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Editor's Musings

Good Grief! Why are we not addressing the threats to our planetary survival?

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Abstract

Humanity is behaving in many ways that threaten to end our existence. There is a growing awareness that we are probably witnessing the 6th major extinction on our planet. The first five extinctions were caused by major shifts in nature. This one is being caused by humans. Our behaviors are very self-destructive – to the point that they could arguably be labeled suicidal. I consider here how unresolved grief that pervades the collective consciousness of humanity may be contributing to our collective suicidal behaviors.

Key words: grief, collective consciousness, sixth major extinction, proxy healing, grief, suicide

Background

Let us consider:

1. The dangerous ways humans are behaving towards our planet;
2. Our failure to address these dangerous behaviors – to the point that this appears to be suicidal behavior;
3. Understanding grief reactions – that can lead to irrational, angry behaviors and suicide;
4. The possibility that our behaviors towards our planet could represent a major, unresolved grief reaction in the collective consciousness of humanity; and
5. A suggestion for how to offer our healing for the collective suicidality of humanity.
6. Ways in which proxy healing might mitigate or heal the collective human march to suicide

1. We are living in a time of great changes and dangerous challenges in our world, and these are not being addressed adequately.

We have clear measurements indicating that:

- Populations have been rising in many places around the world to unsustainable numbers.
- We are exhausting the usable water, land and air we need to sustain human life.

- Bees, birds, fish, other animals and forests are being killed off at rates that threaten to leave humanity short of necessities for our survival.
- Pollution is poisoning increasing areas of land, waters and air to the point that we cannot use them sustainably.
- Genetically modified plants are being widely promoted and used despite evidence that they are poorly digested, can cause diseases, and introduce dangers of relying on monocultures that cannot respond to wide variations in climate and pest predations.
- Nuclear reactors are ageing and further Fukushima disasters are very likely.
- Most alarming of all: global warming is proceeding past the predicted tipping points – beyond which there is no return from extinction of most life as we know it on our planet.

Each of us – individually, and all of us – collectively, need to wake up to and address these changes with urgency if we want our planet and life as we know it today to survive. It is odd to the point of being pathological that humanity is largely inactive in addressing these problems.

These planetary changes and our difficulties in dealing with them must be clarified in order for us to move forward if we are to save our world from probable destruction by any or all of the many creative ways humanity is putting our planet in danger. The multitudes of problems that threaten the continued existence of human and other life on this planet bears witness to the seriousness of the problems and our serious difficulties in addressing them.

2. Our failure to address our dangerous behaviors – to the point that this becomes suicidal behavior

There are studies and plans for addressing many aspects of these threats to continued human life on our planet as we know it today. These range from generic to specific measures, from local to regional, national and global plans to slow, halt and reverse the effects of these dangerous processes.

There are 'Friends of ---' groups, nature lovers societies, scientific research groups, internet groups, governmental groups, and more – all dedicated to identifying serious problems and promoting solutions to them.

Yet our governments have not been adequately responsive in addressing these problems on national and international scales. Repeated international climate change summits have ended with minimal proposals for dealing with any of the issues necessary to seriously slow the progress of global warming, much less to halt or reverse them. For example, the media hailed the G7 Summit 2015, where general promises on a broad range of climate issues were made. Time to cheer? NO! The promises were to address these issues by the end of the 21st century. Nothing immediate was committed, much less planned. (for details [click here](#))

In essence, we appear to be collectively determined to commit suicide. We are not taking adequate actions to compel our governments to address these problems more promptly and effectively. Worse, there is a strongly prevalent atmosphere of denial and dismissal of the possibility that the coming extinction may be well on its way already (Esquire, 2015).

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

- Leo Tolstoy

To deal with these issues, we must first figure out:

- Why have we allowed these problems to develop and worsen to the point that we are endangering our planet?
- Why are we being so very slow to respond in addressing these problems?
- Is there any way possible to move forward with greater awareness of the issues, constructive investments of our energies, and alacrity?

