

EMPOWERED FUNDRAISING: RADICAL GENEROSITY – THE POWER OF RADICAL PHILANTHROPY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT: *Jesus said, the pursuit of money is the source of all evil. In our modern world, it is the money we use which is often the most damaging to our world, but the rebuilding of a gift economy can bring about the greatest healing.*

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INTRODUCTION TO DEMYSTIFYING MONEY

One of the best ways of testing your project is to secure the funding you will need. If the money is easy to raise, then you know that the project may stand a fair chance of success. If it proves difficult to raise the funds you will need, it may be that you have to return to reconsider your strategy and return to the stage of Considering Alternatives.

Empowered fundraising is thus a very important part of the Dragon Dreaming approach, and in running Dragon Dreaming workshops, I often find that people when making a Karabirrdt have greatest difficulty in the allocating the tasks for their project concerning the issue of fundraising. It is here, together with the creation of the budget, that people most often write their names in red, as tasks which they would be afraid of doing. It is as if we are all deeply wounded about the way money works in our communities, and this wound gets activated when we are engaged in fundraising. Empowered Fundraising is a technique that concerns itself with transforming our relationship with money and is the most powerful way I have found in healing the deep wound our culture carries about this issue. In healing this wound, empowered fundraising creates opportunities

for people to engage with their own greatness and magnificence, simultaneously connecting with the greatness and magnificence of others. Currently this approach is far from our current attitude both to money and also to fundraising.

Without doubt our current relationship with money is the source of one of the greatest wounds most individuals carry – it is a source of their alienation from their own ability to create what is of true value - a sustainable future that works for all, and thus is an alienation from their own deepest sources of creativity.

Empowered fundraising as an alternative, in the words of Lynne Twist, aims to *inspire, educate and empower you to realign the acquisition and allocation of financial resources with your most deeply held values.*¹ The approach is committed to providing programs and resources that shift your relationship with money from dependency, confusion and disempowerment to one of freedom, meaning, and contribution.

CASE STUDY 1: THE PILGRIMAGE PROJECT - THE STORY OF HOW WE DISCOVERED EMPOWERED FUNDRAISING

In 1996 Joanna Macy came to Western Australia to run a workshop for the Gaia Foundation and members of the general public. At this time she shared with us the tragic story of the town of Novozybkov, in the Bryansk region in Russia, whose inhabitants were sacrificed by the authorities in order to prevent the radioactivity of Chernobyl reaching Moscow. She also shared with us the Elm Dance, which the people of Novozybkov enjoyed immensely and which Joanna Macy has since taken around the world.

The story of Novozybkov broke our hearts, and five people gathered at the workshop to create a special project, modeled in part on the “Sacred Fire” Pilgrimage that had earlier been held in the UK. At the time, the Australian government, the Australian and New Zealand Bank (the oldest in Australia) and a major mining company North Broken Hill Piko Ltd, were planning a Uranium mine at Jabiluka, on Aboriginal land against the wishes of the local people, inside a World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park. As a result, we decided to bring two people from Novozybkov, from Russia to Western Australia, a man and a woman, to lead a 55 day pilgrimage around the country, visiting 6 of the 7 mainland capital cities, and all the current and proposed Uranium mines, to explain and educate people about the true and damaging nature of the Uranium Industry. To organize this project, we decided to leave, on Hiroshima day, 6th August 1997, the forty second anniversary of the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, drawing attention to the fact that the only use of the waste from the Uranium Industry is the building of nuclear weapons. We had a lantern, lit by the eternal flame kept burning in Hiroshima, took a cameraman and a journalist, and with the hiring of the bus and the camping equipment we would need, the whole project would cost in the order of \$100,000 Australian. We had 10 weeks to raise the money.

How to do it? The Greens Party in Western Australia, particularly their Senator – Dee Margetts, proved very helpful and gave us access to a mailing list of 5,000 names. Letters were written and mailed out seeking support. In 2 weeks we raised only \$400. We now had 8 weeks remaining. By this time our planning team had risen to 12 people. It was clear that a different paradigm in fundraising was needed, otherwise this project would finish seriously in debt.

We had a friend, a professional fundraiser, Cathy Burke, an Australian fundraiser who had been working with The Hunger Project for a number of years, and who each year raises millions of dollars to support women's projects in third world countries and help them overcome the issues related to the persistence of hunger in the world. Cathy consented to train us in a different way. Of the 12 only 4 came to the first workshop. This created huge problems and a degree of conflict within our team, many of whom wished to continue with conventional fundraising – baking cakes, or organizing raffles. If we continued going like this, trying to run “raffles”, “lamington drives” or “jumble sales” we'd finish many thousands of dollars short of our target. At that time I had been marginally involved in another case of empowered fundraising in Western Australian town of Katanning, and so knew that a different system of raising funds through mobilising a whole community by donor directed philanthropic contribution.

A second workshop was organized with 8 people attending. A third weekend workshop, simultaneously celebrating the birthday of Vivienne Elanta, managed to get all 12 attending, and within the remaining weeks of the project, the funds were raised.

We are all connected in invisible networks of personal friendship and acquaintance that help define who we are. These friends are themselves centres of other networks, that spin quickly into the millions and hundreds of millions. Some people are nodes and hubs of extensive networks of information and interconnection. Others are linked through fewer but deeper relationships. Building a truly sustainable world is going to require the mobilisation of these networks in the task of changing government policy and industrial practice and in building the life sustaining communities and ecosystems we will need for our future. Cathy showed the Pilgrimage Project, that by mobilising these networks with common purpose and commitment, we could raise the funding we needed for the project.

But the old attitudes to money built around lack, scarcity and insufficiency are deeply rooted. Some were a little threatened by the novel approach and so did not attend the first or even a second Empowered Fundraising workshop. It was only with the running of the third two day residential workshop that all people on the team became enthused with the new approach. Empowered Fundraising was born. As a result within 10 weeks we were wildly successful at raising the funds needed and the Pilgrimage Project, launched from St Georges Cathedral, Perth, set forth.

THE MONEY GAME

At Empowered Fundraising workshops I begin with a Money Game. People come to find a pile of photocopied Euros, Pounds or Dollars on their chair. This is carefully calculated so that it represents the average wage (or if unavailable, the Gross Domestic Product per capita), divided by 52, to give an amount per week. I then explain that the money they have is equal to their weekly wage if all the money produced in their country in a year was equally divided between the population. It is always interesting here to ask what number of people in the workshop get more than this amount and which number of people get less. There is always a smaller number of people who get more, as the average gross domestic income is always much higher than the median income, as it is a small number of very rich who push the average figure much higher than the true median income.

I then explain that everyone in the group is now an employee of John Croft Community Enterprises Limited, and this is their wages for the first week. I am an incredibly fair employer who pays everyone the same wage. We then set up a free virtual market in the room. For example if one person spends \$100 on food per week, then her neighbour can instantly become a food store, and for \$100 receive a virtual shopping basket of imaginary food. The person who has been paid now wants a bicycle, and their neighbour standing suddenly becomes a virtual cycle shop and will sell them a second hand bike for \$300. This person too can buy something. Everyone is invited now to stand, and the virtual perfect marketplace is now free to begin.

