

Werner Erhard

A Shot Heard Round the World: A World That Works for Everyone
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That's great, thanks. Thank you.

I really love your vitality and your zest and your vigor. It's really beautiful.

I appreciate that you contributed to life and, in particular, to me here this morning. And I really want to thank you for the privilege that you've given to all of us to be here together today to work on what we're going to work on today.

And I know that you didn't come here lightly. I know that you know that this is not an entertainment, that it's not something frivolous, and that you made the investment of money and time and energy and that you've set yourself up to contribute your attention.

And we are going to work today.

It's really wonderful to get together with you. There's just an incredible feeling in the room. It's an experience of closeness.

It's an experience of knowing you deeply, profoundly, not superficially, not by name, not by face, not by story, but nevertheless, to know you profoundly, to know you because you're here today.

Actually, what I'm after in being with you today, and as I said, I came here to be with you, what I'm after in being here today, what I'm after in being with you is something which is within you.

In other words, I didn't bring something here inside me that I want to get outside and put up so that you can take a look at it and see if you like it or not or if you want it or not.

I came here to share something which I've discovered in all of us, something which is innate to human beings. It's kind of like being human is innate to human beings, but it's something that many of us don't recognize in ourselves.

So it's kind of like my purpose today is to poke you in the ribs about something that while it's there in you, I want it to become clear for all of us and amongst us.

Our purpose in being together has to do with being. It has to do with shifting from the kind of life in which you find yourself in circumstances and in the midst of forces which are literally molding your life, from the kind of life in which you do the best you can given the circumstances you've got, to being able to truly determine the way in which life will go.

You see, one of the things that brought me to this was trying to see where we really are.

Now, in the normal course of events, if you want to do any really important thinking, you don't start with where you are. You start at the beginning.

In other words, you see, well, you've just got to get all the stuff aside and start down with the very basic premises.

You've got to get down to the very basic truth in life. And so because that's the objective, that's where many people start.

So I'd like you to know that I didn't start there, that I started by taking a look at the facts of life as life exists now.

So I didn't start at the beginning, I started in the middle because that's where I am, that's where you and I are, we are in the middle of it.

It would be real nice if the slate were clean and we could be sitting here meeting, determining the principles by which we were going to fill the slate. But I'm afraid that that's a fait accompli, that that's already been done.

So if we are to come to have any ability to determine our fate, if we are to come to have some say in life, we're going to have to come to it from where we're at, from where we find ourselves, we're going to have to come to it from here.

And while it is really true that no one wants to say it, while it's true that it's a kind of stupid public utterance, because while it's true that people may attack you for saying it, it is still nevertheless true that our lives don't give us the sense that we make any difference or that anything counts.

You see, I know that like you, I had hoped that when some, such, something which I put my aim towards happened, that that was really going to make a difference.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. It was just a few years ago when absolutely everybody in this auditorium would have been familiar with and had their attention riveted on and be paying close attention to something which had captured the imagination, the attention, the feelings, the minds, the opinions, the intellect of a whole nation of people as well as people around the world.

Something really vital to our lives.

Something that had a great impact on our lives. Something that was truly important. And that was the whole issue of Watergate and the issue of Nixon's presidency.

So I want you, in an attempt to understand how important all these things are in our lives, to take a look at the enormous shift in the quality of your life on the day or the days or the weeks or the months after Nixon resigned as president.

Do you notice how your whole life changed? I mean, the quality of your life suddenly expanded so that life was wonderful and you had a sense that you counted in life and you really had an opportunity to make a difference and say.... Or not.

There's something amiss. There's something rotten someplace.

Because the things you and I pay attention to, the things we give our hearts and our attention and our feelings and our intellect and our opinions and our lives over to, don't seem to have made any difference.

I want to read a quote which I know everyone knows, but it's a kind of poetry and it has the capacity to reach into and touch our experience.

You know, that light of recognition that goes on when you understand something. Poetry has that ability to reach into our experience for the light of recognition when you've experienced something.

To quote Shakespeare, who has that capacity to reach into our experience, he says,

"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It's a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

And that's the sense available to us in life.

You see, I love all the books and all of the people who talked about if we don't watch out, we're going to blow ourselves up. Or if we don't watch out, we're going to come to this cataclysmic overpopulation in which the world will be ended in a cataclysm.

Let me tell you that that's very unlikely. Doomsday is a possibility. But the great preponderant probability is that it will continue on in this petty pace.

