8TH ANNUAL

Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future

FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

LIVING DEMOCRACY, FEEDING HOPE

NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION
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FRANK K. KELLY LECTURE ON HUMANITY'S FUTURE

The Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future was established by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in 2002. The lecture series honors Frank Kelly, a founder and senior vice president of the Foundation, whose vision and compassion are perpetuated through this ongoing lecture series. Each annual lecture is presented by a distinguished individual to explore the contours of humanity's present circumstances and ways by which we can today shape a more promising future for our planet and all its inhabitants.

Mr. Kelly, for whom the lecture series is named, gave the inaugural lecture in 2002 on "Glorious Beings: What We Are and What We May Become." The lecture presented in this booklet is the eighth Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future. It was presented by Frances Moore Lappé at La Casa de Maria in Santa Barbara on February 25, 2009.

The 2008 lecture was given by Colman McCarthy on "Teach Peace." The 2007 lecture was delivered by Jakob von Uexküll on "Globalization: Values, Responsibility and Global Justice." The 2006 lecture was presented by Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire on "A Right to Live without Violence, Nuclear Weapons and War." The 2005 lecture was delivered by Dr. Robert Jay Lifton on "America and the Human Future: Surviving Vietnam, 9/11, and Iraq." The 2004 lecture in this series was presented by Dame Anita Roddick on "Kindness as a Key to Humanity's Future." Professor Richard Falk gave the 2003 lecture on "American Civil Liberties and Human Rights Under Siege."

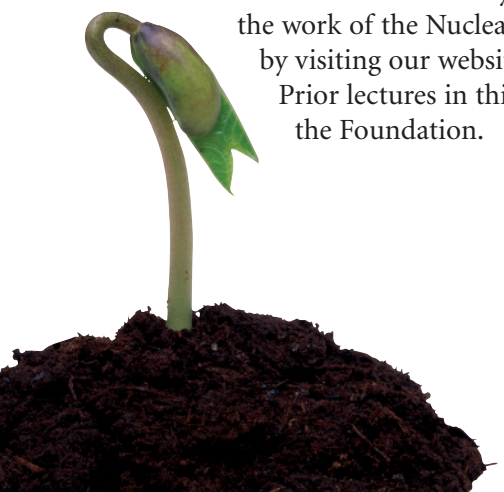
Frank Kelly has had a remarkable life. He has been a science-fiction writer (later inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame), a journalist, a soldier in World War II, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, a speechwriter for Harry Truman, the assistant to the US Senate Majority Leader, vice president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and a leader in the campaign to create the US Institute for Peace. He co-founded the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in 1982. He is the author of ten books and countless articles.

Beyond all of his achievements, Frank has a remarkable faith in humanity and its future. He has lived with a spirit of optimism and hope. He has been a visionary advocate for humanity and has inspired many people through his writing and teaching to take action on behalf of humanity.

The lecture series is endowed to carry forward Frank's vision. If you would like to help support the lecture by adding to the endowment, please let us know. We also invite you to learn more about the Frank K. Kelly Lecture series and about the work of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation by visiting our website: www.wagingpeace.org. Prior lectures in this series are available from the Foundation.

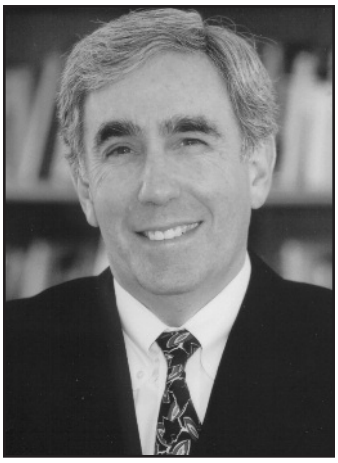
Photo: Rick Carter

Frances Moore Lappé, the 2009 Kelly Lecturer, with Frank K. Kelly.



INTRODUCTION

By David Krieger



The Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future honors Frank Kelly, a founder and the senior vice president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, a man who believes that every individual – regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or nationality – deserves a seat at humanity's table. The purpose of the lecture series is to provide perspective on creating a more secure and decent future for all humanity.

