

# ***LIFEWEB DANCE***

*Gary James Sycalik*

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\* \* \* DRAFT EDITION \* \* \*

*Lifeweb Dance*

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Premises</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Process Premise . . . . .	1
1.2	Content Premises . . . . .	1
1.3	Drivers . . . . .	2
<b>2</b>	<b>Questions to Ponder</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	World in Crises, and Masterful Leadership . . . . .	6
2.2	The S Curve Chart . . . . .	7
2.3	Two Things I Am Against: . . . . .	8
2.4	Is Our Education System’s Content Credible? . . . . .	9
2.5	Further Questions About Education to Ponder While Alone in the Dark of Night . . . . .	11
2.6	How, Through Education, Do We Build the Man/Woman? . . . . .	15
2.7	One Approach . . . . .	16
2.8	Language Interface Modules (LIMs) . . . . .	17
<b>3</b>	<b>Questions and Comments</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Slaves of Yesterday or the Free Men of Tomorrow</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>About the Author</b>	<b>26</b>

# 1 Premises

Good Morning to all of you.<sup>1</sup>

Some people have inquired about the name of my presentation, which is “Lifeweb Dance.” The title represents an integration of concepts from two areas of our world, one is from the East, and one is from the West; both are Indian. The American Indian portion is derived from mythology about the spider and the web. The “dance of life” concept is from India. I’ve contemplated both concepts when forming this title.

As a backdrop to my presentation I’d like to share my premises about its process and content. My first slide relates to my presentation process.

## 1.1 Process Premise

*Questions are pathways to answers.*

I believe that questions are pathways to answers and actually, even more than pathways, questions provide a magnetic quality that elicits, or attracts answers. Furthermore, I believe that if we can articulate the proper questions, we’re well on our way to finding the answers to our quest.

I request that you listen to the questions, contemplate each, then silently reply. I envision that the articulation of these questions will help us in our ability to subsequently dialogue today and tomorrow. Many of the questions that I ask will not be answered. Actually, I hope to create more questions than answers during our brief interaction.

The next slide delineates fundamental premises regarding my presentation content.

## 1.2 Content Premises

**Premise 1:** *We create our lifeweb, and dance upon it—all that which is: “the good, bad, and the ugly!”*

**Premise 2:** *Generally, we don’t ask systemic questions about creating the good “from” the bad and the ugly!*

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<sup>1</sup>This article is an edited transcription of a lecture given by Gary Sycalik at the University of Science and Philosophy’s September 2001 Symposium: *New Education for the New Millennium—Creative Proposals for Transformation in Education.*

**Premise 3:** *Education is not well understood from a contextual viewpoint relative to premise 1 and 2.*

**Premise 4:** *Formal education is institutionally fragmented into Towers of Babel, and hence in many ways is part of the problem, instead of part of the solution.*

My first premise is that we, individually and collectively, create our Lifeweb (the energetic basis for our life experience), and dance upon it; all that which is the good, the bad, and the ugly. Basically, I believe this to be true. Much research exists which indicates that the majority of us are unaware of the tremendous power we possess to create our individual life reality. Frontier science continues to further substantiate this cause and effect relationship.

My second premise is, generally that we do not ask systemic questions about creating the “good” from the “bad and the ugly.” Once we (individually and collectively) find ourselves in a situation that we do not like, we have difficulty formulating systemic questions—the really important questions—that might assist us in transforming our current life experience into a new reality of preference. Instead, we seem to be caught in a circle of repeat, repeat, and repeat.

My third premise is that education is not well understood from a contextual viewpoint relative to premise one and two. In other words, formal education is not helping us much within this context. It’s not assisting us to substantively transform the bad and the ugly into the good. It’s not helping us to understand that we created the lifeweb upon which we are dancing.

My fourth premise is that formal education is institutionalized into Towers of Babel and hence in many ways is part of the problem, instead of part of the solution. Formal education has a perpetuating influence upon our dance in the web within which we’re caught, and we realize not from our educational process how we can systemically change that web, and create a new life dance.

What sustains these premises? Many drivers sustain these premises. I’ve listed a few in the next slide.

### 1.3 Drivers

- *Arrogance*
- *Ignorance*
- *Overspecialization*

- *Reductionistic-Mind-Syndrome*

Two drivers are frequently entwined. They are “AI,” and that doesn’t stand for Artificial Intelligence. It stands for *arrogance*, and *ignorance*. Many of us are very arrogant, which accumulates into an arrogant society, nation, and humankind. If you pause, and look at our society anew, you can see a pattern of arrogance existing within our educational institutions, within our political institutions, and within our religious institutions.

Arrogance is more dangerous than ignorance, in my opinion. When someone is ignorant, and not arrogant, they might be willing to explore new perspectives. Arrogance, however, assumes a state of superior understanding, or knowing, whether the assumption is well founded, or not. Sometimes we find arrogance coupled with brilliance and much expertise. However, all too frequently we, unfortunately, find arrogance coupled with ignorance.

Arrogant experts block new understanding long after compelling information supports its accuracy. This block is one of the reasons why a great many of great thinkers and inventors encounter great difficulty bestowing their gifts upon society. I could name many within this category, including Albert Einstein, Nikola Tesla, W. Edwards Deming, and Walter Russell. Each of these has experienced peer rejection from those arrogant experts who speak on behalf of the academic and professional domains in which they operate. To a large extent the arrogant experts who are in a position of control say, “nay, you cannot publish because your idea is too radical.” Why? One of the reasons (certainly not the only one) the experts say “nay,” is because if they said “yes,” and the new information is published, and they, the current experts, don’t understand the new information, then the expert decision makers are no longer the expert authorities, and may soon thereafter become ex-decision makers. Decisions made based upon inadequate information are frequently negatively compounded when those who don’t know are unaware that they don’t know. Arrogance is the glue that anchors this situation far longer than is warranted, and in some cases the situation can become very dangerous for many.

Another very prevalent driver is reductionistic-mind-syndrome. Specialists have taken apart that which is “whole” to the degree that the specialists no longer fully understand how to put it back together. We exist within a specialist-specialist’s-specialty. Please understand that I am not stating that specialists are not needed. Specialists are very much needed. I am stating, however, that someone has to continually maintain a contextual understanding about how all the pieces fit together, and how decisions in one realm effect other realms. We have not performed this task well. A better balance is needed between the number of generalist-experts, and specialty-experts. A new hierarchical expert-placement methodology, and a new communications methodology between generalists and specialists, could

enhance our whole systems understanding, and thus yield better decisions; consequently enhancing our quality of life.

