

*"...man is ultimately self-determining. What he becomes—
within the limits of endowment and environment—
he has made out of himself."*

American Street Philosophers

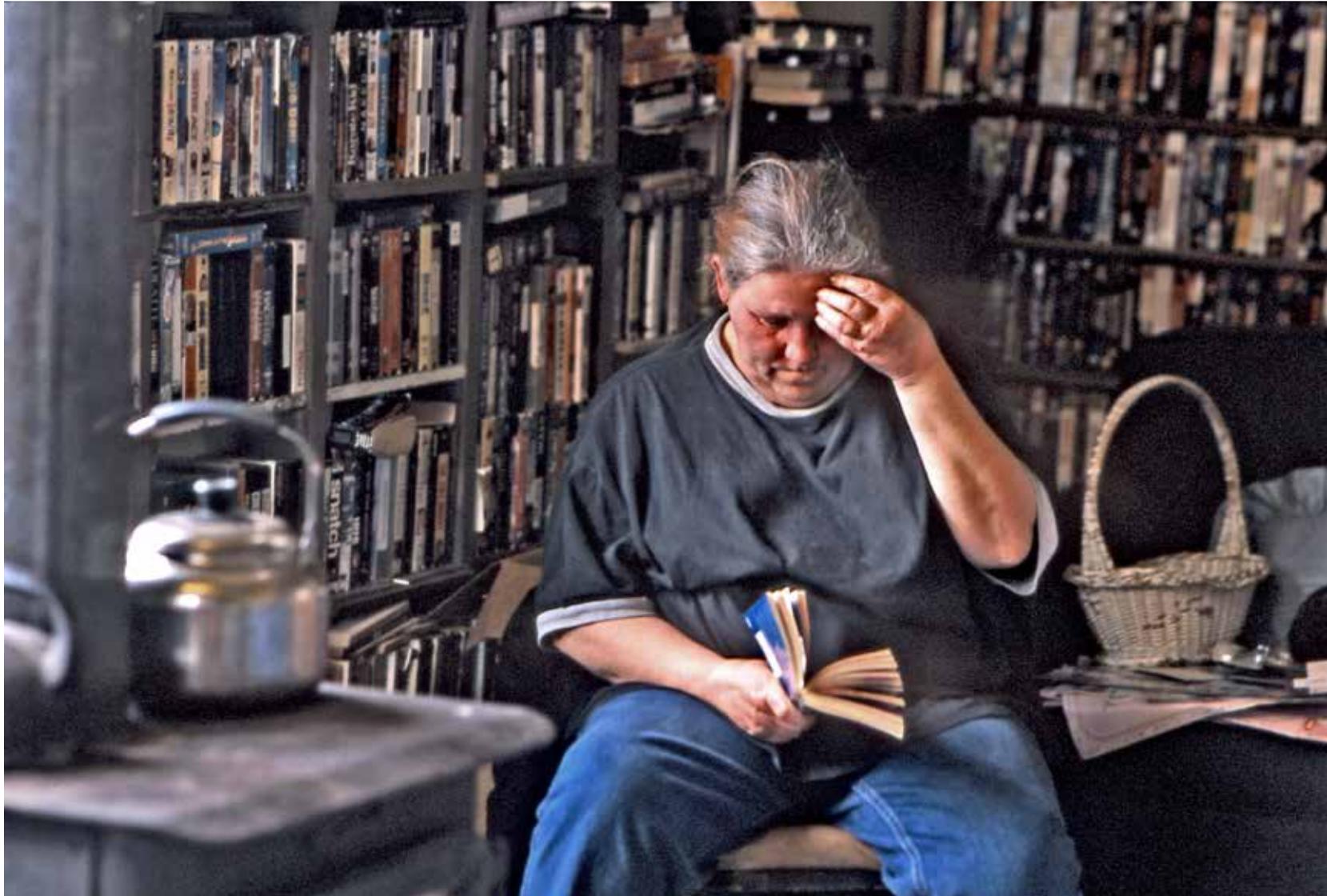
WE'VE BEEN THINKING... AND IT WORKS

Steve Wilson and Friends

*"...there may be such a thing
as authobibliotherapy—
healing through reading..."*