Helen Keller said life is either a daring adventure or nothing. And for most people, it's nothing.

Even the daring adventures turn out to be nothing.

It seems that we don't make a difference.

My God, in our own lifetimes, in our own memory, a short enough time ago to still be in our experience, we pointed not over the left field fence but out into space and said, this we shall do. And we did it.

And it was monumental. And it brought us to tears. And it inspired us.

It moved us. It gave us a glimpse into the potential of human, of humankind. People around the world were inspired and moved.

They were allowed to get next to what could be. And it seems to have not made a difference. It goes on in this petty pace.

There isn't a commentator today who is not aware that one of the fundamental problems in this country is we have no national sense of purpose. We have no sense of dignity. Therefore, we have no dignity around the world.

That isn't surprising to anybody. Everybody knows it.

Some people say what we need is a great crisis to bring us together.

Boy, is that a hell of a comment on what we are. That's right.

People who don't make any difference. People whose actions don't make any difference. People who don't count. People whose choices don't make any difference because they don't matter.

We'll need a great crisis to bring them together. They'll need a war, or the moral equivalent of a war. They will not even be able to act in their own intelligent best interest.

And we don't. We count so little. We make so little difference.

We matter so little that we can't even act in our own intelligent best interest.

So what we do instead is to blame everything but ourselves. Because people who don't make any difference aren't big enough to shoulder the responsibility themselves.

Take a look at the percentage of people who vote in an election. If you had the responsibility to select the next mayor of this city, or your city, the next president of the United States, if that was your job, if your vote counted, by God, you'd be out there counting. And so would the rest of the 60% or more people who don't vote.

That doesn't count the people who aren't eligible to vote.

Take a look at the way you construed your own life. Take a look at what you're doing with it.

Take a look at what you're doing with your life. Take a look at what people do with their lives.

See if it reflects the experience, the awareness, that they make a difference.

See most people wake up in the morning because the alarm clock rings. Not because it makes any difference.

Most people will go to work on Monday. Not because it makes any difference whether they go to work or not. But it's Monday. Time to go to work.

So we go to work.

Do we work in our jobs as if our lives depended on our work? As if life itself depended on our work? Do we work in our jobs like who we are in our jobs really makes a difference? Do we really? No, not really.

I want to stay with what I'm telling you only long enough to give you an opportunity to look at it for yourself, to come to grips with it for yourself.

But to really look at it. To really observe it, to be with it. Not think it.

Not just think it. But to really get with yourself for a moment. Get with your real honest to God experience of life.

And I'll tell you what, if you've got any exceptions to what I've just pointed to, the exceptions prove the rule because they're God damn few and far between, I'll bet on it.

Life is not about making a difference. Life is not about counting.

Life is what's left when you find out that you don't make any difference.

I wish I could take you back to your childhood by some kind of regression. And I wish I could bring you through your childhood when you had dreams.

When you had visions. When you were naive. When you didn't have those nice little boundaries in which you now operate successfully.

And I wish I could move us forward in our experience to that point where we finally gave in and realized it doesn't make any difference.

See, I watch my young son and my two youngest daughters and I watch the commitment, the total investment of themselves in things that I would consider silly, but never mind the capacity for a total investment.

I watch it keep getting blunted.

They'll learn. They will learn. They'll become socialized, acculturated. They'll learn. They'll learn to construe themselves and to live themselves and to be alive in a world in which it doesn't matter. They'll learn not to be totally invested in anything. They'll learn not to care so much. They will learn not to care so much.

You have.

You have learned not to care so much.

You will give up, not because you're a quitter, but because you've learned not to care.

You wonder why you can't follow through with your own convictions, that when you make up your mind it doesn't mean much? You wonder why, on the simplest kinds and silliest kinds of things, like your diet or your exercise program or other things that ought to be as easy and as silly as that? You wonder why?

Because in a world in which you don't count, you learn to blunt your investment in things.

You learn not to care. And you don't care.

Instead, you feel sympathy for.

That ain't caring. You feel a little sympathy, you see, it gets you off the hook. You don't have to care.

You're respected in your community? You've got the respect of your community, you don't have to care.

Because you've got the prize. I mean, hell, that's what everybody's working for.

That's the prize, don't you get it? That's what life's about, when you don't make any damn difference.

Life's about getting everybody's approval.

Like I said, none of us want to say it.

Most of us have organized our lives around hiding it. We organize our lives so as to hide the fact that we don't make any difference.