Unknown to the participants I select one person and tell them they have special rules. They are not to buy anything in this market place they are only to sell. Their job is to try to accumulate as much money as quickly as possible from the market place, operating as a corporation that seeks to maximize shareholder returns. But he is to conceal the fact that I have given them these rules. I usually do not have any money myself but act as an agent of that person, acting as an employee, raising as much money from the others and then giving it to that person, explaining "here is the money that I owe you". Then after 20-30 minutes I call a halt and get people to line up dependent upon the amount of money they have in their hands, with the person holding the most on my left and the person with the least on my right. People count their money and position themselves accordingly. The distribution is always the same. Once the line is formed I draw people's attention to the facts of the distribution by pointing out where in the line was the amount they all started with. People with the most are few in number, less than one third or one quarter of the number present in the game. Between two thirds and three quarters have less money than they started with.

This is the automatic consequence of a "free" market system. The gaps between "rich" and "poor" have already started and are widening. Some people have seen the game as an opportunity to make money, others have just sought to use the game in order to get their needs met. At this stage I introduce the person who has special instructions, and explain that he is not a person but a multinational corporation. I then explain that I at times during the game was operating also as an employee of this person. Research has shown that employees are more inclined to operate

unethically in maximizing the value of a corporation than if they were solely responsible for their acts. By the laws of the land this corporation is recognised as an imaginary person, having the right to “free speech”, can sue another for “defamation”, just like any individual, can lobby politicians and contribute to election campaigns with the same rights as individuals, but has none of the responsibilities of individuals as they have just one task under corporate law, to make profits for their shareholders as quickly and as efficiently as they can. Any thing else, social or environmental responsibility, the location of their factories, the health care of their workers, that gets in the way of making a profit is considered a secondary factor that can be safely ignored, and if profits fall, these factors get sacrificed in order to secure the profits that only go to their shareholders. In return for this work, the managers of these enterprises can earn enormous sums.

- In Austria at the moment it is 1:800
- In Germany at the moment it is 1:5000
- In the USA Industry it is currently 1:65,000 and
- In the USA financial sector it is 1:360,000

They also employ the most skilled accountants to minimise any corporate responsibilities, like tax or legal obligations they have, to the state, and they see their major concern in this area is to weaken or water down any legislation that the government may pass that would influence their profit making abilities in any way. Many of these companies in fact have their corporate headquarters not in their home country, but in tax havens like the Cayman Islands, tiny nations created principally as a means of avoiding tax.

In the game I explain that there was a certain amount of money (the number of people multiplied by the amount given to each person) in the game, and the amount of money made by the corporation has just been repatriated out of this community to the company shareholders and their managers. As this community has less money than before, I explain that John Croft Community Enterprises Incorporated can no longer afford to employ all the workers he did before. And so I apologise and tell the people with the least amount of money that they are now unemployed. To the rest, I explain that to begin this business I had to borrow all the money I paid to them at the start of the game from a bank and I have to pay it back with interest. And as I too am in competition with multinational corporations like the one which we have just mentioned, to be competitive in the marketplace, I too need to maximise my profits. So for me too, corporate social and environmental responsibility takes second place to profit making, workers will only be paid in proportion to their productivity, which will for most people mean longer hours of work for less money than before. It also means we have to externalize some of our costs, so we conceal the pollution of our production and lobby not to have to pay carbon taxes for our Greenhouse gas emissions. When one or two people complain about such conditions, I accuse them of being disloyal or green troublemakers and sack them immediately. By this time everyone is laughing.

I then ask the people who are unemployed how they are going to support themselves. When I started playing this game, a number of years ago, in the days where we still had functioning welfare states, people used to say they would seek social security or unemployment benefit. In these less

secure times, what usually happens is people say they will seek various self-employment ventures in the informal sector. But either way, whatever the situation the government will still raise taxes. The tax rates differ between countries and differ as to the levels raised. Many neo-liberal economists of the so called “Washington consensus” have long argued for a regressive flat tax rate, where everyone pays the same percentage, irrespective of income. All tax reforms over the last half century have tended in this direction, in the name of increasing incentives and the so called “trickle down effect”, where money made by corporations and their managers supposedly will increase employment and national productivity and so all will benefit. In the game, I indicate that the government here has been influenced by these arguments, and so I charge a flat rate of tax – 1.3rd of all the money that people are holding in their hands. Only the very poorest in the line are below the “tax free threshold” and pay no tax. These people often have no money anyway. When I get to the top of the cue I explain that the richest two or three people have very clever tax accountants who minimise their tax, whilst the richest, our corporation is operating out of a tax haven and so pays nothing.

With the tax collected, I then explain how taxes are typically distributed. One third of taxes typically pays the wages and salaries of public employees, road makers, doctors and nurses in public hospitals, teachers in public schools and the like. I subtract that from the taxes collected. One third pays for new government projects and initiatives. And one third is typically spent on social welfare programs. At the moment, right wing groups are seeking to reduce these welfare payments, as they say they interfere with the profitability of the economy, but in fact they more properly interfere with hidden corporate subsidies paid by taxpayers to the major corporations. We then have not much money to pay our unemployed.

Once we have the social welfare payments, I then interview the unemployed, asking have they worked at all in the last week and how much did they earn. I ask them did they pay rent on their housing, and if so how much. The person who paid no rent I suggested was homeless, living on the streets and therefore was not entitled to welfare. Very quickly people catch on to the necessity to lie about their circumstances. The person who lives in their own home is told to sell their asset and support themselves from its sale. Those who didn't pay rent, have their entitlements to social welfare reduced. As the number of unemployed have increased, we have to pay some welfare payments from the money reserved for government projects or civil servants. As a result the government, in order to meet its obligations is forced to borrow money from international lenders. And so I do on my knees to the rich multinational corporation and beg for money, asking what are the conditions for the loan. They insist on a government austerity program, that the number of public servants has to be reduced, that less money is spent on government programs, and valuable government assets get privatised. Exports of goods from this community to the rich and powerful nations have to “become more competitive” and so prices fall, but protection of local enterprises has to be reduced, permitting more corporations to make bigger profits, with various tax concessions. Rates of interest on borrowings are usually high. In desperation I agree.

Then I return to those who have been the losers in this ultimate win-lose game we have been playing and I ask them how are they going to support themselves. I suggest burglary or drug-running, or maybe the “slave trade” explaining that there are 200,000 sexual slaves in Western Europe already and the numbers are increasing as poor are forced into prostitution. I explain that 15% of the world’s economy is in the criminal economy, but that the system doesn’t recognise any difference between criminal money laundering through tax havens or Swiss banks, and the “legitimate” corporate profits.

THE WOUND ABOUT MONEY

Conventionally we all have an “identified though largely unconscious and unexamined relationship with money that shapes our experience of life and our deepest feelings about ourselves and others”. This comes from the way in which we use and create money in our communities.

Economists, tell us that money has a number of different functions.

