

VICTOR CUSACK – A 70 YEAR OLD STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY.

Inevitably, each of us lives separate lives and experiences different joys and setbacks, to some degree even if we live with a close partner. Each of us responds with different reactions, personal approaches mainly dictated by genetic influences but tempered by both one's historical and present day changing environments. We each experience dramatically different successes and failures.

Having reached the ripe 'young' age of 70, I know that I am fundamentally a very happy person, much pleased with my life and successes, and accepting of the setbacks one inevitably experiences. I feel very happy about the relationships and friends I have experienced (I am a 'relationship' person) and don't feel the need to regret my past life, having reached a state of respect for myself and life in general (certainly not perfection, which doesn't exist). I do regret that I don't get to see some people I care for often enough to maintain the same knowledge and close relationship and I once had with them, and they of me, but nevertheless feel I have been a much loved person.

I bless the fact that I chose to become an artist, in spite of now cringing at my early attempts and lack of awareness, both in what I couldn't see when I looked at nature, and what I did with what I saw when I interpreted it. Being an artist is about observing *NATURE*, and that becomes an incredible conduit towards a much broader form of awareness. Thinking about and studying nature so intensely, in such detail, inevitably leads to a more acute consciousness in many different directions simultaneously because Nature controls it all, the music, sound, genetics, food, touch, sexuality, art, creativity, passion, the psychology of man, the whole spectrum of existence. I don't even know where my original need to be an artist came from but it was very much tied up with an inherent sense of idealism about beauty, the world, the conflict of politics, man's unnecessary suffering, and a desire to contribute to creating a better world. That inexplicable passion has remained with me from childhood, developing into an unavoidable need to help right the injustices of the world, not for myself but for society as a whole.

I quickly found that man's religions mostly restricted and channeled those efforts into self serving power struggles that had the opposite result, and I abandoned 'God' as an answer, without abandoning a sense that spirituality in some form was part of the answer.

As a consequence of my 70 years of sometimes successful effort, I have decided to try to summarise the philosophy I have developed over many years that underpins my current beliefs and happiness. Also, many people develop a curiosity about what their ancestors did or thought; the 'where did I come from' that is quite common today. My curiosities about my ancestors have certainly not been satisfied.

So here we go, trying to explain the complexity of:

MY 70 YEAR OLD BELIEF SYSTEM!

Fundamentally, everything in this world is in a constant state of change. Because of this I believe that having a permanent ‘absolute’ opinion or belief is not practical. To maintain a personal state of peace and understanding, one must also change or adjust, either from acquiring wisdom or adapting one’s understanding to the constantly changing world around us. However, once peace and understanding has been substantially achieved, my experience is that it is easier to sustain, and becomes progressively easier to develop even further with awareness. This happens in spite of life’s inevitable upsets and disappointments.

Modifying fundamental beliefs with wisdom is not wrong. Historically, even the most dogmatic religions have been forced to redefine their definitions of right and wrong as society rejects their more insupportable extremes.

My belief system is directed by PASSION, COMPASSION & AWARENESS.

Happiness is awareness. Joy is not a transient condition.

Awareness is a state of joy within, not an event that occurs.

Studying Nature becomes a conduit towards awareness, which becomes joy.

Nature is huge and includes the visual, the microscopic, the unseen and genetic, and is unbelievably beautiful.

Nature is all powerful, is far beyond the ability of humans to ever fully understand, and surpasses all else.

Nature's beauty, complexity and power dwarfs man's diverse fumbling attempts to create religions or describe ‘God’.

Humanity is a part of Nature, a very small relatively unimportant part, even minuscule in this earth’s time, let alone that of other galaxies.

Awareness of Nature, and of man’s condition, grows from observation, compassion, understanding, and acceptance of facts as they reveal themselves; not on invented explanations.

People who have little contact with natural environments lose contact with their ability to find their inner peace. Unfortunately, the world suffers from decisions being controlled by city populations that are unaware of their inherent imbalances caused by this deprivation.

Awareness does not demand conformity to anyone's standards or beliefs, nor start wars.

When aware, one asks what is he/she/they or it thinking or feeling about themselves, rather than asking what they are thinking about oneself, the observer.

When aware in nature, one's focus questions the beauty and purpose of both small parts and the total environment, and its effect on oneself in the here and now.

Awareness constantly strives to feel what your body is physically feeling, or where your body is reacting about every happening, thought or emotion, because each causes a physical reaction that can be used to monitor your own comfort levels and truths.

Ask your stomach what it thinks about your decision, and it will often signal anxiety.

