

Overcoming Trump-ism: A New Strategy for Progressives

by Michael Lerner

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The United States is in deep trouble and we, its citizens, have an obligation to come to the rescue of the best elements of what made America a welcoming destination for people who were being persecuted or oppressed throughout the world. **We are deeply concerned** about the path our country is taking under Donald Trump's leadership. The racist, sexist, and xenophobic signals given during the 2016 campaign led to an escalation of acts of public hate against Latinos, Muslims, and Jews. President Trump has made disparaging remarks aimed at intimidating an independent judiciary if it dares question his executive orders. He will soon have a Supreme Court majority that is likely to bow to much of what he seeks. He has appointed to top positions in his cabinet and in his advisors people famous for their racism, militarism, desire to destroy public education and eliminate environmental regulations, health and safety regulations at the workplace and in regard to the food we eat, and to dismantle health care for millions of Americans. Much of what liberal and progressive social change movements have worked for these past decades is in the process of being substantially reversed and dismantled.

We fully support the many nonviolent efforts to stop, slow down or reverse some of the worst moves in the early days of the Trump administration, particularly the attempt to keep Muslims out of the U.S. Yet we cannot expect that militant demonstrations or protests by themselves are going to help much until we understand more deeply why a larger majority of Americans have not been willing to give liberals and progressives the kind of electoral victories necessary to actually implement the Left's policies and programs.

Resistance is not a strategy—it is a cry of anguish and outrage, but by itself it will not change the dynamics that have led to the Right dominating Congress for much of the past thirty years. Based on extensive research into the psychodynamics of the American people, we have an understanding of why the Right has had growing success in the U.S. (and much of what we discovered applies to some extent in most of the other advanced industrial countries as well).

We have a strategy, based on our research. One part of that strategy is to split the Trump forces, challenging the policies of the truly dyed-in-the-wool racists, sexists and Islamophobes, while responding with empathy, caring, and respect to those who are not. Many of these latter have been in deep pain not only because of economic insecurity, but also because they've felt disrespected, first by the Democratic Party which raised their hopes for a very different world but then capitulated to the elites of wealth and power (remember the Obama of "yes we can"?), and then dissed by a Left that sees them as haters or stupid when many of them are not. Trump offered them the opportunity to express their anger and rage at the societal selfishness and materialism

that surrounds them—and for many, not having the love, caring, respect, economic security, and meaningful work they need. Their pain at witnessing family breakdown, and disrespect toward the national and religious institutions that they've turned to for a sense of security and community, found expression in the Trump rhetoric, even though many who voted for him deplored his own personal distortions. The Left must become a love army, first for each other, then also for those with whom we disagree. We must lead a nonviolent love revolution with a NEW BOTTOM LINE so that we judge institutions, corporations, government policies as productive, rational and efficient to the extent that they maximize our capacities to be loving and caring, kind and generous, environmentally responsible, ethical in our personal and communal lives, promoting economic and social justice, committed to peace and nonviolence as the only way to achieve the world we want, seeing other people as embodiments of the sacred rather than as valuable solely to the extent that they satisfy our personal needs and purposes, and viewing Earth and the universe with awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is, rather than solely in utilitarian terms as something to be turned into a commodity and sold. This is the essence of the (of course necessarily totally nonviolent) Love Revolution! And it will eventually succeed because most people actually really want this kind of a world, but have been convinced by their parents, their schooling, by their experience in the world of work, by the media and by our political leaders that such a world is totally unrealistic and that if you want such a world there might be something wrong with you, so don't let others know that you'd really like to live in that kind of a world. But when people succeed in repressing these ideas to such an extent that they won't even allow themselves to know that this is what they want, for fear that feeling those feelings would make them sad, angry and vulnerable, they hide themselves from other and from themselves, and then experience great pain which leads them to seek relief, often in very destructive ways. And this creates a huge spiritual and psychological crisis which demagogues of every sort can manipulate for their own selfish purposes, and which advertisers and marketers and media experts use to sell their products.

