

23 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative

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- 1) The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.

- 2) The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

- 3) The IPCR Initiative believes that the nature of the “Culture Change” necessary to overcome the challenges of our times will require utilizing the best tools we have in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc).

- 4) The IPCR Initiative is approaching the above mentioned needs for community and regional problem solving and capacity building by providing practical assistance to people working in the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and people working in the “105 related fields of activity” (see “105 Related Fields of Activity” on the homepage of the IPCR website).

- 5) The IPCR Initiative is an accumulation of documents, resources, and observations brought together to support the propositions that we—collectively—have both the need, and the potential, to be
 - a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”
 - b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
 - c) much more resourceful in the use of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom and “embodied energy” which are now accessible to us.

6) The source of threats—whether perceived or real—to the identities and/or cherished meanings of many communities of people is too often linked to religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions; and such threats too often result in conflicts which cast a shadow of negative associations onto such traditions. These negative associations have caused many people to disassociate from the religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions linked to such threats; and have accumulated to such a degree that the real treasured wisdom of many such traditions now seems as if it is hidden—or remains undiscovered. This is unfortunate—as such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) appreciate truth, virtue, love, and peace—and live disciplined lives for the purpose of adhering to truth, cultivating virtue and love, and maintaining the pathways to enduring peace
- b) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- c) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- d) prefer peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation—and *which abstains from violent conflict resolution*—as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end
- e) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- f) support community life and cultural traditions which “... bring to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”

The IPCR Initiative hopes to encourage people—whether they become associated with The IPCR Initiative or not—to contribute to the realization of the potential for peacebuilding in all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions.

7) The IPCR Initiative is an effort to apply the accumulated wisdom now accessible to us towards the general goal of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and towards the specific goal of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.

8) How can local communities arrive at practical definitions of “right livelihood”? What local institutions would be most appropriate as commissioners and overseers of a resource guide to “right livelihood”? How can leaders at the regional and local community level assure residents that they understand the challenges of our times, if they themselves do not participate in the very activities they advocate for overcoming the challenges of our times? How can our communities change “the way things get done” so that more people can live in accordance with their moral convictions? Workshops associated with The IPCR Initiative can identify, discover, create, support, and sustain comprehensive and practical answers to these questions— and provide a system by which the answers could be re-evaluated and re-stated on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it may be said that by its very nature The IPCR Initiative includes a built-in and ongoing process for re-evaluating and re-stating the “moral compass” of a community or region.

9) The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain that part of the many “frameworks”¹ in the world which contribute positive repercussions to the fields of activity described by The IPCR Mission Statement goals—and to other related fields of activity (see “105 Related Fields of Activity” on homepage navigation menu).

However—and this is a most important point—in contrast to the outlook which claims a “right” to develop an initiative even though such efforts are felt by many as “a threat (perceived or real) to their identity, or cherished meanings, or both”; this writer would slow or discontinue the development of this initiative in such circumstances—until such time as communication leads to better understanding, and circumstances are more mutually beneficial.²

In addition—and this is also a most important point—it is not necessary for any of the readers of this document, or any of the participants in an IPCR Initiative, to know anything about Sri Sathya Sai Baba (the most important influence in this writer’s life), or the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to contribute to or benefit from the work of The IPCR Initiative.

And here, as the third important point of this paragraph, this writer would like to affirm with as clear a statement as he can possibly make, that The IPCR Initiative encourages people, whether they are going to participate in an IPCR Initiative sponsored activity or not, to use the resources provided by The IPCR Initiative to nurture, support, and sustain community life and cultural traditions associated with the particular “frameworks” which give their lives meaning.

This writer—the founder of The IPCR Initiative—believes in affirming the above three points for the following reasons:

- a) these points define an approach to interfaith peacebuilding and community revitalization which he can support with all his heart
- b) the challenges of our times are such that it is essential to “bring to the fore” the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions (i.e. there is a profound and critical need for as many people as possible to exercise as much love, understanding, and forgiveness as possible—in as many ways as possible)
- c) this writer understands, by way of the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the existence of a “current”³—which can be recognized according to the degree to which one has incorporated spiritual understanding into his or her everyday thoughts, words, and deeds... or by the grace of association with profound spiritual teachings.

