

The Inherent Value of Diversity

Catherine Nelson, Ph.D.

On a recent hike in the mountains, I saw with great pleasure the abundance of wild flowers, blossoming trees and plants. Some were tall, some short, some were colorful, and some were many shades of green.

Nature has an infinite capacity to create and restore. Each plant has a unique niche in the greater ecosystem, and each has its own purpose in order to maintain the balance of life. We human beings have much to learn from nature.

We are each the same as all other human beings physically, mentally, and emotionally. We are the dust of creation. We share DNA with everyone else. We have the same body organs, arms, legs, ears, and toes. As human beings, we even share 42 common viruses in our blood streams.

Mentally we can think across time—past, present, and future. We share the same cognitive structures, regardless of the languages we speak. We create cultures with religions, with laws, and with ways to govern. Emotionally, we all have the capacity to feel joy, laughter, happiness, sadness, despair, pain



and many more feelings.

So how can we also be unique as individuals? We all have fingers, but we each have a unique fingerprint. We all speak words, but we each have a unique voice pattern. We all have eyes but we perceive what we see differently. We all have skin, but there are many variations of color to our skin. The end result is that each person is a unique creation physically, mentally and emotionally.

Our planet depends on biodiversity to survive. We have yet to value the diversity in our species. In our culture, we enjoy different foods, music, art, and

new technologies. Our lives are so much richer when we explore, and when we stimulate each other with new creations.

However, some of us do not appreciate diversity in our culture and local communities. We criticize, we judge, we discriminate, and we create hierarchies of value of personal worth based on people's differences. Some of us want everyone to look like us, believe our "truths," and hold the same ideas we do. "Sameness" can be comforting in the short term, but it is a pseudo solution. It is our diversity in groups and as individuals that will help us to thrive and survive as a species.

When we diminish others and create arbitrary inequalities and inequities, we actually diminish ourselves and our future. We lose out on their gifts and talents and different ideas. When we fail to properly educate all of our children, we lose their potential talents in helping their generation to grow and prosper.

CATHERINE NELSON, Ph.D., has a counseling practice in Bozeman with over 25 years of experience working with individuals and groups. She has taught at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing and is a certified Pathwork Helper. She offers workshops on personal transformation and energy healing and is available for individual sessions. Call Catherine at (406) 585-8025 or send e-mail to cnhobbit@gmail.com.



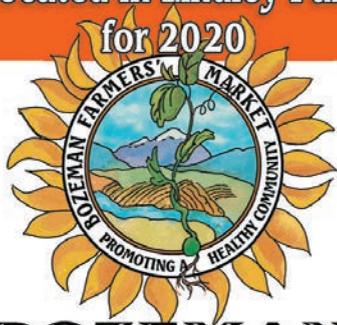
Sherri Mitchell, writes in her book, *Sacred Instructions*, "Many recognize that this time represents a critical crossroads for humanity, a teetering point of choice that will determine the future of all life" (pg.xi). Yes, many of us can feel the truth of these words in our bones. We are all wondering what the future will be for us, for our children and grandchildren.

We need the gifts and talents and ideas of everyone. We need to find solutions to existing problems and ways to avoid future problems. It is time to come together as equals with all of our social and individual differences. Let us welcome everyone to be part of the solution. It is time to let go of our prejudices, our harsh words, and our fears. Conscious, positive co-creation as equals is the doorway to our survival. ■



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