Economically Money functions

1. **As a measure of value:** money is a means by which different persons can agree upon an assessment of how much they value some good or service, in the same way that an inch or centimetre is an agreed measure of length. To serve as a measure of value, money must be divisible into agreed units, have an agreed and recognisable value and to be countable. As Lynne Twist says, “Money is often given more value than life itself.” For example, Insurance companies attach a value to human life, as though your life can be bought and sold.
2. **As a means of exchange;** money overcomes the problem of barter as a means of facilitating exchange, in circumstances where the “double coincidence of needs” is not found. This refers to a barter transaction where one person has something required by another, and they have something to trade of agreed equal value. Failure to meet these conditions means that a barter transaction cannot occur. Economics defines rationality in such exchanges, as transactions where we seek to maximize our benefits and minimise our costs, owing no loyalty to anyone or anything except for contractual obligations established in a market. Neuroeconomics demonstrates such an approach generates distrust and increases unhealthy stress.
3. **As a store of value:** To function as a store of value money must be able to be saved, stored and retrieved, without major loss of value. This function, however, can encourage hoarding, which, if money is not reinvested, removes money from circulation, so increasing its scarcity in the community.

In addition to these economic functions, and in part as a result of them, money also has a number of often unstated political functions, resulting in part from the way it is created.

Politically Money functions

4. **As a means of rationing access to scarce goods and services:** Many goods are in short supply, and therefore cannot be made universally available. By rationing these services and making them only available to those with money, a monetary system can ensure that goods are rationed to those with sufficient purchasing power.
5. **As a means of making money:** The golden rule of economics is sometimes stated, as “those who have the gold make the rules”. Because credit money is a demand for future payment, it can be used to purchase the goods and services of commodities today in ways that can be used, not for meeting immediate needs, but instead solely for the purpose of making yet more money. As a result those with access to credit money tend to grow richer faster than those without such access.
6. **As a means to power:** Because through a credit system, money can be used to increase one’s stock of money, money also serves a political function, giving differential access to the goods and services that confer social, political and economic power within a community. “Fiat money” is money that is created out of nothing but is declared to be in existence by government or by a central bank. Fiat money may be subject to inflation, through imbalance with the circulation of goods and services, and can reduce the power of some whilst increasing that of others.

Close examination of these different functions of money within any community, demonstrates that not all of these functions are strictly compatible, and some functions are in fact mutually contradictory. These contradictions mystify the nature of money, and make it more difficult for the normal person to understand. Thus money as a means of rationing access to goods and services, may tend to allocate financial resources to meeting the luxurious “wants” of those with greatest purchasing power, rather than in meeting the real needs for “subsistence” of the poorest sections of a community. The way corn is currently being used for biofuel rather than feeding people in the Third World is an example in point.

Another example concerns money as a store of value. Thus money can be used as a means of making money, and this results in capital flows away from communities where the ease of making more money is restricted. In these cases the use of money as a means of exchange or a measure of value is restricted as money flows towards those communities where the ease of making money is more plentiful. The scarcity of money in the former communities is not due, necessarily, to any shortage of skills, of resources or of a local demand for goods and services – it may be due purely due to the scarcity of money. This scarcity of money may result in people seeking access to money in inappropriate ways, resorting to criminal activity or prostitution. For example, the adage – “he who pays the piper calls the tune” is directly relevant to community or environmental organisations. When such organisations are dependent upon government or business corporations, this will severely limit their ability to take a critical role vis a vis these institutions, without it directly interfering with their own continued economic viability.

This confusion about money also extends to the “creation of money”. Our money today is created through fractional reserve banking. Here money is “created” through loans given by banks, which inject “new money” into the economy. This ensures that whilst the principal of a loan may be created, the “interest” on that loan becomes a future demand, associated with repayment, and thus the “lender” gambles that they will be able to recover more money from the loan than they lent in the first place. Because only the principal is immediately created, economic growth and the injection of yet more money is an imperative, and failure to achieve such growth will result in widespread bankruptcy. These circumstances create insecurity as they also ensure that the amount of money is always perceived to be in short supply. As a result in “monetary societies”, money comes to be one of the central linchpins of our lives, and “everyone is interested in money and almost all of us feel a chronic concern and even fear that we don’t have enough or will be able to keep enough of it.... Many live openly with the accumulation of money as our primary goal. No matter how much money we have or don’t have (we) worry that we don’t or won’t have enough”².

As Lynne Twist says in her book “The Soul of Money”, these characteristics have a strange effect. “Each of us experiences a lifelong tug-of-war between our money interests and the calling of our soul. When we’re in the domain of soul, we act with integrity. We are thoughtful and generous, allowing, courageous, and committed. We recognize the value of love and friendship. We admire a small thing well done. We experience moments of awe in the presence of nature and its unrefined beauty. We are open, vulnerable, and heartfelt. We have the capacity to be moved, and generosity is natural. We are trustworthy and trusting of others, and our self-expression flourishes. We feel at peace within ourselves and confident that we are an integral part of a larger, more universal experience, something greater than ourselves.

When we enter the domain of money, there often seems to be a disconnect from the soulful person we have known ourselves to be. It is as if we are suddenly transported to a different playing field where all the rules have changed. In the grip of money, those wonderful qualities of soul seem to be less available. We become smaller. We scramble or race to “get what’s ours.” We often grow selfish, greedy, petty, fearful, or controlling, or sometimes confused, conflicted or guilty. We see ourselves as winners or losers, powerful or helpless, and we let those labels deeply define us in ways that are inaccurate, as if financial wealth and control indicate innate superiority, and lack of them suggests a lack of worth or basic human potential. Visions of possibility dissolve. We become wary and mistrusting, protective of our little piece, or helpless and hopeless. We sometimes feel driven to behave in ways inconsistent with our core values, and unable to act differently.”³

The result is a deep division in our way of being, in our behaviour, and in our sense of our own character and integrity. This dichotomy, this break in our truth, not only confuses us around the issue of money, it also keeps us from integrating our inner and outer worlds to experience wholeness in our lives, the exquisite moment when we feel at peace in the moment, a part of and one with life. This quieter experience of wholeness has been largely lost in our culture, overtaken by the noise and scramble around money. The gap exists for all of us -- myself included -- and is at the

very heart of the toughest struggles in life for all of us. It is sustained, as Lynne Twist says in her Video, by three powerful myths.

- The myth of scarcity: that we don't have enough (time, money, love etc) to meet our needs.
- The myth that more is better: that if we could have more (money, time, love) it would improve situations.
- The myth that this is the way it is: that no alternative way is possible.

In the name these myths of money we have done (and continue to do) immense damage to the Earth. We destroy rainforests, dam and decimate rivers, overfish oceans, rivers and lakes, and have poisoned our soil with chemicals from industry and agriculture. We have ghettoised whole segments of society, forcing them into slums and shanties, exploited whole regions and nations and forced young into selling drugs or their own bodies for money. We use money to assign age-old inequalities between men and women and distort people's expectations and obligations in reference to the pursuit of money. While people are prepared to challenge and critique almost every other aspect of life, few ever challenge the role of money in establishing what is worthwhile in human life.