This lecture, the eighth in the series, was given by Frances Moore Lappé, an extraordinary woman who has spent her career trying to understand why people starve and go to bed hungry in a world in which there is enough food for all. She is a woman who has never been willing to accept the world as it is, always pressing for what might be. She is alive to the possibilities of creating a better world – one in which the hungry are fed, the homeless are housed, and the voiceless are heard. She seeks nothing less than "living democracy."

In 1971, she wrote a book, *Diet for a Small Planet*, which sold over 3 million copies, and made her work known throughout the world. Since then she has written 15 more books, which continue her explorations into the causes of hunger and other aspects of unsustainability built into our social fabric.

In recent years, Frances Moore Lappé has been thinking and writing about democracy, and she posits that it is what she calls "thin democracy," the lack of healthy participation, that gives rise to the failure to adequately distribute the resources needed for all people to live sustainably on the planet.

In 2006, she wrote *Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life.* It is an important book that gives numerous examples of using democracy as a verb – democracy that grows from the actions of democracy makers at work.

In 2007, she published *Getting a Grip: Clarity, Creativity and Courage in a World Gone Mad.* This book grapples with the question, "Why are we as societies creating a world that we as individuals abhor?"

For her work, she has received many honors, including 17 honorary doctorate degrees. In 1987, she was a recipient of the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize. She also has received the Rachel Carson Award from the National Nutritional Foods Association and the 2008 Humanitarian of the Year Award of the James Beard Foundation. She is one of 12 living "women whose words have changed the world," selected by the Women's National Book Association.

She currently works at the Small Planet Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, an organization she founded in 2002 with her daughter Anna. She is also a Councilor of the Hamburg-based World Future Council and a member of the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture.

LIVING DEMOCRACY, FEEDING HOPE

BY FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

I'd like to set the tone for this lecture by borrowing the words of Dee Hock, founder of Visa. He reminds us, "It is far too late and things are far too bad for pessimism!"

Perfect. For in this moment of unprecedented global crises I'm convinced that the greatest threat to us is not terrorism, not nuclear proliferation, not the global economic meltdown, nor even global climate chaos. No, the biggest threat, and the only one we really have to worry about, is despair; and the root of despair? It is feeling powerless, feeling that our acts are futile.

Here's my reasoning: Over the decades I've become more and more convinced that solutions to all our biggest problems are known. We know how to end poverty: In the sixties alone, for example, we cut the rate of U.S. poverty in half. We know how to make the essential turn to clean energy. Al Gore's science team and physicist Amory Lovins, for example, argue with hard evidence that we know how to move beyond planet-heating fuels in only a few decades. And the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation can point us to immediate steps we can take to wind down the nuclear threat.

Thus, if true, if solutions are known and what's missing is our power to manifest what we know, the most critical question becomes: *What robs us of power?*

A sense of personal powerlessness – the feeling that one's acts are futile – arises, I've found in my own life, when I can't see causal pattern; when I can't grasp how we got into this mess and therefore how we might get out. I believe most of us are willing to make an effort and to let go of expectations of immediate reward, as long as we can see that in the big picture, in the long view, we count, our actions matter.

Put another way, many people disparage their own capacity, asking, Why bother? I'm just a drop in the bucket. But, as my daughter and I realized one rainy night in Seattle, while touring to promote our book *Hope's Edge*, raindrops fill up buckets pretty fast. So being a drop isn't a problem; it is magnificent. The problem – the feeling of futility – arises when we can't see the bucket we're filling. With no sense of a larger causal pattern that we can reset to move toward life, we might as well be drops in the Sahara Desert evaporating before we hit the ground!

The "bucket" for me is a working theory of how we got here, one giving me strong clues for how to get out. Being able to see this bucket is a very personal quest, unique to each of us.

