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Dear Friend,

Welcome to 2020 where I think we are not only called to inquire as to what might lie in store for us socially and politically, but also what kind of 2020 we are personally going to experience. Will it be an annus horribilis or an annus fantasticus? Or perhaps something in between.

A friend recently suggested that “the world is getting better and better and worse and worse faster and faster” and I think that’s a pretty accurate observation. I think today that we are all challenged to be what I call possibilists, that is, we seek to put our energy into possibilities that we’d like to see happen, as in this way, we can move away from either being an optimist (where we tend to deny that terrible things take place) or a pessimist (where we likewise close off to all the positive things occurring in the world, and, my friend, there are many!). Instead, we can good-heartedly embrace both polarities.

Yes, my friend, we cannot ignore the fact that the most powerful figure in the world today is a malignant narcissistic demagogue and that American politics has sunk to an all-time low - I will not here comment on Brexit - that the war gene is as strong as ever, only it is now being primarily acted out at cyber levels, and that most of those in power who we thought knew what they were doing, mostly don’t have a clue, or that fires and droughts and terrorists still abound and that hundreds of thousands of terrorised immigrants are roaming the world looking in vain for some of the wealthier countries to accept them.

The Power of Goodness

That all said, I believe in the power of goodness; I believe we all have a deeply altruistic and compassionate side to ourselves and that the many world crises we

I suggest you spend some time this year looking inside yourself, i.e., exploring your inner worlds, getting to know yourselves better. Find the gods and the demons dwelling inside you. See if certain changes are required? Discover your sacred self but also see where you hold fear and negativity, and where you are still attached to stories around insufficiency and scarcity that like to tell you that you are separate from the rest of the world and that things like hunger, war and inequality are inevitable – and see if you can begin to unhook yourself from these stories. For they are not true. These things persist or are kept in place because we believe it is the way life is. But it doesn't have to be that way. We all have the power to change the stories that run us.

At another level, I ask you to choose to have a successful year and meditate on what that word really means.

For me, it's much more than just earning a lot of money! I see the financial element is only being one small part of it. I see someone being successful if they know how to love and to allow others to love them, if they have good friends, if they enjoy good health and do a work that feels true for them, and generally live with a generosity of spirit and have a lifestyle that is not too complicated and that serves to nourish their soul.

Many people today are starting to do this, and these people are the happy ones. In my new book called **"Gateways to the soul: inner work for the outer world"**, which comes out in August, I will be developing these ideas more fully.

One reason I am such a strong possibilist is because there are so many extraordinary committed people all over the world - many of them young people, millennials - who I see taking the world into their hands, consciously challenging the old status quo and taking extraordinarily courageous stands for a new and better world to come into expression.



Greta Thunberg is just the tip of the iceberg. I hear she's being nominated for the Nobel Prize. Fantastic. It is these kinds of people who ought to grace our 'Honours' list instead of the many undeserving dynasouric old codgers who do!

When I consider how dumb I was at 20 and how awake and conscious my 20-year-old daughter and my stepdaughter of the same age are, I have so much hope. I just

Open Your Heart to Life

So, here is my message for this year: Work at opening your heart to life. Put your energy where your heart is. Yes, acknowledge that horrible things are happening around you and if they impact you, you of course need to do something about it. But don't let it stop you investing your energy into what is good and wholesome. It will make you feel better and it will do good for the world. Choose to cultivate a generosity of spirit.

I say this as I feel too many of us today are too stingy and I certainly have included myself here. Our stinginess can take many forms. We can be overly hard on ourselves. We can be emotionally mean – we don't really give of ourselves and share. We hold back. We can also be intellectually withdrawn. We don't help others enough in ways that we have the power to. And, of course, we can also be financially mean and shy away from the idea of ever giving any money away. This last point is very key, especially as we are aware of the enormous gap between the very rich and the very poor, and even between those who are moderately OK financially and the very poor.

Why are so many of us 'haves' afraid of giving to or helping the many 'have-nots' in the world? I think it is because deep down we are rigid and afraid. We also feel inwardly deprived. We believe we don't have enough love or security and so we feel we need lots of 'things' to prop us up, make us feel safe and that if we give things away or if we share of ourselves, we will feel even more depleted.

Actually, it is the other way around. One big reason why many of us feel depleted and alienated and why our society is sick, is because many of us don't give enough. But then our current system encourages this. It needs us to feel insecure and dissatisfied and to aspire to have much more than we need, as this drives us to more consumption, and this is its life blood! It's interesting that another meaning of this word refers to a rather horrible disease, which is actually what consumption is.

The antidote? Stand a little apart from the system. Don't let it wholly condition how you see the world. And give more to it. Give your love to those who need it; give your knowledge to those who need a leg up and I repeat : if you have more money than you need, give it to those whom you feel deserving of it - this is important, not everyone is - and make it a gift not a loan.

Do So with Joy

more to help poorer countries, especially if the reason for their impoverishment is connected to their having been exploited in the past.

And don't be so self-involved. Allow your sense of Selfness to expand and embrace those around you in the spirit of interconnectedness.

I promise you this. If you want to feel less poor, less sad, and more connected to life, richer, fuller and happier, opening your heart and giving is one big way to feel this.

Think: are there any particular people or particular organisations who really need or deserve financial help and that you deem worthy? If so, then open your pockets and your heart to them.



Reviews & Recommendations

I now want to draw your attention to an extraordinary new book which has just come out by my old friend John Reed called **"Time Is Running Out; Reflections on an Alternative way of Being."** It is absolutely brilliant, giving a laser-sharp picture of what is wrong with our world and where the solutions lie. This book is a must for all those who wish to live with less ego, and every page holds at least two or three brilliant ideas. I am incredibly impressed by the depths my old friend has gone to, as he expresses so poignantly what is wrong with the world and why and suggests what the solution is.

TIME IS
RUNNING
OUT

*Reflections on
an Alternative
Way of Being*

JOHN REED

I think this book especially needs to be read by politicians and economists and by CEOs of the big corporations.

I also draw your attention to another extraordinary book by an old history and philosophy tutor of mine at Oxford many moons ago, Dr Theodore Zeldin. It is called **"The Hidden Pleasures of Life."** Absolutely brilliant. I also suggest you explore more things that he has written. A truly original thinker.

section entitled [A Mediterranean Jewel](#), an artistis guide to Mallorca, a reatreat which just just took place this month, and will be repeated.

Serge's Services

And remember, I teach my 'bespoke retreats' which are individually designed to help individuals and couples connect more fully to their deeper or more abundant self, and where I blend together my capacities as life coach, mentor, transpersonal psychotherapist and spiritual educator. To find out more, visit the [Personalised Retreats](#) section of my website, [Spiritual Activism](#).



While you're there, see my most recent blog post, ["To Sri Lanka and Back"](#), about my February journey, with my wife, to an Ayurvedic retreat run by a most generous and giving people.

So, my friend, I hope you choose to make it a very successful new year for yourself and that you open up to your own and society's possibilities as much as you can.

With love,

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