Viktor E. Frankl in *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING*

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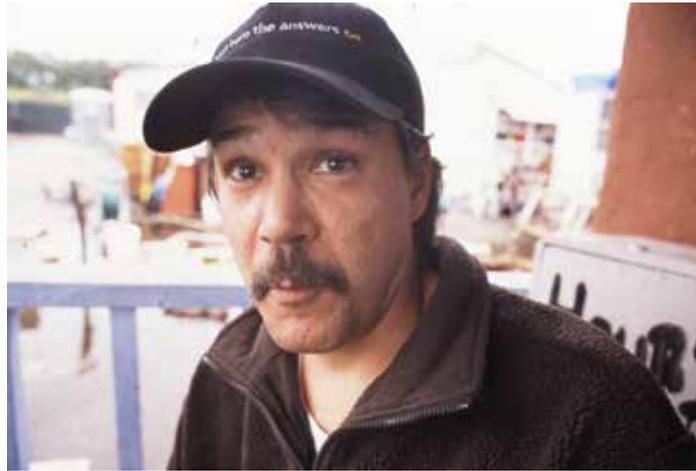
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“I just want to be me.”

Dean, in hand-written words:

“I lost all.

All.

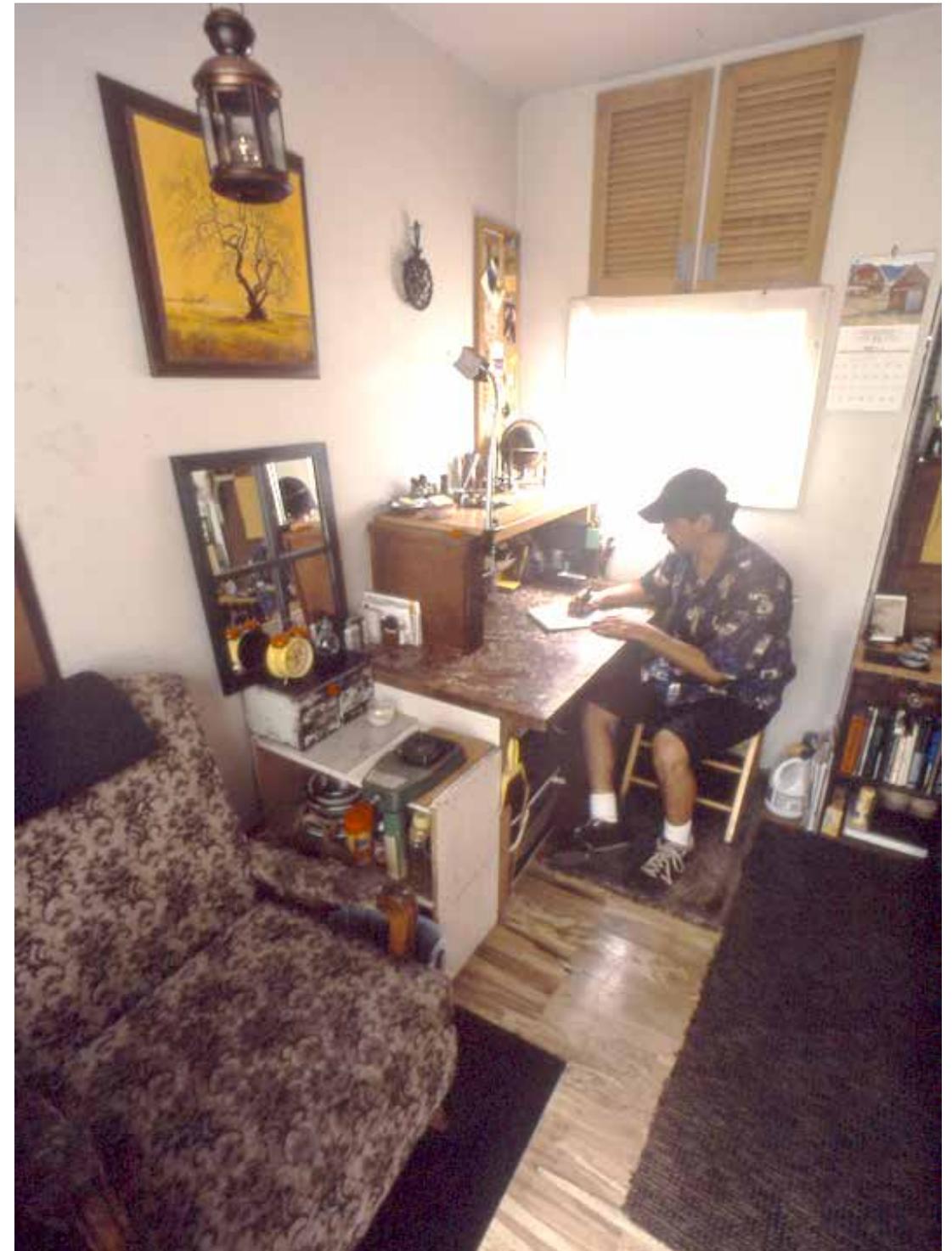
“I experienced the bottom.