For thirty years *Tikkun* magazine has been trying to alert the liberal and progressive world to the deep psychological and spiritual crisis that leads many people to the Right, whose economic and political interests are better served by the Left. Instead, we've been told that it's more realistic to fight for narrow "achievable" goals than to address the psychodynamics of American society and develop a vision of the world we seek. But as much of what was achieved in that supposedly more pragmatic way gets dismantled, it's time for the large array of social change movements to rethink this, and address the psychological and spiritual crisis in people's lives that has finally led them to move far away from what the Left has pieced together.

Many leftists, stuck in a narrow materialist view of human beings, have believed that if we could just offer more economic programs and political rights to Americans, they would satisfy and win the allegiance of the American people. They were wrong.

Despite having the best political and economic program by far, Bernie Sanders' message did not prevail. Bernie recognized the pain in people's lives, yet attributed it mostly to economic insecurity, not recognizing the spiritual and psychological needs that are systematically thwarted by the internalization of capitalist values and the ethos of the competitive marketplace. So he was unable to help people understand the connection between the pain in their lives and how our social system and its ideology, drummed into our heads in schools, through mass media, and through our daily experience in the capitalist workplaces and marketplaces, make us unwilling accomplices to the pain many people have been feeling for several decades.

We at *Tikkun* have mostly backed the economic and political rights programs of the Left, while simultaneously insisting that when the Left speaks to people with a condescending tone, creates a culture of suspicion toward men and whites, and projects an intense religiophobia and contempt for a large swath of the American public, it ensures that it will never have the political power to implement a progressive agenda. It needs to radically reconstitute itself.

Yes, it is true that some of that pain is connected to the uncertainty that many people feel about their future ability to provide food, clothing, and housing for their own families. Yet the pain of economic insecurity once led to the creation of powerful labor unions and social democratic movements. What is different in the past forty years has been the degree to which people have come to believe in the self-justificatory ideology of the capitalist marketplace—that they live in a meritocracy. From childhood on, most people in the U.S. are taught that we live in a society that rewards merit, so if you are smart enough and work hard enough you will “succeed” in your life. For the “winners” economically, the belief in the meritocracy provides a justification for having more money and more things than the rest of the people in society. They tell themselves “we earned it through superior smarts and hard work.” But for everyone else, this same belief in meritocracy gives rise to intense self-blaming. The research we did at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, which you can find in my book *Surplus Powerlessness*, unveiled the powerful role that self-blaming has in making people feel relatively powerless and leading them to be less willing to reveal to others their inner pain and fears since they often believe that doing so is only revealing what a failure they feel themselves to be.

Even those who are doing fairly well economically often find themselves facing inner distress as human relations become increasingly shaped by the powerful dynamics of the capitalist marketplace. They spend all day in the world of work where they are taught that their own worth is based on how successful they are in helping the owners of capital accumulate wealth and power, or how successful they are in accumulating those for themselves. And they experience people in that economic marketplace as caring only about themselves and willing to manipulate, control, or bully others in order to be more successful, or to accumulate more money to purchase more things. They come away from work with a strong belief that this is just how the “real world” is—filled

with people who will do almost anything to gain power and economic success. They go home and see “the real world” presented to them on television or in movies as dominated by this same ethos—most extremely in the type of reality television shows that made Donald Trump famous—and they increasingly come to feel that the only rational way to live is to maximize self-interest or else be dominated, manipulated, and controlled by others.

Many come to believe that caring only for oneself is the deep truth of “human nature” that cannot be changed, and that the only rational way to live is to give priority to looking out for number one and seeing others as valuable primarily for what they can do to advance our own self-interest. Sadly, the more people accept this way of being, the more they act in ways that actually undermine the possibility of sustaining long-term friendships, loving relationships, and families. And experiencing the world this way weakens everyone’s ability to fully see other people as embodiments of the sacred—deserving love and caring just because they are miraculous manifestations of the beauty and goodness that has evolved on Earth!

