

An Interview with Barbara Marx Hubbard

Russ Volckmann

*Here is a case where there is virtually no need for an introduction. As she presents in this interview, Barbara Marx Hubbard's work has been apparent on the stage of cutting edge thinking and action for decades. Her book, **Conscious Evolution**, published in 1998, is a call to action with a blueprint for the reconstruction of human reality. She calls on us all to actively engage in our own evolution, as well as the evolution of human societies and of the earth and its creatures. This call, so needed in 1998, is even more urgent today. She calls on us to stand alone and together in cocreating a world that supports all to thrive.*

She cofounded World Future Society, as well as other organizations. She is now producing a seven-part documentary series entitled "Humanity Ascending: A New Way through Together." This transformational series presents vital elements to awaken the codes for our own conscious evolution and offers direction, meaning, and a vision toward our birth as a new humanity.

*An early book, **The Power of Yin**, first published in 1977 is a fascinating dialogue with Hazel Henderson, Jean Houston and Barbara Marx Hubbard. Here, among other topics, they are already addressing the challenges of global environmental disaster. This continues to be one of her major concerns. Additional information about her and her work may be found at <http://www.barbaramarxhubbard.com/content/>.*

—Russ Volckmann

Russ: Barbara, I'm so excited to have the chance to talk with you. I'm familiar with your political work and other work from over the years. How do you view the current political climate in the United States?

Barbara: I'll start with my original political impulse. It came from the work I was doing on the idea of a conscious evolution and a positive future. It came out of the recognition that we're facing a crisis of an evolutionary order, and by looking at past crises in evolution, you can see that either the species becomes extinct or it learns innovation, transformation and greater synergy.

I began to develop a concept I call "synergistic democracy." It is a democracy that facilitates each person in being freer to give their creative gift within the whole. It would be aiming at a co-creative society. It's not re-patterning existing democratic institutions like the Congress; it's more like what happened when Obama ran for president. He had 13 million people suddenly wanting to help and connect. There were new social networks developed.

Back in 1982-83, I was working with Buckminster Fuller and he told me about the viability test: the timing, the critical path, the utopia or oblivion, the fact that we have the resources and technology to make the system work. I came up with an idea that was

really good, and it launched this paranormal political career—I say paranormal because it was so completely unlikely.

What I did was to run to be selected as the vice-presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket by whomever was nominated, and it was 1984—the year of the woman and the year of Big Brother. It was also the year when the public ear was attuned to women and a future orientation, which is barely happening again. I launched the “Campaign for a Positive Future” and I called my friends and said, “I’m running for vice-president. Would you give a party for me to help me raise funds?” That launched me on a campaign trail across the country where people gathered and I said, “We are at a crisis here of birth towards something new. The only way we will know what it is, is by having a new social function to map, track and connect what’s working.”

Russ: What were the signs of the crisis in 1984?

Barbara: When you look back, we still had the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) program. The Cold War had not ended. We were afraid of nuclear holocaust.

Russ: Yes. I remember those days well.

Barbara: Starting in the late sixties and early seventies with Silent Spring and the Club of Rome, Limits to Growth and other such works. We also became collectively aware for the very first time that we had problems with population, pollution, growth and that we were hitting a limit while our entire purpose was to grow. The whole capitalistic system was based on intimate growth...

Russ: As it still is.

Barbara: ...and I went to a couple of Club of Rome meetings. I met Aurelio Peccei. But at the same time in the seventies, I became interested in the Space Program. I was amazed that at the very same year that we had a lunar landing, we had the first Earth Day—I think it was 1969 or 1970. I began to develop what I call an “Earth-Space Human Development Scenario.” While we are limited on this Earth and we must conserve and preserve and limit population overgrowth and the form of self-consciousness that (inaudible) violence and competition ... at the same time, while the solution is not massive growth in space, the fact is we were being born as a universal species. So embryonic, so new, and the reasons we were doing it were technological competition and militarism. Nonetheless, I gathered that we were to be both an Earth-based and universal species.