The Power of Ideas

To try to identify the causal pattern that has put our planet in such peril, I began with one question: *What could be powerful enough to make us, as societies, create a world that as individuals we abhor?*

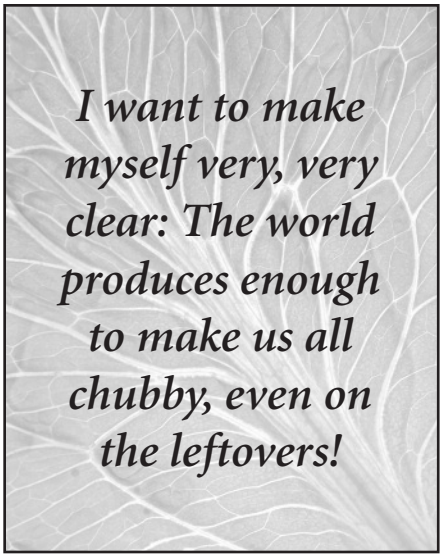
I came to believe there is only one thing that powerful. It is the power of ideas. Scientists now confirm that for human beings, there is no unfiltered reality. We are creatures of the mind. We see all experience through a "lens" or "mental map" – largely unconscious – that defines who we are and therefore what we believe to be possible.

So here's the hard fact of human existence: *If our mental frame is flawed, we will fail no matter how hard and persistently we struggle.* This realization is why I wrote *Getting a Grip*. The tragedy, I've come to see, is that much of humanity today is trapped in a mental map that is, ultimately, life destroying. It defeats us

because it is well aligned neither with human nature nor with the laws of nature herself.

The premise of the dominant, mechanistic worldview, which has evolved over a few thousand years, is lack, the abiding assumption that there isn't enough – not enough of anything, from food to energy to parking places. We see lack in human nature, too, believing that if we peal away the fluff, humans are simply selfish, competitive materialists. I sum up this premise as the "lack of goods and goodness."

From this sense of ourselves as profoundly flawed, we assume that we are unable to engage in an effective dialogue of democracy to create a viable common future. We must instead turn over our fate to "experts" and, better yet, to an infallible law freed from human tampering, one automatically determining outcomes for us. Ronald Reagan called it the "magic of the market." Unfortunately, the market model we've chosen has a peculiar foundation: The notion that benign outcomes for all flow from a market largely driven by one rule: highest return to existing wealth, that is, corporate chiefs and shareholders.



Of course, it takes no Ph.D. in economics to see that, from this rule, wealth returns to wealth until we reach the point we have today in which one family, the Walton's, control as much wealth as 40 percent of the U.S. population and the richest 400 Americans hold as much wealth as half the world's people. That concentrated wealth then infuses and distorts our political decision making to favor its interests. We end up with a couple dozen lobbyists in Washington, pursuing their bosses' interests, for every representative you and I have voted to send there to protect our interests. We arrive, sadly, at what can appropriately be called "privately held government," incapable of addressing global threats.

Consider how this frame determines our response to the tragedy of hunger. If we start from the premise of "lack" as the root cause of hunger – lack of food, seeds, land – as well as a lack of human goodness – what logically follows? We focus single mindedly on conquering scarcity by increasing production and we appeal to humans to shape up, to change our nature by becoming less selfish.

Both are failing. Badly.

First of all, the scarcity frame does not fit the most basic facts: Agricultural output per person has grown by a fifth in the last three decades. Recent years have seen record world harvests. Yet, today more than 100 million more people are going hungry than just two years ago. Focusing on things and not on human relationships of power – righting those so that people can grow food and buy food they need – we end up with the tragedy of more food and more hunger at the same time.

I want to make myself very, very clear: *The world produces enough to make us all chubby, even on the leftovers!* Here's what I mean. Enough calories are available for all the world's people, even on what is left over after more than a third of all grain and more than a third of our fish catch go to feed livestock that return to us a small fraction of the nutrients fed to them. And, increasingly, we use crops to create fuel to feed to cars as well.

In other words, from a frame of scarcity we humans are actively shrinking the world food supply. We are creating the scarcity we say we fear.

Yet, as agribusiness has spent a billion dollars lobbying Washington in the last decade, of course the focus continues to be on greater production as the solution – using the patented seeds and equipment corporations sell. So, while hunger spread, the giant grain trader Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) saw its profits jump 65 percent in 2007, with most of the profit surge coming from the company's financial division, the part of ADM that makes money betting on price volatility.