If light aligns with thought-focused-images, and manifestation results from these images (which summarizes theories from many disciplines), guess what are the results when we create this reductionistic-mind-syndrome focus? We then create a condition of over-specialization. This result cannot be otherwise, because we create that which we focus upon. If the focus is continually on the myopic, then eventually the contextual understanding of the whole, and how all parts fit together, is forgotten. We then experience over-specialization. And we have. Bucky Fuller stated that over-specialization is one of the major problems within modern society. I absolutely concur.

What happens when all these drivers exist simultaneously? We then create institutional entrenchment, intractable mindsets, artificial pride, righteousness, and eventually action-lunacy. If we examine righteousness, it fuels absolute judgment, and metaphorically speaking, generally stands in an inflexible place, and unequivocally states, "I'm absolutely right, and you're absolutely wrong." From this inflexible position, righteousness manifests actions in our world, whether it's from a religious standpoint, a scientific standpoint, or a philosophic standpoint. Frequently, righteous indignation is directed at any who might have the audacity to presuppose that their creative ideas have merit. "We know we're right, and you shall bow to our rightness," sayeth the arrogant, and the righteous. That's a dangerous combination. This condition yields zealots. It yielded the Crusades, and the Spanish Inquisition. It yields people like Osama Bin Laden.

Recently, on September 11, 2001, we witnessed terrorist-created tragedies in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. Long, long ago, another tragedy occurred. The Vatican leaders called forth the knights and the armies to suppress the Cathars. The Cathars were a group of people living in southern France who believed in a direct mystical relationship with their divine source. They believed that they did not need to bow to a Vatican Pope as an intermediary between themselves and their God. So, according to some accounts, the knights and the armies, under the banner of religion, slew thousands of men, women and children in a very short period of time. The motivation for the slaughter that occurred in olden times is similar to the slaughter occurring in recent times. The motivation is, in part, religious righteousness tainted with arrogance. I submit to you that this is lunacy. The attitude that "I speak on God's behalf, therefore I am completely right, and you are completely wrong, and furthermore, you shall submit to my righteous control," is not emanating from Spirit; but rather from an egocentric need to control others, which emanates from fear existing within the would-be controllers. Myopic viewpoints foster such action.

Arrogance is also a factor in the creation of such things as ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) sonar for submarines. What the further consequences of this technology will be to

ocean life is unknown. However, many scientists have issued dire warnings. We also have created projects such as HAARP (High-Frequency Active Auroral Research) where scientists experiment on the Earth's energy belts (superheating the Earth's ionosphere) without understanding what might be the results or consequences. Again, many scientists have issued dire warnings of potentially severe consequences. Everyone has a vested interest in the Earth's energy belts. So, who gave them permission to do that? I didn't; did you? I didn't think so.

## 2 Questions to Ponder

- *Is our world in crisis, and if so, how does that relate to our education system? What are the warning indicators, systemic trends, trend-drivers, and driving values?*
- *What are the systemic relationships among technology, business, government, education?*
- *If we weave our web from our beliefs, dance within its confines, and truly reap what we sow, then why do we fight against taking responsibility for creating our reality?*
- *Why are we, seemingly, caught in mental circles of shallow analysis, econometrics, and sensory effects?*
- *Why do we “wonder in the lifeweb,” and react to our creations without the understanding that having created what we see, we can choose to create something different?*
- *Why don't we seem to know the key questions to ask?*
- *Are thoughts “energetic constructs?” If so, what are the implications?*
- *What are nonlocal field effects, and what are their implications?*

Is our world in crisis and if so, how does that relate to our education system? The following are further questions which provide contextual framing relative to the foregoing question. What are the crisis warning indicators, systemic trend drivers, and values basis? With what are we dealing? What are we really seeing, when we view our world events? What are the unfolding patterns? What are the systemic relationships among technology, business, government, and education? Do we know? Are these important questions? What do you think?

If we weave our Lifeweb from our values, beliefs, and attitudes, dance within its confines, and truly reap what we sow, then why do we fight against accepting responsibility for

creating our reality? Why are we seemingly caught in mental circles of shallow analysis, econometric measurements, and sensory effects? Why do we wander in our Lifeweb as one wandering in the wilderness, and react to our creations without the understanding that we have created that which we experience? I propose that we can choose to create something different. Why don't we seem to know the key questions to ask relative to the "how" to create that "something" which is different?

Are thoughts things? If so, what are the implications?<sup>2</sup> Especially, what are the implications for people existing within downward, or upward life-spirals? Where are we now (upward, or downward), collectively? Paradoxically, humankind probably exists in both. Some people are consciously moving in one direction, and others are moving in a, seemingly, opposite direction. One key factor is that we are all in the global Lifeweb Dance together. We are all on one ship called "Earth," sailing upon the Solar system's ocean. While we might be aware of this "fact," many of us seem not to truly understand the ramifications of our decision trends in this regard.

Did anybody ever see a movie called *The Dark Crystal*? I recommend it highly. Those of you who have watched the movie, would you agree? It's pertinent to our current world state of affairs. The animated movie deals with the fragmentation of a species into two sub-types, and the consequences of that fragmentation. It is worthwhile to watch.

This next chart was created seven years ago, and unfortunately, it is still applicable.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.1 World in Crises, and Masterful Leadership

We have a leadership crisis, an economic crisis, an education crisis, and an information crisis; also, crises of terrorism, health, environment, and infrastructure. If that's the case, what do we need in order to solve these crises? We need masterful leadership, which seems to be a rare commodity. Reactionary leadership, on the other hand, is quite prevalent. Little proactive leadership is demonstrated. Additionally, we need to understand completely that it is necessary for us to do something different in order to solve our crises. We cannot continue to "do the same thing." If we continue in the same manner, we will create the same outcome. Basically, we require a new level of thinking. Einstein stated this relationship so well in the following quote:

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we used when we created them."

—Albert Einstein

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<sup>2</sup>Search for cymatics, and non-local field effects on the Internet, for information with interesting relevance.

<sup>3</sup>Not included, but discussed herein.

