

# Human Beings Are Destroying Life on Earth. The Biosphere and Endless Wars

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Theme: [History](#)

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*It is easy to identify the ongoing and endless violence being inflicted on life on Earth. This ranges from the vast multiplicity of assaults inflicted on our children and the biosphere to the endless wars and other military violence as well as the grotesque exploitation of many peoples living in Africa, Asia and Central/South America. But for a (very incomplete) list of 40 points see [‘Reflections on 2018, Forecasting 2019’](#).*

However, despite the obvious fact that it is human beings who are inflicting all of this violence, it is virtually impossible to get people to pay attention to this simple and incontrovertible fact and to ask why, precisely, are human beings behaving in such violent and destructive ways? And can we effectively address this cause?

Of course, one part of this problem is the existence of many competing ideas about what causes violence. For example, some ideologies attribute the cause to a particular structural manifestation of violence, such as patriarchy (which generates a gendered system of violence and exploitation) or capitalism (which generates a class system of violence and exploitation). However, none of these ideologies explains why humans participate in structures of violence and exploitation in the first place. Surely a person who was not violent and exploitative to begin with would reject such violent and exploitative structures out of hand and work to create nonviolent and egalitarian structures instead.

But most people really just accept the elite-promulgated delusion that humans are innately dysfunctional and violent and this must be contained and controlled by socialization processes, laws, legal systems, police forces and prisons or, in the international arena, by such measures as economic sanctions and military violence. It is a rare individual who perceives the blatant dysfunctionality and violence of socialization, laws, legal systems, police forces, prisons, economic sanctions and military violence, and how these institutions and their violence serve elite interests.

Hence, humans are trapped in a cycle of attempting to address the vast range of manifestations of violent human behaviour – the wars, the climate catastrophe, destruction of the environment, the economic exploitation of vast sectors of the human population (women, indigenous peoples, working peoples...), the military dictatorships and occupations – without knowing what, fundamentally, causes dysfunctional and violent human behaviours and draws many people to participate in (and benefit from) violence in whatever form it takes.

Well I, for one, find it boring to see the same manifestations of violence repeated endlessly because we do not understand or address the fundamental cause (and so even well-meaning efforts to address it in a variety of contexts are doomed to fail). How about you?

Moreover, I find it boring to listen to (or read about) people endlessly deluding themselves about the violence; that is, deluding themselves that it isn't happening, 'it was always like that', 'it isn't as bad as it seems', 'nothing can be done', 'there is another explanation', that I am 'doing enough already', and so on.

To illustrate the above let me write some more frequent examples of people deluding themselves about the cause. You may have heard delusions like these expressed yourself; you may know some of the many others.

1. 'The child deserved the punishment.'
2. 'She asked for it.'
3. Violence is innate: it is 'in our nature'.
4. 'War is inevitable.'
5. The people in Africa/Asia/Central/South America 'have always been poor'.
6. 'The weather hasn't changed; it was like that when I was a child.'
7. 'We can't control Mother Nature.'
8. 'Nature is abundant.'

Of course, the most common delusional state is the one in which most people are trapped: they are just not paying significant attention to critical issues and have no knowledge (and informed opinion) about them but allow themselves to be distracted from reality by the various elite channels used for doing so, such as the corporate media.

So why do most people delude themselves rather than carefully observe reality, seek out and analyze the evidence in relation to it, and then behave appropriately and powerfully in response?

Because they are (unconsciously) terrified.

'Is that all?' you might say. 'Surely the explanation for dysfunctional (and violent) human behaviour is more complex than that! Besides, when people I observe doing the sorts of dysfunctional and violent behaviours you mention above, they don't look frightened, let alone terrified.'

So let me explain why the explanation above - that most human beings live in delusion, behave dysfunctionally and violently, fail to observe and analyze reality and then behave powerfully in response to it, because they are terrified - is the complete explanation and why people who are utterly terrified don't 'look frightened'.

At the moment of birth, the human individual has a genetically-embedded potential to seek out and powerfully pursue their own unique destiny by progressively developing a complex set of capacities to observe and listen, to think and feel, to analyze and evaluate, to plan and strategize, and to behave with awareness and power in response to their own astute insight into reality and the guidance provided by their conscience.

