

Subtle Activism

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SUBTLE ACTIVISM

An Energy Ecology

We live in a world filled with energies of all kinds. Some are the electromagnetic forces that light our lights and heat our stoves and bring us voices over the radio and images on our televisions. But there are other energies that surround us as well, of which most of us are probably unaware but which can affect us just as powerfully. These are subtle forces generated by life, consciousness and spirit.

Where do these energies come from?

They can come from natural sources, from the land, from the sea, from the sun and stars. They come from spiritual sources and ultimately from the Sacred. They come from living beings, from microbes and bacteria, from plants like trees and grass, from animals, and from people—from the whole biomass of the earth.

Many of these subtle energies come from the activity of consciousness, the radiation of thoughts and feelings from human beings.

These are meta-physical energies, and they are as much a part of our surroundings as the physical ones with which we are more familiar. They flow between people and between us and our environment. They form an energy ecology that can affect our feelings, our thoughts, and our overall well-being and vitality in both positive and negative ways.

It's an ecology that we participate in creating through our thoughts, our emotions, and our physical activity, often now in major ways as humanity's influence and technological prowess upon the earth has increased. We bear a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of this subtle ecology and for its impact upon the world. The exercise of this responsibility is subtle activism.

Energy Connections

In the physical world, we are separated by distance. What happens to someone on the far side of the earth may seem to have little consequence or affect upon me. We believe our thoughts and feelings are private, locked within our skulls and our skins. But in the energy world, we are all connected in profound and interdependent ways. It's as if we were all standing on a great trampoline. When one person bounces, it makes the

whole trampoline move and we all bounce to some degree. Subtle energies are not limited by distance. Thus when a calamity strikes in some part of the world, our energy bodies all feel the effect of the suffering and fear no matter where we are. We may feel uneasy or restless, anxious or fearful for no reason we can see.

We live in turbulent, troubling times. The news is filled with one crisis after another from war and terrorism to economic turmoil to global climate change. Through our technological ability to communicate images, thoughts, and feelings quickly and dramatically, we can share our thoughts and feelings—particularly our fears, anxieties, angers, hatreds, and pessimism—around the world with greater intensity, increasing the impact of the subtle energies these thoughts and feelings generate. Such energies are repeated, reinforced, and strengthened by both global media and our subtle energy connections until they accumulate in our world. If they are positive images and energies, they can be an inspiration and upliftment for us all, but if, as they usually are, they are negative in tone and quality, they become a psychic pollution weighing upon all of us. Such subtle pollution, like its physical counterpart, can obstruct the flow and expression of healthy energies and can be a source of further distress. It can poison the mental and emotional environment in which it is found and feed the energies of conflict in the world.

In addition there are conditions and places in the world where great evil has been done, where suffering has been perpetuated, where hatred, fear, anger, and violence have been cultivated for generations between people. There the land itself is soaked in subtle energies of conflict and pain, continuing to influence human affairs until healing and forgiveness can take place.

Subtle Activism

Subtle activism is a procedure for dealing with this psychic pollution and poison. It is a way of working with your own subtle energies and spiritual resources to create a clear, clean, positive, vibrant and healthy energy environment in places of trouble and difficulty in the world. When this procedure is used to deal with psychic pollution within and around yourself, then it becomes energy hygiene. Energy hygiene is simply subtle activism at a personal level.

Not a Substitute

Subtle activism is not a substitute for taking action and doing good in wise and compassionate ways in the physical world. Physical activism is necessary for we live in a world where pain and suffering, hunger and disease, oppression and injustice, pollution and environmental degradation have real physical manifestations and consequences. Subtle activism is not instead of but in addition to work and effort to heal the world and ourselves.

However, because it's invisible to most people, the subtle energy world can go underestimated and ignored. Yet its effects when negative can hinder and diminish outer efforts at helping in the world and even create or intensify imbalance and negativity in the world. Conversely, when positive its effects can support and enhance the good efforts of physical activists to relieve suffering and injustice.

Subtle activism is not a substitute but it is an important complement to outer activism. More importantly, in many cases when the cause of suffering and imbalance originates or is perpetuated in the energy realm, it may be the only form of activism that can effectively make a difference.