My everyday picture
was homeless, questionable future.

“I had to become flat out honest with myself
...and with others.

I had to earn forgiveness for myself
...and others.

I had to learn the simplicity of life
...to discover, respect and enjoy the kid in me,
...to find beauty in every form,
...to find a passion and earn life.



“The honesty became liberating.
Knowing the consequences came to me,
I had the freedom
to be as irresponsible as I wanted.
I could be anybody I wanted to be.
I could use my middle name.
I could invent a name.
I could be anonymous.

“I was not content with myself.
I wanted to like me for what I was,
with all my faults and perceived faults
and the mistakes that are part of growing up.

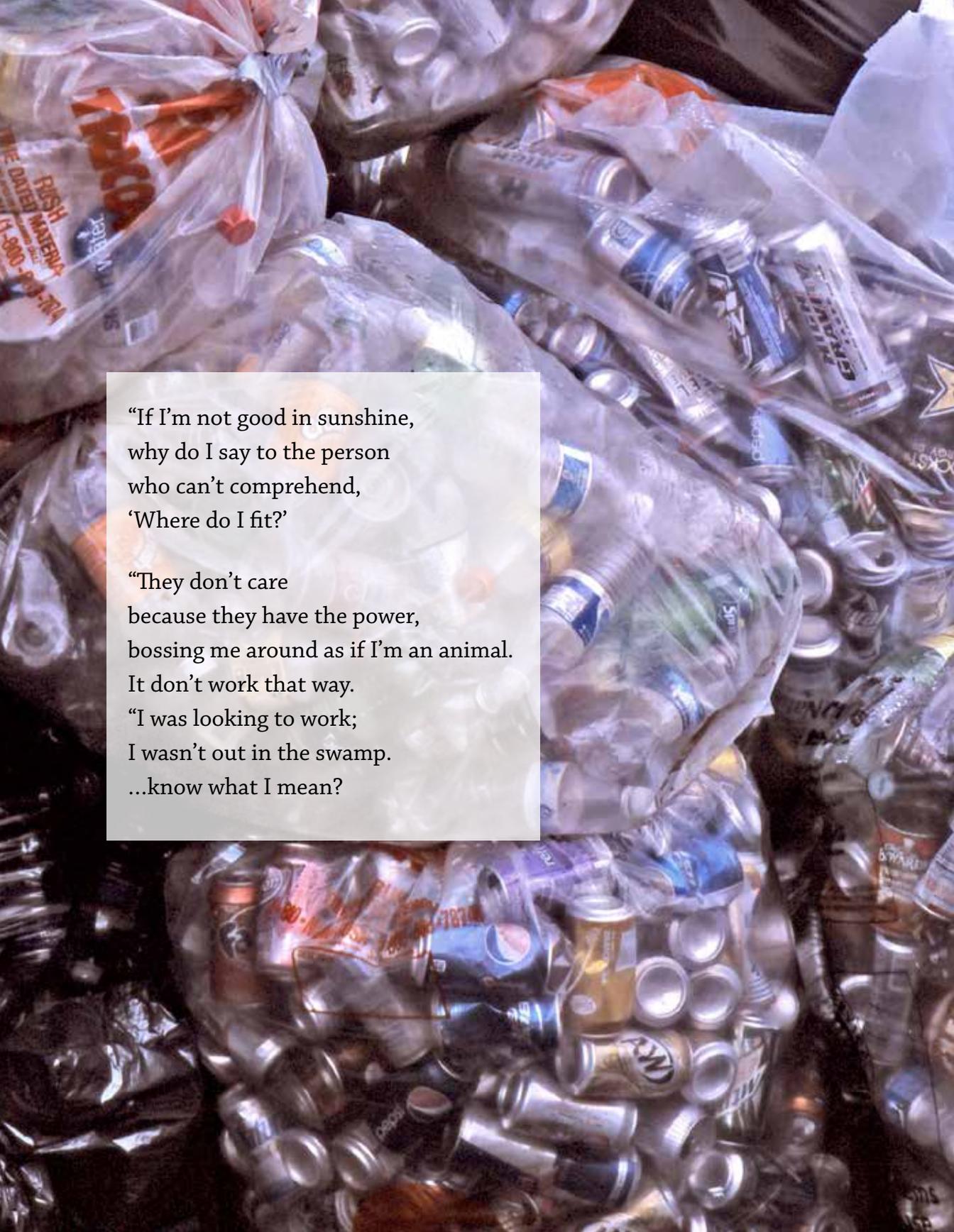
“I found out I just wanted to be me.
I want to use my own name
but I’m tired—
Tired of maintaining my morals and manners
with those without.
It’s taxing me.