The more that people see each other through a narrow utilitarian frame, the less they are able to build and maintain strong relationships. Families become less stable because increasingly as the marketplace mentality shapes consciousness, people enter into marriages with the thought that this person they are marrying will fulfill more of their needs than anyone else likely to be interested in a relationship—a calculation which then produces great insecurity in many marriages because each party cannot be sure that at some point their partner might not find someone else whom they believe could satisfy yet more of their needs. The resulting insecurity about whether one’s family will actually remain intact or become one more divorce statistic is a central dimension of the spiritual crisis generated by the capitalist marketplace and causing immense pain in the personal lives of those who have been shaped by marketplace consciousness.

In no way should we blame people for this instrumental or utilitarian way they view others. It is almost impossible to not think this way. It is a rare person who can see our fellow human beings as deserving of love, caring, and respect just for who they are and not because they are potential satisfiers of our own needs. This alternative way of being with others, seeing people as embodiments of the sacred, through what Martin Buber called an “I-Thou” relationship, or what secular humanists call seeing the other as Subject and not merely as Object, is the defining aspect of a spiritual consciousness, and it is part of what attracts many people to religious communities and spiritual practices (though it is not always available there either, depending on how much one’s church, mosque, synagogue, ashram, etc. have themselves become infiltrated with capitalist market values). Many people do find the sense of being recognized and cared for in the religious or spiritual world that they rarely find in any other aspect of their lives, and if the cost of that is to buy into right-wing ideologies that are taught in some of these religious communities, they will do so.

What we discovered in our research about the world of work was that most people hate being in world dominated by materialism and selfishness. They yearn for a life in which love, caring, being seen deeply and authentically by others, and contributing to the common good and to a higher purpose are more prominent, and yet at the same time they suppress these yearnings because they've been so fully indoctrinated by the dominant ethos of the society that "you can make it if you deserve to" and if you haven't made it in your personal life with a fulfilling relationship and work that have a higher meaning, the same self-blaming you learned in regard to the economy is also appropriate for the rest of your life. Lack of love? Lack of meaning? It is solely your own fault, we are taught.

These painful feelings that we have failed ourselves are intensified by the pop-psychology and pop-spirituality of capitalist society that teach that you create your own reality so you have no one to blame for your own lack of fulfillment but yourself. All this obscures the economic, political, and cultural institutions of the society over which most people have little control and which increasingly reward materialism and selfishness in almost every way.

Because of the spiritual emptiness and the fact people are not getting what they desire in their personal lives and relationships, it is no wonder that many turn to various forms of religion, or often right-wing quasi-religious movements. It is often in churches, synagogues, and mosques or in secular nationalist movements that they find a commitment to cherishing people not for what they have accomplished in the marketplace, but simply for who they are. There are many progressive churches and synagogues in which this community is mixed with a deep commitment to end racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia. Unfortunately, there are also many others that offer community at the cost of embracing a message of right-wing extremism: the reason people are surrounded by selfishness and materialism is that there is some "Other," often those of a racial or ethnic minority, that is promoting selfishness and materialism. This selfishness, they are taught, is manifested in those who are willing to abort babies because their pregnancy is "inconvenient," those who are in same-sex marriages and hence don't share the burden of raising the next generation, or those who are seeking equality through affirmative action programs rather than wait their place in line for societal goodies like "the rest of us," supposedly getting ahead and enjoying special advantage without having earned it by their own merit. They are also told that liberal culture is destroying ethical values and family stability by engaging in profligate sexuality, and that undocumented workers are flooding into our country illegally to take away jobs others might have.

Liberals and progressives have refuted these claims many times in the past. But what they don't recognize is that the reason people will cling to these beliefs is that they offer a (distorted but effective) way out of the often unconscious but pervasive self-blaming that has been poisoning the lives of millions of Americans. The Right gains immense credibility, helping people regain some self-esteem, by blaming these "others" who are

actually doing nothing more than seeking to rectify the unfair treatment they've historically received themselves.

Unfortunately, in the totally justified pursuit of rectification of past and current racist, sexist, and religious discrimination, cultural, political and economic oppression, police violence, rape, murder, and escaping from the ravages of global imperialism and its wars (often instigated and perpetuated by the U.S.), those who are victimized sometimes focus away from the global system that distorts and oppresses almost everyone, and instead articulate their pain and suffering in ways that demean everyone whom they believe has benefitted from that system.

