

## IT IS ALL ABOUT CHANGE

The Siddhartha Effect is when a profound change in reference frame for viewing human reality promotes a major change in behavior. In the case of Siddhartha the reference frame of his youth which excluded sickness and death was pierced by exposure to the dark side of life sending him in the search of how to change his beliefs and behavior to include both the beauty and the dark side of life. Distinctive to the Siddhartha Effect is that the solution was a new reference frame with compassion and the golden rule as its key components. Together they transform the decisions and actions we take to sickness and death to enhancing the experience of life rather than devaluing it. While the Siddhartha Effect of the past reconciled existential and faith based issues, the Siddhartha effect of our age was triggered by us seeing our planet from the moon. That new reference frame changed fundamentally our view of our relationship to each other, we are literally all earthlings, and to our home, planet earth as this precious and very small oasis in the vast darkness of space. The profound conclusion of the analysis in this book is that for this change as well the best answer is if we all practice compassion and the golden rule. If we use those principles to make our decisions and guide our actions between each other and with our planet our species will successfully meet the challenges we face making us happier and our home will be healthier.

The question naturally arises, and I have been asked it many times, is if this is going to be our new reference frame than why is everything so horrible, wars, diseases, starvation and the list goes on. The answer is two-fold. First as was the case of the historic Siddhartha Effect of the past the new insight does not come easy. It is a real struggle to proceed positively if one feels immersed in a negative reality. It takes time to develop the true sense of compassion and to practice the golden rule. In this period of transition where the old no longer makes sense but the new has not yet been conceived is always a difficult period. Those defending the old, whose faith or position in life depend on it, get driven to more extremes actions as the argument supporting their past reference frame no longer makes sense. Those searching for a new path are uncertain whether the one they have chosen will work and need to discover ways to make it happen. It takes time and effort to build the new capabilities to address and change the outcomes so wars, diseases, and starvation are eliminated. Yet the record is clear they all are getting less prevalent with time.

The Siddhartha Effect is a transition in the mental world of our brain though it gets acted out in the physical world. Modern brain research and the most fundamental mathematical truth about our mental world, the Godel Theorem of Incompleteness, both make clear the crucial role that a reference frame plays in determining how we interpret the information we get about our physical world and what we do in response. The popular movie the Matrix has it essentially correct, we cannot really know what is the "true" reality, we create our reality based upon our view of what is real. So in that sense the most profound

decision we each make is what reference frame we chose to interpret our experiences and knowledge.

There is something special and powerful about the modern Siddartha Effect triggered by our view of our planet from the moon. While the historic Siddartha Effect focused on the human condition and promoted actions of compassion and the Golden Rule between one another, the new Siddartha effect literally globalized that concern but importantly also transformed our relationship to our planet and the rest of life that we share it with. One can think of the response of many radical environmentalists as literally applying compassion and the golden rule to the other life forms we share our planet with. We can think of those many experts motivated to warn us of the dangers of climate change as having their own Siddartha moment as they suddenly recognized that what we could do as humans could become a geological force that could rival those they had historically studied.

Over time this has led them to declare we are in a new geological era, the Anthropocene, where human actions dominate. Natural disasters both caused by us and the forces that caused mass killings, even extinctions in the past, and the eat or be eaten reality in which most species exist, seem to clash with the beauty of nature and rich diversity of life it supports. The bambi view of nature is no more real than what Siddartha experienced before experiencing the reality of sickness and death. We are motivated to try and reconcile these two views of nature just as we were motivated in the past to reconcile the two views of our own existence. This in turn raises the question about how change occurs in our planet. In many ways it mirrors the changes in our social and political lives. Nature's changes like those that impact our social and political views and organization. They can in many cases take time with the old holding on as best it can while the new asserts itself. It can also occur in an instant as would be the case with an asteroid impact. This would promote a natural revolution of sorts where the old would be gone before the new had been created.

These and other dramatic changes in our reference frame arising from our vast new knowledge, in particular how our brain works and how our planet evolved prior to our existence, have created our historic moment of change. Our effort to adjust will not come without struggle and will take time but we have a big advantage, we know the answer before we start. Of course this is the distinctive power of the human brain, to use knowledge of the past to conceptualize a future reality it has never experienced. It is also the distinctive power of our brain to create, store and use knowledge to plan for and alter our future. Thus a secular based argument is made that we have the capability to design our future, in fact it will be clear it is easier for us to design our future than to predict it. This is because all the critical components involved, our brain, our planet, and our social political systems are what is called complex systems. Their behavior is known to be unpredictable as popularized by Lorenz is his butterfly effect in which the flapping of the wings of a single butterfly can in principle change the whole planet. This because it

can unleash a set of positive feedbacks similar to what causes a nuclear reactor to go critical.