

Since the main goal of our today's dialog is to become aware of our core values, and then use those values to motivate and orient our joint work, I will introduce this dialog by telling you about my own source of inspiration. What motivates and orients my work is a uniquely attractive possibility. I believe, namely, that we are living on the verge of a sweeping global cultural change, similar to the one that took place during the Renaissance. I have a strong desire to help this next renaissance become reality.

This interest of mine is also what brought me to Nature Culture Health. As Gunnar Tellnes and Øyvind Sørbrøden showed us earlier today, the Nature Culture Health organization is founded on a way of thinking and a set of values that are quite different from the ones we see around us and in the media. When Gunnar told us that people's health can be improved through nature and culture experiences, and when Øyvind told us that back problems can often be remedied by walking in nature, we could already see how a new way of thinking and a new set of values may lead to simple, natural and inexpensive solutions to some of our aches and difficulties.

If you now imagine similarly simple yet liberating and deep-going changes of lifestyle, culture, business, academia, design, community life... you will have no difficulty understanding why I find interest in facilitating such development.

But being a scientist, I need to tell you that this interest of mine is not only a product of how I wish the future should be, but also a rational, objective choice. I will do that by quoting Aurelio Peccei, who was a founder of the Club of Rome, and the Club's president until he passed away in 1984.

The Club of Rome is an international think tank established in 1968 in order to study the future prospects of the humankind. The Club of Rome must be credited for giving us early warnings about the non-sustainability of our current growth, consumption and other trends. "It is absolutely essential to find a way to change course," warned Peccei in his book "One Hundred Pages for the Future. And in "Human Quality", Peccei explained why this change is necessary, and what our new course should be:

"Let me recapitulate what seems to be the crucial question at this point of the human venture. Man has acquired such decisive power that his future depends essentially on how he will use it. However, the business of human life has become so complicated that he is culturally unprepared even to understand his new position clearly. As a consequence, his current predicament is not only worsening, but, with the accelerated tempo of events, may become decidedly catastrophic in a not too distant future. This downward trend of human fortunes can be countered and reversed only by the advent of a new humanism essentially based on and aiming at man's cultural development, that is, a substantial improvement in human quality throughout the world.

*Human development* is therefore the objective towards which mankind must make a concerted and supreme effort during the years and decades to come. As I have pointed out, the sweeping nature of the required human development and the need for it to involve all the world's inhabitants give it the character of a true

human revolution capable of blending, harmonizing and reorienting the other revolutions of our time. [...] we must move quickly from this conception of needs-oriented development to people-based development, in which the key objective is the self-fulfilment of the human being.”

In another passage Peccei expressed the imperative of the next renaissance even more directly:

“The future will either be the inspired product of a great cultural revival, or there will be no future.”

So according to Peccei, the next renaissance *must* happen. The question remains, *what can we* do in order to facilitate this development?

An answer that I would like to propose to you is very simple: We can begin the ‘great cultural revival’ simply by asking the people what values they wish to serve, and what direction of development they want.

A couple of years ago Øyvind Sørbrøden and Tor Ness organized the Dialog Forum in Nature Culture Health Asker, where some 40 participants were asked the above questions. The resulting answer, developed through five one-afternoon dialogs that took place over the span of one year, was “We want a life-giving society which is marked by human happiness and growth.” This answer was the main message of the document called Sem Lake Manifesto, which was the result of the Dialog Forum. So even without being aware of Peccei, the participants of the Dialog Forum spontaneously chose the direction that he claimed was necessary!

You may now rightly wonder, if such orientation is both necessary, and also what the people would choose as most desirable, why is this direction not already followed? I believe that the reason is that we were never asked. What has happened instead, is that our values and our aims have been re-shaped, slowly and imperceptibly, according to various economic interests, determined by the laws of economic ‘survival of the fittest’. We are living in the world where economic survival depends on people’s ability to sell us things. We have no reason to expect that the resulting solutions will be the cheapest, the most natural, best for our culture and our health, or even in the long run sustainable.

After the Dialog Forum was completed, several of us thought further about how we might make a similar dialog on a larger scale, and allow the people at large to make a similar conscious choice of values and of direction. What resulted was the key point dialog technique, which we will put into practice here in a moment, as soon as I tell you briefly how this technique works.

A key point dialog is a combination of a dialog in physical space, and a dialog in cyberspace (on the Internet).

The physical dialog is an adaptation of the dialog technique developed by physicist David Bohm. In our version of the physical dialog people sit in a circle with a couple of

talking sticks in the middle. The person who wishes to talk takes a talking stick. While one of us is talking, the others listen without speaking or judging, until the person who talked has finished and returned the stick.

This sort of dialog should be distinguished from the more usual debate, where we aim to win in an opinion battle. In a dialog our goal is opposite - to provide a 'safe space', within which everyone's subtle values and insights, that are beyond our cultural programming and sometimes even beyond our awareness, can emerge to the surface and be heard.

The dialog on the Internet uses the wiki technology, made popular by the familiar Wikipedia. A wiki is similar to a blackboard existing on Internet, which anyone may read and write through a browser. A wiki allows us to co-create our messages and visions in a democratic way, by writing and modifying the pages of the wiki, or by writing the 'discussion' page that is associated with the page we want to comment on. By combining the wiki technology with a technique called *polyscopy*, we were able to develop a method for growing information "vertically", towards a key point, and not only "horizontally", i.e. in breadth, as Wikipedia does. Metaphorically, the online key point dialog resembles a collective climb to a mountain top, from where we can see clearly the direction we want and need to follow. The key point dialog technique is described in more detail in my article "[How to begin the next renaissance.](#)"

The details of the key point technique may vary according to the goal we want to reach. In the dialog that we will begin in a moment, our goal will be to become aware of our core values, and based on them determine the way in which we want to contribute to the projects that have been the subject of today's meeting. This dialog will subsequently continue on the Internet, by including also other people. The goal of this online dialog will be to see if our values can be merged into a shared direction for each of our projects, and then even higher, into a shared direction for this group and perhaps for this municipality. This shared view of the direction is what we are calling 'the key point'.

Once the key point has been reached, our dialog will enter its second phase, where we metaphorically "descend from our mountain top", by seeking concrete measures through which we want to implement the chosen direction.

We will now begin our dialog. Whoever wishes to speak may take a talking stick. Please take advantage of this silent and supportive group around you by telling us about your core values, and then how you wish to pursue those values by contributing to our shared projects.