A modified “S” curve can be used to describe the evolution of many things existing within Nature, and also many man-made things. I shall use it to imply the need for a new level of thinking.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 The S Curve Chart

A modified S curve can be used to describe a corporation during various stages of development. This curve can also be used to describe the stages of product development. An example is a computer company involved in a product design stage, which is preponderantly a creative stage. This stage is represented by the bottom portion of the S curve. The replication, or production stage, wherein the product is marketed and distributed, is represented by the middle portion of the S curve. Eventually, the market for that particular computer model will mature, saturate, and diminish; and this final stage is represented by the upper portion of the S curve. Thus this product life-cycle is ended. A new level of thinking is necessary prior to the product’s obsolescence, in order to have a new product ready for transition into fulfillment of a new market demand—otherwise the company will fail when the old products become obsolete.

Sequentially linked S curves can also be used to describe the life-cycle process, or evolution of a group. In this chart, I’m referring to the life-cycle process of evolution as it relates to a group of any kind, be it a team, organization, community, or a nation. First, people come together (assembly). Next is the investigation stage. The next stage is a discovery of common ground (ideas, concepts, methods). Then, however, a stage is reached wherein a realization of differences occurs. The realization of differences sets the stage for a crisis.

The crisis stage also includes an opportunity, in addition to danger. At this point, the participants enter either into a break-through transformation stage, or a break-apart stage. What are some of the characteristics that will drive such a crisis into a break-through transformation stage, instead of a break-apart stage?

Characteristics of break-apart stages include: an insistence on “doing;” addiction to task; fragmented strategy; refusal to learn, grow, and change; old paradigm fixation; regressive adolescence; fear-based; aggression; need for control; mistrust; linear thinking; dependence on sameness; low creativity. The group has to transition itself “into” (become) the new “products” (metaphorically speaking) in order to be more relevant to the present “state of affairs,” or the new marketplace.

On the other hand, characteristics of the break-through transformation stage include: openness to learning, growing, changing; seeking the creation of relative context; high in-

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<sup>4</sup>Not included, but discussed herein.

tegrity; paradigm expansion; progressive maturation; trust; being relational; high creativity; and successfully framing key questions.

The comparison can be further delineated as a matrix relationship. Mapping the characteristics under a Break-apart category, versus a Break-through category, includes: “doing,” versus “being;” “addiction to task,” instead of “discovery of possibilities;” “sameness,” versus a “union of differences;” “fear,” versus “trust;” “resistance to learning,” versus “seeking new learning;” opposition to new approaches, versus investigation of new approaches; regression to adolescence during disagreements, versus progression to maturity during disagreements; focus on data and information, versus a focus on knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; fragmented perspective, versus a synergistic perspective; control, versus mastery leadership; construct-focused overview, versus context-focused overview; repression of creativity, versus nurturing of creativity.

I submit to you that we need new levels of thinking, more masterful leadership, proactive methods, and new education architecture, in order to better deal with our world in crises. Specifically, in order not to make it necessary for students to “unlearn” much of what is taught, the education system has to lead the way in the design of new courses which assist students to learn better ways of thinking and doing. Memorized facts generally become outdated and obsolete quickly in our rapidly changing society. However, skills gained in independent thinking, process thinking, systems thinking, creative thinking, and pattern recognition, would serve each student well through their entire life. Once these process skills are embodied, the practitioner can look forward to influencing change in a beneficial direction, instead of resisting change because of alignment with irrelevant skills embedded within information constructs no longer relevant in the present moment in time.

The next slide well describes the position of many people.

### **2.3 Two Things I Am Against:**

1. The Status Quo
2. Change

And we circle in the wilderness because of this attitude. Interestingly, no matter how much we resist change, change will arrive anyway. Sometimes we believe we can stop it, but no one can.

The truth of the next quote is due, in part, to the previous slide’s stated observation:

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

—Albert Einstein

I like this quote very much. Further reasons why this quote is true are due to intransigent arrogance and righteousness.

Relative to the subject of engineering change, I love this next quotation.

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

From Gandhi, very succinctly stated: “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Who here can say this is not true? This statement describes a fundamental component of masterful leadership.

Relative to our education system, it is appropriate to ask a number of questions that relate to the possibility of modifying the mindset-keystone of education architecture, several of which are described in the next slide.

## 2.4 Is Our Education System’s Content Credible?

- *How much of what is taught, is true?*
- *Of that which is true, how much is of deep value?*

Two very pertinent questions, about our educational system, are how much of that which is taught is true, and of that which is true, how much is of deep value to us during our life process? Relative to what is true, I shall refer to “documented” history about Christopher Columbus. We all learned “facts” about Christopher Columbus. While attending school when we were tested about the exploration voyages by Columbus we recalled a memory aid, the little musical ditty, “In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Is this rhyme true?

Well, Columbus did sail, probably. Was Columbus the first to discover America? Probably not! Did Columbus ever set foot on the American continent? Probably not! Was Leif Eriksson the first to discover America, a thousand years before the Columbus voyages? Eriksson quite probably landed in America. Did he discover it? Probably not! Evidence indicates others arrived before, perhaps even the early Phoenicians.

However, when we really “get down to it,” isn’t our question more than a little arrogant? How can anyone land upon the shores of a country, and “claim” it on behalf of the country from which they sailed, when people are already living there? Personally, as a youth I could

never resolve that incongruity. As an adult, I understand why, but I don't like the answer. To me, these so-called "discoveries" epitomizes thievery via armed aggression.

Regarding the subjects of both what is relevant, and what is true within educational content, I recall a quote which I included in an editorial written about twenty-one years ago. While I don't remember all the details, I shall impart the substance. A medical class was graduating from either Oxford or Cambridge. A professor was addressing the graduating class. When the professor was concluding his remarks, he added, "I have a confession: fifty percent of what we taught to you is not true." Most everyone was surprised, and some aghast! Then he continued, "Furthermore, we don't know which fifty percent." This is supposed to be a true story, by the way.

When we view our education system within the context of how it affects our ability to think creatively, I'm reminded of a study that was conducted with approximately two thousand children living in New Jersey. I cited this study during one of my lectures in the early 1980s, so the study is not new. The study objective was to measure the creative capacity of children before attending, and while attending school. Guess what happened? The children were very creative up to about the age of six; tremendously creative. Then creativity began to decrease. At some point in time, I don't remember if it was during junior high school or high school, it leveled off at a substantially lower level, and remained there. What can you conclude from that study? You may be able to hypothesize that formal education is not conducive for maintaining creative ability.

