

Global Warming of the Human Kind

Emotional climate change is needed now more than ever

By Patrick Williams, EdD, MCC

The world needs global warming – not the environmental kind, the relational kind! Throughout the news media, we see the quickening of global warming and its disastrous effects on the environment. What we are also beginning to see is a quickening of global warming in the way individuals, families, communities and countries relate to one another.

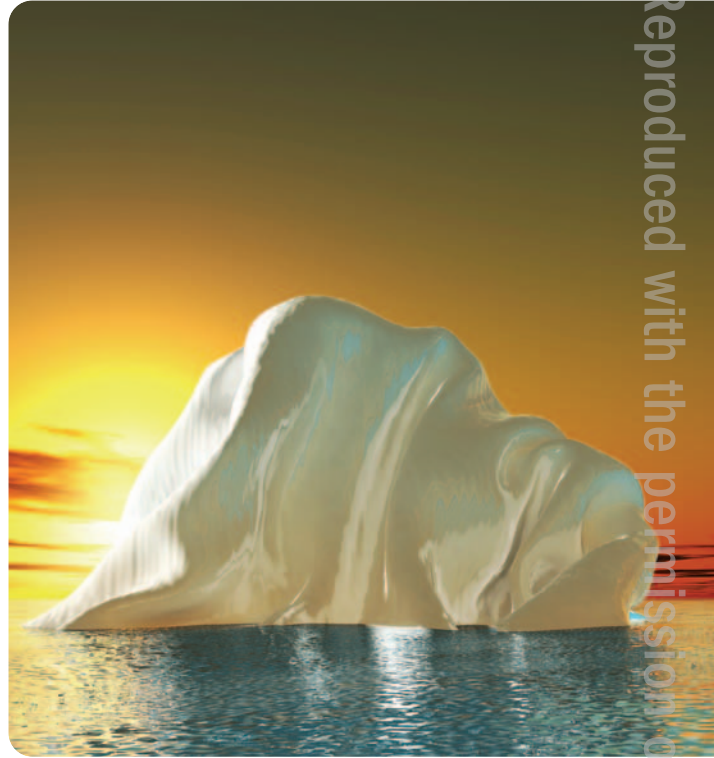
That this could grow so fast is a surprise to all the experts. What if the walls that separate us from truly cherishing and honoring each other came crashing down, just as the icebergs are doing in Antarctica? What if the measurement of warmth in all relationships began to rise? I have had the good fortune to travel to many countries around the globe in the last 10 years in my role as an ambassador of

life coaching, both for the Institute for Life Coach Training and for the profession at large. I have always noticed how people everywhere respond well to human friendliness despite the politics of individual countries. If you act friendly, you are treated as a friend, and if you are courteous, you are treated with courtesy. If you ask people about themselves with non-judgmental curiosity and really want to know, they respond with openness and glee.

My graduate training in psychology in the 1970s was in Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. I pursued those fields of study because I believed in the possibility of learning and applying wisdom and tools that allowed people to pursue happiness and overcome life stressors that lead to the antithesis of peace. Yes, of course, I was an idealist of the Love

Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals who can go it alone. I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation. Not mediation, negotiation, problem solving, debate, or public meetings. Simple, truthful conversations where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.

Margaret J. Wheatley



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Generation, but what's wrong with idealism? Ideals are what we need to pursue more often, but through a sense of global connection and people-to-people experiences – not the disconnection that seems so pervasive in our governments and political leadership.

The new EQ age

Given the research today in the areas of Positive Psychology and Emotional Intelligence (EQ), we have evidence of techniques and outcomes that improve relation-

this new century will come to understand and build those factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish.”

I would add that the timing could not be more crucial. Global warming of the human kind needs to erupt in surprising and multiple places on Earth. Didn't it surprise most experts when the Berlin wall came down? What metaphorical walls could come down if there were a mass movement of people-to-people and village-to-village peaceful actions with purpose? That is

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ships, embrace diversity, strengthen our ability to be open-minded and less judgmental, and improve the honest, clear communication that is necessary to foster good relationships. Shouldn't this research be applied to global relations and community challenges so that we can bypass the typical political efforts among the leaders of countries?

Martin Seligman, in his introduction to the *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Snyder, C.R. and Lopez, S. editors, 2002) states, “I believe that a psychology of positive human functioning will arise that achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving individuals, families and communities. You may think this is pure fantasy that psychology will never look beyond the victim, the underdog, and the remedial. But I want to suggest that the time is finally right.” He goes on to say, “I predict that Positive Psychology in

how all movements begin. It is time for another peace movement, this time armed with the coach approach and the science of Positive Psychology.

Starting a global conversation

For 18 years, I was a member of Rotary International (I travel too much now to be a member locally). As a member, I had the great experience of volunteering with projects in Mexico several times and also housed six exchange students in our house for three to six months each time. Both of these experiences created in me great warmth toward a culture I was unfamiliar with and expanded my view of diversity and the importance of being curious and open-minded rather than judgmental and close-minded. Many other organizations sponsor similar cultural exchange programs. How might professional coaches begin to sponsor or encourage experiences with the *coach approach* included?

I have enormous confidence in the positive impact that the spread of authentic coaching conversa-

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Pat has created a nonprofit company to bring the power of the coach approach to leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens of developing countries, with the hope that assisting with hunger, health and education will lead to more opportunities for peace. Go to www.CoachingTheGlobalVillage.org

tions could have on the world. What would it take to start a coaching conversation movement? Like the woman in Africa who is planting millions of trees, or the young teenagers who started Cell Phones for Soldiers as a way for men and women in the armed services around the globe to communicate affordably with their families, or any of the other great movements that have started with just "a good idea shared with friends"? What would it take to make *coaching conversations* a buzzword on YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Google, Yahoo, and blogs everywhere?

I believe that people really want to feel more connected with others and are curious about other cultures. Let's end prejudice that prevents openness to learning. Let me know how we can start a *Global Warming in People's Hearts* message and spread this message around the globe. Send your ideas to: ideas@lifecoachtraining.com. Let's get together and do something big to create an increase in global warming within the human family. •

Patrick Williams, EdD, MCC, is Chief Energizing Officer of the Institute for Life Coach Training.



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