you, Anjali, hearing that.

Anjali: Well, you know, I love it to a point. I mean I love it, I wish that I could say a hundred percent of me loves it. But part of me says, "Okay, where do you draw the line? When my neighbor bashed into my car and didn't want to deal with it or if somebody was to be physically violent, literally physically violent with me, or I'm observing it, I mean, where do you draw the line? When someone's not paying child support, or whatever it might be, it's a definite action that does have repercussions, and you know, certainly we talk about protective use of force and so forth, removing ourselves when it's "abusive," etc., but I think part of me wants it to be acknowledged that there is an effect that I'd like people to consider. I guess it has to do it with consideration and awareness of how we impact others. I'd like you to tell me what you heard in that, that would be so satisfying.

Mair: I heard that you would really like to agree with what I said and yet when you look at actual facts and situations and those don't compute that there's some way that you want co-acknowledgement or co-responsibility or co-holding of different things, different ways in different situations. Is that, am I getting you there?

Anjali: Well, I think I'm wanting at least acknowledgement and awareness that we impact each other, and not that I want to see myself as a victim ever, and I love the idea of full choice. I mean, you can look at Viktor Frankl who lived through the holocaust. His book to me is one of the most incredible books because he found a way to get through that ordeal by how he changed his mindset, and I think that's what we're talking about here, how can I look at this, and be more responsible and empowered right? That's the outcome.

Mair: Yes.

Alan: Yeah.

Anjali: So, empowered and not see myself as a victim. Okay, where do I go with that, but then there's still the undeniable thing about wanting care, consideration, and acknowledgement that we impact each other I think that's what I'm wanting.

Mair: I think I'm getting you, and I think if you had that sort of acknowledgement and understanding it would give you a sense of peace of mind and sense that you mattered, that you're cared about, that you're living in a universe that make sense.

Anjali: Yeah.

Alan: I'm hearing that you value self-responsibility, too.

Anjali: Absolutely. And I love the challenge of when you think about various people who have done the nonviolent resistance, they end up in jail and they're doing that, if you read Gandhi's movement and so forth, they were so fired up with the goal that they could withstand the violence from the British directly. They were so fired up with the bigger picture, they were willing to die for that. I'm not really there, that's the truth in my day-to-day life, you know, I'm not willing to. I'm going to be assertive about certain things with certain people and in a way that I hope is acknowledging them as well. I want that for me, too. So it's kind of like when someone bristles about something with me, inside I go, "Oh yeah, that had an impact. I see that I could have done that differently." It's about wanting more

for myself as well, because I see how I can bring more to the world when I'm dealing with things differently, that it doesn't come out so much with a certain energy that people find uncomfortable. It's just a fact, so I just want to, I guess it's shared reality, I'm looking for...I'd like that people go, "Yeah, yeah. I get that! Yeah!"

Mair: And the problem with shared reality is it involves another person, and if I'm holding the responsibility, I think you were saying that it is empowering to you when you can hold your place in it and see how you impact other people, that that's powerful for you that you, "Oh yeah! I am aware of how I have impacted another person." Am I getting what you're saying, maybe not?

Anjali: That part, too. You know, I appreciate you reflecting it that way. I was actually specifically referring to, rather than see myself as a victim of someone's behavior, I can choose to look inside at what's alive for me, and like you were saying, like my judgments, etc., that are coming up about that this is wrong behavior or whatever. I can choose to use that as a sort of motivation for personal growth and awareness, and I can also choose to take actions to remove myself from those persons. I have power I don't have to stand here. So nonetheless, it's just about the bigger picture of acknowledging that I think I'm just [wanting]. People go around in NVC circles sometimes it's like nobody's responsible for anybody else, and no, we're not really, but yet aren't we talking about that? We're on a planet together and we've got this interdependent thing, not responsible to your feelings but that we all impact each other. We are interrelated, that's really what I'm saying here.

Mair: I think this is another telesummit.

