



Taking a Stand, by Lynne Twist

Over two thousand years ago, the mathematician Archimedes said, “Give me a place to stand and ITMll move the world.” Taking a stand is a way of living and being that draws on a place within yourself that is at the very heart of who you are. When you take a stand you find your place in the universe, and you have the capacity to move the world.

Stand-takers have lived in every era of history. Many of them never held public office, but they changed history through the sheer power, integrity, and authenticity of who they became as a result of the stand they took. Remarkable human beings such as Mother Teresa, Dr. Jane Goodall, Marion Wright Edelman, President Nelson Mandela and President Vaclav Havel lived their lives from stands they took that transcended their identities or their personal opinions.

Anyone who has the courage to take a stand with their life joins these remarkable figures. You may not become famous or win the Nobel Prize. Your work may be centered on raising children or any of the other tasks that contribute to the evolution of humanity. Whatever you do, your stand gives you a kind of authenticity, power, and clarity.

[...]

When you have taken a stand with your life, you see the world as the remarkable, unlimited, boundless possibility that it is. And people see themselves through your eyes in new ways; they become more authentic in your presence because they know you see them for who they really are. The negativity, the dysfunction, the positionality begin to fall away and they feel “gotten,” heard, or known.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaks about the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which he chaired. During the commissionTMs sessions, people had the courage to forgive the person who murdered their daughter, or amputated the arms and legs of their son. They forgave horrible atrocities and rose above the sea of hatred and entered a new place where they could take a stand for life. In the presence of a stand such as we witnessed in South Africa, positionality dissolves and people find a place in their hearts and souls for forgiveness.

Buckminster Fuller once said, “When you discover the truth, it is always beautiful, and beautiful for everyone with no one left out.” This is also true of taking a stand. Taking a position does not create

an environment of inclusiveness and tolerance; instead, it creates even greater levels of entrenchment, often by insisting that for me to be right, you must be wrong.

Taking a stand does not preclude you from taking a position. One needs to take a position from time to time to get things done or to make a point. But when a stand is taken it inspires everyone. It elevates the quality of the dialog^Â and engenders integrity, alignment, and deep trust. Taking a stand can shape a person^{â€™}s life and actions and give them access to profound truths that can empower the emergence of new paradigms and a shift in the course of history.

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