As I met the space scientists, I was completely amazed to learn of the metals and minerals on the moon, in the asteroids. I met Jerry O’Neill of Princeton who had the whole subject of the space habitats in L5 libration [L5 is the fifth Lagrangian Libration point. The libration points are sites in spaces where a spacecraft may be situated so as always to remain in the same position with respect to the Earth and the Moon.—Russ], where you would use non-terrestrial resources. These people were saying that while we have to conserve and preserve here, there is an almost unlimited new environment for

humanity, but if we misuse the environment on this Earth as we are doing, there would be no chance we would go much further into space. But if we were to actually grow up—not only to stop growth on Earth but also to have an integrated self-social-scientific technological agenda—I saw that it could lead to an immeasurable future.

Out of this thinking, I came up with the idea that there should be a new function in the Office of the Vice-President, which was what I called a “Peace Room.” It would be as sophisticated as a War Room and its purpose would be to scan for, map, connect and communicate what’s working in America and the world. You know we have a system of finding all enemies and how to kill them. We also have a system of noticing all the problems and we have a huge system of keeping up the self-interest of the ones who have it against the ones who don’t. But we actually do not have a practical system of noticing really successful innovations in health, education, energy systems and spiritual development. So I proposed that as my campaign for vice-president. What happened was such a paranormal miracle. I had no money, no media and no passes to the floor because the Democratic Party thought I was New Age.

Russ: *Well, you were.*

Barbara: I mean, “new” New. I walked into that convention—I think it was the wife of the Governor of Colorado who knew me, befriended me and got me into one caucus. It was like 5:30a.m. I gave a 30-second speech: “My name is Barbara Hubbard, I’m running for vice-president to map, track, and connect what’s working in America.” Boom. They signed up. In three days I had over 200 signatures and I was the other woman nominated.

Russ: *The other was Geraldine Ferraro.*

Barbara: Yes, and the Democratic Party was horrified. They pushed the whole convention up. The guard took me up to make my speech, which we had envisioned in church basements and in small groups. The guard said, “Now honey, they don’t pay any attention to you. They never do. You’re saying this for the universe.” This was the guard saying this to me.

So I got up and I said, “There will be a Peace Room as sophisticated as a War Room in the American Presidency, in the Kremlin, in other capitals of the world, and within four years, we’re going to see this new world emerging in our midst right now.”

Just to jump ahead, there is now a movement afoot, once again, to revive the idea—but now we have the technology. We have the Internet. I was doing this as a vision. The idea is that we’re right on the threshold of this new social function. What we need is one more level of coherence and purpose, of mapping and connecting what’s working, and having a new news. I actually feel that what Obama is longing for in his heart is this. It’s one thing to say, “The audacity of hope,” and “Yes we can,” but the government can’t do this alone. It’s impossible. The higher up you get, the more difficult the crisis is to deal with. When you get to the level of people sharing life purpose and creating new communities, new energies and new researches, you find it’s a different world.

I want you to know that what happened in 1984 is resurfacing in my own work in the Foundation for Conscious Evolution. It turns out that Colorado again is a state where there are some of these small citizen-solutions councils. Some of my friends are trying to make this happen in Colorado. I'm going to the American Citizens' Summit that Joseph McCormick is putting on for reuniting America and I'm going to propose this repeatedly. It's not my organizational capacity, but I'm a spokesperson for it, so the effect of such a thing would be to enhance the connectivity of that which is creative. That would be leading towards a new relationship in Democracy where the people's connected creativity is the source of guiding the government rather than the other way around.

Russ: I'm guessing that the media hasn't caught up with this yet.

Barbara: Oh, no.

Russ: What Obama is trying to do is to establish that kind of bi-directional energy between the White House and Washington politics and the rest of the citizenry by having us be involved and recommitted to this country in some fresh, new, exciting and generative way.

Barbara: This is true. While I'm working with certain Internet people who are gifted and want to be able to set up such a service, I'm seeking to meet with Obama face-to-face. My intuition is it's in his heart's desire. It's not like trying to pass the Department of Peace through the U.S. Congress—this is an executive order—it has to be at the grassroots level. You have to have a receptive place in the presidency. It's just an idea.

