



January 2022

Volume 22, No. 1

(The following is a lightly edited transcript of Jean Houston's remarks that began the above online presentation about the role of sports and consciousness in fostering social transformation).

Sport and Social Transformation
Jean Houston PhD

January 28, 2021 -- Full Moon

What role does sports have to play in today's societal breakdown? Yes, we are in a time of enormous breakdown and also breakthrough. It's the changing of the guard on every level, in which every given is quite literally up for grabs. It's the momentum behind the drama of the world, the breakdown and breakthrough of every old way of being, knowing, relating, governing, and believing, and it's shaking the foundations of literally all and everything. But it also allows for another order of reality to come into time.

Now this is not by any means the first time that we've had this kind of breakdown. But what is interesting is that you find times of such colossal breakdown — times of pandemic, plague, utter disorganization, the decay and collapse of traditional institutions-- people lost everywhere — often precede the times of enormous breakthrough. For example, the Italian Renaissance was preceded in the mid-14th century by a plague that destroyed half of the population of Europe and collapsed virtually every old way of knowing. And yet something was engendered in that time of collapse. It was as if the universe said, "Enough already. Now it's time for profoundly new ways of being and knowing to enter into time," and you have the Renaissance, *and it's bringing a time of renewal and discovery*. The critical potency of it was a radical change in perspective that led to the emergence of startling new forms in art, music, science, architecture, creativity, and an enormous unfolding and flowering of the human spirit.

I believe that's where we are now. But what is it that's about to come through for us — is it art.. science? What is it that can serve as the coherent metaphor and method that can bring new societies into being? And when I say, "Is it religion?" No, I don't think so. And when I say, "Is it

science?” Believe it or not, I don’t think so. I think it is sport. Why sport? Because sport is a key activity that coheres all people, all cultures, that brings everything together. So in this time of whole system transition, a condition of interaction that affects every aspect of life, it may well be sport that provides the qualities and energies that bring us to the reconsideration of the enhancement of life on Earth and a world that works.

The one thing so necessary around the world today in this time of Renaissance is a re-patterning of human nature. What sport allows us to do, first of all, is to get back into embodiment. So many of us lost our bodies by sitting in front of television sets or becoming addicted to social media. Embodiment is when we realize that we are in the sacred fulcrum of our body/mind. The fine tuning that occurs in sport allows one to become deeply intimate with the structures and the ways that the body moves, works, thinks, and has its being.

So very important is the activation of and subsequent extension of the physical system, and with it the enhancement of the psychological system. This re-patterning of the body and mind tells us that we are not encapsulated bags of skin dragging around a dreary little ego. We are organism- environment, symbiotic with the whole, making a profound discovery of depths that we have within us. This is what gives us new ways of being, of knowing, of crossing the great divide of “otherness” so that we see the other not so much as enemy or contestant, but as one with whom we are in an exultant form of sporting relationship.

Sport tells us that the capacities that belong to the few must become the province and the requirement of the many, and if we’re to survive as a species the next hundred years, sport must help us learn, feel and know in new ways, function with better use, become more creative, more imaginative, and aspire, within realistic limits, to a much larger awareness, one that is much better equipped to deal with the complex challenges of our life.

The consciousness that solves the problem cannot be the same consciousness that created it. But the consciousness that can rise to the occasion needs models of its own matured possibilities, visions of what the possible human can be and do, beyond the limitations of academic excellence or dogged persistence. This consciousness is sensory and psychological, but also mythic.

What sports brings in is a new order of being hero and heroine. It is a way of being in which we have a new narrative, a new way of not just “contentioning” (contention), but overcoming the old great divides of “othering.” It is also a breakdown and dissolving of the old phobias. It’s not just the new technologies of instant communication that help people join minds and hearts in mutual discovery, but, even more importantly, in sport we find the context of a collective destiny. As the membrane of the old forms breaks down, a more complex and inclusive global organism comes into being, and the great modeling of this is in sport.

