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We Can All Win

By Daryl W. Goodrich, JD

Several years ago, one of our alpacas gave birth to twins. The boy was alive and the girl was stillborn. When the vet came, I watched her perform a necropsy on the little girl. She examined each organ, but was unable to determine the cause of death. Nothing was abnormal!

My awareness jumped to her brother

scampering around the field nearby. “What allows the same collection of organs in the boy’s body to be so alive?” I pondered.

That ineffable aspect cannot be pointed out, purchased, manufactured, measured, or created by science. It is all around, though, and we all share it.

It is a humbling experience to come

face-to-face with the notion of a universal life force. This notion is profound and can cast a different spin on how we see each other.

This different spin is what I called the “alpaca spirit” in my 2003 *Alpacas Magazine* article – The Alpaca Spirit and Win-Win Purchase Agreements. To read this how-to article, go to:



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L-R: Cathryn Whitman, David Perez, Ross Chandler



www.angelwoodalpacas.com/docs/Purchase_Agreements.pdf.

I stated in the article: “Alpaca owners seem to bring out the best in people. Competition in the show ring is a game, not a gladiator fight to the finish. An air of cooperation and helping one another prevails. This is the alpaca spirit. The alpaca adventure is not always

roses, but with the alpaca spirit, nobody is taken advantage of. This is what I mean when I say everybody wins.”

The alpaca spirit is a “we” perspective. This perspective directs our thoughts, words, and actions in support of community.

With the alpaca spirit, life is not taken for granted. It is seen as precious

and fragile – something to be honored above all else.

Community is central to the meaning, value, infinite potential, and diversity of life. It is, however, more than the dictionary definition: “a group of people.” It is a group of people participating with each other in an arena of mutual respect and opportunity that



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brings out the best in each of them. Community is about the group of individual people.

It is easy, however, to go through life without being mindful of how fragile community really is. Self-mindedness destroys community. It is seeing others from the “me” perspective. “Me” is in each of us. It is our individuality. A survival drive is instinctive to “me.” This drive can command one to take from another.

Even though the alpaca spirit and self-mindedness are all around us every day, developing an awareness of the distinction between them is central to life at its fullest. This awareness empowers us to choose the perspective generating our thoughts, words, and actions. The question then becomes which perspective do you choose.

After my above 2003 *Alpacas Magazine* article was published, one of my sons showed it to a co-worker

struggling with a business negotiation between his small-business employer and a Fortune 500 corporate giant.

This coworker suggested the alpaca spirit is purely utopian. He cited in support of his position the cutthroat business environment he found when dealing with client corporate giants. All around us people seeking a better life coerce, steal, lie, and sometimes even kill to take from others for themselves. These acts destroy community. Corporate giant power, for example, coercing my son’s coworker into positions he was not comfortable with compromises community communication and interaction.

Destroying community isolates people. It would be as if each of us were alone on an island. A baseball game with one player, for example, would be the norm.

Contracts and business environments do not exist on their own. People create them. As such, they reflect the perspectives of their creators. If you choose a win-win contract or business environment, be the alpaca spirit. It is that simple.

The big challenge is to get the other parties in your business relationships to follow. Change does not happen over night, but that does not mean working for change is not worthwhile.

If you sign on to the alpaca spirit, you have to act as a visionary in an imperfect world. Visionaries are needed to incubate change. Until your coworkers and business partners change, there will still be pain and suffering. Self-mindedness is a belief. As a result, people do not change merely because someone asks them to. Do not get discouraged. The alpaca spirit can happen. I see it in many people.

Two elements are necessary to incubate another’s change. The first is to set the stage. It increases awareness and inspires. Tell people about the alpaca spirit and how it works. Then be the alpaca spirit. Mahatma Gandhi said: “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

The magic of community transforms self-minded taking from others into the



**The alpaca spirit can
be taught at any age.**

alpaca spirit receiving from others. It is so easy!

Shortly after I received my driver's license while in high school, I attended an antique car parts flea market at the Hershey Stadium in Hershey, Pennsylvania. At the end of the day, I pulled my car out of its parking spot and drove up to the lane exiting from the lot onto the nearby highway. The lane was filled with cars also leaving the lot. The line of cars was long and extended way past me.