Russ: That brings us to the present. You talked about the individual, the social and the scientific. I think having a perspective on what you mean by each of those and how they relate to each other is really important.

Barbara: I place everything in the evolutionary story. In order to think of the evolution of the self, I go back and think of *Homo erectus*, *Homo habilis*, *Homo Neanderthal*, *Homo sapiens*, *Homo sapien-sapiens*. It's not certain how these small jumps occur, but that jump to self-reflective consciousness was a big jump. They weren't aware that they were becoming self-reflective; it just happened. So that's 40-50k years ago. My sense is that 4k-5k years ago, the new jump started to occur in these avatars and spiritually gifted people.

There's a tendency in evolution towards greater consciousness, more complexity. We happen to be the generation that when the complexity hit a crisis, the possibility of self-destruction became obvious. What's happening to the self right now is an evolutionary awareness that we are an expression of the evolutionary process. We are evolution itself becoming conscious. The self-evolution for me is an awareness that my internal motivation is the impulse of evolution localized.

Russ: One thing that has evolved for me in recent years is a greater clarity about connection and oneness and unity in the world and the universe. There's an increasing sense that all

of our frameworks for understanding that and for trying to manifest that in our lives and in our world systems are just tools for affirming that, for understanding it, for communicating it. We organize religions around those tools. We organize intellectual traditions around them. Here I'm listening to you talk about evolution, and in a sense I'm reminded of David Loye's work on Darwin and his "Lost Theories of Love" and cooperation, etc. I'm wondering if you're saying something far beyond what I'm suggesting.

Barbara: I think I'm saying something really significant—from self-effective consciousness about 40k years ago, there's been a continual growth of awareness in all different ways. I feel that the self-evolution is leading to a next stage of human evolution. It doesn't quite have a name—Teilhard de Chardin called it “ultra human,” Aurobindo called it “Gnostic human.” I call it “universal human.” It's a human whose consciousness is evolutionary. I see it in myself. For one, I am aware of being internally connected to the eternal, which would be the more mystic awareness. I'm also aware of cosmo genesis—the whole evolutionary story—and I realize that in my atoms and cells that story exists. Everyone of us is a resume of the whole story of creation. Not only on the Earth's plane, but also as Brian Swimme points out, it took all those supernovas, evidently.

(laughter)

Russ: And I'm reminded of Eckhart Tolle who said that every time we take a breath, we are breathing a molecule of the air of Jesus Christ and Buddha.

Barbara: Brian talks about the big explosions in the galactic realm that created the carbon that was able to become matter and Earth, and it's a complexity and an awesome mystery, but I actually feel that in my self-evolution, I embody that. When I get really deep evolutionary consciousness, I can probably tune into molecular biology and nuclear physics and subatomic particles, because I am all that.

Russ: I know that you have an old friend in Don Beck. I first saw you in person at the World Future Conference in Washington, D.C. You were in the room and I said something innocuous and not very bright in the face of all the other energy that was in the room. I think of Don's work with Spiral Dynamics, and some of the other adult developmental psychology models in theory.

Barbara: It does. I know Don fairly well, and he gave me a turquoise stone—there's yellow in the second tier and turquoise is holistic, universal. Don doesn't focus on the evolution of the self quite like this—if the self is an expression of the one, if it is in its body-mind actually encoded with the whole story of creation, it also is motivated to create. I'm a creative self. We are creative selves, and we get called from our own unique creativity. When you were four years old, I don't think someone said, “I think this is what you should do,” and then you studied to do it. None of us were told to do what we're doing. What I realize is that in the creativity of the individual, when it gets turned on in an evolutionary modality, it begins to recognize itself as part of the larger design. I don't think either of our vocations are independent professions; it feels that the closer you get

to being your real vocation and saying “yes” to it, the closer you get to surrender into a process. When I really feel whole, I don’t feel as though I’m doing this with my mental mind.