“When did caring become a liability?

“I’m tired—
Tired of giving the benefit of the doubt,
then doubting the benefit.

“When did a loving heart become a disability?





“If I’m not good in sunshine,
why do I say to the person
who can’t comprehend,
‘Where do I fit?’

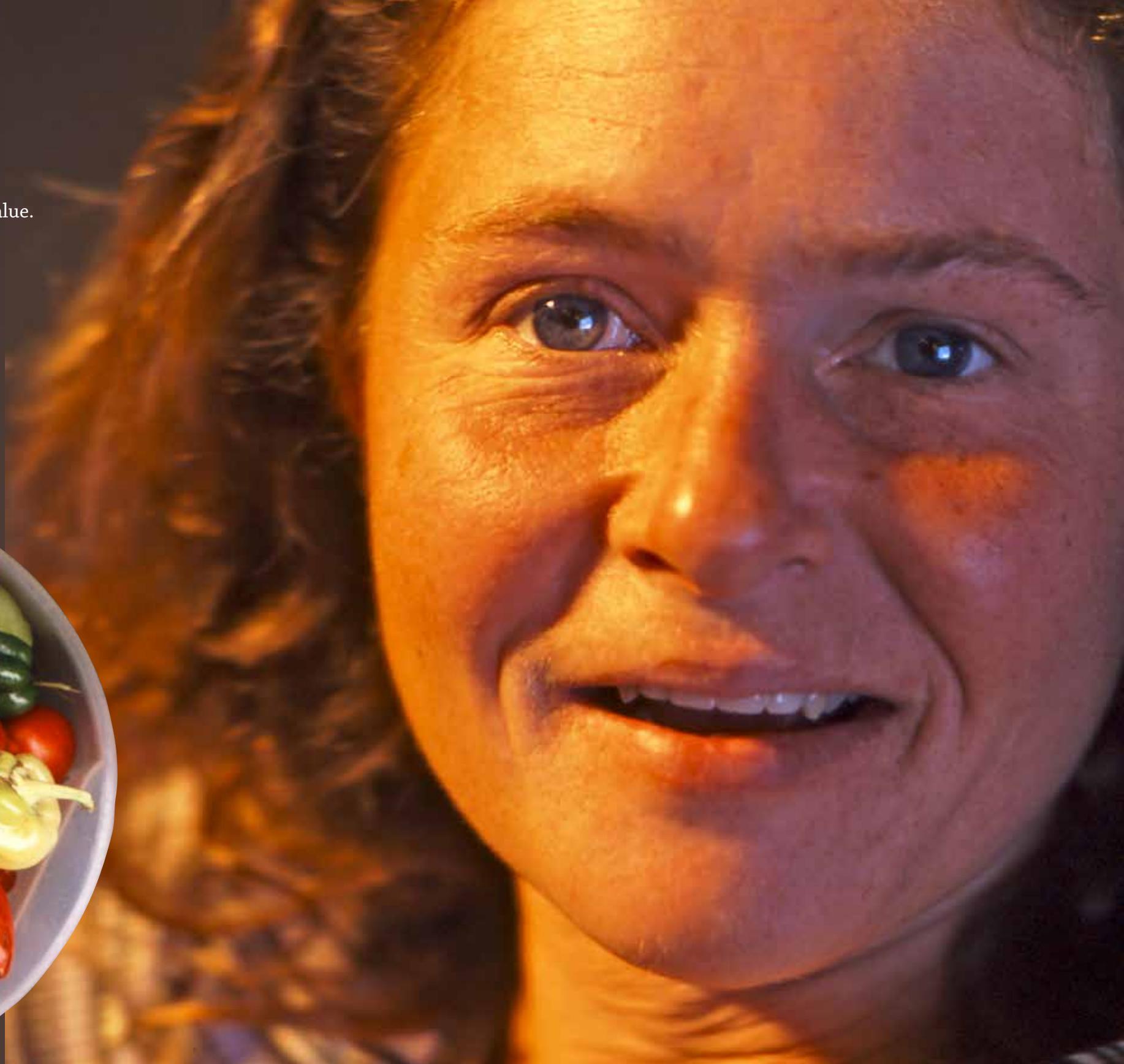
“They don’t care
because they have the power,
bossing me around as if I’m an animal.
It don’t work that way.
“I was looking to work;
I wasn’t out in the swamp.
...know what I mean?”