Alan: So can I chime in here?

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: I think the paradox here, Anjali, is that there's really a both-and. And so I'm seeing the total congruence in what both you and Mair are saying in that, the piece around "I'm a hundred percent responsible for my thoughts, for my reactions, for my patterns and what I do about them." That does not mean that I let other people off the hook or justify or endorse their actions in any way, and so that's one thing I want to say. Second thing I want to say is there's a very powerful set of tools for the mindset piece in Byron Katie's work, and you're probably familiar with it, Anjali. I'm not sure though.

Anjali: Yes, thank you.

Alan: Yeah, she has a book called *Loving What Is*, and I like the audio version even better than the book because she's working live on stage with people, and this is a methodology that I think is very compatible and complimentary with Nonviolent Communication, but it really focuses on a different type of thing. If Nonviolent Communication is a set of pliers, maybe Byron Katie's work is a screwdriver. I mean, you could use them on the same project but they are really different. So the last thing that I'd love to say to you, Anjali, is just I want to thank you for how you've shown up in this event and your emails to me and your ideas and suggestions. And I've just really appreciated your participation, and you had a request around me sharing some additional information about some things in the telesummit, and I'm wondering if any of those questions are still up for you?

Anjali: Thanks so much, Alan, for your comment. I feel really warm inside hearing, and I think I am good for now. And if I have more, I'll email you.

Alan: Okay.

Mair: Thank you so much.

Anjali: Yeah. Thank you Mair, too. I'm very grateful for this conversation. It's actually not only mine, there's some other people in my network and we've been kind of burning on this issue. So I'm saying it for all of us, it's been big for us. Yeah, thanks!

Alan: Thank you, Anjali. The piece around brain chemistry is so, so tricky because we are wired for so many things, and I think it's as we become more conscious and more aware then we can be more intentional around reframing our habit patterns starting to transform them, starting to have them rather than them having us. And neuroplasticity is such a real thing, too, and Victor Frankl's quote, "Between stimulus and response there's a space. In that space is the ability to choose my response, and in my response lies my growth and freedom." Sometimes that gap is a nanosecond, and it takes a lot of intentionality to become conscious of that gap and insert ourselves in that gap and be able to notice our reactions before they're already out the gate. So that both-and is really alive for me in hearing this conversation.

Mair: Thank you, Alan. I really appreciate that, that wider perspective.

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: The both-and, yeah.

Alan: Yeah. Thank you, Anjali.

Mair: It's all accurate to each of us. And I see we have two more people who have their hands up.

Alan: Yeah, and I'm wondering if we could go to Zeke and just check in whether he has a question or comment. Hi Zeke.

Zeke: Oh hi, can you hear me?

Alan: Yeah.

Zeke: Oh, I think I may have unintentionally put my hand up, but while I'm here I'll ask a question. I just thought my concern, I guess, it's probably something I've brought up indirectly before, is when we talk about the types of change and the various models that we should adopt, maybe this sort of thing needs to replace the current economic model with something different, I get concerned about elements of coercion in that kind of statement. Like how do you do that without having a set of rules established. I guess I'm interested in something that is more voluntary.

Alan: I'm not making out your question entirely, Zeke.

Mair: Zeke, are you saying that your concern there is that if we're changing an economic system, a system change doesn't allow for individual decision making and freedom. Is that what you're saying?

Zeke: Yeah, that's pretty much it. [Inaudible: child crying] in that way.

Alan: I'm not making out the words. I'm sorry.

Mair: No, we're hearing every other word kind of, so spacing that together.

Zeke: --[child wailing]

Mair: Yeah. That's not actually working for clarity so I need...

Alan: Oh and I have so much compassion for Zeke because I have little kids, too, and it's so hard sometimes. Being a parent is one of the toughest, toughest jobs, and I just so honor you for being a dad and for being there with your kids, so I just want to say that. I want to address the question and I'm not a hundred percent sure that I got it. I want to check in, Zeke are you still there?