However, rather than nurture this potential so that the child grows up deeply in touch with their conscience, sensing capacities, thoughts, feelings and other faculties necessary to seek out and powerfully travel their own unique path, the significant adults in the child's life immediately start to 'socialize' (that is, terrorize) the child into conforming with culturally and socially-acceptable norms of thought and behaviour on the basis that one human is more-or-less identical with another (give or take some minor variations among races,

languages....).

The idea that each human mind might be unique in the way that each body is unique (while conforming to a general pattern in relation to shape, height and other physical characteristics) never even occurs to anyone. The idea that their child could have the potential to be as creative, powerful and unique as **Leonardo Da Vinci, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sojourner Truth, Albert Einstein, Mohandas K. Gandhi or Rosalind Franklin** never enters the mind of the typical parent.

Instead, we parent and teach children to conform to an endless sequence of beliefs and behavioural norms on the basis that 'one size fits all' because we are literally (but unconsciously) terrified that our child might be 'different' or, horror of horrors, unique! And we reward most highly those individuals who do conform and can demonstrate their conformity by passing, often literally, the endless series of socially-approved tests, formal and otherwise, that we set. See, for example, ['Do We Want School or Education?'](#)

The last thing we want is an individual who fearlessly thinks, feels and behaves as they personally decide is best for themselves, perhaps even because their conscience dictates. But when they do act out of their own volition, we punish them to ensure that behaviour that is generated by their unique 'Self' is, if possible, terrorized out of them.

Of course, there are 'good reasons' for doing this. If we want obedient students, soldiers, employees and citizens, it is the perfect formula. Terrorize the child when they are young and obedience to a set of parentally/socially-approved beliefs and behaviours is virtually guaranteed.

Equally importantly, by starting this onslaught against the child from the moment of birth, they will grow up utterly unaware of the fact that they were terrorized out of becoming their 'True Self' and seeking their own unique destiny so that they could be the slave of their society, performing some function, menial or even 'professional', after they have submitted to sufficient training. The slave who never questions their role is truly a slave. And that is what we want!

Equally importantly, the person who has fearfully surrendered their Self at the altar of physical survival cannot observe or listen to the fear expressed by anyone else, including their own children. So they simply 'fail to notice' it.

So what, exactly, do we do so that each human being's individual Self is crushed and they are rendered too terrified, self-hating and powerless to pursue their own life path, to honestly observe and listen to their own children and to mindfully consider the state of our world and act powerfully in response?

We inflict enormous, ongoing violence on the child, starting immediately after their birth.

'How?' you might ask. 'I don't scream at or hit my child. And I never punish them.'

Well, if that is true, it is a good start.

But, unfortunately, it is far more complex than these obvious types of violence and, strange though it may seem, it is not just the 'visible' violence (such as hitting, screaming at and sexually abusing) that we normally label 'violence' that causes the main damage, although

this is extremely damaging. The largest component of damage arises from the 'invisible' and 'utterly invisible' violence that we adults unconsciously inflict on children during the ordinary course of the day. Tragically, the bulk of this violence occurs in the family home and at school. See ['Why Violence?'](#) and ['Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice'](#).

So what is 'invisible' violence? It is the 'little things' we do every day, partly because we are just 'too busy'. For example, when we do not allow time to listen to, and value, a child's thoughts and feelings, the child learns to not listen to themSelf thus destroying their internal communication system. When we do not let a child say what they want (or ignore them when they do), the child develops communication and behavioral dysfunctions as they keep trying to meet their own needs (which, as a basic survival strategy, they are genetically programmed to do).

When we blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-trip, deceive, lie to, bribe, blackmail, moralize with and/or judge a child, we both undermine their sense of Self-worth and teach them to blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-trip, deceive, lie, bribe, blackmail, moralize and/or judge.

The fundamental outcome of being bombarded throughout their childhood by this 'invisible' violence is that the child is utterly overwhelmed by feelings of fear, pain, anger and sadness (among many others). However, mothers, fathers, teachers and other adults also actively interfere with the expression of these feelings and the behavioral responses that are naturally generated by them and it is this 'utterly invisible' violence that explains why the dysfunctional behavioral outcomes actually occur.