This behaviour, motivated by the scarcity of money leads the personal growth movement to speak of abundance. But abundance is the flip side of scarcity thinking, meaning it's just as negative and we don't need to go there. A more empowering story is the story of "sufficiency" of "enoughness". As Gandhi said "There is enough on our planet (whether you believe it or not) for each one of us to live a healthy, productive and happy life. There is not enough for just one greedy man". Needless to say this greed is usually motivated by the desire for more money. Enough is a belief in ourselves, it's a simpler way to live, to focus on what we actually have in our lives and appreciate it, instead of flying past enough, not even seeing it, trying to get more, more and still more. The great scarcity myths: "there isn't enough", "more is better" and "that's just the way it is." Such attitudes affect us all, whether we live in poor Third World settings or we are super rich CEOs of major corporations.

Healing our relationship with money is an important part of moving from an industrial scarcity economy (built upon unceasing growth of consumerism and waste) to a sufficiency economy (built upon "enoughness" for all beings, human and non-human, and increasing as a result the resilience for communities and environments). This is the central task of our age. Empowered fundraising helps with this process.

CASE STUDY 2: THE TOWN OF KATANNING

Katanning is a community of about 5,700 people in the Upper Great Southern of the Western Australian wheatbelt, provided many of the features of a successful fundraising mobilisation. In the late 1980s it was a town that lacked adequate recreational facilities. For many years the community had spoken of what needed to be done, but nothing had ever happened. It was clearly a case of

“everybody”, “anybody”, “somebody” and “nobody”. “Everybody decided that something could be done, anybody could have done it, somebody should have done it, but nobody did it. As a result everybody looked for somebody to blame, it could be anybody, but nobody took responsibility”.

Eventually the community decided to do something about it and set up a committee made up of community people with some councillors and staff involved to create the centre the community needed. Within this group it was essential that there was a commitment and belief in the project – and those people on the committee needed to have made a contribution themselves both financially and in terms of time, committed to the project, proportional to their capacity. These people were later to become the most important fundraisers, and it is essential that these people are not asking others to do what they are not prepared to be doing themselves. People can clearly detect such hypocrisy in the body language when it occurs. The group comprised those who were considered Peak Community Leaders of the project (2 former Shire Presidents and others), they were people who were recognised in the community as having the ability to help form and shape public opinion.

The committee then set about working for a considerable time on the proposal within a concentrated period of work for 6 months, meeting every 2-3 weeks. To ensure community participation and involvement the Committee was chaired by a community member. Over this time it also formed a number of sub-committees to assist in the efforts.

The Shire of Katanning did all the secretarial support, behind the scenes work, but this committee was divorced from the Council, in order to ensure that when they went out to ask people for money, the Council would not be involved. This was an issue because ethically it violates the duties of Council officers to ask for donations, as the Council was already collecting rates from people in the community to meet the needs of the community.

The Council then undertook to employ a professional fund-raiser - Ern Flint from Sydney, New South Wales. The Council engaged him on a Council Contract, as a contract fundraiser. His professional services were engaged to coordinate the campaign.

To begin with in 10 days he interviewed a cross section of 60 people from the community with an hour of time being spent with each person. This allowed the identification of a great deal of other information. A Committee of 3 people was formed and given an office in the Shire. This committee had the task of bringing these 60 people together. From within this group, two sources of funding were sought

1. Direct donations from contact from community people
2. Corporate sponsorships from local business persons.

Ern Flint then went out with 12 people on the committee to talk to people about making contributions. He was also responsible for developing Donor Gift Recipient status (auspiced through

the Australian Sport's Foundation), which made it easier to sell the whole concept to the community.

The committee then went through the rate book of Council and split people up into contributor groups – Community Donors, Corporate Sponsorship, and Contributions in Kind. Sub-committees were established, and each sub committee was chaired by a person on the peak committee. New people were encouraged to get involved in each sub committee to spread the load.

Training was provided by the coordinator to the sub-committee, and this passed on those skills of ways to engage in building a genuine and authentic one-to-one relationship with all potential donors.

Through Feb – March publicity was also placed through local press, mail-outs were organised to individuals and the campaign built up to a climax.

The group targeted potentially larger givers first. This raised people's sights as to what was possible, and created a sense of infectious enthusiasm within the community as to what was possible. By building these personal one to one relationships with potential donors and then enrolling these investors in seeking further contributions, the community mobilised its family, friendship, collegial and community networks and succeeded in raising \$1.5 million for the project within 10 weeks.

EMPOWERED FUNDRAISING – A WORKSHOP APPROACH

So how can this training and campaign style approach lead to empowered fundraising?

A focus upon scarcity leads to a competitive win-lose zero-sum games of "you or me" - world of winners and losers. In such circumstances cooperative behaviours are irrational as unless you can help me win, our association is unproductive. Empowered fundraising however challenges this ethos and leads to compassionate cooperation, a win-win positive sum game of "you and me" where we are gathered together on a common productive purpose.

If money is a measure and store of value, then "how we use our money reflects our values in life?". And if we sincerely hope for a better world, then we must use some of our money in accordance with our life values – values for personal growth, strengthening the community or service to the Earth. At the moment we seem to be using most of our money for mere survival (if poor) or to make more money (if rich). Both attitudes are motivated from the notion of the scarcity of money. Both produce a scarcity of true community value, and weaken community spirit.

But there is an alternative. We can start using some of our money with the motivation to coming from our sense of sufficiency, to invest our souls in the transformation of this world, to join those who are engaged in this effort, then I believe with this means we truly can change the world, and

build the life sustaining culture of the future. This approach gives us a chance to move beyond our immediate personal comfort zone of non-action, into a new realm of engagement and participation in building such a better world.

How can this be done? Firstly a community issue of importance is required. There are many such issues present in our community. We at the Gaia Foundation believe the projects worth supporting meet three conditions –

It has to be a project of

1. Personal Growth - commitment to your own healing and empowerment
2. Community Building - strengthening the communities of which you are a part
3. Service to the Earth - enhancing the wellbeing and flourishing of all life

STAGE 1:

Once such a project is created and there is a team of committed people working to bring such a project into fruition, the costs for the project need to be estimated, and a timetable set for the completion of the fund-raising, and the launch of the project. The group is then ready for their first Empowered Fundraising workshop.

Ironically, the secret of a fundraising workshop is not about money at all. It is in reality about building a community of relationships – where each relationship is based upon links forged on risk, trust and intimacy. It is essentially a process of true “community building”. Unfortunately for us, community, like money is greatly misunderstood. It comes from three words; “com” (in Latin) meaning “with” or “together”; “munis” (in Proto-Indo-European) meaning “the changes or exchanges that link” (and is the origin of our words for both “municipality” and “money”; and “ity” (from Latin, “itatus”) meaning “small”, “intimate or ‘local’”. Generally a community in our everyday life is seen as an accidental group of people who share only a little in common, but properly defined it is “the local changes and exchanges that link us together, in an intimate fashion”. A true community is determined by the quality of communication that ties the group together. It is a relationship built upon one’s deepest values, and upon the offer of making a difference to life itself. The greatest gift in life is living according to one’s deepest values, and empowered fundraising is a giving of a gift of this true community to as many people as possible. Raising the funds for your project is really about building the relationships that will sustain you both – the giver and the receiver – for a long time to come. Itay Talgam, the Jewish conductor shows that “if you love something, give it away to the community, then it can never be lost”. Ben Zander shows that the conductor depends for his power on his ability to make other people powerful.