Awareness includes the consciousness that one can **only** think, feel or react in the '**here and now**', within the second it is happening. All else is speculation on the future, or about past memories, both of which are fantasies that cause emotions and reactions that you feel in the here and now, be it pleasure or anxiety.

Compassion is part of human understanding, if achieved, usually derived from awareness.

Compassion grows from understanding or even loving people in spite of human frailty, including understanding oneself.

Nothing is 'absolute' in understanding; just part of one's growing awareness.

Even frustration towards man's follies is part on the struggle towards an awareness, and can be used creatively and with compassion (in spite of my impatience at the world's political injustices).

There are no absolute answers because we are all members of a relatively primitive species, and without the capacity to understand 'all'.

We laugh at much of what people believed 200 years ago, but must accept that people will laugh at some of our beliefs in 200 years.

We are completely unimportant to Nature, a miniscule species 'flash' in the billions of infinite years of Nature's history.

Our dozens of man-created faiths are insignificant compared to the power, complexity and history of Nature.

Man's religions become clumsy, improbable, unintelligent, and scientifically insupportable when compared with Nature.

Nature, the elegance of its beauty, visually, genetically, astronomically, its consistence, is '**all powerful**'.

Everything is constantly changing, including every species, man included.

Evolution of plants and species, including man, is inevitable.

Consider the huge evolution of shape, thought, knowledge, colour and race experienced by homo sapiens during the last 2000 years, an infinitesimally small period of the world's time.

Not all evolution is positive; some being adjustment to man's abuse of this world.

Human destruction, even if it includes destroying ourselves, is ultimately insignificant to Nature.

Adequate proof exists that Nature moves on, creating new plants, new forests, new species, even new worlds and universes. Man's history is immeasurably small and unimportant when compared to the age of the world, and infinitely non-existent compared to the cosmos and its infinite galaxies.

Nature is constantly building resistances, mutating to adjust to pressures imposed within the universe, viral advances and species resistances, species dominations, constant change, all evolution in process.

The chance of our world being the only planet supporting intelligent life in the cosmos of all planets, solar systems and universes, is impossibly unlikely.

We humans are an unavoidable part of this huge, beautifully creative process, each atom or molecule being reused, ultimately reformed into new life of some form.

All of us return to compost on death, including man and all other living matter.

We becoming the fertilizer, elements and minerals Nature uses to recreate new life.

Life after death *does* exist at least as part of the inevitable powerful process of recycling all waste matter.

It is questionable as to whether this 'known' resurrection of life retains the consciousness of the individual after death. Is this 'God', or simply the huge power of Nature functioning?

I don't find it necessary to 'believe' or place my 'faith' in an unknown external.

When I die, I will either be aware of my resurrection, or be an earth-bound memory, resurrected or not. It is not important to know what you cannot know or change.

Life is for living, loving, creating and sharing, not to waste on fear of death. This is heaven, so if one can't find joy, or give joy, don't expect it to be 'given' to one after death.

Man's own insecurity leads to the hope that individually, and as a species, humans (and no other species) will have eternal consciousness in some form.

Such a belief is intellectually unsupportable, as comforting as the concept may be.

'Faith' changes nothing in Nature's inevitable progress, and is intellectually insupportable.

Faith and religion often give great comfort or help to the needy or insecure, which is good.

Clashes between religions historically have caused war, death and unbelievably cruel slaughter. Europe alone has witnessed thousands of years of violent religious slaughter.

Today's wars are no exception, most still based on religions seeking dominance. Religious dictates such as banning contraceptives cause massive death, sickness (AIDS), starvation, and misery in this world, an inexcusable crime.

Neither 'God' nor Nature will stop man from destroying himself or others, or from destroying the balance of our planet.

Nature will continue its creative process of change, far beyond man's existence.

Nor will 'God' or Nature intervene in natural disasters, even those involving 'believers'. When a church roof fell and killed 150 worshippers early in 2007, prayer didn't bring back the dead, but the faithful still prayed!

Nor does God or Nature intervene to prevent man destroying our world's balance by continuing to increase our human population by another billion people every 10 years, a phenomenon mostly caused by (and still supported by) religious beliefs.

The reality is that humans cannot know God or Nature's '*will or thoughts*', but we can predict inevitable outcomes if some of Nature's rules are challenged.

Frustration with the evils inflicted by the politics and greed of our human world are inevitable, but must be tempered with the awareness that ***this is the human condition***, and it will always be thus with variations.

Homo sapiens' capacity to 'think' is so limited that human 'thoughts' constant discovery makes those limits apparent, even for ourselves to see. Our wisdom will never reach the ultimate complexities of nature, and nor should we try to explain 'God', unless God is in fact Nature and we speak of what is actually known, not hoped for.