As a psychotherapist, I have often asked myself, “Why would people be so slow to respond to obvious threats of extinction of our species?” “Why aren’t we mobilizing our resources as we did in the US during World War II or worldwide during the ebola threat?”

Some people change when they see the light, others when they feel the heat.
- Caroline Schoeder

I believe there are psychological reasons behind the humanity’s slowness to respond and failures to act. After years of pondering this question, it has slowly dawned on me that unresolved grief in the collective unconscious of humanity may explain a significant portion of our weak and inadequate responses to the global challenges listed above. Our apathy in the face of mounting major dangers is colossal! The majority of individuals and governments are staying in denial, ignoring these glaring problems, and are mired in inactivity or barely effective activity.

I propose that unresolved grief that lingers in countless people. This grief deeply pervades the collective consciousness of humanity. This collective grief could be contributing to our collective suicidal behaviors.

In a recent article I also discussed the probability that this suicidal behavior represents an aspect of a post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the human collective consciousness (Benor, 2015).

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.
- Abraham Lincoln

3. Understanding grief reactions – that can lead to irrational, angry behaviors and suicide

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1975) identified five clear steps in the process of grieving, including: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. I have worked with many individuals who experienced varieties of losses in their lives, large and small. I find that these stages can be expanded helpfully to include seven distinct steps, divided into three major processes of grief:

1. Initial stages of grief responses – Generally 24-48 hours

A. Shock: “Oh, my God!” or “What terrible news!”

B. Denial: “It can’t be true! It must be someone else who died.” or “I just saw ____ a week ago!” or “God wouldn’t have taken someone so young/ good/ important in this world!”

C. Bargaining: “Please let this not be true!” or “I pray that this is a mistake!” or “I won’t believe this till....!”

2. Middle stages of grief – Generally 3-12 months for a friend; 2-5 years for a close family member

A. Depression: sadness, crying, missing and longing for the person; loss of appetite, difficulties sleeping, troubled dreams and nightmares; apathy, lack of energy to carry on with life; feeling empty and that life isn't complete without the deceased; wishing to die too in order to be reunited with the deceased or in order to stop suffering the pain of having lost the deceased; and sometimes the pain of the loss or the longing to be reunited with the deceased is so great that a person will suicide.

B. Anger: At the deceased for 'abandoning' us, for not having taken steps to live a healthier or safer and longer life; at ourselves for acts of omission or commission that might have contributed to the death, for not having helped the deceased enough, for feeling guilty even when there was really nothing substantial we could have done to prevent the death; at other people who might have treated the deceased poorly or failed to offer support; and at God for allowing the deceased to be ill or to suffer in illness, or through trauma, and to die. Anger may be so great that the bereaved want to kill someone in revenge. In tribal societies people often act upon these feelings of anger and it is not uncommon to see revenge killings or even battles resulting in such situations.

C. Guilt: Over our acts of omission or commission that might have contributed to the death, such as not having helped the deceased enough; over being alive ourselves when the deceased is no longer alive; over feeling angry, especially at God; and over having vengeful feelings and even wishes to hurt or kill others in retaliation when the grief is about a death caused by someone else.

3. Resolution/ Acceptance stage of grief – 3 months-several years, overlapping with (2)

A. Recalling positive memories about the deceased; adjusting to a world where the deceased is no longer physically present; finding other relationships and ways to deal with life – without the presence/participation of the deceased.

B. A majority of people, but not everyone, experience the presence of the deceased when that person was psychologically close to them – seeing, hearing or just sensing they are present (Lazarou, et al., 1988). This leads many to understand that physical death is not the end of existence. This is one of the blessings of a good grief. (More on this in Benor, 2004; 2006).

The above are very general outlines of grief reactions. Specific aspects of each stage may occur in any order. Each of the aspects of grief may surface repetitively at any time in the grief process, often with considerable intensity.

It is most common to find waves of feelings alternating and repeating along our paths to resolution. It is helpful for people in grief to hear that they may experience their feelings in waves; that emotions may be triggered by issues related to the death, but also by apparently unrelated issues that resonate somehow with the death. Birthdays, anniversaries and holiday times when we used to get together with the deceased are common triggers for recurring feelings of grief.

