

# CobaltSaffron

A FREE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A more authentic process

*"I've enjoyed the series. Thank you for your thoughts and insights. I enjoyed, particularly in #15, your up scaling the discussion regarding the war between "The world is going to hell in a hand basket" and "Who cares?" You did your usual good job of seeing both sides and then seeing the conflict from a different perspective.*

*However, I was disappointed in what I believe was a slip; when listing examples of various conflicts you referred to "environmentalists vs. arrogant consumers". If you use the adjective, arrogant, then you must use the same word or an equally condemning word in front of environmentalists.*

*Or, do you believe that environmentalists as a group are "better" than their opponents?*

*I, personally, don't see one group as superior to the other. There are certainly individuals in each camp who are caring, thoughtful people who are well intended. But, then, the road to hell is paved with good intentions and the law of unintended consequences usually trumps the best laid plans of mice and men."*

*P.M., California.*

Yes, I did cheat there with the *arrogant*. My reasons for doing so are not because of any preference or affection for environmentalists as a group, but because of my passion and respect for nature (which, hopefully, most environmentalists share to some degree). But you're right; arrogance is probably equally developed on both sides of this equation.

We're in agreement that the key here is not to be found in any particular group, but in the individual authentic acts of care and thoughtfulness. This is what makes for that invaluable third group: individuals with no particular ambition or mission other than to remain true to these principles no matter where lines are drawn or which sides are taken.

*"A friend just forwarded me CobaltSaffron #15. Thank you for your insights. I go with the gist of just about the whole article until your last sentence. I find "the problem is more interesting than the solution" somewhat limiting; it makes for a great ender, it's brief, concentrated and dialectical (opposites able to be identified), yet the article itself describes the 'box' of just such thought patterns. In a sense, the dynamics of polarization & living off the movement. May I suggest a less forceful last line, yet one that might open up more involvement, an invitation into the arena of action (by thought or material): both problem & solution may prove less interesting than the process from one to the other."*

*H.L., Paris.*

Yes, you're right about the ending of my article; your proposal is a wiser choice. My intention in writing what I did was to have the reader walk away from the essay with a clear image of the current dynamic, that there is in general a greater interest and investment in conflict than in solution. Obviously, my deeper hope there is to initiate a more honest appraisal of our motivations and addictions, thus opening doors to a more authentic process toward balance and harmony.

*"... in several of your newsletters, I have been able to observe some amount of "attitude" on your part toward man's misuse of the environment. I've not been in a position to understand exactly where you are coming from on such issues, but I certainly have my own opinions about mankind's apparent feeling of entitlement to do as one wants and ignorance and arrogance toward the consequences passed onto others. As time goes on, I think I basically have come to the conclusion that I don't like humans.*

*I'm in the business of trying to find oil. Many people think badly of oil companies, and the people within. What I have to say is this: If everyone would stop using oil and oil products, the oil companies would go out of business. Everyone that I have ever met is using and abusing the use of oil. Every complainer that I have ever met is a hypocrite."  
T.R., Texas.*

As was suggested in the introduction to last month's newsletter, our focus here is not so much on the environment as on the individual's manner of engagement (toward anything). Nature is, however, a very real stage, as real as it gets, on which we can truly witness the results of our choices and actions, individually and collectively. The arrogance, ignorance and feeling of entitlement you mention are, in my view, the core problem. And yes, as you so rightly point out, the consequences are passed onto others, including those who are entirely innocent.

Unfortunately, the business of transcending arrogance, ignorance and self-righteous entitlement is a difficult one (is there anything more difficult?). Every group I've ever observed believes that it understands better than its opponents do. Indeed, this is the dynamic that defines and maintains arrogance and ignorance on each side of every dichotomy. The only way out of this kind of permanently conflicted dualism would be for someone to realize, "Yes, I'm arrogant and ignorant and probably don't even deserve what I already have." That would then at least establish a starting point for learning—enough of a gesture toward humility, curiosity and thankfulness to cause some true discovery. It's probably also the only way that "the other side" might learn how to do this itself.

I understand and am sympathetic to your comment about coming to the conclusion that you don't like humans. Perhaps the best we can do is to work to uphold the human qualities and virtues we most value, even in the face of everyone's cynicism, skepticism and distrust, including our own. That way, we might help to develop a humanity worthy of being liked or even loved.

Darrell Calkins  
May 2006

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## Comments

Thank you for your comments about the previous issue of CobaltSaffron. Here's an excerpt from another comment that we received:

“This sentence from Victor Hugo came back to my mind after reading CS#15. I find it superbly formulated, it underlines the arrogance and choice of ignorance of humans, and expresses much more than appears at first: *It is a sad thing to think that nature speaks and that the human gender doesn't listen.*”

I.C., France.

### Upcoming events:

*The Magic Moment*

June 24 & 25, Los Angeles

*Redefining Well-being*

July 8 & 9, San Francisco

**RETREAT TO THE SOURCE**

1 - 8 October, Gascony - France

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Concept, design, editing and translation:

John Mitchell, Isabelle Calkins, Karen Strassman, Christian Demeuré-Vallée

We welcome questions, comments and complaints.

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