I waited and waited, but nobody let me into the line. I wanted to go home and became very annoyed and impatient. The big Chrysler sedan I was driving had bargaining power.

Alpaca owners seem to bring out the best in people.

So, I started to inch up to the line of cars hoping to coerce by intimidation my way into the line. I did not wish to actually contact another car's fender with my bumper, but merely threatened to do so by coming very close to a car in the line. Suddenly – a loud tapping sound reverberated from my left window. I turned. A police officer beckoned with his night stick to put down my window.

"You're being reckless," he charged. "You'll have to wait your turn."

"They won't let me in!" I snapped back.

"You'll have to wait!" was the stern reply.

He stood there and I waited. He stood there longer and I waited longer – and longer and longer! Finally, he stopped the line of cars and let me in.

I knew a change was in order. From then on, whenever I was in a line of traffic blocking a car on a side street from getting onto the street I was on, I would stop and let that car cut in

front of me. The driver would usually give me a "thank you" hand gesture.

I was completely amazed. Soon, whenever I was on a side street facing a long line of cars blocking me from entering their road, all I had to do was to consciously choose to get into the line. Then within several cars passing in front of me, one car would stop and beckon for me to cut in front. I would give the driver a "thank you" hand gesture.

I have driven this way for years now. The results are always the same and nobody gets upset.

The second element founding another's change is a catalyst. People are creatures of habit. Change does not usually happen until the need to change becomes greater than the urge to follow the habit. This need is the catalyst.

My son's coworker mentioned above wrote: "As I sit at my desk having to work through another weekend because of a client's unreasonable bidding deadline..." He is obviously getting fed up with being pushed around by corporate giant self-mindedness. At that point, however, his "need to change" is not strong enough to be a catalyst.

He feels he has to live with this discomfort because his business environment is inevitable and not changeable. I see this in his referring to the alpaca spirit as "utopian" and in his statement: "...being that we [his employer] are far down our industry's food chain, we have little recourse but to accept such onerous terms..."

At this point, instead of trying to change the business environment (though admittedly a challenging process) my son's coworker dealt with his discomfort by passing it along. He continued the above quoted statement with: "and share those terms proportionately with our sub-contractors."

The problem is that passing along discomfort merely makes the sub-contractor also uncomfortable. Passing self-mindedness effects to others merely perpetuates self-mindedness and adds to the destruction of community.

At some point, my son's coworker will get so fed up with the self-minded

process that he will choose the alpaca spirit for his life. He will not be able to cause others, however, to adopt this perspective. But, as a visionary he can set the stage for others to change and have the endurance to wait it out until they too choose the alpaca spirit.

Resistance to the alpaca spirit transformation is inevitable because it appears to fly in the face of one's survival. This appearance grows from the notion that the whole consumes the identity of its individual parts. The material world around us easily supports this notion.

The ocean, for example, consumes the identity of each constituent drop of water. The *Random House Dictionary* defines ocean as: "a vast expanse." No reference is made to the individual drops of water. If community were an ocean, the "me" would have to take all it can from others to survive. And, it would not stop until it had everything. Having everything would make it the ocean, and community would no longer exist.

But community is made up of people, not drops of water. People are a paradox. "We" contains and coexists with "me." The *Random House Dictionary* defines "we" as: "used by a speaker or writer to denote people in general, including himself." It defines "people" as: "the persons of any particular group."

Look at a game time baseball stadium, for example. Do you see a people ocean or an assembly of individuals?

Join me in being the alpaca spirit we want to see in the world. Inspire others to also "be." Beautiful pictures are made up of individual brush strokes working together to display a powerful scene.

Daryl W Goodrich is a New Jersey attorney who served many years as in-house counsel for Fortune 500 companies General Electric Company and Kidde, Inc. He is past President and a past Director of the Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America, Inc. Daryl and his family own Angel Wood Alpaca Farm, LLC in Hackettstown, NJ. He can be reached at 908-852-7204 or daryl@AngelWoodAlpacas.com.