Gradually, the waves of grief get less intense and are of shorter duration, though it is fairly common to find occasional, more intense waves of feelings wash over and through us.

All of these are natural psychological processes for letting go of parts of our lives. And we may mourn many types of losses, not just the deaths of people we have known. We may grieve:

- The relationships we have had with other people;
- Routines we have had for a period of time - such as our employment (including parenthood, which we might grieve as our children grow up and leave home), attending a school or activity group, or moving on through the stages of our lives (as in grieving the loss of our childhood).

- Physical aspects of our world that we lose, including body functions or body parts that are lost to injury, illness or surgery, or that simply no longer work the way they used to.

Sometimes our journeys through these stages are blocked. When our emotions are not processed to and through the phase of resolution, our residual feelings can fester, grow increasingly intense, and worsen. We may end up feeling angry, empty, drained, depleted, helpless, depressed and suicidal. We may even reach a point of suiciding due to our intense, unresolved grief.

Compounding our problems when we are carrying buried grief, we tend to avoid anything related to grief. Our unconscious mind wants to protect us from experiencing the pain and distress of our buried feelings. So we avoid discussing related issues; look for whatever evidence might support our denials; and dismiss the warnings and predictions of those who say the evidence points to dire environmental deteriorations that are rapidly approaching.

Here are some examples of working through grief reactions (composite reports with assumed names to protect anonymity):

Example 1 – Initial stages of grief:

‘Ellen,’ the mother of a soldier missing in action in Viet Nam was unwilling to accept that he was almost certainly dead. She felt she would be displaying disloyalty to him if she grieved for him. She was unable to move beyond the denial stage of grieving. Yet after three and a half years, there was no shred of evidence that her son was alive.

Ellen came to me for help because in a single day she had found herself angry at the bus driver, the postal clerk and the market checkout girl. She realized she was carrying a load of excess anger over her lost son and was getting triggered to vent it in many situations. She had also withdrawn from social interactions because she was prone to cry with minimal provocations and sometimes for no apparent reason.

I was able to help Ellen connect with and start to release her devastating sadness and anger over the loss of her son, while still holding a little ray of hope in her heart that he might someday be found alive. Within two weeks she was no longer venting anger inappropriately; after three months she was starting to socialize again; and gradually she found herself most of the time only occasionally sad – to a manageable degree. It was several more years, though, before she felt she had returned to a life in which she didn’t feel a frequent heartache over the loss of her son.

Example 2 – Middle stages of grief:

‘George’ lost his second wife to breast cancer after 8 years of a very close relationship. ‘Rose’ had been a wonderfully loving and supportive wife. She had been a warm, accepting stepmother as well to George’s two young children, whose mother (Betty) had died in a car accident two years before George met Rose.

Everyone had praised George for how strong he was to carry on working a challenging job and caring for his children (7 and 9 years old) after the death of their mother. He was fortunate to have had the help of his older, married sister who lived nearby. George was an accountant in a big business, a person of modest means. He had to work extra hours at home to make ends meet. He had little time to grieve the loss of his first wife. His children followed his lead and pretty much buried their feelings soon after their mother was buried.

George came to me with his two children for help, seven months after Rose's funeral. 'Bob,' age 20, had taken a leave from university because he could not concentrate enough to manage his studies. He was also irritable and easily angered, which was very uncharacteristic for him. 'Sue,' a senior in high school, had withdrawn socially and was irritable, depressed and angry – with herself and often with others. The consultation was precipitated by Sue's revealing to her aunt that she was feeling suicidal at times. It was clear to all that the double losses of mothers were more than the children could manage on their own.

In further explorations for symptoms of grief reactions, George reported that he often felt considerably more drained of energy and tired at the end of a day's work – more than he had ever experienced prior to Rose's death. He, too, admitted he sometimes had suicidal thoughts – wanting to die in order to be with Rose again.