Russ: I get that. It’s an awesome kind of consciousness that you’re referring to. I aspire to something like that in my own life, and I’ve had some glimpses of what it feels like to be in the flow that you’re talking about.

Barbara: Only from time to time. But I know what it’s like. It’s like a peak experience and you keep moving in that direction.

Russ: Exactly. Or what Ken Wilber would call a “state” as opposed to a stage.

Barbara: Absolutely.

Russ: And this is why I brought up Don Beck and the stage theories. It’s a recognition that the population of the U.S. as well as the rest of the world is characterized by considerable diversity in terms of these levels of development at a stage level. Wilber’s work makes sense in terms of it being focused on people who are at least green and trying to move towards yellow and turquoise. He gives very little attention to the other levels other than questioning whether we’ve made them healthy in our developmental processes. Given the complexity that the spiral dynamics model represents in terms of the complexity of the population of the world, I’m hearing you say that you’re aligned with Wilber around the idea of there being a critical mass to be reached in the evolution of consciousness that will help bring most of the world along with it.

Barbara: I read somewhere that he said that if 10% of the population shifts, it doesn’t take everyone to shift. It becomes more of a consensual reality, and you can see it happening now. It started during the great movements of the sixties and seventies, of civil rights, human rights, women—look at what happened with women and blacks! I mean, really! For all our criticisms of ourselves, that is truly amazing. All these other countries are stunned, including France. I don’t think any of them have had a breakthrough comparable to this. I’m proud to be an American in this instant.

Russ: We were talking about the self and its evolution, so I’d like to ask, what is implied around the social?

Barbara: If you take the self-evolving as an evolutionary self becoming more conscious and more creative, I think that social evolution would be the facilitation of our creativity finding its vocation and joining with others to create. Everybody who is evolving in consciousness and who isn’t in dire straits of hunger or war begins to have a real impulse to create—to express their own selves—not simply in a mystical way but in a way of self-expression, life’s purpose, greater meaning than a meaningless job or relationship.

Maslow discovered that every joyful person had one thing in common: chosen work that they found intrinsically self-rewarding. I think the social becomes the co-creative

society where more and more individuals find a way to express unique creativity. You don't do it alone, so you have to find others. You have to become co-creative rather than being the lone artist. What is becoming more obvious to me is that when you become co-creative through cyberspace and the proper use of networking, you'll find that your real passion to create is needed somewhere. You just need to find that matching needs and resources, and you'll begin to have a synergistic society.

In the seventies, I did 25 conferences called SynCons (for synergistic convergence) and we built wheel-shaped environments. Each sector was health, education, economics, and so on. We invited very opposing people to go into each sector of the wheel to state their goals, needs and resources, and then take down walls and look for common goals and match their needs with resources in the light of the system. It's in my books, *The Hunger of Eve* and *Conscious Evolution*. It's being revived. I'm having a renaissance at 80. I should be dead, but I seem to be coming back around!

So the SynCons were an early experiment in synergistic democracy. It was an embryonic stage of it. My partner John, who was COO for the Air Force, pioneered the *New World's Evening News*. That was where if everybody had an agreement, he called it "the news." I had welfare mothers, Yugoslavian ambassadors, space scientists, Jean Houston, Edgar Mitchell—I was a mad woman about wheels. I actually moved to Washington and John and I brought students from Southern Illinois University. We had about 10 wheel-builders, and we went around the country in a bus building wheels and holding conferences.

Russ: Was it a Ken Kesey-type of bus?

Barbara: It said, "The New World's Company." It was filled with 20-year-olds who were inspired.

(laughter)

Russ: It sounds like a model that would be relevant today.

Barbara: It is. John did "The New World's Evening News," and he designed it like a real newscast; someone reported all the murders and then they said, "Meanwhile, at Southern Illinois University, hippy so-and-so met with the Chief Economist of the United States, and they came to this conclusion." You'd see this completely unlikely couple. We had so many diverse people that the stereotypes disappeared and the news was co-creation. I actually think we hit it for a few times. Sometime in your life you will hit something that you can't fully sustain, but it was a signal of what could happen.

