



LET'S HEAL THE WORLD— AN OPEN INVITATION

Heal the world, make it a better place, for you and
for me, and the entire human race, there are people
dying, if you care enough for the living, make a
better place, for you and for me.

—Michael Jackson

What a big topic. Wow! Healing the world. Sure, Bob, let's heal the world. How do you suggest we get started doing that? I have an answer. Let's start small—very small, actually. If we want to play a role in healing the world, we have to heal ourselves first. We need to be able to own our own imperfections, we need to be able to own our vulnerabilities, and we need to be willing to see ourselves objectively and have a relationship with ourselves in which we can heal who we are.

Think about this for a second. Suppose you had an opportunity to go back and talk to the ten-year-old you. What would you tell the ten-year-old you that you've learned over the last—whatever it might be—twenty, thirty, or forty years? What kind of conversation would you have? My ten-year-old me was, well, somewhat tragic in many ways. I was tall, *really* skinny, had buckteeth, was getting some acne—and was a straight A student too, by the way. I also was a very serious kid. There were things that had to be examined, discussed, analyzed. I worried about everything! Now, given this picture of my ten-year-old self, let's just say members of the opposite sex

weren't really "into" Bob back then (grin).

I used to be pretty hard on myself. You too? Many, many of us have been hard on ourselves for much of our lives. Again, what might you share with your ten-year-old self? I've done that, and here's what I said: "Relax. It all turns out fine. It gets better. The world isn't this place that you think it is right now. No need to be perfect; in fact, you're going to lose out on a lot of joy in your life because you will try for perfection. It's not possible, so just relax about it." One of life's biggest and hardest-fought lessons for me was giving myself permission to be OK with my imperfections. And once I was able to do that with and for myself, I was able to see that others were imperfect. I discovered I could love others through their imperfections, just as I hoped they would love me through mine. Don't be shocked by imperfection—the world is full of it! Each of us is imperfect in a beautiful way.

Another critical piece of "healing the world" involves recognizing the fact that how we do anything is how we do everything, especially when it comes to interacting with and treating people. The

way people treat their Uber driver will predict the way they treat their children. I can tell a great deal about people by the way they treat somebody from whom they have nothing to gain—like their server in a restaurant, a flight attendant, a hotel desk clerk, a rental car agent. If they're dismissive, or if they look down their nose, that tells me a lot about them. To me, there isn't a situational nature about how you deal with people. It's a cop-out to say, "It's just business!" No, actually, kindness isn't situational—nor is compassion, care, or courtesy. Want to heal the world? Heal the way you interact with anyone. It'll change the way you interact with everyone.

Then there's the last thing I want to talk about related to healing the world. It starts with a four-letter word, and it ends with the same four-letter word. This four-letter word? Love. Now, that may sound strange to you. It may sound strange to others. But I tell the people who work with me and for me that I love them. I tell my clients that I love them. And I demonstrate that in various ways. It's a process of seeing through their imperfections, holding them in a place where they're able to succeed, and being

WHAT'S RIGHT, NOT WHO'S RIGHT

able to look beyond this notion of me versus you, an either-or viewpoint. The viewpoint should be both-and, and there should be a focus on what's right, not who's right.

Let's heal the world, one person at a time. Start with yourself, and then take it one group, one team, one neighborhood, one family, one community, one business at a time as you expand out. What do you say? Are you up for it? It's my open invitation for you.

Questions, Insights, Implications

1. Are you someone who finds yourself disappointed or frustrated when faced with someone's imperfection (for example, bad service at a restaurant or an oversight by a coworker during a meeting)?
2. How do you feel about the notion that how you do anything is how you do everything? Can you "be" two different people in two different situations?

3. Do you believe that love is universal—in relationships (kids, spouse, friends), in business, in politics, with the environment—or is love something situational (it belongs here but not there)?

Again, reflect on these questions, and allow yourself to be wrong and to be open to new perspectives. By doing so, you'll likely find new insights in the most unexpected places.