Dean continues,

“Success...

“Money doesn’t always measure success.
Insignificant things can sometimes have wonderful value.
In today’s world of ‘copy,’ unique is...well, unique.

**“Success is being able
to make spontaneous,
anonymous gifts.”**





Within sky's immense freedom
acrobatic black dots
climb, dive, glide into nearness.
A pair of courting bald eagles.

It is Saturday.

Without script or intention,
by the wandering path of coincidence
and out of Dignity Village's organizational chaos
this collection of five Saturdays
records the rebirthing
of a self-governing community by a poverty population.

Self-selected, self-governed,
selfish and selfless, lurching forward
freighted with poverty, hopes of happiness
and the occasionally serendipitous.

Follow the action:

...our nation's first city-sanctioned
homeless encampment,
...two Danish lady-anthropologists
from University of Copenhagen,
...His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama,
...the Larson Legacy workshops,
...and, of course, the Villagers themselves.



Scott's outside-inside guided tour engages a visiting JOIN group's questions and curiosities about Dignity Village, about self-government, about the Village's Five Basic Rules, about street life, cardboard bedding, dumpster-diving,...and...and...and....



At the greenhouse the inquiring Danish lady-anthropologists stow questions and recorder and dig, divide and tuck into bed donated strawberry, tomato, cabbage, squash, cucumber and celery starts.

Bearing gifts of insulation and sheetrock, volunteers from Home Depot join carpentry-skilled Villagers to insulate and sheetrock two village homes.



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama



Connecting between science and faith are concerned citizens, environmentalists, journalists, and Buddhists of several flavors, perhaps 11,000 in total, including 11 Villagers.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama Environmental Summit is hosted by Mitripa College.

The Larson Legacy made bus fare, lunch and tickets to the Dalai Lama's presentations available to Villagers.

It is Saturday.

A handful of Villagers board the 8:45 Tri•Met arriving Veteran's Memorial Coliseum to join the pre-conference enthusiasm and confusion.



The Dalai Lama is welcomed, and welcoming.



“Brothers and sisters,
from our inner garden to the Universe
happy experience is the basis for Unity.
A habit of happiness....love toward all of Creation.

“Tibet is a culture of compassion.