Zeke: Just [child crying].

Alan: So okay.

Zeke: ...and I'm sorry.

Alan: Zeke, I invite you also to email me the question, too, and we can check in that way.

Zeke: Okay.

Alan: I just muted you, sorry Zeke. Press 1 on your phone whenever you want me to unmute you again. Mair, the part that I heard you reflect back that it sounded like you had agreement from Zeke on, the question is that if we change economic structures that does not allow for individual voice and freedom, is that accurate?

Mair: I think there was the word coercion in there.

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: So I'm thinking that maybe what he is concerned about was the freedom of the individual to operate within whatever structure quote unquote we change.

Alan: Yeah.

Mair: Yeah.

Alan: Yeah. Oh, that's so tricky. That's such a tricky piece. In any group of people that's working on something together there are people who are going to be more involved, more invested, more active, more participatory, and there are people who are going to be focused on other things or don't have as much time or

access or availability. And how do you create a truly participatory process when you have all kinds of different levels of engagement? So just the process of intentionally changing our economic structure, I'm not sure that that's even realistic in the sense that I look at what's happened to the music industry. I look at what's happening to the publishing industry. Nobody designed this but the book publishing industry is being turned on its head by the internet. The music industry got completely turned on its head and shaken up by the internet, and I don't think any of that was by design. I invite anybody who's listening to this to look around the room that they're in and point to one thing where they are that was not created with fossil fuels or transported there with fossil fuels. Point to one thing that was not created with fossil fuels or transported there with fossil fuels. So in terms of the larger economic structures, there're so many things about which we don't have choice, things that happen externally to us. We don't have control over them so we're not responsible necessarily, but we do have control over our own intentions and our own words and our own actions. So we can take responsibility for that, and I don't have the answer to what I understood of your question Zeke. It is tricky, and so that's why I think it's not just about people with good intentions creating change that they force on other people. We need to continually work on ourselves so that we're clear that we're coming from the most connected place within ourselves, the place that's most conscious and most grounded and that's most likely to take into account as many needs as possible in any choices we make, so I'll say that much.

Mair: I wonder Alan if another part of that, a little component I heard you say before about maybe part of these concentric community circles that we create would be horse-drawn vehicles instead of other, and maybe it's in our local economies that we create alternative methods of interaction currencies or barter, whatever it is that locally then the people who are interested in it and want to participate do.

Alan: Absolutely. Absolutely, and it's what we talked about earlier. We have these large systems around us and so much of which is unsustainable. And we're creating the new structures, the new systems, so that when what's unsustainable plays itself out there's something there, and that's how I see part of what you're talking about and it's very, very complex. It's very, very tricky. The property I live on, my whole neighborhood actually, is bordered on one side by Department of Natural Resources Land. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources manages state land for timber harvests so they're going to clear-cut the entire hill right above my property and above my whole neighborhood. And we're in conversation right now with the Department of Natural Resources

around creating an eco-forestry pilot program with those forests that could potentially demonstrate that it could be more economically viable as well as more protective to habitat to be part of those forests in a totally different way that involves wild mushrooms and cultivated mushrooms and holiday wreaths and all sorts of value-added things. So rather than take down a hundred trees, you could take down one tree. And rather than export the logs to somewhere else where they'll make something useful with it... locally, here, without having them move it far at all, create lots of useful things out of that one tree. Instead of cutting down 200 trees, multiple forest products. So that's just one teeny tiny itty bitty little piece that we're able to engage within our neighborhood, and if that becomes a pilot program that's successful, perhaps other people can learn lessons from it and then take it to another level in terms of how do we really live on this planet in a way that sustains us and sustains the planet. Mair, I've had hundreds of workshops where I've asked people, not NVC workshops, other workshops where I've asked people, "Okay, think of an image of nature." Then people think of an image of nature, and then I ask people by a show of hands, "How many of your images of nature included humans in it?" Out of hundreds of people, maybe two raised their hand and said, "You know, my image included humans." So that's part of a mindset piece, it's part of a practice piece. How do we reintegrate as contributing members of the Earth community that includes so many other species, not just humans?