Many who rightly struggle against racism, sexism, etc., end up labeling everyone who is white as having "white privilege" and being racist and everyone who is male as having "male privilege" and misogynistic. In fact, it was not uncommon to hear liberals and progressives label as racist, sexist, xenophobic, homophobic, or just plain stupid everyone who voted for Trump, though many who voted for Trump did so for the same reasons articulated above that lead people into right-wing churches and movements even though they themselves may not share the racist and sexist ideas in those movements.

It remains a major goal of *Tikkun* and our Network of Spiritual Progressives to advance the struggle against these and all other forms of oppression. So we at *Tikkun* continue to call for programs that would rectify the inequalities and oppression, including stopping police violence against people of color and the violence against many women that persists in our society. (See our Path to a World of Love and Justice, www.tikkun.org/covenant, where we call for reparations for slavery, a living wage rather than a minimum wage, a guaranteed income for every person in this society sufficient to provide them with adequate food, clothing, housing, energy, education and health care—and many other programs that would go far toward establishing genuine economic and political equality. Also, see also our proposed Global and Domestic Marshall Plan www.tikkun.org/gmp.)

These kinds of programs are key to rectifying the history of various forms of oppression. What is not okay, and which we've seen increase over the years and reach a crescendo during the 2016 election campaign, is to be blaming all whites or all men for the history and persistence of racism and sexism and all the other forms of oppression. Yet in some sections of the Left in the U.S. there is a subtext in which all men and all whites are frequently seen through a veil of suspicion.

When my research team at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health began to interview middle-income men and women, they told us numerous stories of peace rallies or other events shaped by the Left where they heard people say things such as, "we have to learn to renounce our male privilege and our white skin privilege," and that left them feeling alienated. For these people, some of them white and some of them people of

color, this kind of language was experienced as extremely offensive because they did not see themselves as privileged. They were struggling to hold two jobs and still have a few minutes of waking time with their families. What they felt was that this group of liberals and progressives had no clue about the realities of their lives, their struggles, their pain, and did not care about that one whit. They felt misunderstood, judged, shamed, and ultimately their needs ignored. Those who were union members continued to vote Democratic, but those who were not reported being drawn to right-wing churches or to the Republican Party where they felt more deeply understood and respected.

Shaming all white people and all men, it turns out, is not really a smart strategy—and if progressives learn nothing else from the 2016 election, they should learn this! As a side note, the media should learn that when people are deeply shamed by the elites and by the Left, they will give false answers to pollsters and journalists about who they support for office, leading the media to make misguided predictions about election results. I understand that many on the Left are totally unaware of how the culture of the Left often conveys this kind of shaming message. They are shocked to hear this. And the reason they don't understand why this would be the case is because they don't understand how deeply the self-blaming induced by the meritocratic ideology of capitalist society makes people particularly sensitive to any form of shaming. Nor are they aware of how the ideology of meritocracy has become an almost unconscious but pervasive belief in the consciousness of even the most progressive or even radical activists, an assumption that their success in the world is a product of their own superior smarts and ethical merit that others lack. This is a key element of classism and it is conveyed to the rest of the population by television figures like Bill Maher, news commentators at MSNBC, and even at times by Jon Stewart when he ran *The Daily Show*. It is the notion that people who are not on the side of liberal and progressive politics are dumb, dumber, and dumbest (and everyone is encouraged to laugh in agreement).

We learned something else from our research: that many working class and middle-income people were at various points in their lives attracted to progressive anti-war, social justice, environmental, or human rights movements, but found that the Left culture put down anyone attracted to religion. What they told us was that in their encounters with people in the Left they often heard comments about religious or spiritual people that went something like: "We really want to get liberal Christians to our demonstrations and to vote for our candidates. We trust if they hang out with us long enough they will eventually evolve in consciousness to our higher level where we have no need for the racist and sexist father figures and reliance on irrational beliefs of religious people." More recently, after the publication of my book *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right*, I met many people who are active in social change organizations who confessed to me that they feel most comfortable in the Left when they keep their spiritual practice or religious affiliations secret, because

whenever they made them known they encountered derision. In short, religiophobia in the Left is another form of shaming.

