

The gift of activism. Speaking truth to power
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We look at the maternal gift economy as satisfying needs directly, not as quid pro quo exchange.

However, in patriarchal capitalism there are needs of a system that is already based on exchange. it is a system that needs to maintain itself AND to BE maintained. Gifts have to be given to *IT*.

Wars are exchanges, vendettas, making pay and paying back, harms may be gratuitously given but they also may be seen as *needs* for punishment in which punishment is the 'gift' that makes the offender learn, sends a message...that creates new needs to which a 'gift' of harm as a message is a reply in a grotesque imitation of conversation, communication and community.

Democracy is a system of governance built upon the people's choices.
In order to make meaningful choices people need true information about situations.
In our system not only is true information a commodity but lies are also fashioned and produced as commodities. It is difficult to tell the difference.
Thus, peoples' needs for information and ways of receiving and understanding it are studied in academia and the ways of manipulating it are also bought and sold as commercial products.

The news channels, which are also supported by advertising, are targeted to different parts of the population that already have different biases that have been influenced by loaded information in the past. Ideological filters keep true news from arriving unaltered.

Democracy as the will of the people is not possible in this situation - or is only possible through the gift of the truth. But how to create this gift? We have to be visible and passionate or at least emphatic to break through the sheep like calm of those who believe what they are told, including that they ought to suspect the 'shrill' protestors.
The problem is also that in a fast-moving society, calm reason can be easily ignored. Impulse buying, quick turn over of merchandise is an important motor and we are used to speedy information and decisions. And the effective lies are expensive well-advertised and acceptable merchandise that are easy to 'buy'.
Thus, there is a *created* need for activism as speaking truth because the commerce - the social nexus - of the society is based on lies.

Our duty as good and relatively safe people in Capitalism is to look outside our boundaries to see where our well being comes from. Distance and safety create a problem for seeing and recognizing the truth. It's like a stage backdrop, and behind it are the ravages of world hunger and war, much of which is *caused* by our economy and our government's policies that makes us to some extent safe.

Finding ourselves in this environment of safety where we can still do something to help and recognizing that we can, is the springboard towards the moral obligation to do something, to

do our best, to change it *for those outside*. One way of doing that is revealing the truth to others who, like us are inside the bubble of safety and who can possibly help push those in power to change policies.

But many of us are held hostage in an alternative reality. Remember Jim Carey and the movie, *The Truman Show*, where a whole town and environment was built around a character who had been fooled all his life into believing it was real.

Distance protects people in the peaceful prosperous neighborhoods from the situations on the other side of town or the other side of the border or the other side of the world where people are dying from poverty created by colonial legacies and present international corporate exploitation, intensified by a climate crisis we first worlders have created in order to create our peaceful neighborhoods.

We have a pump up and trickle down economy, where gifts of free labor and nature are sucked upwards into capital as profit for those 'above' and barely trickle down to those 'below'.

We have to return to the gift economy we experience as motherers and children because it is the basic human species economy. And we have to start practicing it at all levels.

Gifts need to be received in order to actually be gifts, so in this case we have to be not only givers but receivers of the truth. Receiving is creative and active not passive.

It is our duty as truth seekers to listen to alternative news sources. And disbelieve the commercial mainstream that is concealing the truth under the cover of being 'balanced'..

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The people against gun violence and school shootings now in the USA use the motto "If you see something, say something."

But we should also have the motto "If you DON'T see something say something." We need to say and show what we are NOT seeing on the mainstream media.

We need to watch alternative programs like Democracy Now or particularly in the case of the genocide in Palestine, www.AlJazeera.com, the news program in English that comes from Qatar. Israel is not allowing reporters into Gaza, so Al Jazeera is using all Palestinian reporters and there are many interviews with the individual people of Gaza and real time footage from inside the hospitals and of the devastated buildings and streets. We also need to participate in and watch the demonstrations of groups like Jewish Voice for Peace and the marches in New York and Washington of many Pro Palestinian groups as well as the huge international marches worldwide.

And we need to watch alternative commentators here like Chris Hedges, Michael Moore, Aaron Matte, Glenn Greenwald of the Intercept, and interviews with speakers like Scott Ritter and Medea Benjamin.

And we need to join CODEPINK and speak out ourselves, giving the gift of the truth to whoever can receive it.