More than Cleansing or Fixing

Subtle activism is much more than just a process of rescuing, fixing, or cleansing. It's about creating, vitalizing and expressing wholeness. It's about honoring and nourishing sovereignty, identity, coherency, and boundaries on the one hand and developing and practicing connectedness, engagement, love, and a compassionate participation in life on the other. In its full expression, it's a practice of "walking whole" and living your potential as a generative source of blessing in the world. Subtle activism is the expression of an incarnational spirituality.

Seven Rules

Here are Seven basic rules of good subtle activism.

- Don't Impose
- Partnering Stakeholders
- Be Connected
- Stay Grounded and Aligned

- Be Inclusive
- Honor the Specific
- Be What You Send

We each have our own personal energies, our own opinions and ideas about how the world should be and how people should live for their highest good. We resent it when someone else tries to impose their way of being, thinking, and doing upon us, particularly if it's very different from our own. When we are in trouble, we may need help, but we resist being thought of as something to be "fixed." We want and need help in a form that honors and respects our own sovereignty, that empowers us to develop our own capacities, that helps us to grow, and enables us as much as possible to find our own solutions to the problems. We want assistance but we want empowerment as well.

This is true in any situation. The subtle activist doesn't seek to impose his or her "way" or energies upon a situation but seeks to create openness for the innate spirit, health, and wisdom within people to emerge and express in a manner unique to them and appropriate to the situation. With this in mind, a subtle activist wants to identify the "stakeholders" in the situation, that is, who is being affected or will be affected by the outcomes of the situation. In doing inner work, he or she wants to connect and collaborate energetically with the spirit of those involved, or at least be aware that the work is done on their behalf. This also helps the subtle activist remember that the work is one of partnership with the forces, people, and beings involved and not one of acting alone.

Dealing with the psychic pollution and negative subtle energies of the world is not something any person can do on his or her own, any more than one person could clear away all the rubble and rescue all the survivors in a town devastated by an earthquake. We need allies. We need to be connected to the larger spirit of wholeness in the earth. We need to be aligned and connected with the Sacred. If we don't have any physical allies to work with, we can seek out allies of a spiritual nature who themselves live and work within the realms of subtle energy. And as I said, we need to work with the souls and energies of those whom we seek to help.

In this process we want to be sure that we are grounded. I mean this in three ways. We want to be grounded in our own identity and personhood, feeling whole and good about ourselves. We don't want to bring our inner conflicts into our subtle activism. We want to be energetically grounded in our immediate, local environment, our subtle energy connected to and

anchored in the energy fields around us: in the earth, in the things around us, the nature around us, and so forth. And we want to be grounded in and aligned with the spirit of the Sacred, the Ground of All Being. It is from this spirit that we draw the power of creating wholeness.

Sometimes, a person drawn to subtle activism sees himself or herself as a “warrior of Light” going forth to do battle with “forces of darkness.” It’s easy to frame a situation so that there are “friends” to help and “enemies” to combat. But subtle activism is not spiritual combat. It is an act of healing, which is inclusive by its nature. There are no enemies in subtle activism, only conditions to be understood, held in love and positive energies, and transformed. When we are aligned with sacredness, we feel this inclusiveness more powerfully.

Attuning to the Sacred is for most of us akin to attuning to the universal and the transpersonal. But we want to be attuned to the specific as well, to the particular conditions that define the situation for which we are doing subtle activism. Such a situation involves specific people in a specific place meeting specific challenges which will have specific consequences. Our work as subtle activism is to bring the wholeness and spirit of the universal into connection and engagement with all these specificities. We need to honor the specific.

One way we do this is to embody in ourselves the spirit and energy that we wish to bring to the situation or the outcome that we would like to help promote. If it is a situation of conflict, for instance, then we want to embody peacefulness, calm, and the wisdom to resolve that conflict. We don’t simply “project” peace and hope (or insist) that whoever is involved picks up on that quality and embodies it; we’re not telling others “you must be peaceful.” Instead, we embody these qualities in the specificity of our own being and place ourselves energetically in the situation where we can be an energetic presence around which the subtle energies of that environment can configure. We must be whatever it is that we “send.”

There are many techniques of subtle activism, many different ways in which individuals and groups can participate in this endeavor. But at its core, subtle activism is a process of creating wholeness. Not imposing, partnering the stakeholders, being grounded, forming connections, being collaborative, being inclusive, and honoring the specific are all simply ways of doing so.

