

# *Spirituality & Community*

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*www.spiritualityandcommunity.com*



## **Declarations of the Rights of Humanity The Enlightenment**

**This Human Condition**  
Daniel Speraw

**Star Journey**  
Richard Geer

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# Who We Are

[www.spiritualityandcommunity.com](http://www.spiritualityandcommunity.com)

**Welcome!** Seeking spiritual fulfillment? True happiness and mental wellness? Well, that's what we're all about. Spirituality & Community is a magazine, web site, and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. ***We are dedicated to promoting spirituality, true happiness, mental wellness, and appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.***

## A New Age of Light

***Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment.*** We are concerned with what lies within the heart. ***We believe that within everyone lies a pure love that we call the Light or the Lord within. We believe that one must open one's heart to the Light to attain spiritual fulfillment and that only this brings true happiness and mental wellness.*** The Light is the essence of humanity. ***Ultimately, we find our way by casting our gaze inward.*** We will search this inner world over until we find our home:

***We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.***  
***T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding***

***We believe that mankind is entering a new age, an Age of Light.*** We see a growing spiritual crisis in the world today. Our culture has brought us unprecedented material well being, but we seem further away than ever from true spiritual wholeness. We also perceive an increase in mental health issues in our society and believe this to be linked to spiritual detachment. Many wander endlessly in search of the material gratification that will bring them happiness. Many have lost faith in religions and traditions. Others sincerely believe in traditional religions but remain unfulfilled spiritually and unhappy. Unfortunately, too many are so close-minded they refuse to ask what is missing from their lives. Yet, many hunger for spiritual wholeness and are searching for answers. ***We believe that we are entering a new age of enlightenment in which genuine spiritual progress will be made and that spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.*** An appreciation for diversity of belief provides us with a fresh view of the beliefs of others, allows us to take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and enables us to synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. When we view the beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. We look with the highest regard to traditional beliefs and religions for guidance, and we also look forward. ***We believe that the past is not the end but the beginning.***



## What We Do

*Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas.* We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- Spirituality & Community magazine*
- Features on the site*
- Online chats* (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features are also posted on the site. When interest is sufficiently high, we will hold chats online. *We sincerely hope that you will find truth within, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!*

## Declarations of the Rights of Humanity The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment played its greatest role in the 18<sup>th</sup> century although many place its origin in the mid-17<sup>th</sup>. It was a philosophical and political movement that emphasized reason and limited the role of religious dogmatism. Social contract theory and natural law are among the main elements of the philosophy. Politically, the movement perhaps had its greatest impact on the American and French revolutions and the economic and political structures that emerged in their aftermath, capitalism and democratic republics. The following are two Enlightenment declarations of the natural rights of humanity, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and the American Declaration of Independence.



### The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)

Frank Maloy Anderson, ed., *The Constitution and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789-1907* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1908)

The Representatives of the French people, organized in National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public miseries and the corruption of governments, have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, being ever present to all the members of the social body, may unceasingly remind them of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, and those of the executive power, may at each moment be compared with the aim and of every political institution and thereby may be more respected; and in order that the demands of the citizens, grounded henceforth upon simple and incontestable principles, may always take the direction of maintaining the constitution and welfare of all. In consequence, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen:

Articles:

1. Men are born free and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be based only on public utility.
2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The sources of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body, no individual can exercise authority that does not proceed from it in plain terms.

4. Liberty consists in the power to do anything that does not injure others; accordingly, the exercise of the rights of each man has no limits except those that secure the enjoyment of these same rights to the other members of society. These limits can be determined only by law.
5. The law has only the rights to forbid such actions as are injurious to society. Nothing can be forbidden that is not interdicted by the law, and no one can be constrained to do that which it does not order.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part personally, or by their representatives, and its formation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in its eyes, are equally eligible to all public dignities, places, and employments, according to their capacities, and without other distinction than that of their virtues and talents.
7. No man can be accused, arrested, or detained, except in the cases determined by the law and according to the forms it has prescribed. Those who procure, expedite, execute, or cause arbitrary orders to be executed, ought to be punished: but every citizen summoned and seized in virtue of the law ought to render instant obedience; he makes himself guilty by resistance.
8. The law ought only to establish penalties that are strict and obviously necessary, and no one can be punished except in virtue of a law established and promulgated prior to the offense and legally applied.
9. Every man being presumed innocent until he has been pronounced guilty, if it is thought indispensable to arrest him, all severity that may not be necessary to secure his person ought to be strictly suppressed by law.
10. No one should be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious, provided their manifestation does not upset the public order established by law.
11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man; every citizen can then freely speak, write, and print, subject to responsibility for the abuse of this freedom in the cases is determined by law.
12. The guarantee of the rights of man and citizen requires a public force; this force then is instituted for the advantage of all and not for the personal benefit of those to whom it is entrusted.
13. A general tax is indispensable for the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration; it ought to be equally apportioned among all citizens according to their means.
14. All the citizens have a right to ascertain, by themselves or by their representatives, the necessity of the public tax, to consent to it freely, to follow the employment of it, and to determine the quota, the assessment, the collection, and the duration of it.
15. Society has the right to call for an account of his administration by every public agent.