Mair: And includes humans.

Alan: And includes humans, absolutely.

Mair: Yes. Nature and humans, as if we were not natural.

Alan: Yeah. Yeah.

Mair: Aha! And I'm just remembering that there's an entire...I don't even know what to call that phenomena of nature deficit for children in the country of United States.

Alan: NDD. Nature Deficit Disorder. Absolutely!

Mair: Nature Deficit Disorder and how we are...I can't even finish the sentence.

Alan: Well, I encourage people to look up Jon Young J-O-N Y-O-U-N-G and his work. His teacher was Tom Brown, Jr. with the Tracker School. One of Jon

Young's students is one of my closest friends, Cody Beebe. He runs a school, the website is earthwaysnature.org. Cody's a naturalist, he teaches, he has a school that he runs on our property for kids that's based on connection with the natural world and becoming native to your place. Again, another huge body of work that's its own world and really important that we begin to address this. I'd love to hear from the next person who has their hand up.

Mair: That's Sandy. Sandy's got the mic.

Sandy: Hi. Thank you all as usual. This may be another topic for an entire telesummit. I want to go back to one of the first points that Alan made today regarding good skills for cooperation and collaboration being necessary, vital, to turn things around in the world. And hearing that reminded me that, historically, women have had a greater affinity for cooperation and collaborative methods. And you know, while there's probably always room for learning and improvement all around the world, without NVC-type training, when women are not blocked from power and they're allowed to get involved in their economies and their social systems, everything improves for everybody. The economies grow, people are healthier, people are safer, and yet for centuries there's been, and there still is, incredible resistance to women's power, and I don't understand it. Men, and I'm realizing this kind of resistance is probably very little to nonexistent in the community that we're in speaking to each other right now, but in the wider world it's still so huge and so impactful, and I don't understand where it comes from, and more importantly, I would love to hear strategies to change it. I mean what really puzzles me is there are so many situations where men can look at women being able to move into power and see that it's safer and better and more, more productive and richer for them, for their children, not just for the women, and yet they continue to block and fight women's power often quite terribly, violently. And anyway, that's our question, where does it come from and more importantly how can we change it?

Alan: I love that you've given us another topic for another telesummit. Yes, so I don't have the answer for you, thank goodness, but I can tell you one route that will definitely not work that's probably very tempting, a very tempting route to go down that I can pretty much guarantee that will not work, and that is to bombard people with more data, more statistics, more information, because the environmental movement has been doing this for 40 years and what we're finding is that simply giving people a lot of information on climate change or simply giving people a lot of information on species extinction is that the data and the information is not what motivates people to act. And I agree with you entirely, and