An Exercise

Subtle activism can take many forms depending on the situation, the people involved, the intent, and so forth. Here is a very simple and generic exercise. It is not directed towards any particular situation but towards holding, “grounding” and integrating a sphere of blessing that can spread throughout the energy world contributing to healing the negative elements therein.

1. Imagine the pain, the suffering, the hostility and violence, the anger and hatred, all the negative thoughts and feelings of humanity as a dark and turbulent layer surrounding the world. Don't attune to this or try to enter it in any way but just picture it as a layer of dark storm clouds overhead covering the earth.
2. Now imagine a sphere of light like a globe surrounding the world. It's as if a golden sphere of radiance from the sun has crossed space and is now enfolding the earth, including the dark, stormy layer of negativity.
3. Picture this sphere of golden, healing, invigorating light seeking to blend and dissolve into the earth to bring blessings to all life, but it bounces off the layer of darkness. The storm clouds prevent it from coming through.
4. Ground yourself by finding your own unique peace and strength. In whatever way feels comfortable and right to you, attune to the inner light within yourself. Feel this light unfold and expand until it surrounds you as your own sphere of golden light.
5. Extend a thread of this light downward into the earth, into the spiritual light at the heart of the world, the spirit of the earth, of Gaia. Link with this inner, peaceful, life-giving light of the earth letting it enhance and increase the radiance of the sphere of light around you.
6. Now extend a thread of light from the sphere around you upward through the stormy clouds to the golden sphere of light beyond them. Let your light connect to it. You and your light are now a connection between the heart of the world and this sphere of golden

radiance and blessing.

7. Around the world are thousands of people doing just what you're doing, finding ways to bring light to earth to harmonize with the world, heal the darkness and bring blessings to all in loving and compassionate ways. Picture these people on every continent, each encased in his or her own sphere of light, each drawing upon the light within the earth, each connected to the golden sphere around the earth. Imagine a clear light of connection going from your heart to each of them, forming a vast net of human jewels, each sparkling with inner light, each connected to the heart of the world, each connected to the sphere of light above us.

8. At this point there's nothing you need to do. You simply need to hold the connection between yourself, the earth, the sphere of light, and others around the world sharing your concerns and attunements. You are like the stake anchoring a tent to the ground. Your job is to remain anchored, balanced, part of the earth, part of humanity, connected to the world around you, the people around you, and the life within yourself. Your job is to remain integrated and whole. The golden light of blessing surrounding the world knows what to do. It has the task of acting. You have the task of holding.

9. As you gracefully and peacefully hold your connections, release this mediation and go about your daily activities in ordinary ways. As you hold your connectedness in your heart and remain integrated with the world through your daily life, this golden sphere of light can descend, past the storm clouds, breaking up and healing the seeds of negativity feeding the storm clouds. This light, connected to the earth through your life and the lives of those like you sharing this task of holding, can now draw itself to earth, bringing blessing in its wake, moving through and dispersing the clouds and becoming a healing part of the planet we all share. It knows what to do, and it will do it.

Webmaking

Here is another very simple form of subtle activism which can

be performed anywhere at any time. I call it Webmaking as you are contributing to a web of Light. The overall intent is similar to that of the exercise I just presented, but the approach is different.

The brain has been discovered to be “plastic,” always changing in dynamic ways as we respond and adapt to our environment. In the developing science of neuroplasticity, it has been demonstrated that the twin powers of intention and attention when directed in certain ways can result in lasting changes in brain structure. As we change our brain structure, so we change our behavior and our capacities. In other words, the power of thinking can have a more profound physical effect than science had previously suspected.

There is a similar phenomenon at work in the non-physical or subtle environment of the world, the environment in which subtle activism takes place. We are constantly forming energetic connections between ourselves and others and between ourselves and our surroundings. Even simple acts of perception and recognition can do this. The quality and nature of these connections depend on the kind of subtle energies we weave into them. If they are negative in nature, it results in one kind of subtle connection and structure; if they are positive, it results in a different one. Further, the intensity and intentionality behind our thinking and feeling determines how long these connections and this subtle structure may last. Most dissolve immediately as our attention shifts and moves about, but some can persist and eventually stabilize into a long-lasting configuration of subtle energies.