I also think on a mythic level we touch into something that sport celebrates: archetypal symbols, mythical beings, and broad patterns of life that relate to the great stories. In sport we are always “storied.” It may not be the search for the Grail or the voyage of Odysseus, but it is instead a new facet of heroism and heroine-ism. When I, in a sporting situation, perceive the archetypal reality shining through another, my appreciation for him or her deepens. I call forth that depth of possibility in the other, which happens in the contention and the testing of sport. And they rise to the occasion. And ultimately, when we look at each other on the spiritual level, we see each other — and this happens so often in sport — as gods and goddesses in hiding, sometimes experiencing each other as waves of pure energy, transparent to transcendence, the life force in its fullness and in its infinite oscillations.

In such seeing, one is able to see the other’s possibility with a kind of natural felicity that one did not know before. It is as if the optimal template of me is seeing the optimal template in the other. And so, in this world now in the throes of whole system transition, we can begin, through sport, to yield to us all capacities that override outdated and dangerous constructs. In so doing we may gain an inward sufficiency complex and rich to cope with the overload of today’s challenges.

I also think that we are experiencing in our time the break-through of the depths as a kind of spiritual renaissance that is occurring everywhere. Not since the days of Plato and Buddha and Confucius 2500 years ago has there been so much of an uprise of spiritual yearning. And with the inevitable cross-fertilization of the wisdom and practices of the world’s spiritual traditions, more and more people are gaining access to the Source of our being and becoming. I think we also see archetypal ideas, symbols, springing into consciousness. Archetypal symbols are there, profoundly manifested in sport, giving us a sufficiency of inner inspiration to guide our growth and expansion in our outer world.

What happens is ultimately a re-genesis - sport brings us to the possibility of a re-genesis of society. Because as the self is re-patterned, the ways in which we relate to each other necessarily shift toward the discovery of new ways of being. I think sport is a new style of interpersonal connection, a new way of being in community in a global society. And that is something else that sport provides us, the communal, global society, the movement from the egocentric and the ethnocentric to the world-centric, a fundamental change in the nature of civilization, a compelling passage beyond the mindset and the institutions of millennia. It is a true partnership society in which men and women join together in the full social agenda.

Essential to this is a matured consciousness that is moral and ethical, and with it, the growth toward an empathy among individuals and nations that honors the Golden Rule of human interchange. This is re-genesis, a re-genesis of social forms, of human capacities, and above all,

of the sporting consciousness that allows us to cross the great divide of otherness and enter into the new pastures, the new higher sport of a world that is in a state of dynamic recreation and regeneration. Through sport, we can find that central point from which all of these opportunities can then proceed.

Bio:

Jean Houston PhD is an internationally respected scholar, spiritual teacher, researcher of human capacities and visionary thinker. The author of 26 books, she has worked with such diverse groups as the UN and UNICEF, and with people ranging from Eleanor Roosevelt to the Dalai Lama. She is also the founder and principal teacher of the Renaissance of Spirit, a school of human development, a program of cross-cultural, mythic and spiritual studies, dedicated to teaching history, philosophy, the New Physics, psychology, anthropology, and the many dimensions of human potential. Her website is: www.jeanhouston.com.

More information on the Evolutionary Sports Collective (EVO Sports) can be found at: www.evosportscollective.com.

TERMS OF USE

The International Journal of Healing and Caring is distributed electronically as an open access journal, available at no charge. You may print your downloaded copy of this article or any other article for relaxed reading. We encourage you to share this article with friends and colleagues.

The International Journal of Healing and Caring
C/O National Alliance of Energy Healing
31907 South Davis Ranch Rd.
Marana, AZ 85658

Email: ijhcjournal@earthlink.net Website: <http://www.ijhc.org>

Copyright © 2021 IJHC. All rights reserved.

DISCLAIMER: <http://ijhc.org/disclaimer/>