It's like a conspiracy, an illusion, and nobody wants to be the first to point to the fact that the king has no clothes.

I want you to take a look at the way life is constructed, at the way we put it together, at our system of values, at what everybody agrees makes a wonderful guy or a wonderful gal.

What is it that captures our attention?

Why is it that 49 Americans held hostage in an embassy in Iran fills the newspaper and the television screens and pushes off the page the fact that the lives of 2 million Cambodians are not only in jeopardy, but that it is a certainty that many of them will die, and the best we can hope to do is to forestall a real elimination of a whole culture of people.

Now some nitwit will say that Erhard said that 2 million Asians were worth more than 49 Americans.

That's because that's the system in which you think, if you think that I said that.

What I said is that you and I have got to take a look at the way we've got it put together.

One of the ways of taking a look at the way we've got it put together is that the situation in Iran will shove out of the news, shove out of our interest. It isn't them. They put on television and write in newspapers what sells.

They've got the same problem that we do.

Nothing they do makes a difference. They're stuck in the same trap. No kidding.

Talk to them. Don't talk to them as reporters. Talk to them as human beings, where there isn't something to pretend or prove or protect.

They're a reflection of our interests.

And let me tell you, every once in a while, when one of them has the courage to do something out of a sense of making a difference, it very rarely gets any agreement.

Their plight is much like ours.

It's not them and us. We all share in this.

So what is it about the way in which we've got life construed that makes the situation in Iran shove out of the news, the situation in Cambodia, and the situation in Cambodia at least gets a little news, but the fact that 15 million people die every year as a consequence of being insufficiently fed, the fact that 21 children die every minute that you and I are alive, that ain't news! That is not worthy of our attention.

If it were, it would be in the news.

Like I said, every once in a while, someone acts with great courage, sticks their neck out, does something.

Man, it's a spit in the ocean for the most part.

It's a spit in the ocean because the condition is we don't count. The condition is you don't make a difference.

You try to put a drop of yellow in a sea of green, all you get is a bunch of green.

If the condition is that you don't count, if that's the condition of life, if that's the very principle out of which we live, then even our great achievements, even our real expressions of humanity, even acts of great courage and heroism will not count, and they don't.

We have men and women all over the world acting courageously and heroically, and no notice of it is even taken for the most part.

So what I'm trying to get across is not that you don't matter, but that you and I live in a condition in which no one matters.

What I'm trying to get across is not that you and I don't count, but that we live in a condition in which nobody counts.

Therefore you can't count. Therefore who you are doesn't make a difference.

We've got this principle of life, this thing which runs our life, shapes our life without our even knowing it.

Most people never even take the time to wonder what the hell their principles are. And when they do, all they can see is the ones that they made up that are up at the surface.

How about the ones that underlie the ones you made up that are up at the surface?

You know, the things I believe in. How about the stuff that's underneath that that determines what you are going to believe, what you're allowed to believe, what you can believe, what it's all right to believe.

Each human being in this room, each one of us, has a basic life principle.

Which basic life principle is like a box, and we live our lives inside that box.

You know, I can go to here but no further. I can go to here but no further.

I can go to here but no further. I can go to there but no further. I can go to here but no further.

I must live inside this box.

Do yourself a favor, don't be listening to me. Take a look inside yourself and see if you can discover that you've got a basic principle.

Now at first you begin to see the array that comes off the basic principle, and you'll see probably two or three or four or five or six principles by which you live your life.

Get ahead.

Get all you can.

Be first.

Be smart.

Be creative.

Be well thought of.

Be liked.

Be bad.

Be tough.

Be a man. Etc., etc., etc.

You begin to notice that you've got certain principles.

Even if you can't get what your basic principle in life is, begin to take a look down underneath yourself and see if you can see that you've got a basic principle. That there's a principle on which your life is based.

You don't think the principle, by the way. You do not think your own basic life principle.

What you think is limited by, formed by, shaped by your basic life principle.

Be dignified. A lot of the ways you think, if your basic life principle is be dignified, will have to fit. You can't think outside that box. You can't act outside that box. And the shape that you take in the box is formed by the sides of the box. That is to say that your whole life, your feelings, listen. Even what you can feel, what you can think, what you can imagine, what you can create, the way you behave, who you are, what you do, the way you express yourself, all limited by and shaped by your basic principle.

Now, as I get into this a little more, you'll begin to see that, yes, it really is true that people's lives are limited by and shaped and formed by their basic principle.