16. Any society in which the guarantee of the rights is not secured, or the separation of powers not determined, has no constitution at all.

17. Property being a sacred to and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless illegally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.

## **The Declaration of Independence**

(1776)

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. --Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

# thisHumanCondition

## Daniel Speraw

### # 2

## The Anatomy of Guilt

*From the viewpoint of a thirty-two year-old man:*

I answered the door to a draft of cold air and stifled a moan. He was dark, ugly and far too big. Guilt moved to come in, but I blocked him.

“What is it this time?” I asked, hearing the fear in my voice.

He just stood there, staring at me.

The nervous silence stretched, until I blurted, “It is my assistant, isn’t it. I yelled at her, and now I am supposed to feel guilty. Well, I have no more room.”

In a vaguely threatening voice, Guilt asked, “No room?”

I panicked and stuttered, “I, I am overloaded. There is just, well, no more room!”

He gave up trying to come in and leaned against the door frame, pretending he did not care.

“So you are hanging on to the old guilt,” he said. “Why?”

“Hanging on?” I asked.

He looked irritated and said, “Guilt is just a feeling that says, ‘You missed the target.’ When you yelled at your assistant, you missed your target of treating people considerately.”

“Yes, yes,” I said impatiently. “What did you mean by ‘hanging on’?”

He shook his head and sighed. “After you make yourself feel badly enough, for long enough, you have paid for missing the target.” He looked at me like I was an idiot and added, “Once you have paid, you are supposed to let it go.”

My eyes dropped to the floor. Silence surrounded us. Finally, I whispered what had never been spoken: “After all this time, I still feel awful about hurting my sister-- before she died.”

I looked up, and with tears in my eyes, pleaded, “How much time is enough?”

Guilt shrugged and said, “How should I know? My job is to help you with the next load, although I have to say, you have never needed much help.”

Suddenly, I felt angry and yelled, “Well I have too much now! I just cannot take any more!”

Guilt leaned over me with his towering bulk. I cringed.

His voice rumbled, “Like it or not, you already feel guilty about yelling at your assistant.”

Slowly, I eased back.

He straightened, and, with a sarcastic edge to his voice said, “Besides, you are the one in control. You can change your behavior and hit the target, or, you can change the target.”

As I began a question, he shook his head at me, as if I were stupid, and asked, “How do you feel when you overeat?”

I scrambled to switch topics, and said, “Bad. I feel guilty.”

“But you are not overweight.”

“My mom told us that eating too much is hard on the digestive system.”

Guilt laughed and said, “So your mom set the target. When you overeat, is it really too much?”

Thoughtfully, I said, “No, probably not; but wait. Do you mean that I can reset the target and make it okay to eat more?” With some excitement, I added, “Or I can decide not to have a target at all!”

Guilt turned to leave.

“Wait!” I shouted. “Deciding targets is about stopping new guilt. How do I get rid of the old?”

He stopped, looked back, and with unexpected kindness said, “You can, of course, forgive yourself for being hard on your sister. You were children; you were doing the best you could at the time; and, she died from a heart operation, not from anything you did.”

As I turned back into the warmth of the room, tears flooded my eyes. Softly, I asked, “Forgive myself?”

## # 32

### I Just Can't

*From the viewpoint of a twenty-three year-old woman*

I love being with my friends, but they want to go skydiving, and I will hate missing all of the laughing and camaraderie.