I have no desire to shame the shamers of the Left. Just as most whites had no understanding of how deep the racism in our society extends until the Civil Rights and other anti-racist movements started to educate us, and most women and men had no understanding of how deep the sexist conditioning of our society was until feminist movements started to educate us, so most people who have bought into the meritocratic assumptions, religiophobia, and other forms of shaming have little awareness of how deep within us are these other forms of shaming. In these cases, there is not some clear class delineation of oppressed and oppressor—the religiophobia and the meritocratic assumptions permeate the society and are oppressive across traditional class lines.

Our goal is not to make progressives feel bad, but rather to help us overcome demeaning ways of perceiving those who are not yet part of a progressive movement—perceptions that undermine our effectiveness and generate anger and outrage from many who might otherwise be open to becoming our allies. I deeply want our world to transform and for the Left to be successful in its efforts to eradicate racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, etc. and to build a loving and just world. Sadly, some of the strategies promoted by the Left for the last half century have alienated many people who otherwise would join their cause. Even many who gave Hillary Clinton a popular vote majority did it with very mixed feelings and little excitement. I hope my message can be received as a manifestation of great caring about creating a world of love and justice, and seeing how our liberal and progressive movements unintentionally deliver a message that is filled with shaming and blaming that makes us less successful.

When many Americans outside liberal and progressive circles are hit with this combination of being seen as sexist, racist, and dumb by the Left, many respond with an intense anger. Most people in the liberal and progressive world have no concept of how bad these charges feel to people who are already deeply engaged in self-blaming, and without the love and care they badly need and deserve. It is our task to help them understand that the alienation in their lives, and the background assumptions that contribute to the materialism and selfishness that surrounds them, is a function of the capitalist marketplace. That cannot happen, however, until the Left itself is educated about these issues, about what I call the spiritual crisis generated by the capitalist marketplace, the shaming generated by the ideology of meritocracy, and the deep disrespect conveyed by the Left's religiophobia combined with its seeming to blame all whites for the continuing legacy of racism and all men for the continuing legacy of sexism.

Factor all this into understanding the psychodynamics of American politics and you get a much clearer understanding why, when Hillary Clinton described half of Trump's

followers as “a basket of deplorables,” her remark was heard by tens of millions of Americans as just further confirmation of the intense disrespect that liberals and progressives have for them.

The failure of people on the Left to vigorously disassociate themselves from what she probably thought was just a denunciation of racism, sexism, and bullying in the Trump world nevertheless highlighted what has been the psychological subtext of the Left’s communications to many Americans.

The Left, in an effort to support the voices and needs of traditionally marginalized groups, dismisses the real pain and suffering of white middle, working, and poor people (and some people of color, a small segment of whom did vote for Trump and do not identify as racist, sexist, or homophobic) and even worse, blames them for systemic racism and sexism. We reject that path.

But it is possible to both lift up the voices of traditionally marginalized groups so their perspectives and experiences are heard and valued, so the history of ignoring their voices is addressed in meaningful ways, while simultaneously acknowledging the voices of working class and poor people of all races and genders. Trying to change systemic structures of oppression does not require that we shut our ears to the pain and suffering of others. On the contrary, it is precisely by acknowledging all the different forms of suffering, even of those who act in hurtful or oppressive ways or who materially benefit from the suffering of others, that we have the best chance of building a lasting transformation of our society to one based on justice and love.

To get to that place, we need to both validate and move beyond identity politics, to unite across class, race, and gender, and bring to the forefront the intersectionality or shared experience of all the different forms of pain and suffering. But to do so we have to be willing to see that others who we have historically seen as our enemy are really our brothers and sisters too. We need to recognize that we are bound up with them as they are with us and that the real enemies are the systems and structures that allow for a society based on alienation and separation, and those who rely upon those systems and structures to maintain their power and oppress us all. This kind of solidarity must be extended to all people on earth. Together we can build a world of love and justice!