Lots of people in other cultures than our own come and look at us and think that our basic principle is 'get approval'.

Don't dare do anything which is not approved of.

And always do that which will gain approval.

Take a look at it. Isn't an enormous amount of your behavior limited by, dictated by the need for approval?

You can't see it in yourself.

Can you look outside and see it in the behavior of others?

Real clear.

Another basic principle which rules people's lives, outside of which they cannot behave, outside of which they cannot experience, cannot perceive, cannot think, cannot feel, cannot live.

Don't let them think you got conned.

Don't let them think you got co-opted.

Don't let them think you got taken in.

The basic principle which rules and guides, shapes, forms, and limits people's lives.

They go to life inside that box. It's not what they find out there. Yes, they also find it out there.

But they find it out there because they can't perceive outside the limits of the box.

You and I live in a box about which we are unconscious and unaware and which we form with no intentionality and no purpose.

It was formed in reaction or unconsciously.

Not purposefully, not intentionally, not self-awaredly, not humanly, but mechanically, defensively, reactively.

And that basic principle in people's lives will be consistent with, you don't matter. Who you are does not make a difference.

Now, what we've done or what we've attempted to do is to work our way back to the beginning and working our way back to the beginning. And at the beginning, we find someplace around the beginning, we find a life principle.

Now I have to introduce something which is a great deal more difficult than anything about which I've spoken so far.

If you were here with any intention to get what was going on today, then what we've been discussing, what we've covered so far is pretty clear.

It's not that you don't have some questions about what I said. It's not that you understood everything I said.

It's that essentially I'm quite sure you are with me. This hasn't been very taxing so far.

Now we're going to get into something very taxing.

The reason we're going to get into something very taxing is because the stuff that isn't very taxing doesn't make any difference.

For God's sake, are you so stupid that you don't understand that what you can understand is a mere extension of what you already understand? And that what you already understand, extended, is tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow?

Is that unclear for anybody in the room? That if what we deal in together is an extension of what we already understand, it's an extension of what we already got, and that's our plight. It's more of the same.

You need to be willing to deal with that which boggles your mind. That's what it means to think for yourself.

I'm going to do a lot of talking about thinking for yourself because I think that what passes for thinking for yourself in this culture is not thinking for yourself.

I don't think your strongly held opinions are thinking for yourself.

What you mean when you say, I thought it from my... See, what we hold is dear. We think that the intellect... See, somebody who has 30 thoughts is more intelligent than someone who only has 10 thoughts.

He thinks more. Oh, he's a real thinker. She's a real thinker.

They do a lot of thinking. See, the more you think, the more intelligent you are.

Oh, but the really intelligent, they think better.

See, they take the same old bag of thoughts that we've been sifting through now for a couple of decades or more, and they put it together in a new and better way. And THEY think better.

But, of course, the ultimate... See, the ultimate is to think different.

Thinking different than other people is not thinking for yourself. Strongly held beliefs are not thinking for yourself.

Figuring it out in that same old bag of thoughts, in that same old bag of principles is not thinking for yourself.

That's saying you can think in this box. See this box? We've got lots of great thoughts in that box.

But, by God, don't you think outside that box.

If you think a thought outside that box, is it going to make any sense inside the box?

No!

Therefore, if you think a thought outside the box, we're going to call it gobbledygook.

We're going to call it nonsense.

But let me tell you something.

The truth does not exist in that box.

Listen, you and I live in a paradigm of reality. That is to say, our view of what's real,

our view of what is possible and impossible,

our view of what's true and what's false,

our view of what's right and what's wrong,

our view of what we can do and what we can't do,

our view of what we actually did and what we actually did not do,

is all that, what is going on, you and me and life and experiencing and moment by moment and the process of life and what you have and what you do and who you are, that's all happening in a paradigm.

The only things which will make sense are those things which are consistent with the content of that paradigm.

Even statements about the paradigm itself will not make sense. In a given set, statements about the set itself do not make sense.

Only elemental statements make sense in a set because they agree with or disagree with the other elements. The set itself is of a different logical type, therefore statements about the set itself do not make any sense inside the set.

Now what does all that mean? It means that any statement about the paradigm in which you and I are functioning or any statements about another paradigm will not make sense.

Anything of any value outside the process of day by day in this petty pace will at first appear to be nonsensical.

It is only that which is consistent with day by day in this petty pace which will be immediately understandable.

Look, I didn't make it that way.