I chose to see all of them in weekly family sessions because they all acknowledged they were struggling with issues of grief and because George and Bob wanted to be of support to Sue. As with most people in grief, the primary work was to open themselves to the neglected and buried feelings. Sue was the most open in sharing her feelings, and this was a help to the others to connect with and to express theirs. It was clarified that her suicidal thoughts and wishes were an expression of missing her stepmother and mother and longing to be with them.

Because they had not grieved the earlier loss of Betty, their feelings about her death were also explored and released. Six weekly sessions and four monthly sessions later, they were all in much better emotional spaces. Sue was no longer suicidal and Bob was able to return to his studies. All reported they felt more energy in general in their daily lives.

When people have not grieved through to resolution for several years, it is often helpful to them to use a releasing technique. It is very common for people to realize they have been functioning at considerably less than their full capacities after releasing such buried emotions.

Example 3 – Middle stages of grief:

'Bill' was a policeman who had witnessed his partner, 'Sam' killed by an armed robber at a grocery store. Bill had entered the store behind Sam because he had been the driver and had to run around the car to get to the door of the store. Bill shot and seriously wounded the robber.

Bill was utterly devastated by Sam's death. He found himself alternating between deep anguish (which he kept to himself and expressed only to his wife), explosive anger, and constantly replaying the scene of the shootout in his mind. He blamed himself for being slow to enter the store, and felt he was a coward for having let Sam take the lead. No amount of reasoning could budge him from his obsessively replaying the scenes of the shootout in his mind. He was placed on medical leave and was given, in turn and in combinations, tranquilizers, antidepressants and sleeping pills, all to no avail. More than half a year passed and he was given a medical discharge from his job.

Bill had lived for his work. Unemployable because of his unresolved trauma and grief, he became bitter and increasingly irritable. His wife eventually left him, taking their two children with her, and he turned to drinking and using various street drugs to numb his emotional pain and to counteract his depression. He started getting into fights in which he provoked people verbally till they attacked him, following which he beat them severely. After his fourth arrest – very reluctantly carried out by his former buddies on the police force – the judge mandated that he get therapy.

It took months for Bill to come to trust his therapist. Very gradually he was able to process his trauma, work through his various feelings of grief, and come to a place of resolution. He learned to control his temper, using several different self-calming methods (Energy Psychology, meditation, and physical exercise).

Bill was lucky that he had disability benefits that enabled him to get help for dealing with his trauma and grief. I have known numbers of people with similar traumas who ended up destitute, homeless, in jail and/or dead from violence or illnesses caused by self-destructive lifestyles.

Example 4 – Resolution stage of grief:

‘Wilma’s’ husband of 22 years, ‘Joe,’ was killed in a street robbery. This childless couple had been extremely close with each other and Wilma was utterly devastated. She came for help because she felt she was “just not herself” since she had lost Joe, four years earlier. Wilma appeared to have processed her grief, with recurrent periods of deep sadness; anger at the robber; anger at God for having allowed Joe to be killed; guilt over blaming God; and many of the other such feelings included in the spectrum of grief. It is quite common to experience these sorts of responses in any grief process – both normal and prolonged. But Wilma never returned to be the fully warm and caring person she had been prior to this tragedy. She avoided socializing, isolating herself from colleagues at work and from extended family – in ways she had never done prior to Joe’s death.

As frequently seen in unresolved grief, Wilma had experienced prior, unresolved grief. She had lost a twin sister at birth and later on lost her father when she was in college. Both had been ungrieved losses. Her father had been estranged from the family after running off with his secretary when Wilma was in her early teens. Wilma recalled having sided completely with her mother when her father left, and having felt no grief then, and none for her twin.

While the loss of a twin at an early age is generally dismissed as irrelevant to the surviving twin, we are learning that this is far from true. Even the death of a twin in utero may be experienced by the surviving twin as a loss – consciously or unconsciously (McCarty, 2012).