Yes, I could ride along, sit alone when they go up, and feel left out when they come back; and, of course, they will be talking about it for weeks and referring to it for years.

The truth is I am a scardy cat. There was a way-too-steep path at the side of our house. When I was young, I would not go down it, and my older sisters called me that, a scardy cat. They were right too; in fact, I do not to try new things, even when they are not scary.

But do my friends listen? Before this talk of skydiving, one of them asked me to take a charcoal-art class together. I told him *No*, that my art ability stopped somewhere around kindergarten.

He, of course, pushed, and I kept saying, *No*. I hate art. Every time I have tried, the result was stupid, and I felt embarrassed.

Anyway, so there I was in class, trying to do what the teacher said. The charcoal was messy, and my picture looked nothing like what we were supposed to be doing. I did not want anyone to see it, and then the teacher was looking over my shoulder.

“Stop,” she said, “Stop trying to do it right, and have some fun.”

With great relish, I tore that picture to shreds, started again and stopped trying. Some of the time, I felt like a little kid.

Later, the teacher looked at my picture, and said, “No, it does not look like the one you were copying; it looks exactly like the one you created. I like it.”

Okay, so the class was somewhat fun. All right! I signed up for two other art courses, but that is not the same as jumping out of an airplane from thirteen-thousand feet.

You probably think you know where this is going. You think I let myself be pushed into it, and it ended up being fun. Well, you are wrong.

After much trepidation, I did try it, and it was not fun. It was the most amazing, exhilarating experience I have ever had.

With great satisfaction, I called my sisters. I did not mention their childhood jeers, but I did tell them what I had done – in detail.

First art, then skydiving; I wondered what else I cannot do, so I made a list:

1] I absolutely cannot remember names. Tomorrow, I might see if that store in the mall has a memory book.

2] I am terrible at trying to fix things. I even prefer it when someone else uses the Drano. What would it be like to visit the home-supply store and ask them how to fix the kitchen’s leaky faucet?

3] My thumb is so brown that plants die at my touch. There is a nursery nearby, and maybe I can—.

## # 26

### The Pain of Being Strong

*From the viewpoint of a twenty-something man:*

The play-offs were over, and when Kenny opened the door, he asked, “See you here for the big game?”

The answer died in my throat, as I looked out at the rain.

“Where did this come from?” I asked.

Kenny turned away and said, “There is an extra umbrella right here.”

I quickly countered, “No, it is okay, my car is close anyway.”

In fact, my car was two blocks away, and I was completely drenched as I slid into the seat. I began to shiver, as I waited for the engine to warm up, and I had to stop myself from turning on the cold heater.

Feeling angry, I wondered why I had refused the umbrella. Saying *No* to help was something I did way too often: last week, toward the end of the company picnic, I was feeling cold and said *No* to a sweater; later, feeling tired and even colder, I rejected a ride back to my car, saying, “No, it is just up ahead.” In fact, it was a football field away; and, yesterday, I said *No* to the offer

of a chair at a lecture/book signing. The young woman who offered the seat next to hers was pretty too.

I was finally able to turn on the heat and got home as quickly as I could. Of course, there was no place to park, and I, again, found myself running through the rain.

As I rushed through the door, my roommate looked up, and said, “Washing your clothes **while** taking a bath? What would your mother say?”

He added, “You want me to heat up the coffee?”

Hot coffee sounded good, as I found myself saying, “No thanks, not right now!”

I could not believe that I had just done it again. Why was it so hard to accept a little help?

With a rush of embarrassment, I realized the answer had something to do with looking strong or being manly. Was that true? If so, did people see me as more of a man when I rejected their help; or did they see me as I was beginning to see myself—as the village idiot?

What I did know was that acting that way **always** meant being uncomfortable.

As I finished putting on dry clothes, I decided to try saying Yes to offers of help. I thought, “How hard can it be?”

The next morning, I hit the snooze button too many times and missed breakfast. At work, the newest hire pointed to a box and said something about extra donuts. I smiled and shook my head *No* and was immediately disgusted with myself.

I wondered, “What is my problem? Isn’t life difficult enough?”

Anyway, the night of the big game arrived, and I spent a fun evening with my friends at Kenny’s. When I opened the door to leave, I yelled back at him, “What is it about your house and the rain?”

