

Video 6

What is a Renaissance?

Part Four

Hello. If you are joining us for the first time, welcome to the team.

The title for our talk today is, **What is a Renaissance? Part Four**, of five.

Let us go back to that list of evils from the 20th Century (and from the many centuries long before the 20th): poverty, pollution, plundering, racism, and war. We need—we *urgently* need—to focus our attention on the evil which we ourselves have refused to abandon. Instead, we have made this evil increasingly hideous with all of the deadly power of our modern technology. We refuse to stop our unrelenting wars. We refuse to acknowledge the desperation of the refugees fleeing from those wars. Because we are busy, very busy, making profits from those wars.

War is a business, the dirtiest business on planet Earth, and we must *shut down* that business. Soon. And forever.

War is not a form of slow motion suicide, because once the first nuclear weapon is launched, our long human journey will very quickly come to an end.

Young people of the world, some of you—the bravest of the brave—must turn your attention to the global weapons market. Especially, the market in which weapons are traded for oil, and oil is traded for weapons. This market is a lethal cancer which will eat at human civilization without mercy, so that a very small number of people can earn vast amounts of money. This money provides them with wealth, but more important, with power.

Old men did not fight in the trenches of World War One. Old men did not fight on the global battlefields of World War Two. Old men did not fight in the proxy wars that ravaged the world during the Cold War. Old men do not care about the children, whom they call “collateral damage”, who die from the bombs and artillery and poison gas of our utterly unnecessary wars today.

Old men make their profits and play golf.

Young people of the world, we need “investigative journalists”, brave people who investigate the crimes and then write about them, revealing the truth.

To be such a journalist is perhaps the most dangerous job in the world.

Visit the website of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, then click on “Military Expenditure”. You will find an extensive Database which covers “the military spending of countries for the period 1949–2017”. Rather than stun you, amaze you, *appall* you with the amount of money which various countries have spent on the manufacture, and sales, of weapons, I would rather that you do your own research.

Yes, as members of the First Global Generation in Human History, *you must do your own research*. Your initial research will lead you on to further research as you dig deeper and deeper. A Renaissance cannot be built on old thinking; it is built on new knowledge, new insights, new revelations, which guide our decisions as we design and build a far better world.

As you read about the vast amounts of money which have been spent in order to kill each other (or to keep the peace with a nuclear knife at each other’s throats), consider what we could have done with this money during the second half of the 20th Century and the opening decades of the 21st. Had we built modern schools and health clinics in the poorest countries of the world, we would have far fewer terrorists today. Had we not armed a multitude of dictators, we would have far fewer refugees today. Had we spent the money on modern colleges and universities, as well as modern medical schools, business schools, and law schools, and then had we developed exchange programs between these fledgling schools—these young schools—and our own established universities, we would by now have at least two generations—thousands of young professionals—who would have little desire to build roadside bombs.

Yes, we have definitely invested in many worthwhile development programs around the world. We have done a lot to benefit the world. But we have invested so much more into oil and weapons. And now we reap the harvest.

Young people of the world, invite the veterans into your classrooms. Devote an entire day, at least once a year as an annual tradition, to learning from the people who have fought the wars. Invite them into your classrooms so that they can speak, and

you can ask questions. Make a special lunch for them in your school kitchen, serve it in the cafeteria, so that they feel not only welcome, but honored.

Ask the veterans about the *real* causes of war. Ask them how to build a just and permanent peace: a peace which provides justice, and safety from any further madness. The veterans may be initially shy to speak about their experiences in a war zone, but if they feel that you are genuine in your desire to learn from them, they will tell their stories.

In the same way, invite refugees into your classrooms. Devote an entire day, at least once a year as an annual tradition, to learning from the people who have fled from the jets roaring overhead, from the bombs dropped into their apartment buildings while they were sleeping, from the snipers, from the land mines, from the drones. Ask them about the real causes of war. And ask them how to build a just and permanent peace.

You will learn that before the war came crashing into their lives, the refugees were teachers and nurses and librarians and accountants. They were farmers and carpenters and musicians in a symphony orchestra. The kids listened to the same rock stars that you listen to. Their dreams are much like your dreams.

The refugees never asked to live in dusty tents inside a vast refugee camp surrounded with barbed wire. They never asked to trudge through the mud to the food line, where they receive the same small package which left them hungry yesterday. They never asked to sink into black depression so deep that they think about killing themselves.

Yes, ask the veterans and the refugees to join your Weaving of Schools. Introduce them to the Network of Experts, and to the online Climate Library. The veterans and the refugees will make their own special contributions to our Renaissance. We need their voices. We need their wisdom. We need their determination as we move beyond the ancient evils.

Together, we become Architects of a clean energy grid. We become Architects of a new economic system, a new legal system, and bold new forms of education. We become Architects of Peace.

Thank you.

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