Wilma found herself experiencing the whole gamut of grief feelings In sessions focused on both of these earlier losses. At the same time, she also released many more layers of her most recent grief, including hurt, abandonment, anger, betrayal, and most importantly, distrust and avoidance of relationships – due to unresolved elements of grief over the loss of Joe. TWR was a great help to her in connecting with, processing and getting over these feelings. After clearing the issues that were blocking her resolution of the grief, she soon felt herself back to being her full self – though still missing Joe at times (as is normal after losing someone very close).

The above are examples of people who were fortunate enough to live in modern time and in places where understanding of grief and help to deal with its resolution were available. On the whole, these are a minority of people – even in settings in which such grief counseling is available.

Extended family supports often help in dealing with grief, especially in traditional societies where family members still reside nearby and/or remain in close contact with each other. Grandparents, elders and others provide social, emotional and financial supports. These can bring healings in many ways to those who experience trauma and grief.

Cultural and religious traditions and rituals for grieving are also enormously helpful. This is true even in modern societies where social mobility has distanced people from their kin and weakened the human support systems for grieving. Even though I do not practice my Jewish religious traditions in

general, at times of family deaths I will gather with close family for the funeral and visit during the week of 'shiva' (ritual mourning). The condolences and reminiscences, reviewing our memories of the deceased, and social supports are helpful facilitators for beginning to move into and through the grieving processes.

Sadly, there are many who do not have such supports for dealing with their grief processes. Their life circumstances, past and present, do not provide them with outer or inner resources or supports for releasing their grief. Unresolved grief remains an enormous burden of drained energies. It also tends to distort people's feelings, behaviors and lives. The above examples provide just small windows into the problems that can develop through grief.

From my five decades of studies and practice of psychotherapy, I have learned to always look for pockets of residual grief issues – regardless of my clients' initial presenting problems. Quite often, when there was a significant loss in earlier life. These aspects of grief very commonly are triggered by issues arising in present day life – as with Ellen, described above. Anger, depression, guilt and suicidal thoughts and feelings are commonly linked in these ways.

*So many parts of ourselves we have pushed away come up in grief.
That is why grief has this enormity of potential for healing.*

- Stephen Levine

When people release their unresolved grief issues along with their current issues, they are able to clear both their current and old problems more deeply, rapidly and thoroughly. Sometimes it seems to me that some aspect of people (their unconscious mind, their higher self, their guides or angels) have led them into their current problems as a way of clearing the buried, unresolved, silently festering earlier issues.

People who are stuck in unresolved grief can be helped enormously with therapies of many sorts. My personal favorite, which I developed (Benor, 2009; web references), is TWR (Transformative Wholistic Reintegration), a rebranding of WHEE (Wholistic Hybrid derived from EMDR and EFT). TWR is easy to use, rapidly effective, and enormously helpful in clearing lingering residual grief. A therapist familiar with grief problems can help to identify the issues needing to be addressed, both from recent and earlier life losses, and can provide the methods for self-healing to release them. Best of all, a therapist can help to clarify lessons to be learned from the grief experiences. These are often deeply healing experiences. Once the grief issues have been released, therapists can help to install positive cognitions and feelings to replace the problematic ones that were released. Grief that is processed in these ways often becomes a deeply transformative experience.

When you have changed the thought that triggered the emotion that caused the aches, then keep it changed. When you throw out the garbage, don't go fingering into it for bits around which to build your next meal. We do just that when we "dig up" those old hurts and fears and wallow in the miseries of the past. "Let the dead past bury its dead" while you go on to new glories.

- Alice Steadman

When people have no supports for dealing with trauma and grief, and especially when their life circumstances are difficult, the best approach for survival is to 'bury it and move on.' By immediately burying their pains, sorrows, angers and guilts in their unconscious mind, they are able to cope with their own stressful life challenges. This works well initially, but as time passes, many find that the grief issues gnaw at them and start to sap their energies. Or, as with Joe and Sue, a loss or trauma later in life will resonate with the earlier, buried emotions and the feelings they experience will be more intense.