One of the tasks of subtle activism is to shift the subtle structure of the world away from being stuck in violent, hateful and negative configurations towards patterns and flows of energy that are healthy, holistic, loving, caring, and nurturing. It is a work of generating a structure, a “web” of positive qualities and energies that can support and bless individuals, attune them to the loving inclusiveness of the Sacred, and foster goodwill and collaborative behavior that creates wholeness in the world. If this is done on a regular basis, then patterns develop that persist within the subtle world.

The exercise I gave above is one way to do this. But it’s a formal meditation. What is needed is something we can do “on the run,” as we go about our daily lives. One approach is that of Webmaking. Think of a spider spinning a web. It anchors a strand of silk on something solid and then swings out to connect with something else where it attaches the other end of that strand. In Webmaking, you are making a connection

between an individual and the Sacred, a connection that is a strand of blessing.

By “Sacred” here, I don’t mean any particular religious image of God, though you can certainly use whatever image of deity is important to you and in which you believe. What I mean is a universal and inclusive source of life, wholeness and love, the Ground of All Being, which seeks to bless each individual life according to its uniqueness and its needs, enabling it to fulfill in optimal ways its potentials.

Webmaking is something you do with anyone you meet during your day. As per the seven rules of subtle activism, you are not imposing anything, nor are you projecting a particular energy to anyone. You are, however, establishing a connection of a particular nature—the strand of the web. You can even do this with objects in your environment and certainly with animals and plants as well. This web of Light and lovingness ultimately connects all to all.

We could say that there already is a universal Web—the Sacred itself—that connects everything to everything else, and we would be right. But operationally in our lives and in the life of the earth this universal Web is more potential than realized. We have but to watch the evening news to see how fully and tragically humanity falls short of implementing it. Further, the activities of disconnection and violence, fear and anger in which humanity does participate creates a very different kind of subtle energy structure, one that breaks the sacred Web and prevents it from manifesting. Our collective “brain” is badly wired, creating habits of separation and violence that only make that faulty wiring more persistent.

The good news is that the subtle environment, like our brain, is very plastic and can change, often very quickly. We can create inner structures and configurations of energy that support and promote wholeness. What is needed for this to happen, though, is for us to make those changes through the power of our intentionality and our attention. We have to intend goodwill, intend love, intend collaboration, intend understanding and then we must give those intentions our attention and focus, particularly where those qualities don’t exist or are being undermined in a given situation. So while the universal Web of connection, life and love is there, we can’t simply take it for granted. It’s up to us to participate in its expression and to do what we can to manifest it.

In Webmaking, then, there are three steps in doing this. The first step is to make a connection with another individual, to “spin a strand” in his or her direction. The second step is to connect that strand to the Sacred.

The third step is to further connect that strand to a larger, evolving web that you are part of co-creating. Let's look at each of these in more detail with some examples.

- **Spinning a Strand:** When you see an individual—it doesn't matter whether you know them or not—imagine a ribbon or strand of Light between you and that person. This strand is NOT tying or binding you two together in anyway; it is simply a carrier of your goodwill, love, and blessings to that person. In effect, you are affirming a universal truth: "We are connected in the love and blessings of the Sacred; we are connected in the universal web of life that seeks to manifest wholeness on the earth. Between us there is no violence or separation, only goodwill and mutual support." With your strand, you are activating and expressing this truth.

You can do this with anyone. For example, while driving, you can spin strands to other drivers around you. While shopping, you can spin a strand to other shoppers or to the clerks that serve you. In a restaurant, you can spin a strand to other diners and to the waitpersons who bring you your food. And you can spin strands to plants, animals and objects as well. The possibilities are endless.

- **Connecting to the Sacred:** Imagine this strand of light and blessing that you've spun between yourself and another and extend it beyond yourself into the Sacred, however you imagine that Presence. This is important. You are spinning the strand, not anchoring it in yourself. You are anchoring it in the Sacred, in the Beloved of All Beings, the Ground of all existence. This prevents unwanted psychic links from coming into being between you and another, assuming that the link lasted anytime at all. The Sacred is the universal Anchor for the web of life.