10) Viewed in this light, The IPCR Initiative—and *all related fields of activity*—can be seen as efforts to contribute to religious, spiritual, and moral “tool boxes”... “tool boxes” (many of which have been created from centuries of cultural experience) which have been confirmed by saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views” as storehouses of accumulated wisdom associated with utilizing that “current” to do good.⁴

11) The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer a well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing building process, which results in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

12) There are a number of core beliefs which have contributed to the development of The IPCR Initiative in general, and The Eight IPCR Concepts, in particular. Two examples of such core beliefs are as follows:

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.

There are countless numbers of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

Readers who wish to confirm for themselves the truth of these statements are encouraged to refer to Sections 5, 11, 12, and 13 of “The IPCR Workshop Primer”.

13) Workshops introducing The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”) can be a starting point for many practical collective efforts, based and sustained at the local community and regional level, and representing contributions towards the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. This writer is confident that applying these concepts—at the local community and regional level—will provide for each of us more and more opportunities to contribute towards such goals, more and more understanding about why we would want to contribute—and more and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

14) Participating in IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops at intervals—over a long period of time—will make it possible for participants to come in contact with a valuable variety of input and experiences relating not only to the IPCR concepts, but to many other peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability initiatives as well.

15) There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as it encourages and facilitates a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as

appropriate recipients of peoples time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and on other related fields of activity (see “105 related fields of activity” on homepage navigation menu). As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

16) Specifically, the contributions the IPCR Initiative hopes to make are as follows:

a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of the “...Towards Higher Common Ground...” Survey—so that the actual survey takes place in as many ways as possible (For more information about the “... Towards Higher Common Ground...” Survey, see the “Core Documents” section)

b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts through workshops offered at the local community level

c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the local community level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)

d) actively contribute to the planning, preparation, and realization of “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace” at the community and regional levels

e) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world

f) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 105 fields of activity

and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional good news, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations

to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)

g) and combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts—such as those in “A List of Related Fields of Activity”—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

17) The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the six steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

18) What can we do—at this particular point in time—in the everyday circumstances of our lives, to bring the best ideas *from* the storehouses of accumulated wisdom now accessible to us and “*through the mist*”, so that our community building processes will be most effective in helping us overcome the challenges of our times?

“In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, friends, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.”

The IPCR Initiative is an effort to assist fellow human beings in identifying what—from the storehouses of accumulated wisdom now accessible to us—would best answer the above question “What can we do...”—and what—from the storehouses of accumulated wisdom now accessible to us—would best fill in the blank in the above statement.

19) It is possible to see participants in initiatives like the IPCR Initiative as bridge builders between people focusing on living lightly and building eco-villages and agriculture-based communities and people focusing on spiritual discipline and inner development through religious, spiritual, and moral traditions; as bridge builders between religious, spiritual, moral and cultural traditions; as bridge builders between “developed” countries and “developing” countries; as bridge builders between rich people and poor people; as bridge builders between good ideas and financial support; as bridge builders between right livelihood and marginalized people everywhere; and as bridge builders between ideals and their practical realization.

20) In light of the urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between communities of people, all of the documents, information, resources, etc. created by The IPCR Initiative are viewed as resources which ought to be made as accessible as possible to people who can make good use of them. Therefore, all such documents and information (including this document) may be reproduced without permission, and distributed in any way the user believes will be consistent with the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement.

21) One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness “to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it”—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a “way to

earn a living” providing such assistance. The IPCR Initiative can help to remedy such an unfortunate irony by helping to create “caring communities”, which are defined here as follows:

“Caring communities” are communities with residents who are aware of the depth and range of the challenges of our times, and therefore do their best to take actions which will have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and on other related fields of activity (see “105 Related Fields of Activity” on homepage navigation menu).

