

# **The Manifesto of New Sincerity**

*A Platform for Transformation*

by Oleg Lega

Whenever I come to pick up my son from school and see him running towards me my heart opens up and fills with the anticipation of tender joy and complete mutual trust. Our kids are such an amazing fact of our lives: biologically they fulfill our selfish need to pass down our set of genes; altruistically they give us a chance to express our parental love, one of the most sincere and responsible kinds of love ever. This strong love for our children inevitably makes us wonder: *What kind of world will we leave for them?*

Ours is a pretty badly polluted world already and our descendants are very likely to blame us for turning this planet into a huge dumpster the same way we blame our ancestors today for the atrocities of slavery.

It is general knowledge that natural resources are depleting. At the same time Russia alone produces 5 billion tons of waste a year, and the death rate from drinking polluted water in our country is higher than that from car accidents and murders. Paradoxically as our depleting resources become waste, both processes are skyrocketing simultaneously. Every day brings us new evidence that without environmental consciousness our descendants will not survive. So, do we really love our children? I would put a big question mark here.

How can my child be happy in the future dumpster-world with no resources? How can our kids really express themselves and be successful in such an environment? Which of the companies our children are going to work for will emerge as most creative and sustainable in the future world? Which ideas will turn out to be most attractive?

My hope is that the ideas, companies, and relations our kids are going to find most attractive in the future will be more honest than those that used to appeal to us. I do hope that our children will be more authentic and sincere in general, and the world around them will respond with more openness and sincerity as well. I believe that to a large extent it is already coming true today.

Have you ever had any colleagues, friends or family members going out of their way to look better or more impressive, but all their attempts end up in a professional or personal fiasco? Have you had similar experiences in your own life? This is certainly true about the author of this text. I (and my close friends) have experienced such failures more than once but still haven't come up with all the answers to the arising questions.

This is quite understandable: until very recently such competitive mimicry was a way to achieve: Do not ask too many questions, be compliant and you'll get extra perks. Be an obedient wife and you'll save your marriage.

But today this kind of compliance is not enough: the world has become more transparent, more open, changing, accelerating and revealing. It gets much quicker with its feedback not only to businesses, but in communication and in relationships in general. To lie to oneself and to the world is not that easy anymore. Even such a corporate giant as Volkswagen gets immediately busted and its stock price falls in value dramatically when it tries to cheat on the emissions control tests. And whoever would have imagined the #metoo movement just a decade ago?

Such openness in today's world encourages us not only to seem good but to be authentic. This challenge calls for a comprehensive transformation and may lead the human community to the next developmental level where there are no more gurus but a need for everyone to search for one's own answers to the pressing questions. These questions arise every day and become more essential and urgent. They refer not only to ecology but to the issues of finding one's way in life, our relationships with others, our personality in general. They seem to be asking each of us: are you just trying to look good, or are you really authentic in your expressions?

Let me give you some examples of what I'm speaking about:

- *I'm a cool and progressive businessman, my company recycles plastic. But nobody knows that styrene which is emitted during this process is toxic for human lungs and in fact our lungs act as a filter for my production.*
- *I am a famous blogger. I use only paper bags! What do you mean saying that paper bag production is bad for the environment? If this information is revealed, I'll lose all my subscribers.*
- *I am a CEO of a production company. Speaking with our customers I always emphasize that our plant recycles all its waste. But if during this process styrene gets emitted does it mean that I really care for ecology? Or do I use it as a marketing trick and lie for the sake of Capitalism, in this way being not much better than the previous generation of CEOs?*
- *My husband is a CEO of a big plant. I'm proud that he preaches recycling and team work, but I have recently come across an internet blog saying that recycling plastic at a non-certified producer is even a greater evil. The blog condemned people like my husband and called them hypocrites and cunning marketers. Shall I initiate the unpleasant discussion with my husband tonight, or will it compromise my family's wellbeing?*

We would be able to continue along the same lines forever because the complexity and interconnectedness within ecosystems are infinite. If the protagonists of our dramatic examples have enough honesty and courage they can make the world inside and outside them cleaner. If they don't, it will be more toxic.