Don't look annoyed at me. I'm just reporting on the facts.

Now let me tell you something else that's much worse.

That if humankind is to make any great breakthrough, you and I are going to have to start thinking the unthinkable.

You didn't even get what I said. I said you and I are going to have to start thinking the unthinkable.

You and I are going to have to develop a faculty for thinking that which cannot be thought.

This is about thinking out of this paradigm. This is about thinking of a paradigm, but a very special paradigm.

This is about thinking about the paradigm of paradigms.

This is not the substitution of one paradigm for another, but to move into that space in which you are responsible for whatever paradigm of reality you're functioning in, in which you've got the power to create a paradigm of reality for yourself, where you can live at the vortex of life, where you can be the table on which the pool game is being played rather than one of the balls, thinking that you've made any difference.

You know, if you and I were pool billiard balls, we'd be crashing around the tables like crazy, thinking that every crash made a difference.

If I am to have as the basic principle of my life, who I am makes a difference. Really, just who I am makes a difference.

So being me is a great adventure because who I am makes a difference.

See, for most people, who they are doesn't make any damn difference at all. So there's no adventure to it.

You want to live your life out of the basic life principle, who I am makes a difference.

You're going to have to develop a capacity, which most people have never developed. You're going to have to use an organ, which most people don't even know they have.

You're going to have to stand on your own two feet and think for yourself, because this organ, this capacity, this facility, this faculty is only available to people who are willing to stand on their own two feet and think for themselves.

The ability to create a principle for your own life, to be able to get control for yourself over the principles which shape, form, formulate, limit your life.

You must have the power to create a context for your own life.

For most of us, context does not exist.

You know, to the illiterate, to an illiterate society, the idea that knowledge could be held on a piece of paper is unfathomable.

See, you and I can't get that somebody could not get that how to farm a plot could be put on a piece of paper.

But there are farmers in this world who think that if you don't do it, if you haven't done it with your hands, you can't know it, you couldn't put it on a piece of paper.

It's not that they can't read, it's much worse than that. The dimension of literacy does not exist for them. The context literacy.

I want you to get that it's unconscious to us, our context of literacy.

Sure, we read. Sure, we can read.

Sure, we can use the written word. But we haven't thought that in order to do so, we must have the context literacy.

You see, context is the freedom to be.

It is the space to be. And it doesn't take up any space. It doesn't use the space.

It is the space. It has no expression. It allows expression.

It has no form. It allows form. It's different than a box to live in.

A box to live in limits form and shapes form. A context allows form.

See, it's not that you don't make a difference.

It's that there's no space for anything to make a difference.

It's not that what you're doing in life is wrong. There's no space for what you do in life to have any impact, to really count, to make a difference in your own life as well as in the lives of others.

In order to make a difference in life, you need to be able to create a context.

And that's why I've spent so long on it.

And there is a context which is now available to us.

Which is the most exciting opportunity ever presented to humankind, as far as I can tell. An opportunity exceeding literacy. An opportunity exceeding agriculture and urbanization.

An opportunity exceeding industrialization. An opportunity even exceeding returning to our environment. Away from industrialization.

For the first time, really, there's enough to go around. We live in a world in which it's possible to take care of everyone.

So for the first time, and I say it happened sometime around now, that may be five years ago or fifty years ago or two minutes ago, but sometime around now, it became possible for you to create a context in which to live your life that could allow you to have the principle of your life be that you make a difference.

You see, I'm talking about the principle of your life now. The way you're allowed to be. The way you're allowed to think.

The way you're allowed to feel. The way you're allowed to live.

Where that comes from is a context.

Given the context in which we have been living, it has not been possible for you to have as the principle of your life that you make a difference. That who you are counts. It has not been possible.

See, if you try to adopt the principle that who you are counts and that you make a difference in the old context, you know how it expresses itself? Helping people because they can't help themselves.

It expresses itself that you are big and powerful, and they are weak and puny, and therefore you will take out of your largess and out of your overflow, that which is overflowing, and share it with these people who because they are weak and stupid cannot help themselves. And that's the way we've done it.

You don't believe me? Ask them. Don't ask you. Ask them.

No, it requires another context to have the principle that people make a difference. That who we are counts. That the choices we make in life really do matter.

There's only one context in which that's possible, and that is a context which encompasses the whole.

What makes a difference is to create a context which includes everyone with nothing left out.

And in that context, it follows naturally that the principle of your life is that you do make a difference because in that context, everybody makes a difference.