And appeals to solve the problem by changing our own selfish nature – to address the lack of goodness in us – well, they don't seem to have worked any better! The just-released "food insecurity" report on the food price crisis from the United Nations, for example, scolds us for not having tried hard enough: The problem is our "lack of concerted effort to combat hunger," it says. The implication? We must just try harder.

The New Lens

Today many of the most faithful adherents of the dominant frame are in shock. They are experiencing a

disturbing "moment of dissonance" – that moment when our world cracks, when we realize that our mental map failed to predict what is happening to us and therefore we no longer trust its capacity to help us find our way out of our predicament.

So what do we do?

Do we hold on for dear life, making more "concerted effort"? Or do we dig deep to rethink our core assumptions? Or maybe we don't have to dig: We are in the midst of an unprecedented financial and ecological storm; and when a storm fells a large tree, one doesn't have to dig; sometimes we see big roots exposed for the first time.

In this storm, will we examine the roots and remake our flawed mental map?

What if we try shifting our frame, our mental map, from a "lack of goods and goodness" to a frame of possibility? What if, in regard to global violence, poverty, and hunger, we were to shift our focus from things – from filling in the many lacks with more food, jobs, seeds, and roads – to look through another lens, that of focusing on the quality of relationships?

What if we try shifting our frame, our mental map, from a "lack of goods and goodness" to a frame of possibility?

Does this approach sound feel-good but weak? It is not. I mean an approach that is quite tangible and strong: aligning production, for example, with what we are learning of nature's laws and aligning our society's rules and norms with what we can now know about human nature. Within this understanding, it means balancing relationships of power.

Let me explain. One great advantage of our time is that we alive today can examine several thousand years of recorded history. We can ask, what does the grand, or not-so-grand, sweep of human history reveal? What has proven to bring out the best in us and to inhibit the worst?

If we face the record honestly, we know humans have what it takes to make this great turn – *provided* we have the courage to look at our fullness, the good, the bad, the ugly.

For one, we now can see that human potential for unspeakable evil – from Darfur to Abu Ghraib – lies not in a few bad apples but in most of us. The Holocaust, for example, was not about a handful of sadists driven by a mad man. This truth about ourselves is hard to accept, but when we do, it is profoundly liberating and empowering: for then we can identify which conditions invariably result in manifesting our dark side and address them with some precision.

And one consistent condition? Power concentrated in a few hands and the majority taught to distrust itself, its own capacities, and to defer to unaccountable power.

Frighteningly, this condition characterizes ours and many societies today.

Of course the capacity for cruelty under certain conditions is not all we know about our nature: Laboratory experiments in which we are the guinea pigs, as well as neuroscience, confirm that equally real and hard-wired are strongly pro-social human capacities – especially four that turn out to be exactly what we need in this historic moment. They are *empathy* and the *cooperation* it makes possible; a sense of *fairness* and the need for *efficacy* to manifest fairness. Scientists observing our brains when we compete and when we cooperate, conclude that acts of cooperation light up the same parts of the brain that respond when we eat chocolate! Evolution has rewarded the cooperative; no wonder it is profoundly pleasurable.

More and more people are shedding the false frame and are saying, in effect, that humans are complex and that we can remake the rules to bring out the best in us and to keep the worse in check. We know that concentrated power brings out the worst! Solutions to today's unprecedented crises begin to emerge when look through this lens.

Living Democracy

Let me offer a bare taste of the emergence of what I see emerging as a result: I call it "living democracy," democracy understood and practiced no longer as a set system – finished and far removed – but *democracy as a*

set of system values that permeate every dimension of our public lives. Living democracy is a way of being with others, based in a more complex and accurate view of our nature.

Let me choose unlikely places, perhaps, to make my point.