Fear of dying is another aspect of grief often weighs on people and creates difficulties. This is particularly true in modern societies where we distance ourselves from death. In the West, for instance, people commonly die in the hospital. Their bodies are transferred by family with a phone call to a mortuary, and the funeral is held with the body neatly arranged in the coffin or even with a closed coffin. People may never touch a dead body, and come to fear death because it is unfamiliar.

There is in many of us a strong motivation to distance ourselves from the anticipation of our own death. Grief over the death of others will thus resonate with fears of our own death. Burying one's feelings of grief may help to distance one from considering one's own mortality. Thus, many will distance themselves from the whole topic of death. This is particularly true in societies where physical death is believed to be the end of existence for a person.

Our individual and collective reluctance to even acknowledge that the 6th mass extinction is probably well on its way might be explained in part by anxieties and fears of deaths of massive numbers of people in the impending mass extinction, along with our own death and/or that of our immediate descendents. These fears we experience would be markedly enhanced by any unresolved grief we are carrying.

4. Grief in the collective consciousness of humanity

I believe that unresolved grief reactions of uncounted numbers of individuals, have been accumulating over thousands of years. These may be expressed through the collective consciousness in various ways.

Each individual contributes to the collective consciousness of humanity in diverse ways. Very directly, we share our thoughts and feelings with each other through our daily physical interactions. We share our experiences and views with many others through social media. The airwaves and cable media also bring us information about collective behaviors in our communities, governmental bodies, and international relations.

There is also a collective consciousness that transcends physical communications through our sensory organs. This is through the collective consciousness that is largely outside of our conscious, present moment awareness. There is excellent research confirming the existence of extrasensory perceptions, including:

- telepathy - mind to mind communications),
- clairsentience - direct awareness of the physical world, transcending outer sensory communications, and
- precognition and retrocognition – awarenesses that transcend the present moment

These sorts of individual awarenesses provide a much broader and deeper framework for the collective consciousness of humanity. (For more details on this see Benor, 2015).

We can only speculate on what happens in the collective consciousness, with countless people suffering active grief and contributing their feelings of hurt, anger, guilt and more to the collective. It appears likely that such unresolved feelings would accumulate over time. As with individuals, the collective consciousness might respond with depression, anger, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Many of the problematic behaviors exhibited by humanity as a whole resemble those of individual people with unresolved grief reactions. Angers, violence and suicidal behaviors in particular are recurring issues we often see and hear about – reported very generously in the media. There are grossly unbalanced numbers of reports of violence (contrasted with reports of positive experiences) that are broadcasted and published in many of these media outlets. Until recently, I had not found a

satisfying explanation for the morbid preferences of most people for items of violence and death in the media. I now believe this gruesome behavior may represent individual and collective ways of discharging some of the accumulated grief in many of our individual lives and in the collective consciousness as a whole.

In broader ways, our collective angers are expressed in discriminatory and persecutory behaviors towards vilified minorities, as well as in wars and genocides. Here again, I suspect that people may be venting on 'others' many aspects of their individual and collective grief reactions that have been buried outside their conscious awareness.

Grief is the garden in which anger and hate and violence grow.
- Michael Pritchard

When we avoid strong, buried feelings, they tend to fester and get triggered by other life circumstances, as we saw in the individual examples above. These responses would be just as likely to manifest in the collective consciousness as they do in single participants/ contributors to the burdens of feelings that are buried in the collective consciousness. Unresolved grief may in great measure also explain humanity's apathy in addressing the issues contributing to the impending mass extinction. Common individual behaviors suggestive of grief reactions that are exhibited by humanity as a collective include many people feeling drained of energies, apathetic, too weak to deal with these serious demands and challenges, and avoidance of facing and dealing with underlying inner thoughts and feelings about our many flirtations with extinction.

We can be certain that numerous experiences of losses with unresolved grief have occurred over the many thousands of years of human life. We can be equally certain that understanding and resources to deal with these feelings were in many cases unknown and/or unavailable in the past. In cases of grief caused by major disasters, outbreaks of illnesses and wars, it is often the case that the best thing people can do at the time of the original traumas is to bury their feelings and move on. This gives them their best chance for survival, as they are then not burdened or incapacitated by their grief.