And that's one of the things about making a difference. That's one of the rules. Either everybody makes a difference or nobody makes a difference.

It can't be that I can make a difference and you can't.

In that paradigm of thinking, in that condition, no one will ever make a difference.

There's the myth that the congressperson makes a difference, but talk to them, they don't.

There's the myth that the great executive makes a difference, but talk to him or her, they don't.

There's the myth that the person in the media makes a great difference, but talk to them, they don't.

We've got lots of myths about people who make a difference.

But in a context in which I am important and you are not, or in which someone else is important and we are not, or in which you are important and I am not, in that context, nobody makes any difference because it's a context devoid of the potential to make a difference.

In the context of a world that works for all of us, with no one and nothing left out, the natural principle on which to base your life, that which will hold your experience, that which will shape and form your experience, that which will limit, that which will proscribe and prescribe your experience, your life, your living, is you make a difference.

Each of us makes a difference.

Literally, just who you are makes a difference.

In that context, who you are.

In that context, the landless laborers that I spent time with in India, who eat with any certainty for only a third of the year, because there's only employment for a third of the year, who year by year face extinction by starvation or the diseases associated with starvation, they don't make any difference, but in a context of making the world work for everyone, out of the principle that each of us makes a difference, you begin to realize these people expend more courage in one day of living. They manifest more humanity just getting through life than you and I will probably manifest in our greatest, most horrendous achievement.

And in a context of a world that works for everyone, that person makes a difference. Just who they are.

But in our consensus reality, that thought is unthinkable.

And so we interact with the people in developing countries like they don't make a difference. We make a difference, but they don't.

You notice how that's worked so far?

It's not that we don't have great diplomats.

It's not that we don't have great thinkers.

It's that in this paradigm, the greatest diplomacy, the greatest thinking, the greatest statesmanship will fail because everything fails.

Finally, nothing makes any difference in this paradigm.

You want your life to matter? You want to make a contribution? You want to get up tomorrow morning because you can make a difference?

Don't try changing your circumstances. We've all done that a hundred times, and it doesn't make any difference if it's in the same old paradigm. Just for a couple of hours here today, leave the goddamn circumstances alone.

Don't change your mind.

Don't get smarter for just a couple of hours.

Don't reinforce what you stand for and what you believe in for just a couple of hours.

Let's see if by taking a vacation from our circumstances and our minds and our beliefs and our strongly held opinions, if we can gain some mastery with respect to our circumstances.

I don't want you to stay away from them very long. Tonight you're going to go back to them, and I tell you they're going to be the same as they were when you left.

And if you create for your life the context that the world can work for all of us, while the circumstances will be the same, nothing else will.

If you had the courage, not the brains, because it doesn't take this kind of brains. at the level of context we're all infants. None of us has got any prowess.

We're always a beginner with the truth. The truth you discovered yesterday isn't the truth anymore. It's got to be created newly right now.

And context is like that.

People don't have the power of context simply because they never bothered to take a look that it exists.

Once you know it exists, you have the power of it.

You right now have the power to create a new paradigm of reality in which to live your life.

How?

You stand up on your own two feet without any proof, without any calculation, without any predictability, and you create a context for yourself.

The way you do that is by doing it.

Does that sound like tail-chasing to you? I'm sorry, I'm at the level of the truth. It's going to be tautological.

To create a context, you create a context.

It's like that. Just like that.

Like what?

Like that!

It's a simple act because it requires no behavior.

It happens before time. Context has no time. It allows time.

It has no form. You don't say it in a word. I mean, you can if you like, but that isn't it.

Saying it isn't it. Saying the context for my life is that we can make the world work for everyone, that isn't it.

I mean, it's all right to say it, but that isn't it.

Thinking it. That isn't it either.

You are it.

You just stand where you are with nothing, with no history, with no chart, with no plot, on your own, by yourself, without the benefit of society or history, without the benefit of experience or understanding.

You stand on your own, by yourself, and you say, in the way that they're talking about when they say, in the beginning was the word, not the kind of words coming out of my mouth, you say, this is the way it is.

The way it is, is the world can now work for every one of us.

We can make the world work for all of us.

The great opportunity facing each one of us is to participate in the transformation of society, of what it means to be human.

Now, you better watch out about that, because I want to tell you something about that as a context for your life.