I'll focus on India. When most in the Global North think of India, they think of call centers and high-tech enterprise, all the new wealth we see in Bollywood movies. And two big points get missed: First, India is home to more hungry people than all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, this view blocks us from seeing the real movement within India:

While, as of 2004, high-tech information jobs provided less than 1 percent of GDP and employed a few million people, the economic creativity of 12.3 million ordinary Indian villagers have created, over three decades, a network of 100,000 village-level dairy coops – generating several times as many jobs as has the high-tech information industry. Few have heard of these cooperatives, led mostly by women, but they supply over a fifth of India's total milk supply.

Their coop structure embodies the hardwired need for fairness: Most agricultural cooperatives sell to private corporations who brand and market, and so reap much of the profit; but not the Indian dairy coop network. It retains control over marketing and garners a greater share of the return.

Coops themselves crack the dominant frame. While most of us hear only of the power of corporations, worldwide membership in cooperatives like those in India has doubled in the last 30 years to nearly 800 million, likely more people than hold stocks in publicly traded companies. Coops provide 100 million jobs worldwide, one-fifth more than multinational corporations offer.

Kerala's Villagers Living Democracy

Living democracy engages citizens, drawing them into decision making; citizens don't just point fingers at officials but become accountable themselves for outcomes.

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India offers another compelling case in point: In 1996 the southern Indian state of Kerala, with a population roughly that of Canada, launched a participatory effort known as the People's Campaign of Decentralized Planning. Citizens gained "unprecedented authority, bringing them directly to the table in the planning process, through village assemblies and citizen committees...," according to a World Bank report.

During the first two years, one in four households in Kerala participated in village assemblies, and attendance is still good. Hundreds of projects emerged – in housing, small-scale irrigation, roads and agriculture, health and education; and many were especially beneficial to women and "Untouchables."

Kerala's long history of democratic inclusiveness – from land reform to an emphasis on gender equity – help to explain how it is that this comparatively resource-poor state has achieved health, education, and longevity advances approaching those of the world's richest countries, all with less than *5 percent* of the U.S. per capita income.

Social Lending, Not the Miniaturization of Capitalism

The coop movement is one dimension of the democratization of economic life. Democratization of finance is another. How many of you have heard of microfinance or microcredit? In Bangladesh today, 80 percent of villages now have organizations making small loans to poor people, mainly women. And this bottom-up, decentralized strategy is one big reason that Bangladesh, with only 60 percent of the per capita income of India, has made much faster strides in lowering child mortality, for example.

But don't be confused about the real power of microcredit. At its best it is not the miniaturization of capitalism, with ownership control ever tightening.

Consider what happened in Nepal. Starting with a pilot project in 1998, rural village women were encouraged to form savings circles in which access to a common pool of money rotates among the savers. It is called WORTH. There is no separate bank or bankers as in the

Nobel Peace Prize winning Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Typically in microfinance schemes interest goes to an external agency, but in WORTH interest accrues to the savers. WORTH women therefore benefit both from the money they earn through their individual and group enterprises and from dividends distributed back to savers at the end of each banking cycle. During the first 18 months after the initial group was trained in the approach, 56,000 women had started businesses and generated $3 million in new revenues. And "that was before the micro-enterprise curriculum and training materials had been published or distributed!" an American close to WORTH, Mac O'Dell, told me.

A 2007 study of WORTH showed that, though external donors, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, ended their support in 2001, two-thirds of 1,500 village banks were operating. "Of the 125,000 women in the original Nepal program," Mac told me, "the number who can read and write has tripled, their savings have more than doubled. The number with businesses has quadrupled, and their total business revenues have increased eightfold."

WORTH is now being replicated in Cambodia, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and (DR) Congo to reach another 100,000 women.

This type of social lending is transparent, with benefits returning to the women themselves and their communities, because they retain control, and not to the executives and shareholders of a global bank.

Local Living Economies, Agriculture for Life

Let me dispel one of the most dangerous myths in the dominant frame of scarcity – that, if we were to align with nature, growing food without chemicals using massive industrial operations, we'd starve. Just last summer George Bush's science advisor told the *New York Times*, "If everybody switched to organic farming, we couldn't support the earth's population – maybe half." That is scary.

