



## The heart of the matter

by Gary Zukav, Sunday, April 19th 2020

My Dear Neighbors,

I have been honored and privileged to live for 20 years here in Ashland and the beautiful Rogue River Valley. When Linda Francis and I moved here from Mt. Shasta, we adopted a Hawaiian tradition — bringing a gift when visiting another's home, even if they are family, even if you have known them all your life. When we arrived we offered you a gift from our hearts which we called a "A Gift to Ashland." If I had known then how much Ashland is part of the Rogue River Valley, we would have called it "A Gift to Life and the People in the Rogue Valley." The Gift, two evening events in the Ashland High School auditorium, raised funds for some of the charities in our new home.

Linda and I gave the best that we had to give. Now I again offer you, my cherished neighbors, the best that I have. All my life I have gone to the heart of the matter. When I graduated from college, I volunteered to fly fighters because I felt that was the heart of the Air Force. My eye sight prevented me, so I joined the Infantry because I felt that was the heart of the Army. Then I became a Green Beret officer because I felt that was the heart of the heart of the Army. When I wrote about quantum physics, I reached for the heart of this powerful discipline so that I could write a book about it without scientific jargon and give non-scientists like me a clear and understandable explanation of it. That book won The American Book Award for Science, I believe, because it did exactly that.

Now I have come to see the heart of everything that we experience, do, and create, individually and as a species, as consciousness. Our consciousness. My consciousness. Changing anything in the world, including myself, requires changing consciousness. The only place I can change consciousness is in myself.

Now I come to the coronavirus. Like everything I see around me, I see it as symbolic. It has a lesson to teach me, and in my opinion, it has a lesson to teach us. The coronavirus is real in that it kills, the world economy is crippled, hundreds of millions have no work or shelter or comforting hand to hold theirs when they are ill. The most difficult is yet to come in economically undeveloped countries and cultures. To me, the coronavirus paints a picture of what fear in my consciousness — such as anger, jealousy, resentment, feelings of superiority and entitlement, feelings of inferiority and needing to please, and every obsession, compulsion and addiction — has created in me: distance from others, incapacitation, and indifference.

I see the fear in my consciousness contributing to this massive global experience of fear and collapse that comes to us as the coronavirus, and I see the love in my consciousness contributing to a new human species of unimaginable constructive potential. The coronavirus gives us opportunities to choose love. For example, we choose love instead of fear when we isolate ourselves in order to protect others as well as ourselves. “Social” distance becomes loving distance instead of fearful distance when we create it to protect others as well as ourselves. We are in love when we leave the last package of pasta on the shelf for someone else to buy.

The coronavirus is unlike any event in our history. It illuminates for our entire species, 8 billion of us at the same time, opportunities to choose love when we are in fear. It invites us to participate in a new and different human species that creates consciously with love instead of unconsciously in fear. It invites us into the sunlight for the first time.

I hold this reality close in my heart every moment, and I offer it to you to hold as well.

PS. You can read a Coronavirus Soul Thought weekly on [seatofthesoul.com](http://seatofthesoul.com).

Love,

Gary Zukav

*Gary Zukav is the author of [The Seat of the Soul](#) and other New York Times bestsellers, former Green Beret officer with Vietnam service, and supporter of the [Ashland Culture of Peace Commission](#).*