When soliciting for donations, given the conventional views about money, it is all too easy to come as a mendicant, a beggar, coming from lack or scarcity, seeking something in a situation of dependency upon those who are more powerful and have greater resources than oneself. Such a scarcity motivation will automatically be communicated and will activate scarcity in others, and they will feel reluctant to contribute to such a project. Faced with such a spirit, as a result people engaged in fundraising often attempt to organise something else - a raffle for instance, or a stall, selling goods for cash. But such an attitude reinforces the disempowering belief that the cause for which you are seeking money is somehow worthless or valueless, and people will only contribute out of a desire to be a "winner", or a "consumer" of another kind. This further reinforces the scarcity consciousness about the issue of money and will minimise your chances in the future. Again this leads all people involved to feel the cause is in some way worthless, or valueless, and leads even the people committed to the cause to dread the task of fundraising. But through empowered fundraising there is another way. As Hafiz, the Sufi poet says

*Even after all this time
The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe Me."
Look what happens with
A love like that,
It lights the Whole Sky*

Everyone, no matter how poor or wealthy, has a balance point, a point somewhere between a token and a sacrifice.

- A token is where people may just reach into their pocket and give their loose change;
- A sacrifice is where a person gives so much that they go without food or shelter, or some other important personal need is unmet.

This balance point depends upon the individual personal circumstances of the person involved. Each person has one, and no-one really understands where your personal balance point is except yourself. You are the expert in understanding the nature of your commitments in life, as only you have the understanding of where this point lies.

The second realisation is that the balance point of different people, wealthy or poor, is functionally equal to the balance point of another. Conventional "scarcity based" fundraising is inclined to consider donations from wealthy people as of more value than is those of the poorer groups in society, but this just reinforces the power structure beliefs concerning wealth and poverty. It is the funds in this balance point that represents the ultimate disposable income. In a third world setting, the balance point of a poor peasant earning less than \$1 per day may be a few cents. For the head of a huge multinational corporation it may represent even hundreds of thousands of dollars. The secret here in "Empowered Fundraising" is that all balance points are equal, and should be treated

equally. \$10 from a widowed pensioner may represent a greater sacrifice than \$10,000 from a millionaire.

The first task for a person involved in an Empowered Fundraising workshop is to identify their own personal balance-point. Then, in order to experience the “enoughness”, each person is encouraged to take a small step beyond this balance point, to stretch them beyond their personal comfort zone. This is the primary contribution that is necessary. Each person involved in the fundraising campaign makes such a personal commitment of just beyond their “comfort zone”, to ensure that they are in integrity, and are not asking others to do something they are not prepared to do themselves. It is important to realise that anyone seeking to raise funds by this method of “Empowered Fundraising” is not asking someone to do something that they are not prepared to do themselves. Having estimated their balance point people then write a personal dated I.O.U promissory note for that amount and date it according to when those funds will be made available to the project. These promissory notes are then collected and totalled. It is amazing how quickly these funds total up, and projects which may at first glance appear impossible, suddenly are realised to be do-able.

For example at an Empowered Fundraising workshop held at Schumacher College, Dartington, in Devon, England, held in February 2007, over £27,000 was raised within a few hours from a group of 17 people for projects to assist raise awareness of the problems of Climate Change. The Western Australian Forest Alliance in April 2008 raised \$13,700 from a group of seven people, in a workshop creating a project with a budget of \$100,000.

Empowered Fundraising is always a case of the exchange of a truly reciprocal value, it is not the seeking of an unasked for gift. In giving money, the person who makes this donation is getting the value of participation and engagement in a powerful and potentially life changing and rewarding project that aims to make a positive difference to ourselves, our communities and our Earth. Not everyone has the time they can commit to such a project. In “Empowered Fundraising”, this is the reciprocal value that is given, and thus rather than just a donation, such a contribution has much of the nature of an investment in the future – an investment in generosity from which all in a community will benefit ultimately, rather than such as normally the case, coming from a position of “scarcity” from which a single private individual may unduly benefit, often at the expense of ourselves, our communities or the planet.

SEVEN RULES FOR GIFT-ECONOMY

The German/Brazilian Dragon Dreaming Trainer, Ita Gabert has constructed these seven rules for building a gift economy culture.

- * Be honest, just ask for or accept what you really need.
- * Be aware, how much lovely work is in the things you got - honor and care it accordingly.

- * Pass on as a gift to another, all that you don't need anymore.
- * What ever you make or do, put your lifeblood in it and give it - let it go.
- * Look to the eyes when you give something, look to the eyes when you get something, make of it a real meeting.
- * Be aware that when someone is giving, she or he is already getting something very precious - don't over-celebrate (effusive-exaggerate) if you get, but honour it appropriately.
- * Watch your emotions. If you find some greed, envy or egoism in you in either giving or getting - send these feelings in yourself, a smile.

Because of our monetary caused wounds, suffered at the hands of the ways we use money, it is all too often the case that an individual feels that a person who declines to make a contribution and who says "No" when asked, is in some way rejecting the person asking by rejecting the values of the person who is asking. It is easy to internalise this as a negative feeling. The secret to empowered fundraising is to have the "No" have the same meaning as a "Yes", as both are an opportunity to establish a deeper relationship with that person, a relationship based upon value rather than upon superficial interests held in common. In asking you are offering a genuine invitation to become involved, and an authentic invitation is based equally upon the power to decline as to accept. Being disappointed by the "no" response will always be communicated in one's body language, and this acts as a form of coercion that aims, rather than an invitation, as a form of manipulation, to get the person to say "yes". This is also motivated by our "scarcity consciousness" and is a form of disempowerment.

When given a "No", however, the person involved should always follow up with three further questions.

1. Could I ask "Why"? We are sincerely interested in learning of the reasons why people either accept or decline our invitation, our offer to participate?
2. Would you like us to ensure that you are to be kept informed about how this project is going?
3. Do you know anyone else who may be interested in such a project, to whom you could introduce us?

Once again, there should be no obligation for anyone to answer these questions, as any sense of obligation will ultimately backfire upon the project. A person who is dissatisfied will tend to tell many more people than the one who is satisfied in such circumstances.

This exchange of information about the project will keep the community relationships alive, and may, at a future date, lead to a person who originally declines the offer to engage with the project, to participate in some other, perhaps even more valuable, way.

Empowered fundraising is always as a result of face to face engagement with a person. It never proceeds on the basis of a "cold ask" of the door-knock appeal or the telephone enquiry. This is not

to say that telephoning a person is possibly important but it should be for the purpose of arranging a face-to-face visit, or an appointment at some mutually convenient location. On such an occasion, the relationship is always one in which you already have some depth of friendship, intimacy or acquaintance. The person you phone or speak to is someone with whom you have had some prior contact, maybe only intermittently, but you are known to them.

How does one proceed from here? Once each participating member has made their personal balance-point contribution to the project, each participant in the Empowered Fundraising Project is encouraged to make a list of 10 people, from within their personal network of family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances, whom they intend to ask within the next 3 weeks. Based upon the nature of their already established relationship, each participant estimates where that person's balance point may be. This is the amount that a person will be asked for; it doesn't matter at this time how accurate your assessment of their balance point is, they will be free to amend it either up or down when the approach is made.