The opposite is true. A 2007 University of Michigan study concluded that moving globally to organic, sustainable farming practices could actually increase food output by over 50 percent. The shift would also help us reduce gases that are heating the planet because organic farming typically results in only a third of the greenhouse gas emissions that industrial farming causes.

To bring this possibility to life, consider India's state of Andhra Pradesh, which ranks second in the recent, horrific epidemic of farmer suicides, nationwide killing 166,000 farmers in a decade. Farmers took their lives in large measure because of desperation when unable to pay off debts they'd incurred to buy commercial seeds and pesticides.

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Recently, facing catastrophic losses from Monsanto genetically modified cotton that failed to bring promised returns, some farmers in Andhra Pradesh started moving in a new direction. Switching away from genetically modified seeds and toward natural pest-control practices, farmers' yields were not significantly affected, but by forgoing the expense of Monsanto's seeds and pesticide, their incomes went up. And they had no debt to pay off.

Women are key to the transformation underway. A few years ago the local government and social benefit groups extended rural credit to their women's self-help groups, and, says one of the instigators, "What is remarkable is that the program is completely owned by the farmers and women's self-help groups." Foregoing dependence on a single cash crop is bringing greater security. Farmers are intercropping (growing several crops in the same fields). In one village, a women's self-help group has cultivated a field with 29 varieties of vegetables and pulses. With plants maturing at different times of the year, income is spread out.

Freed from dependence on corporate-made chemicals, a local, living economy is emerging: Farmers sell their organic produce and new entrepreneurs are springing up, selling their homemade, pest-deterring concoctions made, for example, from cow dung and urine, garlic, chilies, as well as from neem, and ancient and sacred trees, extracts of which have long been used in natural

pest control. People's health is improving as they no longer face pesticide exposure.

From widespread desperation of farmers on the pesticide treadmill in the 1990s, the approach – locally called non-pesticide management – has been taken up by 340,000 farmers in over 3,000 villages in Andhra Pradesh. "It has expanded beyond our expectations. This year our outreach will be one and a half million acres," said T. Vijay Kumar, chief executive of the Society for the Elimination of Rural Poverty, which helped launch the movement.

In Living Democracy Citizens and Government Partner to End Hunger

To begin to conceive of the possibility of a culture of empowered citizens making democracy work for them, the story of Brazil's fourth largest city, Belo Horizonte, is a rich trove of lessons. There, in 1993, a newly elected administration declared food a right of citizenship. The officials said, in effect: If you are too poor to buy food in the market, you are no less a citizen. We are still accountable to you.

Bringing forth the best requires the dispersion of power – from cooperatives to participatory planning to mutually accountable citizens and government.

This shift in frame brought to life dozens of innovations that did not displace the market, but made it serve the widely shared value that all people should have access to healthy food. A new city food agency was created to serve as facilitator, advised by a 20-member council of civic and business organizational leaders. Soon the government began working, for example, with grocery stores that committed to buy from local farmers and keep a basket of basic, healthy food within the price reach of the poor. Large "people's restaurants" began serving daily thousands of people healthy, subsidized meals for roughly $.50. This is food with dignity, say those involved: No proof of poverty is required to be served. With the new "lens," Belo residents came to see as resources what before was perceived as waste: Manioc leaves and egg shells were processed into nutritious flour and baked into rolls for all school children, including those in city-sponsored nursery schools.

After only a decade, these and many more innovations were associated with a decline in the city's infant death rate, a widely accepted indicator of hunger, of more than 50 percent. And the cost? About one penny per day per city resident.

The key here was not increased production, nor even increased income. This huge breakthrough for life flowed from a shift of relationship: Both citizens and municipal government let go of the idea of an automatic force, the market, making up for human flaws, and made themselves accountable for working with the market to find solutions.

What is Required of Us?

I began asking, What can arm us against a sense of futility? Where is our power?

To find it, I've discovered, we must each shape a picture of cause and effect that makes sense to us because it is evidence based. Only then do we realize that we don't have to settle for "random acts of sanity"; that we can instead choose acts that turn the causal pattern toward life.

