

Culture of Peace: Allowing sufficiency to enrich our lives

By Bob Morse Ashland Culture of Peace Commission

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The death of her adoptive mom shifted Allison Epstein's perspective on families. Wanting a new relationship with money and abundance, Epstein participated in Making Peace with Money, a recent seminar provided by the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC) and the Global Force for Healing.

Kay Sandberg offered the ACPC workshop to elucidate misunderstandings about scarcity and truths about sufficiency, lessons learned while directing the Soul of Money Institute, founded by Lynne Twist, fundraiser extraordinaire. "There is so much suffering," laments Sandberg, "related to feeling there's not enough in a world of abundance."

Spending time in the Ecuadorian Amazon through the Pachamama Alliance, co-founded by Twist, shifted perspective for Sandberg. "People weren't hooked by money. I found profound sufficiency and so much wisdom in people who were just being who they are."

"My job," Sandberg realized, "is to help us reach a place of resourcefulness within community." One Soul of Money truth about sufficiency is that collaboration creates prosperity and strengthens community.

The day before Sandberg and I were to hold a conversation in the ACPC office with some of the seminar participants, she serendipitously met Ashlander Timothy Nobles, who is well aligned with Sandberg's world view. Nobles brought to our discussion a copy of the cartoon book he's authored, "More Than Enough: How We Enroll Billions of People to Implement Global Prosperity and Restore the Earth NOW."

According to Nobles, "We so underestimate our human capability. We have more than enough to create sustainable lives for all."

Crystal Arnold has a degree in international economics and is the founder of Money-Morphosis. She currently works as Director of Education at the Post Growth Institute at SOU. Arnold spoke to the importance of integrating feminine values to shift away from the growth economy that honors consumption above all else.

“Money can be used to bring us together instead of driving us apart,” says Arnold. “Circular economies are designed to steward human and natural resources more effectively. This develops true wealth, which includes not only financial, but also inner, relational, and environmental aspects.”

Arnold turned to Epstein who, like all moms, are not paid for their hard work and added, “It’s about valuing mothers.”

“A critical mass of us are coming to realize that relationships and family are most important,” Sandberg concurred. “When that becomes a normative experience, it shifts the larger scale to a currency of transformation.”

Nobles described how our current economic system focuses on controlling each other, protecting ourselves, and exploiting others. “There’s a 99 percent overhead to keep this system in place.”

Nobles’s antidote is the Golden Rule. “Treating each other with love, respect, and fairness gives the equivalent of every one of us winning the lottery.”

“One thing that’s moved me,” noted Sandberg, “is the generosity of humankind to support others in need.”

Sandberg shared an anecdote: “During the recent smoky days with hazardous air quality, it was a luxury to be able to stay indoors.” Sandberg spoke of one kind soul who recognized that our neighbors without homes hadn’t access to clean air and then purchased and distributed masks to people living on our streets. “If Ashland had a year-round shelter, more people could have lived indoors when needed, and this would contribute enormously to a culture of peace.”

“A genuine generosity of spirit is the essence of people in Ashland,” says Arnold, “which helps to bridge together the rich and the poor. People of wealth can foster even greater financial good in our community by buying from local businesses and circulating more cash in our local economy.”

Arnold spoke for her and Epstein's millennial generation. "Home ownership is out of reach for many youth, as Ashland has become gentrified. Many people our age can't afford housing; it dampens intergenerational diversity."

Nobles offered the reminder to focus our resources on expertise, not just finances, when moving toward creating a place of peace. Arnold agreed. "That is asset-based thinking, an alternative to talking about what's wrong or lacking. When we balance the masculine and the feminine and explore a wide-range of resources generatively, the nervous system relaxes."

In her work Arnold uses humor and storytelling to encourage people to share money stories and change money mindsets. "It's transformative. I help people realize that their worth cannot be fully measured by coins."

The name of the sexual-abuse-prevention organization with which Epstein is involved — Darkness to Light — is a metaphor for economic transition. A movement toward a culture of peace is a shift away from the inadequacy driven by unexamined thoughts of scarcity and a shift toward knowing that we don't need to compete for resources.

— *Bob Morse is an ambassador of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission. Email comments and questions to ashlandcpc@gmail.com. The ACPC website is www.ashlandcpc.org; like the commission on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AshlandCultureofPeaceCommission; follow twitter.com/AshlandPeace on Twitter. All are welcome to join the ACPC's Talking Circle at 11 a.m. each Tuesday and Community Meeting at 4 p.m. each Wednesday, both at the ACPC office, 33 First St., Suite 1, diagonally across Lithia Way from the Ashland Post Office.*



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