Another interesting observation is that after some of these students graduate from high school, subsequently enter into the higher education system, and eventually pursue a Ph.D. certification, all of a sudden the Professors state, "Thou shall now be creative. Create an original thesis; something new." Meanwhile, where is the creative ability? By then, creativity has been severely diminished. The method of memorizing "facts," and reciting those facts during testing, served students well, while they were moving through the educational system as it is currently structured. However, suddenly this method became insufficient, by itself, to move further towards a Ph.D. certification, or in a post-college life stage.

Let us briefly view our educational system (both formal and default) as it relates to the documentation of our country's history and foreign affairs. Do you believe that all you read historically, relative to what was done to whom, is accurate? Does one country's history of a war dovetail with its adversary's version? Probably not. Do the newspaper and television news coverage accurately portray world events from a true and objective contextual perspective? Can we depend upon standard media sources to obtain accurate news information? Why do all major television stations, and all major newspapers, carry the same stories, at the same time, with the same perspectives, presented about those same

stories? Does the current organizational news structure produce sufficiently accurate news reports to serve our need to be informed in a true and substantive way?

Concerning what is true, and what is not, relative to terrorists' motivations against the US, I read a quote by an Afghani woman on September 19th (eight days after the September 11th terrorist attacks) in a *USA Today* newspaper. She made a very interesting statement. I think we should contemplate it. She said, "Americans think. Why does the whole world hate you?" I submit to you that while the whole world does not hate us, a significant portion does, and the reason might not all be caused by jealousy about our high standard of living in the U.S. Perhaps we should examine that question more carefully and ponder it from a number of perspectives. Something seems to be missing, relative to the common understanding about why the terrorist attack on September 11th occurred. What is that something?

The next slide presents further questions regarding education for your consideration.

## 2.5 Further Questions About Education to Ponder While Alone in the Dark of Night

- *What is the purpose of education?*
- *If we better understood the purpose, how would we design curriculum and content to achieve that purpose?*
- *How would we best deliver/teach that curriculum?*
- *What is education by default?*
- *What is our myth about knowledge?*
- *Do we revere intellect and logic? What are the implications?*
- *Do we participate in a conspiracy for mediocrity?*
- *What is the relationship between our life experience and education?*
- *Is our educational system significantly based upon artificial systems?*
- *What is the source of learning?*
- *Is our education system based primarily upon data-analysis sensing functions?*
- *What is the relationship among data, information, knowledge, and wisdom?*

- *What are we attempting to build?*

What is the purpose of education? This, truly, is an important question which desperately begs to be considered with a new level of thinking. If we better understood the purpose, how would we design curriculum and content to achieve that purpose? How would we deliver that content? What is education by default, and what is its impact? By default, I mean all other sources that we don't consider to be constituted within the formal education system. What are we being taught as an individual, and a society, through the default educational system, such as television? What are the people of lesser developed countries being taught by the U.S. television programs, received and watched in a context void of any experience of the viewer ever having visited the U.S.? What is our myth about knowledge? Do we revere intellect and logic more than wisdom and compassion, and if so, what are the implications? Do we participate in a conspiracy for mediocrity? Relative to the last question, my opinion is that we certainly do.

What is the relationship between our life experience and the education system? Is our education system significantly based upon artificial systems (artificial systems, as opposed to, and in contrast to, natural systems, which are based upon the laws of Nature) and therefore, less relevant to our journey upon life's pathway? What is our true source of learning? Is our education system primarily based upon data, analysis, and sensing functions? And if so, what are the implications of this basis? What is the relationship among data, information, knowledge, and wisdom? I believe that these are crucial questions.

Joseph Campbell, an educator (whose name most of you probably recognize), after retiring from Sarah Lawrence College, visited various parts of the United States, where he shared his wisdom with many retirees. He gained new wisdom in doing so. One of his observations during his presentations and interactions with people, who had retired after climbing the "ladder of success," was that they were not happy. One of Joseph's conclusions about those retired people was phrased as follows: "I found that those people climbed the ladder of success, only to learn that it was leaning on the wrong wall." What further can we deduce from Joseph's conclusion?

A critical question is, what are we attempting to build with our education system.

"In vain we build the city if we do not first build the man."

—Edwin Markham

This is one of the most important quotes I have ever seen. It becomes more relevant as time passes and we observe the consequences of more lunacy, more righteousness, and more arrogance in our world. As we soar in the skies, travel to the moon, and perform all kinds of "things" faster, and supposedly "better," what are we building? Are we primarily building better annihilation tools? "In vain we build the city if we do not first build the man."

So, how do we do that—“first build the man,” especially through the formal education process? How do we accomplish this objective? Perhaps we might begin with “Life 101,” in which we teach a living philosophy based upon a knowledge of the laws of Nature which governs man/woman/humanity. What a novel idea! Such a course could actually be of immense assistance to students as they formulate their life path.

While attending college I studied Differential Equations, and Integral Calculus which, granted, exercised my mind. If I ask myself whether Life 101, and Life 102, or Differential Equations, and Integral Calculus would have been of more use to me in my life, there is no doubt that it would be Life 101, and Life 102 (as I envision such courses).

We arrive on Earth, we’re born, and somehow while passing through that doorway to Earth, the “Manual of Life” was left behind, and we struggle without it. At some point during our lifetime, most of us attempt to locate that lost manual. It seems to me that it would be appropriate for our education system to include a substantial part of that manual. Does it? What do you think, based upon your experience with life inside the educational system, and with life outside the education system?

In addition to Life 101, and Life 102, what else of merit could be included in the new educational curriculum? Perhaps subjects such as “pattern recognition” would be appropriate, which is that which has to do with “signatures.” This course could assist people to learn how to better recognize patterns within dots/points/data/information.

Flying geese have a unique signature. You all recognize flying geese from afar, because of their unique flying pattern. Running elephants have a unique signature. Running giraffes have a different signature, or configuration, which is also unique. The word “Earth” has a unique configuration, or pattern, which conveys an agreed upon meaning to you. A test conducted by a technician with a special instrument called a Spectrum Analyzer can analyze the “signature” of minerals and identify each by the unique characteristics, or signature of each. These examples exemplify the manner in which we identify that which we view. How well do we connect the dots within our individual life unfoldment and understand the “signatures” of our experiences? Probably not as well as we do with those objectified “things” “out there” in the world. If not, why not?