He walked up, glanced out at the downpour, and laughed. The storm was not supposed to bombard us until mid-morning.

“I still have that umbrella,” he said with a grin.

Half-way down the steps, I stopped. Rain began trickling down my neck. I took a deep breath and let it out with a groan. Forcing myself to turn around, I went back and knocked on the door.

After a moment, Kenny opened it.

He laughed and motioned me in, as he said, “The umbrella is right here.”

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Daniel Speraw’s current project is *this Human Condition*, a series of stories written from a different point of view.

[www.thishumancondition.com](http://www.thishumancondition.com)

# Star Journey Spiritual Art

Founded by Richard Geer, Star Journey is a dynamic and enjoyable approach to attaining personal insights. The system works with such principles as intuition, synchronicity, self-empowerment and creative visualization. Players' "Games of Meaning" consistently result in new ideas, personal insights, the clarification of life-issues and goals, and enrichment of life. Star Journey is available in many formats, including books, cards, and a 3D interactive world online. Several Star Journey images are shown below.

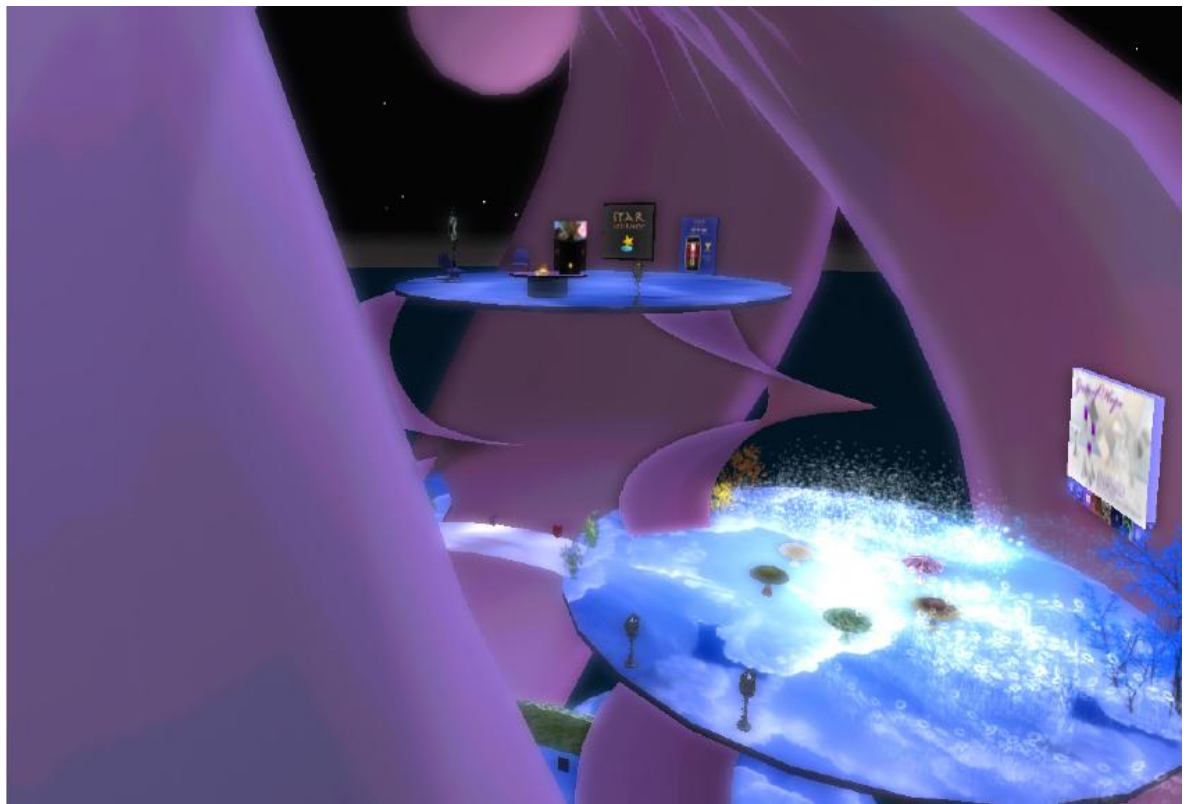
For more, see: [www.star-journey.com](http://www.star-journey.com)



**Tower symbol**



**Ice symbol**



**Star of Aspiration**