22) The IPCR Initiative is the result of recognizing and sympathizing with the difficulties many people are having in their efforts to work towards living in caring communities.

23) Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecologically sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

Notes and References

1. The following passage from the essay “Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form” (the keynote document on the website of The IPCR Initiative) will help clarify the meaning of “frameworks” as it is used in this document. For a more detailed discussion of the cause/effect relationships between “frameworks”, infrastructures, community life, and cultural traditions, see the section “About ‘Frameworks’, Infrastructures, Community Life, and Cultural Traditions” in the essay “Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form”.

As young children grow into adults, the everyday circumstances of community life and cultural traditions provide “frameworks” by which they “understand their experiences and make judgments about what is valuable and important”. These “frameworks” shape the way people come into contact with each other, and the way they interpret facts, issues, and events—and

provide the context by which people decide what are appropriate responses to the circumstances of their lives. These “frameworks” are often the source of a person’s thoughts about who they are, how they feel about themselves, how they evaluate other peoples “frameworks”, and how other people might evaluate their “framework”.

Note: The above passage is by this writer, with ideas (and one partial quote) from Michelle Maiese (see knowledge based essay "Moral or Value Conflicts", paragraph 3) Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: July 2003
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/intolerable_moral_differences/>.

2. There is an element of faith and philosophy in the willingness to “slow or discontinue” development of The IPCR Initiative (if necessary), which is a reflection of this writers interpretation of the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba—and this writers’ interpretation of the following concept: “There is an estrangement present between elements that naturally belong together. Do not try to reunify the situation with force. Allow things to return to a state of accord naturally, as they will.”] [Quote from Hexagram #38 (“Contradiction”) in The I Ching Workbook Interpretation and Commentary by R.L. Wing Main Street Books (Spi Edition) 1978

3. Two particular quotations in Appendix 2 (of the document “Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form”)—A) 3) and E) 7)—may be especially helpful in appreciating this concept of a “current”. In addition, readers may also find it helpful to review the contents of footnotes #3, #13, and #21 (from that same “Peacebuilding...” document). From his own personal experience, this writer offers the following: just as a glint of reflected sunlight comes from a fish which suddenly moves in the stream, so any movement in the direction of truth, virtue, love, and peace has the potential to provide a “glimpse” of this “current”-- or a way of “feeling” the good results of this “current”. Eventually (however), no matter what anyone may say on the subject, a full appreciation of this concept of “current” can only be arrived at by learning first hand—from direct experience—what spiritual wisdom is, and how to live in accordance with such wisdom in the everyday circumstances of one’s daily life. [Note: The IPCR Initiative is most interested in helping to develop well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.]

4. There are opportunities in every minute of every day for people to “catch a glimpse” of this “current” in the process of actively affirming the treasured wisdom from the teachings of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. Consider the following “awareness exercise”:

During the course of any given day—and in ways we may not even be aware of—acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Hindu faith inspire Muslims to become better Muslims; acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Islamic faith inspire Christians to become better

Christians; acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Christian faith inspire Buddhists to become better Buddhists; and so on.

And consider further: that during the course of our lives, we all require the benefit of experiences, goods, and services from countless numbers of other people.

To be more specific, this writer now asks you (kind reader) to consider tracing the materials and “human energy input” associated with the water you use (and drink); the food you eat; the building structure which you call home; the clothes you wear; the mode of transportation you use; the fuel for that mode of transportation—and the centuries of cultural experiences which make up the knowledge and wisdom now accessible via the Internet....

Even if we use only the implications of this very limited exercise, by the end of any given day countless numbers of people in this world will have had the opportunity—whether they were aware of it or not—to be a positive influence in the lives of countless numbers of other people who are practitioners of a faith tradition different than themselves... (end of “awareness” exercise)

[The question therefore becomes: what messages do we give to others by what we do in the world, and the way we do it?]