When you read a newspaper, you see an information “dot” (metaphorically speaking) here, another information “dot” in another news story, and hear more news coverage about the same subject from another source. How many people have been trained to think with sufficient independence that would enable them to objectively recognize the hidden signature (by connecting the dots) of that which is occurring from a deep causal driver basis, instead of from just the contextual framing, slant, or conclusions of the writer? If more people possessed this discerning capability, how would this change our world?

Do we teach independent thinking, or values clarification in schools? Do we really, even know our own values? Is it important to know your inner values well? Our deep values and attitudes are the drivers of our decisions. I submit that most people are not aware of their deep values and therefore are primarily robotic in their reactions. We “ricochet off” things that “happen” to us during our daily experience. We walk down the street and somebody smiles, we smile in return; someone rudely gestures during a traffic flow disagreement and we gesture back in like kind. Many students have their lives designed by others without ever knowing what interests them most (which is driven by their own deep values). How could we become less robotic? Perhaps “Principles of Life 101,” and also “How to Discover Your Life Passions 101,” could significantly assist in this objective. Joseph Campbell advised students to “follow your bliss.” Another way of stating the foregoing is: follow your life path inspirations that emerges from your deep values.

I also strongly believe that we should teach “systems thinking” in our schools. What is that? It’s essentially “contextual thinking.” Another way of describing systems thinking is that it’s “process thinking.” After studying much over many years, I have concluded that we would greatly benefit by being more aware of the whole-life-system. As we make decisions about the system’s parts, it is important to be aware that when we destroy a system, such as by dissection, we no longer have that system. If you dissect a body, the body will disappear. On one level we know this, yet on another level, we seem not to fully understand, because some of us are dissecting Earth’s natural systems, and in so doing adversely impacting all of humankind’s quality of life. Why are we acting in this manner? Is this magnitude of destruction necessary in order to maintain progressive economic development? I have concluded that it is not.

It is also appropriate to understand that the way in which we comprehend information is from a “network perspective.” Information cognition is an awareness that is always contextually referenced to something else: therefore it is part of a network. In order to be meaningful, the information cannot exist separately. It has to exist within a network information system.

“Columbus in 1492” means something to you. However, if I said, “John in 1823,” what would that mean to you? Quite probably it would mean absolutely nothing to you. “Columbus in 1492,” means something to you, because you have a contextual reference for this particular pattern of words within an information network, whereas with “John in 1823,” you do not. How well are the subjects and the course contents comprehensively packaged in an interlocking network information system for students? How well are the pieces that are contained within a four-year college program glued together (comprehensively) by the institutionalized methodologies for program delivery?

My opinion is that the information network is not well glued together, or made sufficiently contextually relevant in order to provide each student a basic skeleton or framework upon which, and within which, to appropriately place the rapid incoming stream of dots/data/information to each student.

The next slide addresses Edwin Markam's quote from the standpoint of how do we use the education system to build a better man and woman?

## 2.6 How, Through Education, Do We Build the Man/Woman?

*First: teach a living philosophy based upon a knowledge of the Laws of Nature which govern man/woman/humanity.*

*Second: include subjects such as:*

- *Pattern recognition—signatures*
- *Independent thinking*
- *Values Clarification*
- *Systems Thinking—(contextual thinking) (process thinking)*
- *Whole Systems—Systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected into its component parts*
- *Knowledge as a Network*
- *Cause and effect; the daisy chain of creation*
- *Data, information, knowledge, and wisdom interrelationships*
- *Good health and happiness through self-realization*
- *Commanding one's life by aligning with the laws of Nature*
- *Bridging Functions to the concept that everything is connected to everything else via:*
  - *Interdisciplinary courses*
  - *Cross functional teams in business, research, and government*
  - *Synthesis*
  - *Union of Differences*

– *Open Forums*

- *Courses on values and technology—values and scientific research, (values are not peripheral to Science and technology, rather fundamental to them)*

In order to understand the life process better, we need to better understand the “daisy chain of creation” (cause and effect ripples). Within this slide, I again include the subject of data, information, knowledge, and wisdom. Understanding the aforementioned relationship is critical to the task of designing educational programs well. I submit to you that information is *not* knowledge, and is certainly not wisdom. What is knowledge? To me, knowledge is a deep contextual understanding of information. Knowledge can be stimulated within students, but not imparted.

What is wisdom? To me, wisdom is knowledge, lovingly applied. Again, wisdom can be stimulated or elicited within students, but not imparted. By chance, should we include such curriculum subjects as wellness creation? And what about attaining happiness through self-realization, as part of the educational process? Would we be “wise” to do so? I believe that we would. Furthermore, I submit to you that we should also design courses on science and technology subjects that include values, such as would be embodied within the courses, “Scientific Research and Values 101,” and “Applied Science and Values 102,” in order that we better understand what it is we’re “about,” in our fast-paced pursuit of faster, better, and bigger. What is it that we are creating in such a fast-paced manner? Do we really know? If we don’t know, how dangerous do you think it is not to know?

The next slide describes component parts of one approach currently underway which addresses the following: Edwin Markam’s “building the man;” providing a better skeleton or framework for the placement and storing of information; ameliorating over-specialization; and reuniting our industrial technology engine with an in-house values-based engineer (metaphorically speaking).

## 2.7 One Approach

- *The marriage of “Science and Philosophy”*
- *SHBU (The Science of the Human Being Within Its Universe)*
- *LIMs (Language Interface Modules)*

What can we do to enhance the quality of life on our planet? In terms of putting “pieces” back together that have been academically separated by artificial lines of demarcation, perhaps initially, through a concept of the union (reuniting) of that which is perceived to be

very different domains, such as science and philosophy. Hundreds of years ago, these two domains were integrated. What would happen if we reintegrated science and philosophy within the halls of academia, at least to some degree? I happen to know of an organization that has accomplished exactly that reunion. The organization began in 1948, and is called the “University of Science and Philosophy” (USP).