Russ: I can imagine that would have a profound impact on people—both those who participated and those you met within communities. Was there any specific action that emerged from that work?

Barbara: I think thousands of people were involved. When I lived in Washington, I eventually reconvened some of the people who helped me run it. It's intangible, but their entire lives have been affected. They're trying to apply it in their own work. Jerry Glenn, who organized this, is now head of the United Nations University where he has 30 tracking points around the world checking on what's breaking down and breaking through. Someone else is working for NASA; someone else is in PBS. We didn't have the finances to create an organization around it. We did it 25 times and finally my partner wore out, but I ran for vice-president. There are throwbacks in nature, and I think I've been an evolutionary throw-forward.

(laughter)

Nature throws things forward and most of them die. What happened to me is I got a hold of the evolutionary perspective. I applied it and demonstrated full form—in SynCons, in the vice-presidency, in the Soviet-American Citizens summit work I did as well as in my teaching. I thought it wouldn't amount to much, and in the last year as the crisis deepens, the work I did all those years ago is becoming useful. It's like I planted a garden: winter came, I thought everything died, and the matter of fact is it's spring.

Russ: That's amazing. I sense the validity of that. It's like when we take action in our lives and may be initially frustrated by a lack of obvious results, but then we see it emerge. It's like having children.

Barbara: It is. And there's a hidden process so I believe that the social is towards synergistic democracy. Social synergy is a new function like the Peace Room.

Russ: What is the role of the scientific/technological group?

Barbara: There is truly the quantum disruptive technology, if you talk about technology. Take robotics—think of Ray Kurzweil's work—and add biotechnology, nanotechnology, robotics, space development, zero-point energy research, and put that together with spiritual and social evolution. We become what I call a "universal species." Homo universalis. We have in the maturing knowisphere—if you want to use that language—we have the resources and technology to restore the planet, have clean energy, stop population overgrowth and so on. Those are immediate problems. We also have social innovations that can be cultivated. We can shift towards a more synergistic democracy ... or die. I think that we should guide our science and technology to give us an earth-space life-ever-evolving scenario as a universal species.

Russ: What do you mean by "scenario?"

Barbara: Way back in the early eighties, I went to a big meeting of some international business that Orville Freeman was invited to address. These were the leading business executives of the world, a totally male-centered audience with people like Herman Kahn and Peter Drucker. Then there was me. The subject was doing business in a resource-short world and I said that the Earth was resource-short, but not the solar system. I read off the metals

and minerals on the moon and the asteroids. I said they should create task forces to really look at the environmental crisis, the social/poverty crisis, and the new energy potential in the earth-space environment, and develop a long-range 30-year scenario. I knew they couldn't do it short-term, but I said they were smart enough to do this. I was met with dead silence.

At the reception after the conference, Cy Ramo, who was president of a big space company, said, "Only one really important thing was said here today. It was by Barbara Hubbard." All these huge executives really wanted to talk to me, but they didn't know what to say. I said to Cy, "You have the resources of the entire world at your disposal. Why is it that you won't create such a task force?" And he said, "You don't understand how hard it is for us to survive, how competitive it is, what a short-range perspective we have. We're much more fragile than we look." That's exemplified in recent times with the sudden collapse of the automobile industry. He was telling me then what I can see now. It's much more fragile than it looks.

I believe we did our best. We got generals and members of Congress and thought leaders to agree that this scenario is the best thing we can do for national security, for dealing with social injustice and poverty. You can't deal with it piecemeal. We talked to the Ambassador from Bangladesh. We did that at the SynCon. I see it's reviving itself in a variety of ways. I'm just glad that I didn't really feel so much of the failure that I gave up entirely.

Russ: One of the evidences of that is your effort around vision. Can you tell us about that?