Once this is done, the participating individual identifies the first three people they will approach, over the next week. They then form themselves in pairs, to role-play the nature of the request. The first task of the role play is to share with their partner, the nature of the relationship one has with the person who will be approached, and the nature of the place and circumstances in which the approach is going to be made. This allows the partner to feel into the character of this person and "enrol themselves" into identifying how this person may possibly respond. In asking such a person it is important that the following approach be clarified.

1. Firstly, clarify that you clearly understand the nature of the project and can explain exactly what it is and why it is important.
2. Secondly, establish as early as possible before the event that you are going to be asking the person to become a participant, who will engage in some way with the project.
3. Thirdly, after you have introduced the nature of the project, share with them a little of the nature of "empowered fundraising" and the concept of the "balance point".
4. Then inform them that you have estimated their balance point to be \$XXX, and ask them for that contribution. Once you have asked the person it is important that you remain silent and allow the person to respond. Don't try to fill up any silence that may result at this time with further justification or explanation.
5. At this point the person asked may either accept, increase or decrease the amount you have asked for, or decline altogether. As before, be gracious in accepting whatever occurs at this point
6. Finish by asking the three questions identified above.
 - a. Could I ask "Why"? We are sincerely interested in learning of the reasons why people either accept or decline our invitation, our offer to participate?
 - b. Would you like us to ensure that you are to be kept informed about how this project is going?

- c. Do you know anyone else who may be interested in such a project, to whom you could introduce us?
7. If the person has accepted your offer to participate, you may like to share a little of what you have learned through the Empowered Fundraising Workshop, and ask if they would like to participate in such a training event.

Once person A has had a chance to “role play” such a request it is the chance for person B to have a turn. Once each person has had a go, it is a chance to debrief on how that felt. What were the feelings that arose with the request? How did the person in the role of the other feel about the openness, honesty and authenticity of the invitation to engage and participate? What could have been improved?

The conclusion to this exercise is to build a team of support for those who are going to be making the requests. The first member of this team is their “buddy” with whom they have role-played. People at this time exchange names, addresses and contact details, and let the “buddy” know by when in the next week you will be making your first contact. One at this stage promises to engage with one’s “buddy” at a time of mutual convenience to share how the approach went and what was the result.

It is important at this stage to collect a copy of all of the names and amounts that people on each list will be asked for. These figures can then be totalled as this will, together with the first promissory notes, be the sum that will possibly result over the next three weeks from the Empowered Fundraising approach. Once again, it is my experience that people are amazingly surprised at just how much money could be raised.

STAGE 2: STEPPING BEYOND OUR COMFORT ZONES

It is rare that a single Empowered Fundraising Workshop will be sufficient to raise the funds identified as necessary for the project. There is also a need to establish the kind of coaching relationships that will assist those who have made the promises achieve the targets they have set themselves. As with the Katanning project, much other work needs to occur behind the scenes. Is Donor Gift Recipient status required for tax deductible contributions? Can an auspicious body be found who will be prepared to extend and lend its credibility to the project? How will participants in this process be kept informed of its progress? How can the relationships that have been created by Empowered Fundraising be maintained and extended? Those people who have volunteered to contribute in kind, either by providing time or materials to the project, how is this to be organised and acknowledged appropriately? Money in these circumstances is always a means to an end and should never become an end in itself.

Albert Einstein once remarked “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” The current problems of our world are created ultimately by the economic, social and

political rules we have chosen for our money system, our social interactions and our political decision making processes. If we are to build a sustainable world for all, then this requires us changing our awareness of these things, and even more importantly, as Gandhi said for us to become “the change we wish to see in the world”.

But attendance in an Empowered Fundraising workshop is not enough to change our scarcity consciousness, nor the rules of money upon which our lives are currently based. While a person has participated in an Empowered Fundraising workshop, the world as a whole has not altered. It is still the world that created our original concepts about money. Once the workshop is finished, an individual will start being more empowered with the concept of sufficiency and enoughness, but this feeling will fade over time, and the old scarcity consciousness will return. In such circumstances, an Empowered Fundraising workshop will be worse than useless, as not only will it have not made a difference, but the individual person who has completed such training, will finish feeling that they now know everything about how to raise money for their project. This is a mistake. A workshop without appropriate follow up will quickly revert back to the status quo ante, back to the way things were before.

For this reason it is important to have correct follow-up, and to build and maintain a structure of support and follow up for all participants and to contact them individually as soon as possible after the gathering so as to help anchor and reinforce the realisations they have internalised.

Also no two Empowered Fundraising workshops are ever the same. Each is unique and each will uncover slightly different aspects of the issues that are addressed. It has been said, that the best way to learn something at depth is to teach it to another. Each person who comes to an Empowered Fundraising workshop is to be encouraged to once a year undertake a retraining and to ensure that one has both a mentor and is a mentor for another. Mentoring involves that you are

Available. Make yourself available about 15 minutes a week. In that time, you can help with an approach, discuss meeting roles, doing evaluations, and answering questions.

Respectful. One of the things that makes a mentor wonderful is how many different people come to be involved in Empowered Fundraising. Be respectful -and learn from- those differences. True respect demands that we treat the other person in a respectful manner, too.

Supportive. We support each other, but we also support the project. Be encouraging.

A good listener. Often simply listening, without trying to solving a problem, is all the speaker really needs. Hearing the problem out loud can lead to a solution. A good listener is also an active listener. Pick up clues about the person’s concerns by noting posture, tone, breathing, or the amount of time they spend on a subject.

Patient. Important things can take time. You cannot hasten the blossoming of a rose, and developmental processes all take time. This is important.

Confident. There is a reason this person asked for you to be their mentor. Reflect that in your demeanour—be self assured and friendly.

NEW STEPS IN DRAGON DREAMING EMPOWERED FUNDRAISING

At the end of World War II, the USA, as a part of a gift of unparalleled generosity, and partly as a policy of preventing the spread of communism to Western Europe, organized the Marshall Plan, as a means of assisting in the rebuilding of the War damaged nations of Western Europe. It was a huge success. As a result, the ex-Canadian Prime Minister, Lester Pearson, in 1960 wrote a book, *Partners in Development*, in which it was suggested that just 1% of the world's wealth, if transferred in a similar way, as a gift to the Third World, could narrow the gap between rich and poor nations permanently. As a result the United Nations proposed that 1% of the GDP of advanced nations each year be allocated to Third World Development Aid. So the United Nations then revised its goal down to 0.7% of each rich nation's GDP. Few nations have ever reached this target. What meager aid has been given is also often in the form of tied grants, money must be spent on products of the donor country, funds have been used to bribe officials to accept loans for projects that will have little effect on assisting the poor, but will in fact be siphoned off for the rich. The gap between rich and poor continues, as a result to widen. Corporations have used development loans to create a debt crisis for many countries, leading to a privatization of their resources, and the shutting of many health, education and community services in debtor countries to benefit themselves.