One of USP’s programs involves the science, research, and education area. This program includes the creation of a “Universal Model.” Why would anyone want to create a Universal Model? The answer is that it might function as a road map (to anyone interested) that illustrates the inter-relationships among the parts that we have separated, and subsequently forgotten how to reintegrate well as a total system. This model might also help to ameliorate the Tower of Babel that we have produced. It might assist us from becoming lost even further in our maze of specialty.

The next slide illustrates the design approach that we within USP are currently engaging, in order to create a Universal Model, and Language Interface Modules (LIMs), that have applicability in any part of life, including government, physics, chemistry, astronomy, astrobiology, and microbiology. If it truly is a model of life itself, how could it not be relevant to everything?

## 2.8 Language Interface Modules (LIMs)

This chart shows the domains of astronomy, biology, physics, and chemistry, among others. Guess what? The languages of each are very, very different. These domain languages contribute greatly to our Tower of Babel. These domains are vertical information constructs that exist almost autonomously relative to each other. If a breakthrough occurs in one domain, and that breakthrough has significant applicability in another domain, do you think scientists from the other domains generally know about this breakthrough? Sometimes, after many years elapse, such as in one case 15 years. So, what can we do about this situation? Perhaps, create programs that foster inter-domain communications.

One approach to accomplish better inter-domain communication is to develop the Universal Model in conjunction with Language Interface Modules (LIMs), which are placed between each of the scientific domains and the model. On this chart, Biology has a Language Interface Module between it and the Universal Model, and so does each of the other domains. Within each LIM we plan to correspondingly map the key words, phrases, and concepts within each domain, to the key words, phrases, and concepts within the Universal Model, so that each domain expert-scientist can more easily understand the Universal Model. If scientists choose, they can mentally travel through their domain LIM, as a language pathway to the Universal Model, and on into any other domain. This is an example of

an educational strategy applicable to curriculum design, and content development, which I think is going to be helpful to assist us in finding a more common language within our Tower of Babel. I submit that the formal education system desperately needs more course subjects that could be described as “integral studies” or “cross-disciplinary studies.” A course based upon the Universal Model, in conjunction with the LIMs, is such an example.

SHBU (refer to previous slide) stands for the USP’s “Science of the Human Being in its Universe,” at the heart of which is the Universal Model. The name implies that within this model we are perceiving ourselves as being integral with Nature. Portions of society seem to have erroneously constructed a paradigm in which they are mentally separate from Nature, and from this vantage point believe that control over Nature can be achieved. From this detached vantage point it matters less if Nature is destroyed, because the belief is that science and technology will bring forth the solution to rebuild Nature better.

Relying on technology to rebuild parts of Nature that have been destroyed seems very unwise to me. Humans are not separate from Nature. Our solar system is part of our galaxy, Earth is part of the Solar system, and humans are part of Earth. We are not separate from Earth. The laws of Nature apply to humans. We are not exempt from those laws. Walter Russell said, “You may command Nature to the extent only in which you are willing to obey her.” This is an important statement, and extremely germane to our current state of world affairs. Unless we acquire more knowledge, and lovingly apply that knowledge, we may eventually unleash a powerful destructive technology, the effects of which are a threat to all forms of biological life, that we cannot undo.

Walter Russell also stated that within the universe exists one law. If we use one word to describe that one law, it would be *balance*. If we use two words to describe the one law, they would be *balanced interchange*. If we use three words to describe the one law, they would be *rhythmic balanced interchange*. This law implies that all things are connected to everything else.

I stated previously that in my opinion, wisdom is knowledge, lovingly applied. Recently, much has been written and spoken about light and love. This is important. I also believe that the majority of us do not really understand light and love. We are, however, seeking to more fully understand light and love, as we progress within the maturation process as a species. Within the USP philosophy, light has a much broader meaning than is currently used within scientific realms. A book entitled *The Divine Iliad* by Walter Russell can provide the reader with new insights into the subjects of light and love. So can *The Secret of Light* by the same author.

After many years of observation, I have concluded that a divergence exists (an increasing gap) between humankind’s maturation evolution, and our technical evolution, which has resulted in the creation of much destruction. Our technological advancement has far

outstripped our maturity to use our powerful technologies in a balanced manner. We all know that it is unwise to give a loaded gun to an immature child. Then I ask you, why do highly developed countries manufacture weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and then provide these weapons to militant people who are not sufficiently mature to revere all life? Does our current educational system contribute to the formation of such imbalanced decisions? If so, how could it be otherwise?

Many adults are psychologically more similar to large children than to mature adults. When positions of power are bestowed upon immature adults, we reap the consequences of immature decisions. Relative to immature decisions, would the U.S. be under better stewardship with a President who possesses a photographic memory, and is immaturely vindictive, or with a President who is somewhat forgetful, but is very mature, and very wise?

Force met with force is sometimes, but not always, the best choice. Retribution, as a motivating force, or goal, is never in the best interest of anyone involved. Unless we stop, see things anew, and think anew, we become lost in the maze regarding that whole chain of retaliatory reactions. Someone, sometime, has to say, "it shall stop here, I will not seek retribution." Someone in Belfast, Ireland, within one of those two Irish factions, and also someone in Jerusalem, an Israeli, or Palestinian, must say "yes, even though my son was killed, I shall not seek revenge; rather, I shall advocate forgiveness, and will work to create peace between our peoples." Others must then join the masterful leadership of this man or woman, to create peace in the manner of first becoming that change which they wish to see in the world. Based upon current trends, in order for there to be a reasonably pleasant future for humankind, the sanity of a few masterful leaders must engage the many, and influence a change in humankind's decisions and actions, more conducive to the establishment of true peace.

Previous approaches to the aforementioned conflicts (Irish, and the Middle East) have not been very successful. The lack of success implies that we must think differently, in order to foster a more successful outcome. We must also act differently. What else must we do? Does our current education system effectively foster a maturation process? What is the degree of difficulty involved in switching from a competitive mindset, formulated over twelve to sixteen (plus) years of schooling, which sees itself separate and in competition with all else, compared to a collaborative mindset, which sees itself as part of the whole? Which of the two mindsets foster a deep sense of connectedness to each other, and to the Earth's natural systems? Which mindset is imparted to students during their 12 to 20 years' attendance within the "halls of knowledge?" Which mindset would you rather have embodied by the world's leaders? Which mindset do you believe a masterful leader would embody?

Perhaps a balance which consists of both mindsets, wisely applied, which is appropriate to each unique situation.