A Strategy for Progressives 2017–2021

So what do we do in light of all this? Here are some elements of a strategy for progressives in the Trump era.

1. **Create an Empathy Tribe** of hundreds of thousands of people on the Left who have learned how to recognize and transform blaming into compassion for those whose own pain has been manipulated into destructive or hurtful actions, ideas, and reactionary movements. That empathy tribe must work first to dismantle the set of ideas in the Left that have led many liberals and progressives to develop elitist ideas and behaviors in

relationship to a large section of the American public. Once that has changed, this same Empathy Tribe can play an important role by reaching out to people who have felt shamed and humiliated by the liberal and progressive world, but who are NOT racists, sexists, homophobes, Islamophobes, antiSemites, or xenophobes.

The Empathy Tribe will work on two fronts. First, to change the culture of the Left by challenging the shaming and blaming described above. Second, to reach out to people outside the liberal and progressive world with an empathic approach to the pain that has been caused by the worldview, institutions, and daily practices of the capitalist marketplace and which has been channeled into racist, sexist, or other destructive directions. We shall make a clear distinction between the institutions and practices that must be challenged and the individuals who, through no fault of their own, may be benefitting from those practices. We will assume the goodness of Americans rather than assuming that they created racism or sexism. Apologize loudly, and repeatedly, for the way liberals and progressives have engaged in shaming Americans.

2. **Articulate and popularize the notion of the New Bottom Line:** every institution, corporation, our economic system, our political system, our legal system, our educational system and our government policies should all be judged efficient rational or productive to the extent that they maximize our capacities to be loving and caring, kind and generous, engaged in ethical and environmentally sustainable behavior, seeking social and economic justice, committed to peace and nonviolence, and responding to other human beings not as vehicles to satisfy our personal needs but as ends in themselves, embodiments of the sacred, who deserve to be treated with respect and caring, and responding to Earth and the universe not solely in utilitarian terms (something that can be turned into a commodity and sold) but as deserving from us a response of awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is. Help liberal and progressives who are in a wide variety of different single issue or purely local organizations to see that they have something in common by adding to their organizing an advocacy for a New Bottom Line of love and generosity, etc. as articulated above. If every social change, social justice, human rights, labor unions and peace organizations were to adopt that New Bottom Line and repeat it constantly (not in replacement of their more immediate demands, but as a way of showing what they have in common with all the other liberal and progressives organizations). With this New Bottom Line, the liberals and progressives no longer appear as merely a random grouping of complaints and demands, but as articulators of a new positive vision for the world we want.
3. **Challenge Religiophobia in the Left.** Just as people on the Left were unaware of the racist, sexist and homophobic assumptions that many on the Left shared with the mainstream culture in the U.S., so today while having made huge strides on those issues, we must now make similar strides to recognize the deep prejudices against religion that have turned against us a significant section of the 60% of Americans who say they go to church at least once a month and the 70% who say they believe in some version of God. Most people on the Left are completely unaware of how pervasive that

disdain of religion and looking down on religious people really is in liberal and progressive circles. Just as men denied their sexism, and heterosexuals denied their homophobia, and it took those who were suffering from it to challenge these ideas, so now we need to invite religious people to speak out loudly about the ways they've experienced put-downs and a sense of being perceived as "less than" those on the Left who are secular. Of course, many of those on the Left have anti-religious sentiments because they experienced oppression, sexism, racism, ultra-nationalism, conformism to capitalist values, and/or homophobia in religious communities in which they grew up. They feel totally justified in their feelings. But they make the same mistake that every other form of prejudice makes—assuming that because they have had a bad experience, that everyone in the religious world is similarly holding the worst values. Yet in every religion there are also significant movements of people who oppose the racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. and it is these people who would be our allies if they felt welcome instead of feeling that they are suspect. Liberals and progressives should be making the same efforts to invite in and honor progressive religious communities that we have made to invite in and honor progressive elements in every other community. When the Left feels welcoming to the religious progressives, it will be in a much stronger position to stop the most repressive movements that have currently gained power.