Unresolved grief appears likely to be contributing to the current day drift of humanity towards self-destruction and collective suicide. Aspects of accumulated individual grief that may be expressed through the collective consciousness may explain:

- The reluctance to consider that most or all of humanity could be dead within 1-200 years.
- The high levels of anger in humans, easily triggered into aggression and violence towards other humans.
- Most importantly, the suicidality of humans – as detailed above.

Grief is also found frequently as a part of a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The precipitating events of the PTSD may involve the death of someone close; death of someone we happened to see being killed in an accident or act of war; experiencing secondary trauma through hearing the reports of trauma of other people (as in psychotherapists, first responders, emergency room personnel, and court stenographers). We may also mourn the loss of some aspect of our own body functions or health.

The behaviors seen in PTSD and grief reactions have broad overlaps. PTSD trauma produces symptoms of:

- cognitive and emotional intrusions ('flashbacks' to images and feelings of the trauma);
- avoidance of situations that trigger memories of the trauma;

- negative alterations in cognitions and mood (anxieties, depression and suicidal thinking and suicidal behaviors);
- alterations in arousal and reactivity (anger, temper outbursts, insomnia, nightmares).
- everyday functioning is impaired

5. Suggestions for sending healing for the collective suicidality of humanity

Healing from a distance, also called ‘absent healing,’ can be effective in addressing individual and group problems. Research confirms effects of distant healing. Distant healing effects have been demonstrated in well-designed, well-reported research reports (Braud 1989; Braud and Schlitz 1983; Braud, et al. 1985; Byrd 1988; Goodrich 1974; Green 1993; Nash 1982; Nash, 1984; O’Laoire 1997; Radin, et al. 1995; Snel and Hol 1983; Solfvin 1982; and see an annotated bibliography of healing research in Benor, 2001).

A meta-analysis of distant healing studies published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* assesses the significance of the effects of distant healing in a series of studies (Astin, et al., 2000). Three types of studies were analyzed in their review: prayer, Non-Contact Therapeutic Touch, and other types of distant healing. Literature reviews of available databases through 1999 brought to light 100 studies of distant healing. Of the 23 studies that met their inclusion criteria (including 2774 participants), 13 studies (57 percent) demonstrated positive treatment effects, 9 (39 percent) showed no effect, and 1 (4 percent) had a negative effect. This is ample confirmation of healers’ claims that healing works from a distance.

Proxy healing is a variant of distant healing that is commonly used in Energy Psychology and in other methods, such as Kinesiology and Healing Touch. When a person in need is not present in the therapist’s office, a proxy person or object (such as a doll) may be used as a focus for projecting the healing. The intent during this healing is held for healing of the absent person who is in need of the healing.

Numerous anecdotal reports attest to successful results with proxy healing. The only systematic review of proxy healings I’ve found describes a collected series of 100 reports of proxy healing. David Feinstein (2013), found that proxy healing was successful in every reported case. While I would speculate that this unusually high rate of positive results involves selective reporting of successful cases, the fact remains that this is a series of documented successes with proxy healing.

We must be cautious, however, with distant healing or proxy healings when they have not been requested by the intended recipients. Many people who are new to healing through conscious projection of general healing intents are eager to promote more healing in the world in ways they believe could be helpful. They think that sending the intent that others should “Be more loving” or “Be more caring” or “Be more considerate and generous to others” will promote improvements in the world. Many believe that healing comes from a higher power and wish to share with others what feels healing to themselves in these ways, such as “May Christ’s love be accepted by all” or “May the devil be driven out of those who behave in evil ways.” Further along on the spectrum of such beliefs are those who send out prayers for the rapid progress to Armageddon and the end of the world, so that they and other ‘True Believers’ will ascend to heaven. Countless other variations on these approaches are promoted by various religious and healing groups.