If this is the case, why have the first step at all? Why not directly see the individual as connected to the Sacred and leave out yourself as a middle person? There are several reasons. For one, there is a benefit to your personal expression of caring and goodwill; this is good for you and it's good for the recipient. For another, you and the other individual (or plant, animal or object) have a natural resonance already by virtue of being part of this physical world. You can form a connection along this natural resonance that then

becomes a “carrier wave” for the deeper connection with the Sacred. It’s not that you don’t wish to acknowledge or empower your connectedness to the other; it’s that you don’t want to anchor that connectedness in yourself. Once the connection is recognized and affirmed through your intentionality and attention, you then want its “end point” to be established within a larger, universal field that embraces both of you. That’s the Sacred.

- **Connecting to a web:** The next time you “spin a strand” of light and blessing between yourself and another and connect it to the Sacred, think back to the previous such strands you’ve “spun.” Visualize this new strand connecting to them, forming a web. See this web filled with the Light of the Sacred and vibrating to its loving and supportive presence. You don’t have to remember each separate strand, each connection you’ve made as you’ve gone through your day but do remember and visualize the wholeness of the growing web itself. See this web that you’re spinning as connected to and reflecting the universal Web that is the underlying wholeness and life within all things.

In performing these three steps, don’t forget that you have a personal strand yourself between yourself and the Sacred. Be sure to think of this from time to time to renew your own connections and participation in the larger Web.

Intention and Attention: What makes this work is the intention behind the Webmaking and the attention you bring to it. Each strand you spin and send out to connect a person to the universal Web needs to have your clear and clean intention behind it. Part of that intention is your intent that that person (or animal, plant, or object) be blessed and, through connection with the Sacred, empowered in the expression of his, her, or its unique identity and soul’s purpose. It is an intention of goodwill and love made impersonally and in a way that places no binding on the individual, no imposition upon his or her sovereignty and personal energy. You are not insisting that something happen. You are only augmenting the will of his or her soul and innate sacredness to unfold the highest of which he or she is capable.

To give power to this intention, you must then give attention to

that person. This can be very brief, no more than a few seconds, but in that moment—however short—your whole attention is on that person and their wellbeing and connectedness to wholeness.

In short, in Webmaking, you have to mean it. It's not something you do idly or wishfully. It need not take much time or energy, only a second or two, but it needs to be sincere. For the three steps to work there needs to be intention and attention behind them.

If you practice this, you will find, however, that the growing strength and vitality of the web you're creating and its attunement to the universal Web will empower your ability to spin your strands. A deeper part of you, knowing what you intend and that you're sincere in following through, will take over and greatly augment the process, so it becomes almost automatic for you (though never taken for granted).

In this way, you become an agent for shaping the subtle environment of the world, drawing into manifestation the energies and patterns of the universal Web of wholeness. This is a powerful act of subtle activism. It means that when the individuals whose connections to that universal Web you have empowered encounter situations that may cause them to react in a negative way, they have something positive and life-affirming to respond to other than the habits of mental, emotional and physical violence engraved into the subtle fields of the earth. The function of all subtle activism is to bring new options into play and create loving alternatives to habitual action. That is what your Webmaking can help bring about.

Other Sources

Subtle activism is becoming recognized as a powerful and valid form of spiritual practice in its own right. Many people are exploring it. One source you could investigate if you are interested is www.gaiafield.net. There you will find articles on subtle activism and a variety of activities. Another source is www.gratefulness.org. Though not explicitly about subtle activism, it deals with the underlying spiritual attitudes that go into it and into creating wholeness in our world.

What is most important, though, is that you realize that you are a source, too. Subtle activism is nothing more or less than a relationship you form with the world. It's a relationship based on love and caring, compassion and concern; it's a relationship based on a willingness to take actions that create wholeness in both the inner and outer worlds. For this reason, how you perform subtle activism will emerge in part from your

uniqueness, from who you are as an individual and how you relate to the world. In learning how others do subtle activism, don't neglect discovering how you do it and what works for you.

Further Steps

If you would like to explore the possibilities and usefulness of subtle activism in your life, please visit our website, www.Lorian.org. There you will find information and exercises for both personal and planetary energy hygiene. And if you would like to go further and learn how to practice subtle activism or energy hygiene for yourself and with others, we offer regular classes on this and other topics of an incarnational spirituality. You can learn about these classes and programs on our website as well. Please visit us! You will be most welcome.



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