This is a difficult choice you can't avoid. You have to make it every single day even if you are a serene Buddhist spending your life in a nonjudgmental contemplation and never losing your inner peace of mind.

Because if I am (with all due respect) a serene Buddhist, can I afford to stay unperturbed contemplating a river with a pile of waste floating on its surface? Does my meditative and nonjudgmental attitude allow me to ignore industrial waste and man-made carcinogenic substances in the air we all breathe? If I persevere proving to myself that it is none of my business, do I still call it peace of mind or rather is it my lack of responsibility?

In a way, bringing our attention to the current ecological situation (which in fact reflects our concern about the future of our children) we expand our understanding of what it takes to be a Person. Can an individual who fails to behave in an ecologically mindful way be rightfully called a Person?

To be a Person means to transcend one's biological instincts. It implies everyday efforts to become something more than just a mechanism for biological reproduction.

And, above all, to be a Person means to make conscious choices. To be able to tell good from evil. For most of us these choices are obvious; fresh air is good, and styrene emission from plastic burning is bad. Biodiversity is good, and fish killed by plastic trash is bad. The majority of people find it impossible not to interfere when we see a child being abused by an adult. Both, our instinct and the Person within us will rush to protect the kid.

Here the question arises: Am I being honest with myself when I feel empowered enough to protect a child from her abuser but too lazy to protect the dwindling natural resources? Do I have enough critical thinking to see that the fewer natural resources we leave for the generations to come, the less chances to be happy we leave for the child I have just saved from the abuser? And isn't it hypocrisy to consider myself a Person just because I read Mandelstam's poetry, never mind that I don't recycle and do not try to produce less household waste.

We can gently invite ourselves to a new level of sincerity and to encourage the emergence of higher ecological consciousness by asking ourselves the following questions:

1. Do I try to be liked by other people, or I am authentic and sincere in what I do?
2. In my activity, the way I produce, consume, build my relations, and communicate, am I informed by creativity and evolution, or do I just exploit life and contribute to the reduction of its resources?
3. Do I solve the third order problems at the expense of the first and second order problems (e.g. increase air pollution and global warming by recycling plastic that causes styrene emission)?
4. Is my ecological behavior a conscious choice, or do I just comply and follow the current trend because it is in fashion and popular today?

New sincerity is a platform for integration into the new reality. How to be happy while staying successful at the same time? How to be successful and authentic and honest with yourself and the people you love? How to be both happy and successful and not to add to the depletion of natural resources but rather to increase them? Because, as we know, one begins to think about happiness only when one resolves survival and success issues?

By sincerity I do not mean sincerity for its own sake, like the way with which a scoundrel may speak about his misdoings and boast that he is open and authentic in his revelations. Rather, what I mean is the evolutionary need to be sincere with oneself and the world, the honesty that serves the world and myself and helps to make things better, healthier and more ecological.

Below is an example of an honest inner dialogue in which you can see how a higher level of the thinker's consciousness is evolving and how it may benefit the world if the thinker takes it to the end turns his/her thoughts into action:

*If I can do without something why do I need this thing at all? Why should I go to all the trouble of acquiring it and get it recycled afterwards if I do not really need this thing in the first place, since recycling is such a resource-consuming process? And maybe it is the right time for me to think how much I need in general and to cut down on the things which are not on my priority list. Like, for example, I could write on the other side of the used paper? I can also stop using disposable cups and carry around the ones I can reuse later. Then I'll have much less to recycle...*

In the end I'd like to emphasize again that it is not exactly ecology that I'm speaking about. It is mostly about evolution. New sincerity does not moralize and berate today's lifestyle, rather it calls for the transformation in the way we think, for the new ecological awareness of how we behave, consume and recycle. This will allow us to be more mindful, responsible and loving when choosing the kind of world, we are going to leave for our children to make their future and our present happier.

Welcome to the new sincerity.

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