You've seen on television those great films, those really comical, funny films of airplanes in the early days before flight, of airplanes with this complex, wonderful, complex wings and machines, heavier than air flight, and you watch them go up the hill and they go whooooo! And everybody laughs uproariously.

You think Wilbur and Orville Wright didn't see those films? You think guys that were deeply, they didn't watch them on television, but you think they didn't see the films?

You think guys deeply involved in aeronautical research before flight didn't know about all that hysterically funny stuff? And didn't know that people were out there taking photographs and writing down descriptions of their attempts to fly?

The problem of context, there's no precedent for it. There's no argument for it. There's no proof for it.

You say that the world can work for everyone.

Prove it.

I can't prove it, but I can know it, and I can honor it in the same way that Wilbur and Orville Wright could not prove that flight was possible.

They could not prove the context heavier than air flight, but they could know it.

They could honor it.

They could live from its truth.

They could live from its truth into the lack of the fact of it.

And by doing so, they could make it possible for flight to occur.

You and I have an opportunity which no human being has ever had.

A space is open for us that no human being ever could come from.

Flight's already been discovered. That space isn't open. Flight is a more, better, and different game.

It'll get better. It'll get worse. It'll change.

It'll improve. It'll evolve. But the space in which it evolves has already been created.

The space forwhat's the word for moving a body from one place to the other without...? Teleportation is not an idea whose time has come.

We need a little bit more mass transit first.

You and I are not privileged by the opportunity of such a space, but you and I, human beings living on this planet today, have an opportunity to create a context which has not

heretofore been available, and the opportunity is to create a context of a world that works for everyone.

I don't know when it happened. It's just very clear to me that sometime around now, the opportunity to make the world work for everyone has put in its appearance.

It is an idea whose time has come, and you and I have as a privilege the opportunity to make a world that works for everyone the context for our lives.

So in a context of making the world work for everyone, and having the opportunity to create that as the context for our lives, we find we then have the power to create as the principle of our living that who we are actually makes a difference.

It really counts who we are.

But what about making a difference? What about living successfully in a world in which you not only want to make a difference, in which not only who you are makes a difference, but you also must be effective.

I mean, the circumstances have got to be moved around.

So how do you make a difference in those circumstances?

The secretand now for those of you who can only tolerate what you call practical things, concrete things, I am now down to the concrete and practical.

So practically speaking, how do you get along in the circumstances of life? Well, you've got to find a way to create some leverage.

You've got to find a way, the Buddhists call it skillful means.

You've got to be able to produce five for one.

You've got to get five out for one in.

I like the way Bucky Fuller talks about it. Bucky calls it trim-tabbings.

He says there's the great ship of state, this great ocean-going vessel, steaming along in the ocean, and people are trying to guide the great ship of state by going up to the front of it and pushing on the front.

Nothing happens because you don't turn a great ship by pushing on the front. You turn a great ship by going all the way to the back where the rudder is.

And the ship is turned by moving the rudder. It takes great force because the rudder is in the stream of the ship, in the slipstream of the ship.

It takes great force to turn the rudder.

It's being turned against the flow of the water, against the movement of the ship. But when you turn it, the great ship of state slowly makes the turn.

And so if you're going to have any effect on the great ship of state, if you're going to have any effect on life, you've got to get back where the controls are.

And Bucky points out that at the end of any control surface, like on an airplane, it's usually a little trim-tab, a little, very small thing.

It takes very little energy to move it. It can be moved very easily.

Just a little wheel. On a great big airplane, it's just a little wheel. You can move it with your two fingers.

You don't need to use both your hands to move the stick. Because it's so small.

See, there are very little forces acting on it.

It's real small. But if you turn that little trim-tab, it turns the rudder, which turns the great ship of state.

And that's the way Bucky says that the little individual can count.

And man, if you're going to make a difference in life, you damn well better find out where the trim-tab is.

And you better find that trim-tab that works in a you-and-me world. Because that's really one of the rules of living successfully in a you-and-me world.

You've got to have leverage. You've got to know where the trim-tab is.

Now, in a you-or-me world, you move the rudder of the ship of state by being clever, by gaining influence, by buying your way along, by conning your way along, by arguing your way along, by bullying your way along, by shoving your way along.

You go on and keep trying that, see how it works. You'll accomplish all those things in life that will leave you with a life that didn't even get used when you died.

So the rules for living successfully in you-or-me don't have anything to do with trim-tabling.

But in a you-and-me world, you've got to find a trim-tab.

And a trim-tab is real simple.