those statistics are there and the data is there, that when you empower girls and women everything improves. Education improves, literacy improves, infant mortality goes down. So many aspects of society get better that as far as I'm concerned, and this is just "Alan's perspective," as far as I'm concerned, that's been statistically proven. So if giving people more data is not what causes them to change, then what does? And I think we might be able to get some clues from a man named David Johnston. His website is, I believe, it's whatsworking.org or [.com](http://whatsworking.com). And it might be [whatworks](http://whatworks.org), but I think it's [whatsworking](http://whatsworking.org), and I'm not going to look it up right now. But David Johnston worked in the area of green building, and he succeeded in getting green building to become code, in other words, the law of the land... green building became code in San Francisco, San Francisco County, in Alameda county — Alameda county includes Oakland, Berkeley and a bunch of other small cities. And the way that he did it is he based himself somewhat on Ken Wilber's Integral work and from that on Paul Ray's work in sociology, and I'll just try to be as brief as I can in describing this. Paul Ray pointed to the United States and he wrote that before World War II there were two major cultural groups, "Traditionals" and "Moderns." Traditional value structures are a lot about safety, autonomy, land rights, what we might consider traditional conservative values in the United States, those were the Traditionals. The Moderns were interested in economic growth, scientific rationality, on the individual level there's a very strong achievement orientation. So we have these two major sub-cultures before World War II. After World War II a third major subculture emerged which Paul Ray called "the Cultural Creatives" or Post-Moderns or Greens. These are the people who brought us the environmental movement, the women's movement, and the civil rights movement. So what David Johnston did with green building in San Francisco and Alameda County and some places in Colorado, too, is he created three distinct marketing strategies, one for Traditionals, one for Moderns and one for the Post-Moderns and Cultural Creatives, because what he recognized is that if you use the language of one group you turn off the other two. If you try to please everybody, you end up pleasing nobody. So for Traditionals he would say, "Did you know that traditional insulation, conventional insulation is soaked in formaldehyde, and you don't really want your children around that, do you?" So he would emphasize the needs that come up as a general pattern from that worldview, that value structure, around safety and security. "Oh, you don't really want your kids around formaldehyde, really." For the Moderns, he would emphasize, "Look, your monthly maintenance bills are going to be so much lower." So addressing what's important to them. "By the way it'll be good for the planet," right? Only when the crowd was already within that world-view of green or post-modern or cultural creative would he emphasize, "Look these are the effects from green building,

how much less pressure they put on old growth forests, how many tons of carbon emissions we're not putting into the atmosphere because of increased energy efficiency and energy savings." So I think the point I'm getting at right now Sandy is that we need to try to reach people where they are and connect with what their needs are that are getting in the way of seeing other possibilities. So my guess is a lot of the men that are entrenched against women's power in some cases it's fear, in some case it's stories, a worldview of, "This is the way our ancestors said it should be done and so this is the way we're doing it." Or, "This is the way it's always been done," or, you know, "our interpretation of this particular scripture says it has to be done this way." And so connecting at a deeper level with what's important to them and seeing how it would meet their needs where they're at for women to be more empowered. Now again, I started out saying I don't have the answer, but I think there are some clues that I would draw from David Johnston's work in terms of reaching people where they're at that's totally consistent with NVC, too, really hearing the needs and addressing what is there. I think simply citing the statistics isn't by itself going to do it, and I'm curious what comes up for you Sandy.

Sandy: Well, I agree with what you just said about statistics, it's something I learned from some other lessons, too. I got to participate in one of the first social experiments in the 70's using computer-based learning and very difficult classrooms in the poorest schools in a city, and in spite of the fact that the results were widely successful at the beginning of the year, these kids were in reading and math two years behind their grade level, at the end of the school year they were 2 to 4 years ahead. And you would have thought that the school district would have grabbed onto this program with both hands. They continued as usual. And you know, I'm aware of other social experiments with the same results that were clearly successful, clearly productive, and they were not adopted. So I'm not surprised to hear what you just said about statistics. I think this is the beginning of a conversation to be continued.

Alan: Sure, and it's really important for us to know what's out there, what's been tried, what's been successful, and equally important to find ways to really reach the people who have their hands on the levers of power so that we build trust and they can hear us. Now we have somebody else in power, but in the County that I live in Washington State there was a period of time when if I needed the County Executive to hear something I had to say, I could because there had been some relationship building that had happened and I had built some trust with this person. So I think that that's the kind of thing that we need to also look at, is so

much of it is about relationship building, because when we have the trust then people are much more open to hearing us.

Sandy: Right.

Alan: So it might be...

Sandy: And that's still really complicated because when you're dealing with men who see women as less than cattle...

Alan: Oh yeah, how do we connect with the Taliban?

Sandy: Yes.

Alan: I agree with you. I totally do. It's so complex and it's one of the mindsets that: we're not running a hundred-yard dash, this is a marathon.

Sandy: Right.

