

WHO DO WE CHOOSE TO BE

Facing Reality | Claiming Leadership | Restoring Sanity

DISCUSSION GUIDE: “Emergence”

“We see where we’re headed, and we want to stop it.

“But this is impossible. We are dealing with emergence. Emergent phenomena can never be undone. We failed, but not from lack of effort or commitment to cause. We won’t change these dynamics; we can’t repair and fix what is broken...

“Working with emergence means we understand what we’re experiencing and we don’t blame ourselves or our colleagues because we’ve failed. We didn’t fail from lack of effort; we failed because we can’t change an emergent system. In our culture of blame, there’s an instant reaction to pin this on someone and demand redress. It’s essential to call out the real offenders, but focusing *only* on blame can end up as a distraction and a loss of the precious energy needed for meaningful service” (p276-277).

Invasive species are destructive because they don’t work from collaboration: they take everything for themselves and wreak havoc with their insatiable appetite. Predatory invaders destroy the delicate harmony and balance that an ecosystem creates for itself. Without any doubt, humans are the greatest invasive species on Earth” (p220). How are invasive species and predatory invaders kept in check? How can humanity “check itself before it wrecks itself”?

How might blaming and shaming be a distraction from and an energy drain away from that which matters most?

What matters most now, in this emergent time?

“If we want to be people we admire—honest, generous, kind, and creative—we have no choice but to step out of this oppressive culture and begin again, creating Islands of Sanity” (p284).

“Our task is to create the conditions, but internally and within our sphere of influence, where sanity prevails, where people can recall and practice the best human qualities of generosity, caring, creativity, and community.

“We need to be in the world but not of it. We need to create places at work and in our communities that protect people from the destructive dynamics of this culture and reawaken their human spirits” (p285).

What’s the difference between an island of sanity and a walled off stronghold of sanity?

Where are your islands of sanity? Who are you signaling onto the shore?