

Inciting Democracy

A Practical Proposal for Creating a Good Society

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<<http://www.springforwardpress.com>>

The Vernal Education Project

<<http://www.vernalproject.org>>

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This Talk: 3 Points +

1. It is possible to create a good society
2. There are 5 key obstacles
3. We can overcome these obstacles with a long-range strategy based on widespread education and powerful mass movements

...And then a bit about the Vernal Education Project

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Possibilities: The Reality of our Situation

- In the last 500 years: great strides in understanding and **solving** poverty, delinquency, crime, disease, conflict, prejudice
- Some victories in the United States:
 - Ended dueling
 - Ended slavery
 - Supplied clean water, sanitary sewers nationwide
 - Developed universal education, library system
 - Enacted universal suffrage
 - Developed vaccines, antibiotics — ended many diseases like polio
 - Shifted to treating psychosis as a mental illness rather than as moral depravity

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Characteristics of a Good Society

Based on Golden Rule

- Humane and Compassionate
- Democratic and Responsible
- Tolerant and Wise
- Fun

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Five Key Obstacles

1. An Adverse Power Structure
2. Destructive Cultural Conditioning
3. Dysfunctional Emotional Conditioning
4. Widespread Ignorance
5. A Scarcity of Progressive Resources

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8 Crucial Characteristics of Efforts for Fundamental Change

- Powerful and inspiring
- Focused on broad, fundamental, enduring change
- Reliant on ordinary people
- Democratic and responsive
- Focused on ending systemic oppression
- Nonviolent
- Means in harmony with the ends
- Direct and personal

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A Strategy for Democratic and Fundamental Transformation of Society

- Widespread Education
- Powerful Social Change Movements
 - Challenge existing structures
 - Build alternative structures

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Vernal Education Project — Basic Idea —

- Provide deep, broad education to many dedicated activists
- These activists then educate, support, and inspire other activists
- Together, they challenge, educate, support, and inspire everyone in the U.S.

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Vernal Education Project

After a 20-year start up period:

- 50 educational centers around the U.S.
- Each center would offer a one-year program to 120 students in four sessions
- Total: 6,000 students each year

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Vernal Education Program

To make the program effective and inexpensive:

1. Student-run study groups
2. Internships with existing social change organizations
3. Independent social change work
4. A small amount of social service work
5. Self-study of current affairs
6. A series of five ten-day, staffmember-facilitated workshops
7. Student-run emotional support groups

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Vernal Graduates — Numbers

- If 6,000 students graduated each year...
- And each graduate tried to work at least 20 hours/week...
- Then, after a few years, likely about 25,000 would be working simultaneously at least half-time for change
- If each Vernal graduate supported 6 other steadfast activists...
- Then, a total of 175,000 activists working at least a few hours/week
- More knowledgeable and better supported than now

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Massive Change Movement

- Over 1 million activists working for change
- A gigantic movement — able to bring about massive change