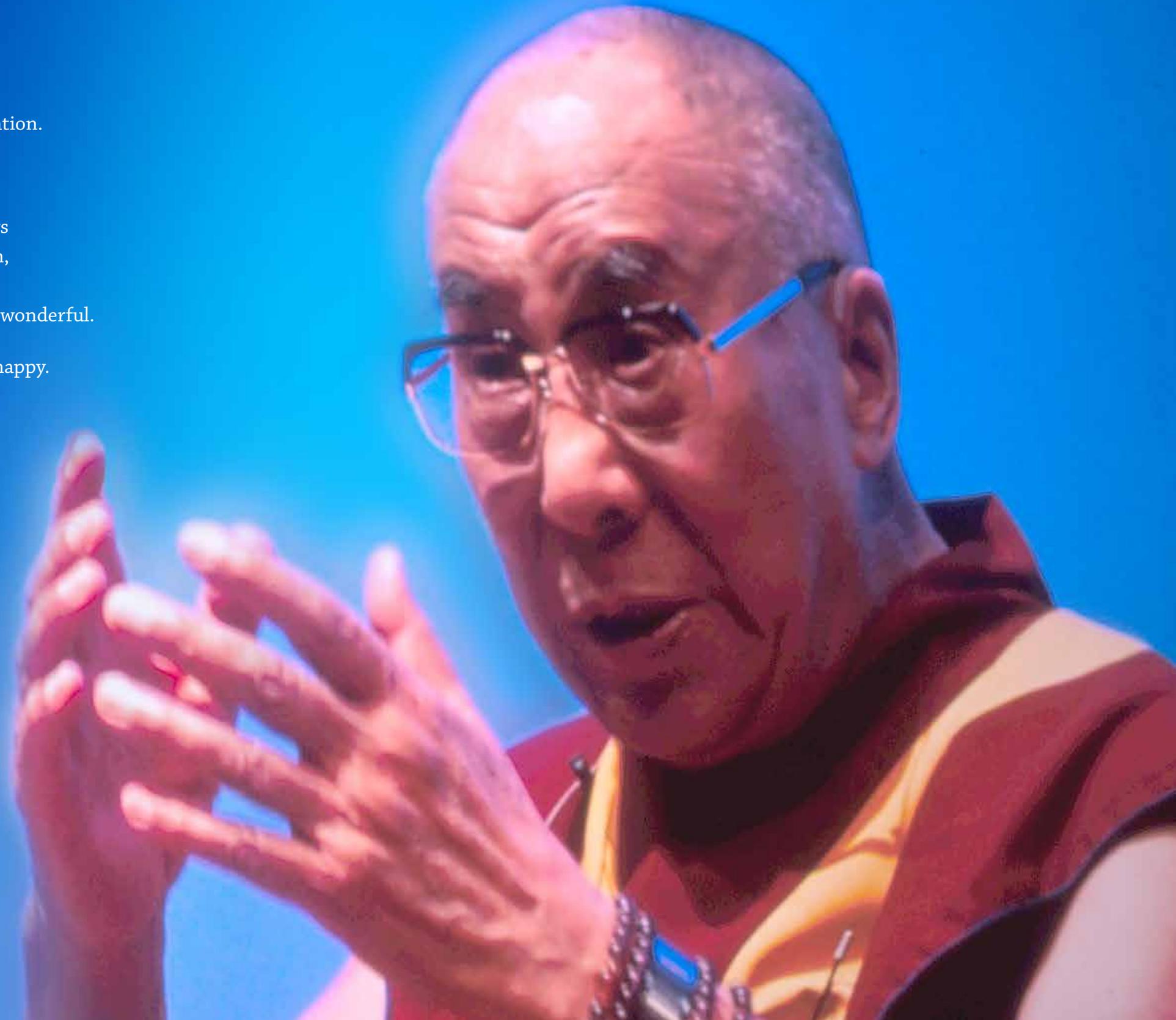
“Compassion, that sense of concern for others
comes not necessarily from a religious person,
you will find the same qualities in all people.
The same opportunity to produce something wonderful.

”Loving kindness is the way for others to be happy.
What we want is unbiased love.
What we want is unbiased compassion.
Increase and nurture these basic values.

“Unity through kindness”

It is classic Dalai Lama
as are the concerns:

“Nothing easy. Must be some moderation.
We are a social animal.
All neighbors come together,
smile and nice words but inside not happy.
To get happy physically
you must get happy mind.
Ruling class too much exploitation.
So therefor, anger out of a sense of concern.



