



THE PROCESS OF ILLUMINATION In a Nutshell

H B Gelatt Oct. 2007

The Process of Illumination (POI) is a process of illuminating and expanding our collective worldview one worldview at a time. A worldview is defined as “the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world;” and “a collection of beliefs about life and the universe.” The way one sees and interprets the world is what I am calling *the way you see things*. Behind this way of seeing the world (a worldview) is a collection of beliefs. So beliefs are the focus of the illumination process.

My theme is *the minute you make up your mind that the way you see things makes a difference, it will make a difference in the way you see things ... and do things*. In my opinion, we are not paying close attention to the way we see things, and to the beliefs behind our view. The essays that follow, which I hope you will read, are all intended to help you look more closely at the way you see things.

My reason for writing these essays is based on three assumptions.

1) The direction the world is currently heading is not where we want to go. Although, according to recurrent opinion polls, most people seem to agree, they apparently don't believe changing direction is possible, or they don't believe changing direction is up to them, or they don't know what to do.

2) The way we see the problem IS the problem. If we see the problem is not our problem, or a solution is not possible, or we don't know what to do, then we ignore it. We don't seek solutions, or we expect someone else to solve it. We need to make up our minds that the way we see things makes a difference.

*Our minds are the source, and properly directed,
the solution to all our problems.* The Dalai Lama

3) An expanded, open and inclusive collective worldview is the solution. I believe current individual worldviews that are dogmatic and closed-minded and those that are exclusive and divisive are determining the direction we are heading. More open and more inclusive beliefs behind our collective way of seeing will help us change directions toward a positive future for everyone and the planet.

The Belief Continuum

Beliefs are not all the same; they vary in certainty. I believe at one end of the continuum are the dogmatic beliefs and at the other end are the tentative beliefs. Actually by dictionary definition all beliefs are tentative; they are not facts or the truth but more like opinions, assumptions, and thoughts. But that isn't always true in “human definitions.” Some people believe that what they believe is the absolute truth and not open to questioning (dogmatic). Some people believe their beliefs are hypotheses, open to questioning and examining (tentative). Some other people don't think much about what they believe and don't want to bother questioning (the passive believer). Passive beliefs are somewhere in the middle of the continuum.

Tentative believers investigate the origin and utility of their current beliefs. They might look for evidence to support or revise their belief. It is this kind of believing that leads to open-mindedness and an expanded worldview. It is my opinion that if all human beliefs were “tentative hypotheses,” the world would be heading in a different direction.

Of course all of your beliefs or my beliefs are probably not hypotheses. We all have our beliefs that bind us and blind us. And we all have built-in mechanisms for believing that our beliefs are true and other's beliefs are false. The first step toward illumination is admitting that we have them. The Process of Illumination is a process of illuminating and expanding the beliefs behind our beliefs. The dogmatic beliefs (absolutely certain beliefs) and the passive beliefs (unaware beliefs) will be the hardest to illuminate or expand until they are acknowledged.

Since beliefs are the focus of each POI article I am writing, it is important for you to know *my beliefs about beliefs*. Following are four important ones.



Believing is seeing and seeing is doing. Beliefs have consequences for us and others --- they influence our behavior. Our beliefs form our perspective from which we see and interpret the world. What do you believe?

Some beliefs are better than others. Better beliefs are tentative and not divisive. I simply believe that open and inclusive beliefs are more likely to lead to positive consequences. What is your opinion about better beliefs?

Beliefs are learned or acquired and can be unlearned. Changing one's mind is not a crime --- or even a sign of weakness. I say that because people seem to avoid change, except in others, and there are those who believe that some beliefs are so deep-seated that they are unable to be changed. What is your position?

People often are not fully aware of what they believe. This belief of course is crucial to the POI. Bringing passive and dogmatic beliefs to awareness is one of the goals. It is important because beliefs have consequences -- even if they are unknown or unconscious. Is it possible you have some significant beliefs you are not aware of?

Is The POI Realistic?

Some will say I am crazy, promoting a "pie-in-the-sky" objective. How many expanded worldviews would it take to change the direction the world is heading? I don't know, of course, but there is a "tipping point," the moment of critical mass, the point of epidemic change as explained by Malcolm Gladwell in his best selling book of that title in 2000. To reach that point, I believe, requires that we rethink the way we believe and see. And we need to believe it is possible. Can we create an "epidemic" of open-mindedness and inclusiveness one worldview at a time? I believe it is possible? Do you?

Many small discussion groups of committed citizens are meeting around the world, sharing their beliefs about the direction the world is heading and what can be done about it. It is my hope that the illumination strategies of the POI and the questions, quotations, and metaphors will be a process guide for some of these groups. Will you be part of this "word-of-mouth epidemic"? If not you, who? If not now, when?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

I am writing the POI because it supports my desire to make a contribution to creating a positive future for everyone and the planet and it is supported by my belief that it is possible. It is my current career and passion. My previous career was in the fields of education and counseling psychology, with an emphasis on personal and career decision making. It seems logical that I spend the next part of my life promoting open and inclusive collective decision making.

Finally, here is one of my favorite Lucy and Charlie episodes by Charles Schultz:

One Saturday afternoon, over the back fence without the psychiatric booth, discussing the future of the world.

Lucy: "If I were in charge of the world, I would change everything."

Charlie: "Gee that would be pretty hard to do. Where would you start?"

Lucy: "I would start with you Charlie Brown."

If I were in charge of the world I would illuminate individual worldviews into an open, inclusive, evolving way of believing, seeing, and doing. And I would start with you.

Your worldview is important to me and my worldview is important to you because our worldviews have consequences for everyone and the planet. Our worldviews are the beginning of a collective worldview, which I believe is our greatest hope for a positive future for everyone.

Copyright © 2007 H B Gelatt. All rights reserved.