If governments and corporations are not prepared to meet the target of 0.7% as untied grants to overcoming the problems of the world, perhaps we as individual citizens committed to rebuilding the gift economy can do so. In fact we could commit, possibly 3% of our personal post tax incomes to this task – 1% being dedicated to reaching Lester Pearson's original target, 1% for projects within the country that is raising the funds, and a final 1% being used to support the project support project work of Dragon Dreaming and Empowered Fundraising.

Each Dragon Dreaming group could thus create its own little fundraising project. Once every year, or even once every six months, those who were contributing could gather, in celebration, to decide which projects they would be supporting from the funds that they gathered. Projects, of course would have to meet the principles of the Gaia Foundation. As this work spreads we could find a huge change in the nature of the way in which our money works in our communities. As Lynne Twist says "Money carried the soul's energy". At the moment we use more than \$300 US for every man woman and child alive on the Earth, to kill each other through so-called "Defense Spending". Only a tiny fraction of this if properly used could solve most of the world's problems of poverty, and ensure that the total population of the world was fed, clothed, housed and educated, and had access to clean water and good public health. The absence of these fundamentals to human life fuels the struggle that leads to war and violence, and so creates the pressures for ever more defense spending. Empowered Fundraising is just one way to mobilizing these planetary energies to building a world that works for all.

So there you have it. If you are interested in persevering with the Empowered Fundraising approach, please contact other Dragon Dreamers and let them know. We are all still novices at this system, although many have used it for many projects. We are all learning all the time, just as you

will be once you start. In life there are many worthwhile projects we allow to become still-borne for lack of money. With Empowered Fundraising, lack of money can never again be used as a reason for not persevering with any worthwhile endeavour. After all it took us centuries to destroy the sustainable gift economies that once existed in the world. It will take some time to rebuild them.

STAGE 3: EMPOWERING OTHERS – REBUILDING THE GIFT ECONOMY

How do we change the world? How do we build a world that works for everyone? We cannot buy or sell such a world. For 150,000 years our economic systems were based not upon the reciprocal exchanges of monetary transactions. Such exchanges are all about maximising benefits and minimising costs. Neuroeconomics – the science of wiring up human brains and monitoring what happens in real time with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) when people make such economic decisions shows that anxiety levels increase, levels of adrenaline and stress hormones, the steroids also increase, as the immune system is suppressed, making us more susceptible to infection. For 150,000 years our economies were “gift economies” based upon mutual altruism. Marshall Salins demonstrated that gift economies were, as evidenced by their nature as gift economies, economies of sufficiency, or “enoughness” not of scarcity.

Surprisingly fMRI shows that when engaging in gift giving, whilst giving away from an economic point of view seems to be “non-rational behaviour” – it would be seen as maximising a cost and limiting a benefit – but in fact anxiety levels diminish, levels of serotonin and endorphins in the brain increase, immune system functioning is enhanced, and the giver’s happiness increases as they practice a “random act of kindness and senseless beauty”. People’s levels of trust in the world and optimism for the future also increase, and states of depression get minimised.

So one of the most radical things we can do at the moment, given the international economic crisis currently effecting our planet is to rebuild the gift economy. What is this thing called “the gift economy”? A gift culture or a gift economy is a society where those things of value, goods and services, are regularly given without any specific agreement for either present or future rewards. As a result this giving will circulate and redistribute those things held in value within the community, in contrast to a barter or market economy, where exchange is only in return for money or some other commodity. Contrary to modern economic theory, barter systems in pre-modern times only existed between strangers or would be enemies – it was the economy of the gift that tied communities together and allowed them to function effectively.

The true gift is not merely a back and forth between individuals. A Buddhist tale tells of two who did this, and after their death, they were transformed into poisoned wells. A true gift is given selflessly as a result of fostering compassion through assisting meeting the needs of others – a gift of time, money or even just attention. Ultimately gift giving is the source of all scientific and technical progress, where rather than “intellectual property” to be sold to the highest bidder, we communities our discoveries by giving them away through meetings, conferences or publication. A true gift is

given by the giver out of gratitude, not out of obligation, it is a part of celebrating who I am and who you are. It is a question of encouraging what Anne Herbert started in a restaurant in Suasalito in 1983, "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless beauty". For example the movie "Pay it forward" shares the idea that for each good deed we receive we pay it back by doing three good deeds for others. Blake Beattie, from Sydney Australia, in 2007 as a result has established "Pay it Forward Day", on the third Thursday of April, each year, which has now spread to over 35 counties around the world, to remind communities of the irrational power of giving. As a result it is estimated that there will be some 3 million individual acts of random senseless kindness performed on this day this year. He says "What we get we use to make a living, what we give we make a life".

It is a true but often misunderstood fact that in an Empowered Fundraising workshop people will forget 50% of what they learned within 24 hours. Fifty percent of what was retained will disappear within a week, and within a month less than 1/8th will be retained. How do we slow down the forgetting curve? The best way is to teach what you have learned to someone else, and encourage them to do the same. Giving the gift of the rebuilding of a gift economy, not only will mobilise additional resources to your project, but it will also heal both yours and their wound about money, building a community that works for everyone. If you empower just one other person with the skills of empowering others, at the rate of just one person a week, then within less than 33 weeks, you will have reached everyone, man, woman and child alive on the Earth. Starting in January, by the end of September, you would have built a world that has totally healed its relationships to the economy and to each other. We have nothing to lose, and a world to gain. In running your own Empowered Fundraising work remember that as you step into your power as a leader, you must not doubt for a single instant that the people you are working with cannot achieve their dream.

Running an Empowered Fundraising workshop, if you are the presenter, is the best way to learn and impart the skills of Empowered Fundraising for oneself. But if this is the case it is always important to have time for an evaluation and celebration at the end. In the evaluation get people to share the following.

- 1/ To what extent did the workshop meet the needs of all participants. Don't be afraid of negative criticism, or the fact that people may not have all of their needs met – it gives a chance to be more on target next time.
- 2/ What unintended outcomes or "Aha" moments did the person discover? Always in such circumstances there are creative "Eureka" moments when people come to see things in a new way, and understanding these are useful
- 3/ In what ways could the workshop have been improved if it had to be run again? Collecting this information will ensure that as you run these workshops each one will be an improvement upon the last.

Celebration is an important part of any project, and the most important part of a celebration is the recognition and acknowledgement of what has been truly achieved. No project is truly over until it has been properly celebrated, so make sure you leave some time at the end for this to occur.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN EMPOWERED FUNDRAISING

There are a number of new resources available to help with Empowered Fundraising.

Given our interconnected world, long before the internet and social networking, in 1929 the Hungarian author Frigys Karinthy wrote that due to technological advances in communications and travel, friendship networks could grow larger and span greater distances. In particular, Karinthy believed that the modern world was 'shrinking' due to this ever-increasing connectedness of human beings. He posited that despite great physical distances between the globe's individuals, the growing density of human networks made the actual social distance far smaller.

As a result of this hypothesis, in one of Karinthy's stories characters believed that any two individuals could be connected through at most five acquaintances. In his story, the characters create a game out of this notion. He writes:

"A fascinating game grew out of this discussion. One of us suggested performing the following experiment to prove that the population of the Earth is closer together now than they have ever been before. We should select any person from the 1.5 billion inhabitants of the Earth – anyone, anywhere at all. He bet us that, using no more than five individuals, one of whom is a personal acquaintance, he could contact the selected individual using nothing except the network of personal acquaintances."