...and the answer is:

Respect for self and others.

A safe and secure home.

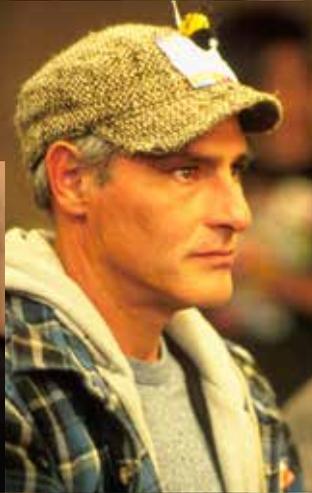
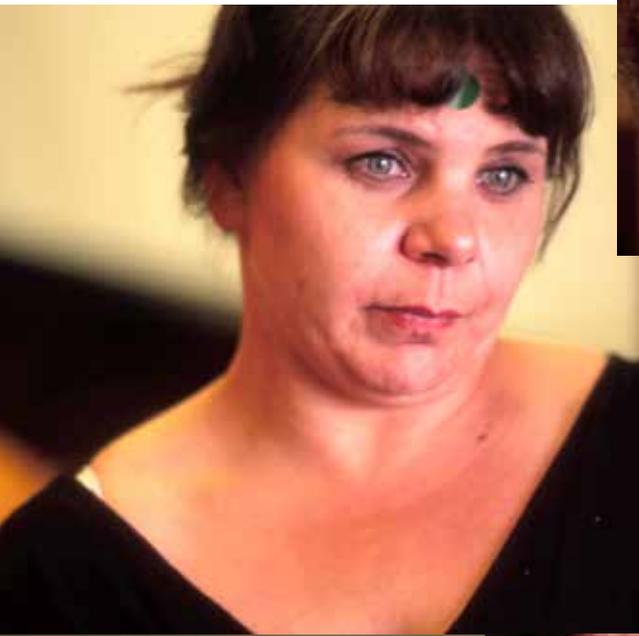
Mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health.

Diverse people working together in community.

Outreach and inreach.

donations and revenue.

Self-governing.





Upholding bylaws,
enforcing rules,
often contentious,
but Village prevails
over the errant individual
—mostly.

**“What good do we do
throwing anybody
back on the street?”**

How accurate is our listening?
...our core sense of humanity?
How successful our self-governance
in selecting members?



Living the Agreement—or Not

Gather together,
encouraging people
to speak for themselves.
Honest and open.

Listen with respect, honest and open,
follow through with kindness, caring, fidelity.

Share the stories.
Walk the talk.

Discuss the temptations.

Discover what I can do with myself.

Collected from diversity
talents join together a random 'family'
creating Village
—mostly.



...but if...



“...if people can’t talk, they can’t think about our economy, democracy, humanity. I traveled among intentional communities in Nevada, Alaska, in Oregon, SquareOne, in Seattle, The Jungle. I was allowed to listen. I reached a lot of people. A lot of people who don’t trust our society, don’t trust its morals and the empowered. I listened to discouragement.”

Ptery’s words are schooled and street-smart. I query about Dignity Village.

“I don’t know. There are lots of different minds, lots to discover, appreciate where they’re at. There are lots of walls between people, physical walls of abuse, of fighting, of fairness, of money, of screaming without listening.

“Look at the sky, the generosity. Sense the sharing, Though the culture is selfish, encourage individuals.

“In concept, sustainable may be the way to go. “Too much profit enchants,



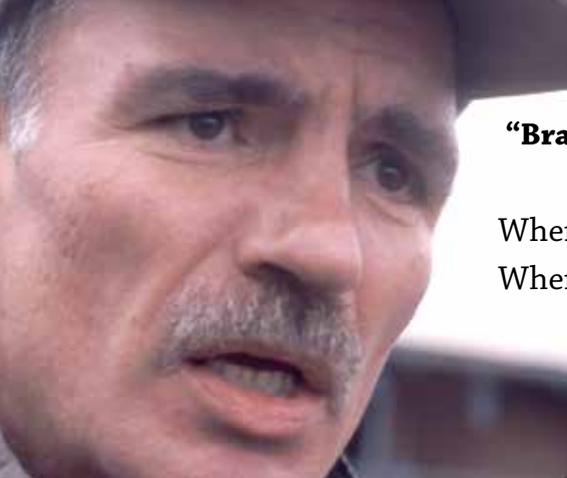
distracts from community awareness of basic stuff: shelter, food, water, caring, sharing, welcome. In concept this might be the way to go but our past has made many barriers. And some don’t see opportunity, while others won’t embrace change.