Barbara: Patricia Gall and her husband Norman Kramer became really interested in how you get this message out. I've been a public speaker, I've been a writer, but it hadn't hit a popular medium. They came up with the idea of doing a DVD series called "Humanity Ascending." The first DVD is called, "Our Story: A New Way Through Together." It's an evolutionary story. Now we are completing visions of a universal humanity. I interviewed 10 wonderful people like Freeman Dyson and Jean Houston, Michael Dowd and space pioneer Rick Tumlinson, Don Beck and others on their view of the next stage of evolution. I wove their responses together as the story of the birth of Homo universalis. That will be out in a few months.

Colleagues of mine want to build a Peace Room—all of this now comes to another fruition level, but still way under the surface of mass media. My daughter is a biologist/environmentalist in Canada who is saving the wildlife from the fish farmers who are polluting the oceans and destroying the salmon and which destroys the surrounding ecology. She was so moved by Obama's victory. She said, "Mom, I'm a biologist, and I put my ear to the ground. He broke the spell." She's long said that we don't have much time, and that our environment can go extinct quickly. It's not about saving salmon and whales—it's life itself. When she said, "He broke the spell," it's the spell that it's okay to be violent or corrupt or racially prejudiced or to be exponentially wealthier than others—like the Wall Street titans—while others are losing their jobs.

The spell has been broken. I feel that those of us who planted seeds can put our ears to the ground, and they're all growing. I'm beginning to feel this rising tide of life. It's more than just my consciousness; it's the billions of years of nature's evolution and I see a spiral with a core—I call it the Great Creating Process. It's not an external god, but it doesn't feel to me like an accidental universe. Between an external god and an accident based on error, I see the universal intelligence operative everywhere. It's a living universe as people say, and I feel that intelligence is breaking through now into our consciousness.

Russ: How would people get in touch with what you're doing around vision and the DVD's?

Barbara: Just go to www.EvolvingNow.com and you'll find my newsletter, "The Conversation of the Century." In the simplest way, they can tune into that, order "Our Story" and "Visions" and they can talk to me as well. I'm going to be doing a teleseminar series for people who are interested in this so that I can reach out further. Right now, I'm wanting a bigger outreach than before.

Russ: So your involvement with the Evolutionary Leadership Group is another strategy or another approach that complements this?

Barbara: Definitely. I was just invited to be a member of that. Several friends of mine, especially Barbara Fields who is the Director of AGNT—Association for Global New Thought—invited me to be a member. We only had a one-day meeting at La Costa, but it was amazing to have 30 people, all of whom are leaders, like Jean Houston and Joan Borysenko, Marianne Williamson and Bruce Lipton, Greg Brighton and others. Then the question was what to do. They determined it was a call to conscious evolution. James O'Dea wrote a draft of a declaration that is all over the Internet—it envelops conscious media, conscious business, conscious health—and we're having another meeting in July. People are being nominated for it. We are searching as others are for greater coherence, and I don't believe we've yet found in this movement—a positive change—discovered how to do social synergy at a really effective level. I don't think we know yet. What I mean is something like the Peace Room on the Internet and face-to-face as a coherent connectivity of what's emergent and working. I feel I know what it is in embryo, and I have a chance to work with some people on it, but it hasn't happened yet.

Russ: Given that we're all operating in the soup of this global financial crisis and there are all these exciting, innovative, evolutionary and emergent activities going on as you've just mentioned, what do you think the rest of us should be doing? How do you see us as engaging with this effort and direction in a way that will contribute to the kinds of things you want to see happen?

Barbara: I'm writing a book called, **The Joy of Supra-Sex** and here's my theory: the drive for self-preservation and self-reproduction—basic human drives—have expanded into the drive for self-expression and self-evolution. Sexual drive is expanding into creative drive. Literally as we have to have fewer children and live longer lives in the developed world,

hundreds and hundreds of millions of people are trying to turn onto their greater creativity.

What I think everyone can do is the same thing you and I are doing. In my book, **The Joy of Supra-Sex**, I say that you first have to tune into the compass of joy inside you. What turns you on enough to attract you to start to create it?

I was told to go tell the story of the birth of humanity. Well that was an amazing vocation for a mother of five in Lakeville, CT. But I did. But when I was 29 or 30 and got this idea, do you think I was a likely person to do this? No. It was an impulse that attracted me. Also, I was depressed. Most people will get depressed if they don't find their deeper expression. We're meant to express ourselves more fully.