Now, this is for the folks who like concrete, real simple things.

Here it comes.

The way to get your hands on a trim-tab, the way to get leverage, the way to be effective in a world in which you make a difference is to discover what is needed and wanted and produce it.

Devote yourself to discovering what is needed and wanted.

But where? Right where you are!

Go home tonight and look at the people in your house. Look at your wife. Don't go over and ask her.

Do it on your own. Think it out for yourself. Ask yourself.

Discover. Find out what's needed and wanted.

In her case, what is needed and wanted? You discover what's needed and wanted right where you are, at home.

You go to work on Monday and you stand in the middle of the place where you work. In the middle of your office.

Or you sit at your chair, at your desk.

Or in the middle of the plant. Or in the middle of the building. Or wherever the hell you work.

In the middle of the set. Wherever it is you work.

And instead of trying to figure out what would get you a raise or how you can do a little less work or how you can get promoted, if you want to make a difference, sit there, stand there and discover what's needed and wanted in that place and then produce it.

And I'll tell you what, when you start doing that, you will begin to know that who you are makes a difference.

What you do actually counts. And the choices that you make matter.

So you start making a difference right in the crummy circumstances you've got.

You go back to those same old people you've been living with. And that same old job you've been working in.

And that same old church or synagogue you've been attending. That same old group of people with whom you've been interacting.

Go back into the exact same circumstances which you left.

Only they're all different now. Because those exact same circumstances now exist in a context of making the world work for all of us.

And life is lived out of the principle, who I am actually makes a difference.

And you can be effective in the circumstances because you know the rules of trim-tabbing in the circumstances.

You know that the job that needs to be done in order to make a difference in life is to discover what's needed and wanted and produce it.

See, the question is, can you wash the toilet? Question is, can you clean the toilets out of the principle that who you are makes a difference?

Can you go handle the everyday mundane day after day stuff out of the principle that who you are makes a difference? That's the question.

Question is, have you got that kind of heart? Have you got that kind of courage? Have you got that kind of humanity to do that stuff you've got to do every day?

And to do it in a context of making the world work for all of us.

Can you wash the dishes out of the context of making the world work for all of us?

Yes, you can.

If you'll create for yourself as the central principle of your life, who I am makes a difference.

What I do really counts. The way I live matters.

And you can matter and you can make a difference.

And you can have an impact.

You and only you have the power to make your life make a difference.

Only you.

No great leader is going to come along and provide us with a great purpose. Those days are over.

This is you and me.

The power to produce purpose in your life resides within you and only within you.

You are waiting for the Holy Ghost to descend on you and create meaning and dignity and purpose in your life.

You're going to be sitting there for a long damn time.

She ain't coming this time.

See, I'm quite clear that I am never going to be the same. It's not going to be day by day, tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace.

Yes, it's true that like you, I'm going to go back to the circumstances I left.

But I'll never be the same because my life will be lived in a context of my own creation. The only way one can have a context.

My life will never be the same because I'll have the power to shape and form my own life because I have the power to create the basic principles of my life.

I will not go out to find out if I make a difference. I will live my life out of the principle I make a difference.

And for that, I'll never be the same.

You and I, listen to this, you and I can choose to make humanity, you and I can choose to make the success of all humanity our personal business.

You and I can choose to make our daily business what we wake up for, what we go to work for, what we come home for, what we go out for, what we do the things we do in life for.

You and I can choose to make as our personal business the success of all humanity.

You talk about being alive. You talk about getting up with a sense of purpose.

You talk about having dignity.

You and I have a great and incredible opportunity. We have the opportunity to make the success of all humanity our personal business.

We can choose to be audacious enough to be responsible for the whole human family.

At that level of audacity, you are truly alive. You are out there.

You have swung out. You've stepped out. You've put yourself out.

You got it on the line.

We can choose to make our love for each other what our lives are really about.

I want to share with you one last quote while I'm here on the platform.

It's again a quote from George Bernard Shaw. Some of you will have seen this before because I've shared it with some of you before. But it's become really real for me now.

This will probably be the last time I'll ever show you this quote because it will be complete today.

Because as you'll see about the quote, it really sums up the things that we've been talking about today. It does it in three paragraphs:

"This is the true joy in life. The being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. The being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community. And as long as I live it is my privilege my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment. And I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations. And I have no end for this."

I have no end for today. I have no way to wrap it up, to summarize it. I have no end for today.

So I'm going to finish by saying thank you.