I have argued that finding our power requires a shift in mental map from one *focusing on things to one focusing on relationships* of power. It means a shift from a frame of deficits to a frame of possibility: replacing the premise of lack of good and goodness with the realization that human beings have what it takes to make the turn toward life … *if* we are willing to construct social rules and norms aligned with what we know about our nature, about our capacity for both good and evil, and what brings forth each.

We've learned that a few things are certain in this regard: *Bringing forth the best requires the dispersion of power – from cooperatives to participatory planning to mutually accountable citizens and government.*

And all this hinges on *what*? Certainly, upon removing the power of private wealth over public decision making. To protect and restore our ecological home, to reverse the proliferation of deadly weapons, and to create living economies, we must remake the *economics of politics*, and we can start with instituting voluntary public financing of elections, already effective in three states.

But even more personally, what is asked of us? If we want to remain awake and alive in this extraordinary moment, as life itself hangs in the balance, not metaphorically but literally, some deep, internal shifts are needed. In my case, I'm trying to cultivate what I've come to understand as "bold humility."

First, the bold part.

French philosopher Patrick Vivaret notes that fear has become the emotional plague of our planet. Fear is not just unpleasant: It can be our greatest enemy; it is being deliberately used to keep us from our own common sense, our own deepest truths. It works because, as we evolved over millennia in tightly knit tribes, we learned to trust the body's fear sensations. See a lion in the grass? Of course, our fear responses – flee, freeze, fight – were critical to survival. Plus, we learned that, for sure, separating from the tribe meant certain death. We couldn't make it for long alone, so being expelled from the tribe was scariest of all.

We can see that fear is in part only an idea – the product, that is, of our mental map's interpretation of reality, not reality itself.

But here, in the early 21st century, do these unquestioned fear responses serve us? Today the entire hypertribe appears headed right over Victoria Falls. Breaking with the tribe in today's world often means, not death, but life. Life for ourselves personally as we trust our deepest knowing, and life for our precious planet.

So let us rethink fear. We can see that fear is in part only an idea – the product, that is, of our mental map's interpretation of reality, not reality itself. Fear is an idea we can reshape to alter its potentially deadly power over us. We can see fear not as a verdict that we are in the wrong place at the wrong time, but simply as information we can use. Fear sensations may be telling us we are exactly where we should be, doing what we most need to do. We can then discover that the challenge is not "getting over" fear but simply walking with it. This shift of frame protects us from those who would use fear to manipulate us to act in ways counter to our own interests.

Now, humility: In 2000, traveling the world with my daughter Anna to write *Hope's Edge*, I witnessed close up some of the world's most effective social movements pointing the way to living democracy. On returning home, I had to admit: None of what I'd seen then, and what most inspires me today would I have predicted in the 1970s.

Land reform in Brazil, are you crazy? No way. But Brazil's Landless Workers Movement has since settled a third of a million families on almost 20 million acres of land, creating thousands of new schools and enterprises and organic farms.

Kenyan village women stand up to a brutal dictator and to village chiefs and plant 40 million trees and reclaim their sustainable food traditions? No way! But that turned out to be what happened after Wangari Maathai planted seven trees on Earth Day in 1977 and launched the Greenbelt Movement, today with thousands of village nurseries.

Now this is humbling. Really humbling! And it leaves me with but one conclusion: *It is not possible to know what's possible; and in that realization we are free. We are free to trust ourselves and to go for the world we really want.*

FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

Photos: Rick Carter

Frances Moore Lappé is the author or co-author of 16 books. Her first was *Diet for a Small Planet* and her most recent is *Getting a Grip: Clarity, Creativity and Courage in a World Gone Mad* on which this lecture is based. With her daughter Anna Lappé, she leads the Small Planet Institute in Cambridge. www.smallplanet.org

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To advance initiatives to eliminate the nuclear weapons threat to all life, to foster the global rule of law, and to build an enduring legacy of peace through education and advocacy.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation initiates and supports worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, and to inspire and empower a new generation of peace leaders. Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age.

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