After the compass of joy, I talk about "vocational arousal." There's a certain arousal by talking to someone whose vocation is related to your own—you get excited and sometimes you want to get to know that person better. Then you go into how to join genius. When I'm talking to you, I feel you have a certain genius or certain creative talents and impulses. I have the same. We are in this small way joining genius right now.

The way you really get going to create in the world is you want more of the joining of genius. It feels good. Nature put pleasure as it did with sexuality. She put pleasure into supra-sexuality. It goes on to say that this would lead to a more co-creative society. I think the post-menopausal women over 50 are entering regeno-pause. Most people who find a life's purpose and stay alive will start to feel regenerated. Like me—I am totally amazed to be 79 years old and feeling this way. I don't know what word you use for men—it's not regeno-pause—but it's the evolutionary man and the evolutionary woman who get turned on. Then our creativity joining with each other creates a world. The old system can't do it.

I think if I were Obama I would be in hell. He's trying to prop up an old system long enough for the new to emerge. Whether that's right or not, I don't have the wisdom to judge, but I know that the new has to emerge and it's not that old system. I just went to something called "The Transition Town" about small groups and communities taking things into their own hands. They plant trees and take care of each other. They're all over the place.

I think the financial crisis is an absolute necessity. Probably what's happening is an attempt to keep it from complete collapse while the new systems—energy, currency, relocalization—take root. Nobody really says that clearly enough. They're talking about wanting to get back to "where we were," but I don't think we should or can. There's no way.

Russ: What you're suggesting, then, is for all of us to be engaging consciously in our evolution, not just as individuals but connecting with others to create a more social generative effort around that. It's our opportunity to take advantage of the crisis to give rise to something more positive and meaningful for the world and the universe to have.

Barbara: Really true. Tom Hartman told someone that at one of the inaugural balls, Obama had stood up there and said, “I am an empty vessel.” That was symbolic of the fact that if we look to him to have all the answers, it won’t work. People are just infantile if they think that someone else will have the full solution to all this. Actually, he’s right. He knows we have to work together, but we don’t yet have the social structure. What I’m working on with others is the social structure to empower co-creativity.

Russ: How wonderful. Is there anything else you wish I’d cover?

Barbara: Only what your own deeper passion and purpose is, just so I can catch hold of it from the point of view of being a co-creator with you.

Russ: The way I think about what I’m doing is trying to create a field that is fed by many streams and tributaries, but fosters the emergence of more coherent ways of engaging all the challenges we face in the world. The reason why the subject of leadership fascinates me so much is that I think that’s one of the areas of transformation that we are going through that is quite significant. I think it fits with your comments about Obama—our models and our ways of thinking about leadership historically have been heroic leadership models. There’s still a role for heroic action, and I think some of the things you brought up today demonstrate that. But I like to distinguish between leader as role and leadership as a system that includes the self, the social, structures, processes, technologies and cultures.

It’s been fascinating to watch our evolution in the past several years since I’ve started this. I love seeing how these ideas are starting to pop up in lots of different places. What we’re evolving into is a way of thinking about leadership that is far more in keeping with the kinds of social dynamics that you’ve been describing—we’re not looking to others, we’re not looking to Obama, we’re not looking to the governor or the priest or the leader of our choice to bring about change. We’re looking at ourselves and at our own relationships to support the emergence of the kinds of changes that are meaningful for us.

Barbara: Well we’re definitely co-creating, and the more convergent we are, the better. I did a whole seminar on evolutionary leadership in terms of how it happened to me. I went underneath the particular things I did as to what the motivation was to take a housewife from Lakeville with five children into this life, and how to uncover the actual experience of becoming an evolutionary leader when I didn’t even have a name for it. Anyway, that’s for another interview.

Russ: I look forward to that one, Barbara.

Barbara: Well Russ I’m glad to have met you and gotten to know you. Thank you for your work and for the interview.

Russ: Thank you, Barbara.