

Making a Conscious Future-Responsible Leadership

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Book Review

The Great Growing Up by John Renesch. 208 pages. Prescott - Arizona: HOHM Press - 2012.

“Our world needs leaders whose eyes we trust, whose heart we know, whose soul is rampant in all they do, seen and unseen, heard and unheard, done and not done.”

-Rob Rabbin, Invisible Leadership: Igniting the Soul at Work

Being a human is to be responsible. John Renesch’s latest book *The Great Growing Up* is a reminder of humans’ responsibilities—not just as responsible individuals, but also as leaders who may shape tomorrow through conscious decisions they can take today. He affirms that *The Great Growing Up* is for those “who want to see a world that supports human life and allows us all to grow, learn, and have families who feel secure, nurtured and free.”

Renesch believes “it’s time to grow up and be responsible as adults for what we have created as adolescents”. He touches his readers’ hearts and minds, concentrating on points that have been addressed earlier by other futurists like Slaughter (1999) and Inayatullah (2008) with terms like “critical” or “disowned” futures. What differentiates his book as an outstanding work is a clear roadmap for action designed based on *external* and *internal* attractors that could pull us into a historic shift to more sustainable, mature futures.

External attractors are reasons for optimism that will allow us to make an historic shift in consciousness and create the kind of world we want. *Internal* attractors are factors like: transformative learning, the physical sciences and changing views of reality, growth in collective wisdom, the rise of interdependence, conscious leadership, and the human potential movement.

Renesch assumes that it’s a responsibility for humans as the wisest species of living things to accomplish the mission they are designed for: ‘shaping the future’. In his view, humans are far closer than ever to the first consciously chosen leap in their evolution. Inspired by the visionary social scientist Willis Harman, Renesch illuminates his ultimate

goal in making such a book: “*The Great Growing Up* is about ‘the good society we all know is possible,’ which is certainly an idea whose time has come.”

He claims that humans have been living well below their spiritual means and his solution is a balanced satisfaction of spiritual and material needs of humankind based on a set of futuristic values. His real concern for *disowned* spiritual needs is a reminder of what has been developed earlier by Inayatullah (2008) as *disowned* futures. While Inayatullah’s focus is on Eastern civilization, Renesch has concentrated on Western, especially American (US) civilization and culture.

The Great Growing Up is the revival of *maturity* that calls for responsibility to accompany the freedom we can enjoy as adults, not freedom without accountability like so many adolescents seek. In this sense, a new age of *Enlightenment* is on the way and it “requires explicit recognition of not only what we’ve been pretending we don’t know, but the full recognition of our spiritual nature—our interconnectedness with a power greater than ourselves.”

Renesch re-introduces the concept of “Conscious Evolution” in his book. It means: rather than think about what might happen in the future, we start thinking about what we want to happen: ‘shaping the future’. Renesch has founded his book based on three pillars: what we *think*, *say* and *do* for the future. He re-iterates Hubbard’s (1998) view on conscious evolution as the emergence of “a universal humanity” capable of “co-evolution with nature” and “co-creation with Spirit.”

In Renesch’s eyes there are real problems with our currently established systems. “They are all in breakdown or close to it at this time.” In fact, our world today is infected with a big problem that is a *culture of fear and separation*. That culture should be replaced with a new one, a *culture of consciousness*. It can be built by the power of thought.

Renesch’s strategy for making a new kind of future-oriented culture is based on a shift in consciousness. Meanwhile, he warns against fundamentalism in all of its shapes. He regards it as a closed system and thinks that fundamentalism is a sham created by the ego to appear as though everything is under control, that there are no loose ends and that everything has been figured out “once and for all.”

He reminds that we can change the *content* as much as we’d like, but if the *context* remains unchanged there’s little lasting improvement. He believes context is not something widely discussed in the West. Context includes all the underlying assumptions, conscious and unconscious, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs. Context provides meaning for people in their work and in their personal lives.

Renesch’s dream is to shift the context from separation to unity, not merely making changes in the content. These words of Renesch can never be forgotten: “We are presently in the midst of a major paradigm shift in the way we human beings think: the way we think about each other, the way we think about how the world works, and the way we relate to one another. In other words, the way we experience *reality*.”

The Great Growing Up is going to transform the way we experience *reality*. It’s about making a conscious future-responsible leadership.

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