4. **Bring a spiritually-based critique of capitalist values** into the communities that now find their spiritual life tied to institutions that validate the competitive marketplace.
5. **Build an explicitly spiritual progressive caucus** (where what we mean by "spiritual progressive" is embracing the New Bottom Line) in the Democratic Party, the Green Party, or create a new Love and Justice Party to champion a New Bottom Line in both public and private life. Every institution, social practice, corporation, government policy, our judicial and penal system, our educational system, our health care system, and more must be judged efficient, rational, and productive (i.e., successful) to the extent that they maximize our capacities to be loving and kind, generous and compassionate, ethically and environmentally just, to create just social and economic systems, to see other human beings as inherently deserving of love and respect and not in instrumental or utilitarian ways, and to see our planet Earth not as a repository of materials that can be turned into commodities and sold for the sake of our own profits but rather as our sacred inheritance which we are responsible to care for and respond to with awe, wonder, radical amazement, and deep appreciation. This New Bottom Line would quickly yield a love-based socialism quite different from the socialisms of the past that were mechanistically economistic and did not speak adequately to the heart of humanity.
6. **Create visioning circles** for people to imagine what their world would look like with our New Bottom Line. Organize in-depth discussions with friends, neighbors, colleagues, and co-workers to envision what would look different in the places in which they spend their lives if the New Bottom Line were to be implemented there. Only one rule: keep the "reality police" out of the discussion (the reality police are all the voices in your head or

in the heads of others in this discussion that are intensely yelling to them: “don’t waste your time because ‘they’ won’t ever let anything like this happen in the real world.”) Instead, allow each member of this visioning circle articulate their most beautiful visions, because as they do so with adequate detail they will be energized to join you in building a local embodiment of our Network of Spiritual Progressives and a better world.

7. Teach a new approach to foreign policy.

The strategy of domination and power over others as a path to homeland security has guided the foreign policy realists and the imperialist interventionists for the past 8,000 years since the invention of class-based societies. And it hasn’t worked to make the world safe. In fact, when coupled with the power of the gun lobby in Washington D.C., America becomes one of the most significant sources of rising violence both domestically and internationally, providing arms that eventually end up in the hands of terrorists and militarists. That’s why the Network of Spiritual Progressives advocates for a Global and Domestic Marshall Plan www.spiritualprogressives.org/gmp to once and for all eliminate (not just ameliorate) global and domestic poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education and health care, and also repair the damage done to the planet after 300 years of environmentally irresponsible forms of industrialization and modernization in both the capitalist and self-described socialist world.

8. Lobby your local and national elected officials to pass the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S.

Constitution www.spiritualprogressives.org/esra

9. Take the training offered by Cat Zavis, executive director of the Network of Spiritual Progressives in which you will learn how to be an effective and empathic articulator and embodiment of the strategy being suggested here. To sign up to get more information once we’ve finished the present round of training and start a new round in March, go to <http://spiritualprogressives.org/training> You will learn skills that will be critical for saving America from the destructive path it is on at this moment in time.

Join us in this endeavor and you will help create the possibility that by the 2020 elections a progressive force could capture most State Houses and Legislatures, redistricting them in ways that would allow for the possibility of electing a progressive President and Congress. Far more likely that this path will work than continuing to fight every small battle against the Trump.

Warm regards and blessings,

Rabbi Michael Lerner, Editor, *Tikkun* magazine

To learn how to get involved, please contact cat@spiritualprogressives.org. She offers a training that will teach you the skills you need to truly be a spiritual change agent with the depth of psycho-spiritual understanding and skills needed to manifest the world we want.

In short, I implore you to go for your highest dreams and deepest values and to make that the motto for your life and the lives of all whose worldviews you might influence these next four years. Demonstrate, protest, write op-eds, go to public discussions, and everywhere you go, present the spiritual progressives analysis and our proposed New Bottom Line—and advocate for The Caring Society—Caring for Each Other and Caring for the Earth.