For example, by ignoring a child when they express their feelings, by comforting, reassuring or distracting a child when they express their feelings, by laughing at or ridiculing their feelings, by terrorizing a child into not expressing their feelings (e.g. by screaming at them when they cry or get angry), and/or by violently controlling a behavior that is generated by their feelings (e.g. by hitting them, restraining them or locking them into a room), the child has no choice but to unconsciously suppress their awareness of these feelings.

However, once a child has been terrorized into suppressing their awareness of their feelings (rather than being allowed to have their feelings and to act on them) the child has also unconsciously suppressed their awareness of the reality that caused these feelings. This has many outcomes that are disastrous for the individual, for society and for nature because the individual will now easily suppress their awareness of the feelings that would tell them how to act most functionally in any given circumstance and they will progressively acquire a phenomenal variety of dysfunctional behaviors, including some that are violent towards themselves, others and/or the Earth.

From the above, it should also now be apparent that punishment should never be used. 'Punishment', of course, is one of the words we use to obscure our awareness of the fact that we are using violence. Violence, even when we label it 'punishment', scares children and adults alike and cannot elicit a functional behavioural response. See ['Punishment is Violent and Counterproductive'](#).

If someone behaves dysfunctionally, they need to be listened to, deeply, so that they can start to become consciously aware of the feelings (which will always include fear and, often,

terror) that drove the dysfunctional behaviour in the first place. They then need to feel and express these feelings (including any anger) in a safe way. Only then will behavioural change in the direction of functionality be possible. See [‘Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening’](#).

‘But these adult behaviors you have described don’t seem that bad. Can the outcome be as disastrous as you claim?’ you might ask. The problem is that there are hundreds of these ‘ordinary’, everyday behaviors that destroy the Selfhood of the child. It is ‘death by a thousand cuts’ and most children simply do not survive as Self-aware individuals. And why do we do this? As noted above, we do it so that each child will fit into our model of ‘the perfect citizen’: that is, obedient and hardworking student, reliable and pliant employee/soldier, and submissive law-abiding citizen.

Moreover, once we destroy the Selfhood of a child, it has many flow-on effects. For example, once you terrorize a child into accepting certain information about themselves, other people or the state of the world, the child becomes unconsciously fearful of dealing with new information, especially if this information is contradictory to what they have been terrorized into believing. As a result, the child will unconsciously dismiss new information out of hand.

In short, the child has been terrorized in such a way that they are no longer capable of learning (or their learning capacity is seriously diminished by excluding any information that is not a simple extension of what they already ‘know’).

Fundamentally, the child is now incapable of carefully observing reality, analyzing the evidence in relation to that reality and responding strategically so that conflicts and problems are moved closer to resolution. That is, the child is now unconsciously trapped, believing and behaving precisely within the spectrum of socially-approved beliefs and behaviours that society terrorized them into accepting, no matter how dysfunctional and violent these beliefs and behaviours might be.

In industrialized countries, for example, this will invariably include overconsuming, which is standard (but highly dysfunctional and violent) behaviour, particularly given the current state of the biosphere. See [‘Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War’](#).

### **Responding Powerfully to Reality**

So how do we nurture children to become the unique and powerful individual that is their birthright? Someone who is able to clearly identify what they need and what outcomes work for them, and who does not learn to progressively compromise themselves until there is nothing left of their unique identity. Someone, in short, who is so powerless, that they are incapable of considering themselves, others and the state of the biosphere. Someone who lives in delusion.

Well, if you want a powerful child, you can read what is required in [‘My Promise to Children’](#).

If, after reading this ‘Promise’, you feel unable to nurture children properly, you might consider doing the healing necessary so that you can do so. See [‘Putting Feelings First’](#).

If you already feel free of the delusions that afflict most people and able to respond powerfully to the state of our world, then consider joining those participating in the fifteen-year strategy outlined in [‘The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth’](#) and signing the online pledge of [‘The People’s Charter to Create a Nonviolent World’](#).

If you are powerful enough to campaign for change against one or more of the ongoing manifestations of violence in the world, consider doing so strategically so that you have maximum impact. See [Nonviolent Campaign Strategy](#).

And if none of the options I have offered immediately above appeals, ask yourself if you are serious about helping to end the violence or just deluding yourself like all of those people I described above.

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