Some of us understand, to a certain extent, that we are all connected on a deep level. How much of that is understood by the average citizen? Perhaps not much. Could education play a significant role in providing insights into that interrelationship? I believe that it could.

### 3 Questions and Comments

Do any of you have questions, or comments?

**Question (Audience)** In reference to the area where you discussed the conspiracy of mediocrity, I'm wondering if you've observed whether there are any conspiracies for mediocrity, such as in gravitational systems, or animal kingdoms, and if so, are there any systems which offer an alternative?

**Reply (Sycalik)** The word conspiracy is formulated from "conspire," which essentially, in its broadest sense, means to breathe together. When we use the word "conspiracy," we usually are referring to something we consider to be bad, and most dictionaries convey such a meaning. Generally, we discover conspiracies that generate a quality of life about that which we are not comfortable; we deem them to be bad, and seek a different state of affairs. However, I believe that a conspiracy can also be good. We could conspire to host a birthday party for you. A Greek novelist, Nikos Kazantzakis, used the word conspirators in a positive connotation as follows: "like conspirators, that they might unite for the sake of the Earth." Pierre Teilhard de Chardin used the phrase, "conspiracy of love," in his writing.

Sure, there is a conspiracy in Nature, in the sense that it is a system that breathes together; but in my opinion, not within the same context that we would normally use the term conspiracy, with a negative connotation. So to answer your question from the commonly accepted context, not in my opinion; no.

**Question (Audience)** This "conspiracy for mediocrity;" wasn't that a term that you used?

**Reply (Sycalik)** I did refer to "conspiracy for mediocrity," which I believe exists in education. Essentially this conspiracy is a webdance that some people have chosen to create, and participate within, which is constituted in part by righteousness and arrogance. The message, stated or inferred, of "I'm right," and "I'm the expert," is in epidemic proportion. My

conclusion is that this state of affairs produces mediocrity, because it suppresses independent and creative thinking. The educational system is geared to teach and test the average person, and bestow good grades upon those who can memorize the most facts, and recite the exact same answer to a given question. Additionally, penetrating questions asked by creative students, still retaining independent thinking skills, are often perceived by many teachers as being an annoyance, and tangential to their objectives; and therefore disruptive to the stability of the class.

However, does a conspiracy for mediocrity exist in Nature? I don't see one. If it exists, that pattern has eluded me.

**Question (Audience)** You've done a good job of delineating many of the shortcomings of the world in which we live. There are situations like this conference where you speak to, more or less, kindred spirits who presumably have come together because of a similar sense that the world and the path of the "right" are in conflict with each other. I just want to ask you . . . you seem like not a wild and crazy guy . . . . Do you have much experience in the world? I get the impression that you do have experience of engaging with the world that embodies these shortcomings that you've delineated. If you have, I'd be interested in what you've learned does or doesn't work in terms of productive exchange or interaction with them, and also in terms of how you deal with what of value in you, is or is not recognized by the world with which you're interacting.

**Reply (Sycalik)** What doesn't work is telling someone they're wrong. What doesn't work is approaching someone who is arrogant and immature and stating, "your process is wrong; you are wrong, and I have the answer." That doesn't work. In this manner, you are functioning in a state of being "against" something, and will only fuel the existing polarization.

What also doesn't work is speaking to them in a language they don't understand. This diagram should serve to illustrate this latter point further. If you meet three people, with three different belief paradigms, and you desire to communicate with all three as a group, where would you begin?

Let's represent each paradigm by drawing an oval. We now draw all three ovals so that each overlaps slightly, so that an area exists common to all three. This type of drawing is referred to as a Venn Diagram. Now, there's really only one good place to begin to communicate. That's the place where all three paradigms overlap, also assuming that you are capable of thinking within this paradigm area.

If this group consists of a physicist, a biologist, and a priest, then you better identify the actual overlap area and begin to communicate with word symbols, language, and beliefs common to all three. If you don't, and you begin to communicate from any other area,

you will not be as effective. If one, or more, does not understand your language (even though you are speaking in their “native tongue”), your concepts, or ideas, then they will not understand that which you are attempting to convey, and you will probably experience great difficulty and frustration.

In terms of what does work, a good beginning includes designing your communications based on the aforementioned understanding, and then simplifying it so that an eighth grade student will understand your point. Do not underestimate the power of your associates’ paradigm filters in their ability to obscure your intended communications, which seem so self-evident to you. Also, try to hold any adversarial meetings at a neutral site. If you desire to conduct a successful peace process, do not hold it in the war-hawk’s room.

Additionally, based upon my understanding of etheric-energy-constructs produced by mind-thinking, and their manifestation process, you also have to be “for” something; you cannot just be “against” something, and ultimately prevail. If you’re only against something, you will assist the fruition of that about which you consider yourself to be in opposition.

For example, suppose that we are discussing war and peace, and someone states that “John is against war, and Paul is for peace.” So, I ask you, are these two conditions (John’s and Paul’s) the same? Are these states similar? John is “against” war, and Paul is “for” (an advocate of) peace. Are these two states even close to being, essentially, the same?

Actually, the states are very different. Granted, the words seem to convey the same state of being. However, if it is true that thoughts are things, and that which consciousness is focused upon yields that manifestation, then if you focus on war, you’ll receive war, whether you’re “for” it, or “against” it. On the surface the difference seems to be subtle and of no significance. In actuality, the difference is very great, and an important concept to explore, if you have not already done so.

Within the United States, we currently are engaged with a war on poverty, a war on cancer, a war on drugs, a war on “this,” and a war on “that.” Have we won any of those wars? Not any of which I am aware, be it the war on cancer, disease, drug addition, or poverty. Are we going to win this war with terrorists which we just engaged? We shall quite probably win the battle, but do we want a hundred-year war, even if we win in the end?

I suggest that in addition to fighting the terrorists in a state of being against them, that we should develop a program that is “for” peace, and take appropriate actions to create that state. I submit that the latter approach is likely to produce a long-term outcome to the current conflict more to our liking, and to our children’s children’s liking. We have only to recall the Irish and Middle East terrorist history to learn much about how not to succeed in ending terrorism.

Actually, to answer this question well, much more time would be required than is allocated at this point. However, I hope I have provided an answer to you of some substance.