Alan: This is a long term-effort that needs to happen and yeah, I totally agree with you. By the way, I mentioned my mom earlier, she was one of the founders of the first chapter of NOW in Mexico 1972, National Organization of Women, and she was also cofounder of the very first environmental organization in Mexico so, and she opened up a lot of routes for women in the media. Mexico, at least when I was growing up there, it was very male-centric, very *machista* sort of country and it's very, very tough, and I think women do need to partner with the men who are in favor of everything you're talking about.

Sandy: Right.

Alan: Because in many cases, it's going to be those men that are going to reach the men whose minds and hearts we're seeking to open to other possibilities.

Sandy: Yes, yes, I was thinking along those lines, too..

Alan: Yeah.

Sandy: A strategy may be to build relationships with those who can build relationships with those that you're wanting to impact.

Alan: And I want to say in this forum that I got an email from somebody, from a man in Afghanistan early on in the telesummit and he desperately wants more NVC and can see that he's working for a nongovernmental organization working to create better conditions in Afghanistan. And if anybody hearing would love to go to Afghanistan and share more NVC skills let me know and I'll put you in touch with this person.

Mair: I'd like to add something here, too.

Alan: Please.

Mair: What occurs to me, and I don't have scientific data to back this up, that what tends to mobilize and interest and involve people is personal connection. So save the whales, eh, not so much. Save *this* whale that's on *this* beach right now, you've got the news and the people are mobilized because it's personal to them. And the same way that a particular situation or event can be mobilizing and excite people into being involved and interested, stories do that, personal stories of what actually happened, and photographs or videos. This is happening and what part can you play when you're hearing it? How, what motivates you into action, I think that's a part we can cultivate.

Alan: And I just want to check, Sandy, do you feel complete for right now?

Sandy: I did not expect to solve this problem today because I...

Alan: I'll take that as a yes because...

Sandy: Oh, yeah.

Alan: I'm noticing that I need to start preparing for the next call with Gregg Kendrick on NVC and organizations, and I'd like to take one more hand so...

Mair: Yes.

Alan: I'm curious if that works for you, Sandy?

Sandy: Yes, fine. Thank you.

Alan: Thank you.

Mair: And that was...I think Roger had his hand up for a while here.

Alan: Yeah. I'd love to hear from Roger. Hi Roger.

Roger: Hi Alan, hi Mair.

Mair: Hi.

Alan: Good to hear your voice again.

Roger: Oh, and I'm just really excited to hear social change from your perspective. When I first checked into this telesummit I wasn't feeling particularly hopeful or interested because I've heard the word social change handed around quite a bit and it didn't really connect with me. But the way you've been talking about it today really instills in me really a feeling of hope and I wanted to perhaps end with my contribution on this in the form of perhaps some help for other people who don't want to get involved with bringing about change because they think there is no hope. Perhaps they think there is no way they can contribute with the government operating as it is right now. Well, I'm really excited to say that there is a form of governance called Dynamic Governance based upon Sociocracy. And if you're interested, you can go to a website called governancealive.com, governancealive.com, and it was started by Jon Buck many years ago. It very much incorporates NVC principles, and it's a form of governance, and if all of us were to experiment with that within our own families within our local communities and small groups just to see what the potential is, what potential it has for allowing us to be heard and to be seen, I think we could translate that to a national level. Perhaps not into our government exactly as it is right now, but as a model that might inspire some real change in our government. So I'd strongly encourage everybody listening to check that out, and I'm curious to know how you're hearing it or how you feel about it.

Alan: Thank you, Roger. I love that and, you know, I'm familiar a little bit with Sociocracy and Dynamic Governance and there's another iteration that I'm much more familiar with that I'm absolutely in love with called Holacracy which is H-O-L-A-C-R-A-C-Y.org.

Roger: Yes, I've heard of it.

Alan: People can go to holacracy.org H-O-L-A-C-R-A-C-Y, and what I'm told is that this is an integrally informed version of Sociocracy.

Roger: That's correct.