Of course today we have 7 billion people but Karinthy's assertions still hold true, in fact even more so. In the early 1950s mathematician Manfred Kochen at the University of Paris wrote a mathematical manuscript, "Contacts and Influences" which explored the mathematical consequences of these degrees of connectedness. Stanley Migram an American student in Paris took up the challenge on his return to the USA, leading to the experiments reported in "The Small World Problem" in May 1967 (charter) issue of the popular magazine Psychology Today. Information packets were initially sent to "randomly" selected individuals in Omaha or Wichita. They included letters, which detailed the study's purpose, and basic information about a target contact person in Boston. It additionally contained a roster on which they could write their own name, as well as business reply cards that were pre-addressed to Harvard. Upon receiving the invitation to participate, the recipient was asked whether he or she personally knew the contact person described in the letter. If so, the person was to forward the letter directly to that person. For the purposes of this study, knowing someone "personally" was defined as knowing them on a first-name basis. 64 of the letters 296 letters issued eventually did reach the target contact, with the average path length falling between five and a half and six. From the chains created it was found that generally, the package quickly reached a close geographic proximity, but would circle the target almost randomly until it found the target's inner circle of friends. Malcolm Gladwell in his book "The Tipping Point" suggests a "funneling effect" was in operation where a Connector with large networks of contacts and friends acted as a hub: these hubs then mediate the connections between the vast majority of otherwise weakly connected individuals.

We found this with the Pilgrimage Project already mentioned. There were eventually about 280 donors who raised the money we needed, but 33 acted as “hubs”, a number which grew out of the 5 who created the project and the 12 who attended the first Empowered Fundraising workshop.

Following this research at about the time we were bringing the people from Novozybkov, a number of people created a game called the “Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon”, based on the assumption that every Hollywood actor had either acted with Kevin Bacon or had acted with someone who had. In 1994 it was suggested that Kevin Bacon must be the centre of the universe! A “Bacon number” recorded the number of connections found was created, with the most distant highest finite Bacon number reported by the Oracle of Bacon being 8. On January 18, 2007, Kevin Bacon launched sixdegrees.org a crowd funding site to encourage philanthropy.

The first such crowd funding using this principle was actor and philanthropist Edward Norton who created “Crowdrise” as a way of bridging the gap between social networking and support of worthwhile causes. Check out <http://www.crowdrise.com/> for its resources on fundraising. Catriona Blanke’s, the first of the 2 year Dragon Dreaming apprentices used such a Crowdfunding source and Dragon Dreaming to help her to release her second album”. She wrote

“I learned a lot at the Dragon Dreaming workshop ..., but one thing stayed with me especially. It is the point when the dreamer actually has to let go of his / her project and ask the dream sharers for help. And so that is just what I did when in my role as singer-songwriter I wanted to publish my second album, “Fortuna“.

I stumbled across an internet crowd funding platform called Startnext. Anyone wanting to realize an art project can put all information on the site and raise funds from “the crowd”. Here I asked everyone I knew for help and would they finance the project beforehand, which then would enable me to record and make the CD and then send it to them. I had 30 days in which I had to get the money – 1500 Euros. I thought I'd try this way of raising funds, kindly asking for help, not knowing what the result would be.

To my astonishment, within two hours from starting the countdown, the first help had arrived. And within 6 days the whole amount was in my account. The number of people supporting me and the speed at which they did it was astonishing. I felt so supported and appreciated, and I could not stop marveling at how people apparently thought my project and my dream so worthwhile that they were willing to wholeheartedly support it. I ended up with over 2000 Euros and so my new CD could be released.

The supporters weren't just my close friends or family – some of them I had not been in touch with for many years or hardly knew them at all. But I realize now – just the fact that I let go of my dream and shared it, making it OUR project instead of just mine, was so strong and inviting, that all those helpers appeared.

This experience gave me a feeling of gratefulness and happiness which then flowed into everything I did during the next few weeks. I felt humbled by all this loving support and things became so light and easy. It feels so different not to be alone with a dream, but to be supported by others in this way. “

There is evidence that the interconnectivity of the planet is increasing. Recent research using the database of 2 billion facebook friends has suggested a median interconnectivity number of only 4.7 links. Given the speed with which the Occupy movement spread world wide, and that the Stop Kony 2012 video spread virally from the 5th March 2012 to the 19th September 2012 when the film had over 93 million views on video-sharing utube and another 16 million “hits” on vimeo. Within a few days it has been estimated that half the youth population in the USA had seen the movie. Empowered fundraising harnesses this immense interactivity for projects that make a difference in the world, projects of personal growth, community building and service to the Earth. Our time is short, the great unraveling is accelerating, but our connections around the world have never been greater.

CONCLUSION – WHERE TO FROM HERE

Since Dragon Dreaming has now spread around the world Empowered Fundraising has now been used to support many hundreds of worthwhile projects in many lands. For example, four workshops held with the Buddhist monks fro the European Institute of Applied Buddhism, a German project of Thic Nhat Hanh and the monks of Plum Village, in France, raised over half a million Euros in 6 months. Projects using the method have now been run in the Congo, in Ghana, in Brazil, and many other countries. A young woman, Katherina Philip, has used the method to raise 20,000 Euro for a Transition Project Café in one day.

The Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran has said –

*You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.
For what are your possessions but things you keep
and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow?
And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the overprudent dog
burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?
And what is fear of need but need itself?
Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?*

There are those who give little of the much which they have—

*and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.
And there are those who have little and give it all.
These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.
There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.
And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.
And there are those who give and know not pain in giving,
nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue;
They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.
Through the hands of such as these God speaks,
and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.*

*It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding;
And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving.
And is there aught you would withhold?
All you have shall some day be given;
Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors'.*

*You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."
The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.
They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.
Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights,
is worthy of all else from you.*

*And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life
deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.
And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies in the courage
and the confidence, nay the charity, of receiving?*

*And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride,
that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed?
See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.
For in truth it is life that gives unto life while you,
who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness.*

*And you receivers... and you are all receivers... assume no weight of gratitude,
lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.
Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;
For to be overmindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity
who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father.*

Empowered funding is based upon the idea that the greatest gift we can give anyone in life is the chance to live a life of meaning, that makes a difference. We all have, as far as we can be certain, only one chance at this. What truly makes the biggest difference in creating a meaningful life is the projects we do. Such projects create us – they build (or destroy) our souls. As the wonderful resource book of Lynne Twist’s “The Soul of Money” states, our money carries our soul’s energy. What we appreciate will grow and appreciate. Putting our money in ways in accordance with our highest principles will lead these principles to flourish even more.

W.H.Murray in a 1930s attempt to ascend Mount Everest wrote “Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans, that the moment one definitely commits oneself then providence moves too. A whole stream of events of events issues from the decision raising in one’s favour all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no[one] could have dreamt would come [their] way. I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe’s couplets. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.” Try your own Empowered Fundraising campaign and watch the magic happen.

¹ From Lynne Twist’s web page

² Op cit

³ Lynne Twist (2003) “The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of Our Inner Resources” (W.W.Norton, NY)