“I’m educating myself about activities that are beneficial to the climate, that work with nature. I’m motivated listening how we’re all connected: globalized compassion. Yet “they” aren’t with us because “they” have a different goal.

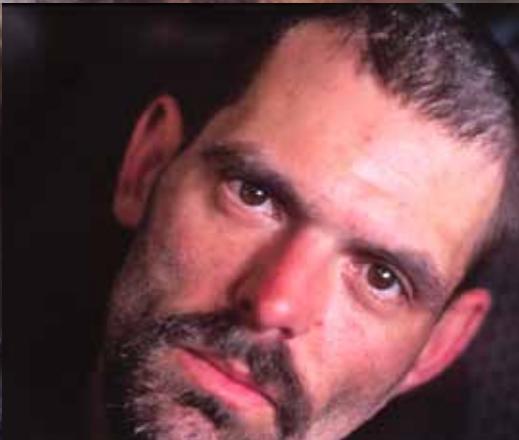
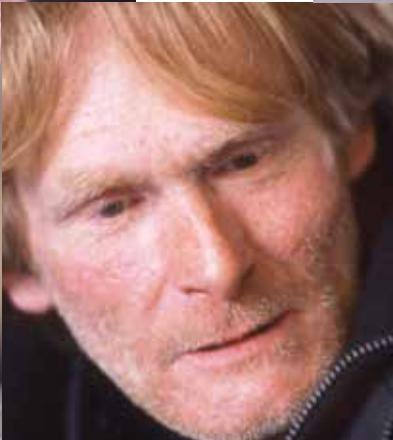
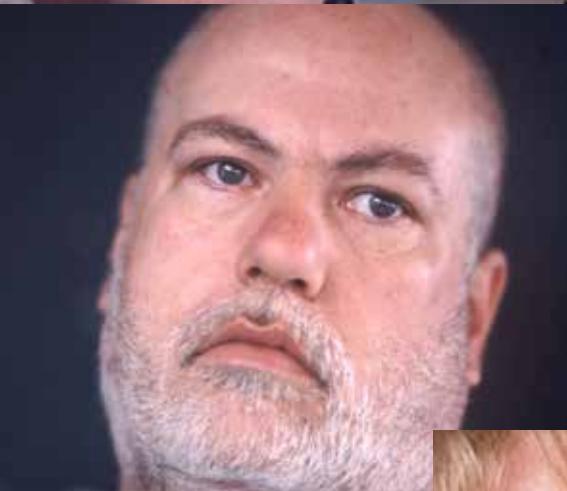
“I don’t know... Influence comes a little at a time and sometimes sideways, by appreciating where people are at, by encouraging individualism and honoring what we don’t know. There may not be **magic**, but there is **mystery**.

“It’s hard to figure out where leadership might come from. Learn to inspire, to understand myself and others, help restore the Earth.





“Brains are all different...
 how they work with their histories.
 When our gate opens and closes **ideas come and go.**
 When you help things happen, comes kindness.
 Being kind brings happiness.
Happiness brings unity...



...an 'American Dream' where
you wouldn't have anxiety about health necessities,
you would gain your money by doing stuff you value,
you wouldn't feel the need to impress,
you would embrace cooperation.
Kids would play in the dirt
learning thinking and building skills,
with encouragement
for curiosity, enthusiasm and imagination.

"Dignity Village is in the right direction,
limited and slowly, but in the right direction.

"I'm leery about jumping back
to mass media frenzies, the greed momentum,

corporation-inspired propaganda,
relentless marketing
and our habit of forgetting about the earth.
I fear losing what I've gained:
humility, facility and humanity.
'Homeless', for now just feels better.