**Question (Audience)** Gary, I just want to say that I really support the USP project and I would just like to share one thought for all of us regarding the “free men and women of tomorrow.” That is, in universal consciousness, since time is somewhat of an illusion, we really are creating the future at this very moment.

**Reply (Sycalik)** Basically, we only ever possess the eternal present. The past and future, where is it? When you experience your life, it’s now, now, now. The eternal present is where our most powerful point of creative energy exists and that’s why a few people whose consciousness is focused on peace (in the present) have a tremendous impact in the world. Many people are focused on the future, many are focused on past events, and therefore those who are focusing in the present-space-time have tremendous influence in creating what arrives in the next present moment from our future. Those who feel totally helpless to influence global events would feel less helpless if they better understood the laws which we engage when we create our experiences.

**Question (Audience)** In the Chinese language there is an ideogram representing crisis? The ideogram consists of two characters; one symbolizes danger, and the other, opportunity. If you solely focus on the danger, you cannot capitalize on the opportunity. You are always creating that which is in the direction of your focus, be it danger, or opportunity.

**Reply (Sycalik)** Yes, I’ve used the Chinese ideogram for crisis on numerous occasions, to illustrate the exact point you made.

I’m going to conclude my presentation by reading something which will take about five minutes, and it’s oriented around this question: “Are you slaves of yesterday, or the free men of tomorrow?” The book from which the quote was excerpted was not written recently, and it is apparent to me that the writer meant the use of the words “man,” and “men,” to mean individuals (both male and female), and humans. As I read this excerpt, I hope that you can automatically translate these words to mean both genders. The excerpt is from a book called, *The Voice of the Master*. It was written by Kahlil Gibran, who was born within the Middle East in Persia, now known as Iran.

## 4 Slaves of Yesterday or the Free Men of Tomorrow

In this world there are two sorts of men: the men of yesterday and the men of tomorrow. To which of these do you belong, my brethren? Come, let me gaze at you, and learn whether you are of those entering into the world of light, or of those going forth into the land of darkness. Come, tell me who you are and what you are.

Are you a politician who says to himself: "I will use my country for my own benefit"? If so, you are naught but a parasite living on the flesh of others. Or are you a devoted patriot, who whispers into the ear of his inner self: "I love to serve my country as a faithful servant." If so, you are an oasis in the desert, ready to quench the thirst of the wayfarer.

Or are you a merchant, drawing advantage from the needs of the people, engrossing goods so as to resell them at an exorbitant price? If so, you are a reprobate; and it matters naught whether your home is a palace or a prison.

Or are you an honest man, who enables farmer and weaver to exchange their products, who mediates between buyer and seller, and through his just ways profits both himself and others? If so, you are a righteous man; and it matters not whether you are praised or blamed.

Are you a leader of religion, who weaves out of the simplicity of the faithful a scarlet robe for his body; and of their kindness a golden crown for his head; and while living on Satan's plenty, spews forth his hatred of Satan? If so, you are a heretic; and it matters not that you fast all day and pray all night.

Or are you the faithful one who finds in the goodness of people a groundwork for the betterment of the whole nation; and in whose soul is the ladder of perfection leading to the Holy spirit? If you are such, you are like a lily in the garden of Truth; and it matters not if your fragrance is lost upon men, or dispersed into the air, where it will be preserved.

Or are you a journalist who sells his principles in the market of slaves and who fattens on gossip and misfortune and crime? If so, you are like a ravenous vulture preying upon rotting carrion.

Or are you a teacher standing upon the raised stage of history, who, inspired by the glories of the past, preaches to mankind and acts as he preaches? If so, you are a restorative to ailing humanity and a balm for the wounded heart.

Are you a governor looking down on those you govern, never stirring abroad except to rifle their pockets or to exploit them for your own profit? If so, you are like tares upon the threshing floor of the nation.

Are you a devoted servant who loves the people and is ever watchful over their welfare, and zealous for their success? If so, you are a blessing in the granaries of the land.

Or are you a husband who regards the wrongs he has committed as lawful, but those of his wife as unlawful? If so, you are like those extinct savages who lived in caves and covered their nakedness with hides.

Or are you a faithful companion, whose wife is ever at his side, sharing his every thought, rapture, and victory? If so, you are as one who at dawn walks at the head of a nation toward the high noon of justice, reason and wisdom.

Are you a writer who holds his head high above the crowd, while his brain is deep in the abyss of the past, that is filled with the tatters and useless cast-offs of the ages? If so, you are like a stagnant pool of water.

Or are you the keen thinker, who scrutinizes his inner self, discarding that which is useless, outworn and evil, but preserving that which is useful and good? If so, you are as manna to the hungry, and as cool, clear water to the thirsty.

Are you a poet full of noise and empty sounds? If so, you are like one of those mountebanks that make us laugh when they are weeping, and make us weep, when they laugh.

Or are you one of those gifted souls in whose hands God has placed a viol to soothe the spirit with heavenly music, and bring his fellow men close to Life and the Beauty of Life? If so, you are a torch to light us on our way, a sweet longing in our hearts, and a revelation of the divine in our dreams.

Thus, is mankind divided into two long columns, one composed of the aged and bent, who support themselves on crooked staves, and as they walk on the path of Life, they pant as if they were climbing toward a mountaintop, while they are actually descending into the abyss.

And the second column is composed of youth, running as with winged feet, singing as if their throats were strung with silver strings, and climbing toward the mountaintop as though drawn by some irresistible, magic power.

In which of these two processions do you belong, my brethren? Ask yourselves this question, when you are alone in the silence of the night.

Judge for yourselves whether you belong with the Slaves of Yesterday or the Free Men of Tomorrow.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Excerpted, with permission, from *The Voice of the Master*, By Kahlil Gibran, published by Citadel Press, New York, NY; Copyright © 1958 by Anthony R. Ferris.

So, in closing, my final question to you is: Are you slaves of yesterday, or the free men and free woman of tomorrow?

Thank you very much for your participation.

## **5 About the Author**

Gary Sycalik has a background in many areas, including business, technology, metaphysics, art, music, and philosophy. He is a futurist who has presented at world futures conferences, general systems conferences, and education conferences, on a variety of subjects. His passion centers around ways and means to enhance the quality of life on Earth. He enjoys nature through hiking, canoing, and photography. He may be reached at [gs9@ibsail.com](mailto:gs9@ibsail.com).