Alan: So yeah, and just wonderful, wonderful models, wonderful tools. I've used Holacracy in an organization on a local level and on a national level and just been so impressed by the results. And I had not even taken their training. And when I told one of the founders of Holacracy that I'd done that simply just based on a little bit of reading about it his jaw dropped and he said, "Wow!" And he really encouraged me and I do want to do their facilitator training. So anyway, thank you Roger. I think that these types of models really do offer a lot of hopefulness for something that's very functional and that can include the needs of many people. Absolutely!

Roger: I'm hoping that maybe that could be a topic for another telesummit because the two, NVC and Dynamic Governance, go very well together. I've seen how they can work together, and I think they can give people a lot of hope.

Alan: Yeah, super. And Roger, you are a member of the Blackbelt Communication Skills Coaching Program.

Roger: Yes.

Alan: And right now we have 5 modules up, and I just wanted to let you know, and whoever else is listening, that module 6, which is not up yet, the topic of module 6 is social change. And the reason that I've done nothing with module 6 is because I wanted to do this telesummit first. I knew that I'd be learning a lot from all these conversations and I'm going to take all the recordings and transcriptions from this telesummit and put them in the bonus section of the coaching program. So you don't need to go if you're part of the coaching program, you don't need to go out and buy the recordings and transcriptions separately, I'm going to throw them in there and a lot of what I've learned in the telesummit will be part of module 6, so I just wanted to let you know that and...

Roger: Wonderful!

Alan: Yeah. This has been a delightful conversation. I'm wondering, Mair, if you have anything else that's alive for you? And thank you Roger.

Mair: Well, what I'm going to ask you is what you ask people at the end of every other call which is do you have any parting comments?

Alan: You know, I think the thing that I'm most intrigued about...That's hard to say that I would stick to that phrasing...I think one of the things that I'm very intrigued about, something that really inspires a lot of curiosity for me is how can I serve and contribute to change agents? How can people who are committed to positive change externally and also committed to their own personal development, what can I do to serve you? What can I do to contribute to your path? What can I do to partner with you in your work? So that's what comes up for me is just wanting to hear from people and I've already gotten out of this call ideas for a few other telesummits that I could do, and so any other ideas that you have. Just briefly on this question of Dynamic Governance, our call this afternoon with Gregg Kendrick is focused on NVC and organizations, and he's done quite a bit of work with Dynamic Governance and has integrated it with needs consciousness for organizations. And thank you for my friend Wes for pointing that out. Wes is on the call and he just zipped me a note stating that, and David Johnston's website is whatsworking.com. Thank you again, Wes. And now, those are my closing comments. It's just been a real pleasure to do the telesummit and I think it's hard for people maybe to see everything that goes in to something like this behind the scenes, but it's been very, very, very fulfilling, and I do encourage people to stay in touch, and I'm really looking forward to our final call. And now the other thing is that even after our call this afternoon the telesummit's not over because I'm still interviewing people next week. I'll be posting some bonus prerecorded interviews on the site, and so you can look for those including the one with Cat Zavis and Rabbi Michael Lerner and several others. So thank you, Mair, for your time and for all your love.

Mair: Thank you. It's been an absolute honor to be with you on this call and through the whole telesummit, your whole... what you're doing here is just wildly inspiring.

Alan: And so I would love to...Hold on I think I'm just going to pause and take that in. So what I'd like to do is unmute everybody so we can say bye to each other.

Mair: I already did that.

Alan: Bye everyone.

Mair: Bye.

Everybody: Bye! Thank you!

Alan: Thank you.

Person1: I agree it's wildly inspiring.

Person2: Bye, bye.

NOTE: Any inaccuracies in this transcription are solely the responsibility of Alan Seid and Cascadia Workshops. Minor edits have been made for reading clarity. Please consult the original recording as needed.

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**Stephanie Bachmann
Mattei**

*“If We Want to Change the World, We
Should Start With the Children” ~ Ghandiji*