Do not change your beliefs because you want other people to change theirs. Change your beliefs because your new beliefs announce more accurately who you are.

Yet even as you change, do not be surprised if other people change, and if the world around you changes. For the change in you will act as a catalyst in producing change in others. Not because you have sought to produce change in others, but, more probably, because you have not.

- Neale Donald Walsch

From the healee's perspectives, there may be reasons behind the illness, pains, angers, and negative behaviors. It is quite common for people to find that their illnesses bring them deep lessons – which are a different form of healing. Healers who are sending healing, however well-meaning, could be interfering with or even blocking these important lessons.

A more respectful way to send healing is to hold an intent that is respectful of the independence of the healee to choose whether to accept the healing or not. One offers healing with the intent that it should be “for the highest good of the healee and for the highest good of all.” This is an acknowledgement that neither the healer/therapist nor the healee/client may know what is ultimately for the best of the client in the long run.

In offering healing for the collective consciousness, one simply invokes an intent such as the following, after completion of a healing for oneself. The same would apply when a therapist is providing healing to someone else – in which case either or both participants in this healing could recite the following invocation, silently or out loud:

I / We invite anyone and everyone
 Anywhere and everywhere
 Anywhen and everywhen
 Who is ready to [accept this healing/ clear their issue(s)/ etc] with [me/ us] to do so.

In this way we open doorways of healing for others to resonate with – as and when they are ready to do so.

Research confirms that In addition to helping individuals, distant healing has been effective in influencing groups of cells and organisms (Braud 1989; Nash 1982; 1984). This supports likelihood of benefits of proxy healing for problems in the collective unconscious.

A decrease in the intensity of the collective grief memories could decrease the intensity of collective residual hurts, angers, depression and suicidality that have accumulated over uncounted generations, during the entire existence of the human species.

Everyone has something they can do. Whatever means you have to make the world a better place, you need to do it. Even if we won't see the fruits of this in our lifetime, start now.

- Daniel Goleman

Proxy healing through inviting the enhancement of positive feelings and thoughts in the collective consciousness may also alleviate some of the selfish human behaviors that are contributing to the brutal behaviors of humans – which are, in turn, creating further grief in many beings on this planet.

There is an important link between deep change at the personal level and deep change at the organizational level. To make deep personal change is to develop a new paradigm, a new self, one that is more effectively aligned with today's realities. This can occur only if we are willing to journey into unknown territory and confront the wicked problems we encounter. This journey does not follow the assumptions of rational planning. The objective may not be clear

and the path is not paved with familiar procedures. This tortuous journey requires that we leave our comfort zone and step outside our normal roles. In doing so, we learn the paradoxical lesson that we can change the world only by changing ourselves. This is not just a cute abstraction; it is an elusive key to effective performance in all aspects of life."

- Robert Quinn

Proxy healing for humans, animals and plants that are dying in distress, helping them have a more peaceful and healing transition out of this life, could alleviate some of the collective grief that continues to accumulate in the collective global grief.

Some believe we may be too late to avert the human mass extinction that appears to be well on its way already on our planet. Even if that should be true, we may yet be helpful to many souls through clearing their individual and collective PTSDs before they leave their current lives for unknown futures.

We can also offer our proxy healing to those of other species whom we are genociding. They, too, suffer traumas that need clearing.

And if we are indeed too late to save most of the life on our planet as we know it today, we may console ourselves in some measure by recalling that Gaia, our planet, has survived five earlier extinctions. She will survive this one, as well. And perhaps our proxy healings will help her and those creatures that evolve in the spaces we vacate to live their lives in more healing ways – hopefully with lessons learned in some manner by records we might manage to leave. What warnings would you propose we suggest?

...Here in birth the preamble of life on earth there is the immutable provision that creation is not a programme in conformity but rather is committed to diversity and to an increase through diversity of new and more and more options and revelations of areas of creation to swell the great flow of becoming to which the stars, the nebulae and the foam and spray of the Milky Way bear witness and quicken the sense of unclaimed realities beyond.

- Sir Laurens van der Post

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