Inner peace, awareness, compassion and understanding lies within ourselves.

Such peace cannot be truly gained by giving one's search for answers over to 'faith' in someone else, or something external, or to faith in 'God'.

Anxiety, the polarity of peace and awareness, will continue to coexist with 'faith'.

The question? Is Nature 'God'? I believe in *NATURE*, but not man's invented Gods.

What we don't understand becomes 'spiritual' or 'supernatural', but could still have explanations beyond our current knowledge (eg: Mental telepathy, magnetic or other energy radiating from our skin such as in the 'Kyrillin photos', all of which I believe exist).

Man, with his complex talents, will remain confused and often anxious, but we still have huge untapped capacities for good, for acquiring knowledge, and for harnessing the apparently supernatural.

Religion did not create man's morality (as they claim), which is an inevitable outcome of cooperative survival and human love. I learned much from my Grandmother and from John Steinbeck's novels, certainly little from religion or Hans Christian Andersen.

Passion, humour and creativity are as important as other wisdoms. Life should be fun and it is neglecting a responsibility and a necessary balance if one does not develop those aspects.

All the above is more important than wealth, which is distorting the values of our society.

ON RELATIONSHIP: Love, compassion, respect, physical love & touch.

At 70, I still believe in love and relationship.

I could not sustain a long term partner/relationship/marriage without love. To understand this belief, I need to define what I mean by 'love'.

Intimate 'love' has a number of different dimensions, including affection, respect, compassion, touch and caring sexuality.

Compassion is a form of love, but relates more to understanding, acceptance, even sympathy. It is not intimate love, but is part of intimate love because perfection doesn't exist.

Respect for and from one's partner is an essential for intimate love, but must be earned rather than demanded.

Without respect, an intimate love partnership cannot be sustained.

For me, without touch and the desire to share such giving, any intimate partnership will inevitably be degraded and ultimately impossible to sustain.

We cannot be balanced if we refuse to acknowledge or develop any part of our whole self, including very personal components such as touch and sexuality.

To be skilled at anything, one must practice, participate, explore that skill with enthusiasm, courage and sensitivity.

We are an overlapping whole, not a collection of separate elements. Neglecting any part usually causes a personality distortion, often an opposite, as an attempted correction.

Touch, like food, is an essential. It is not necessarily sexual, but one withers without it.

Our body is our own to love, abuse, or hide, but all its parts sexual and otherwise belong to 'you', and will suffer if not accepted, used, nurtured and shared with loving pride.

Love and the warmth of caring, both given and received, is possible in a marriage/partnership, and is essential for its healthy survival.

Love also cannot be sustained without constant effort; awareness, compassion, respect, and affectionate touch. It always was, and still is, essential to my life.

MY CONCLUSIONS:

These days my conscious seeking towards enhancing my peace and awareness involves:

- *Thoughtful meditation of various kinds.
- *Developing my awareness of nature, wildlife, fauna, the sea, etc.
- *Developing awareness of myself in various forms (eg: the inevitable instant reactions between one's body and mind).
- *Developing my awareness of others as much as possible.
- *Being creative in various ways, painting, drawing, writing, cooking, loving, etc.
- *Trying to compassionately understand the psychology and reasons behind the inevitable loves, fears, reactions, defenses and cruelties one constantly sees in life.
- *Indulgently sharing one's life joys with others, including food, wine, books, music, ideas, friends, humour, etc, thereby creating joy for others.

Whilst it may not always have been apparent to both me and others, in various ways and with varying success I have been striving towards this goal all my life.

For me this search has been, with time, substantially successful. I am also quite proud of the fact that as I write this I am 70 years old. I would not wish to sacrifice any of my years of experience or knowledge gained, even those where pain was an essential part of the experience.

I have formed some wonderful enduring friendships, and have recently enjoyed sharing time in France with a huge diversity of friends, Australian, English, Scottish, French, American, Chinese, Canadian, Dutch and Hungarian during our wonderful three month visit to the Dordogne in France.

NOTHING IS ABSOLUTE, BUT I AM BY FAR THE HAPPIEST PERSON I KNOW. If I knew how, I would give this gift to all those I care for (and others!), but that is an impossible gift to give.

Enjoy your lives, love with abundance, try to have compassion, respect and forgiveness for others and yourself, and most of all, **enhance your awareness because that is the key to all the others.**

Victor Cusack – France, 7th November, 2007. (aged 70 today and, nature willing, 50 to go)
Artist, Sculptor, Author, Poet, Father, Grandfather, bamboo fan, lover of nature and others, passionate advocate of life and loving, wine, food and good company.