

Letter to theguardian.co.uk

My response to “Women in Finance”: an article by Joris Luyendijk published Thursday 3rd November 2011 in the Guardian News and Media, UK.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/nov/03/voices-of-finance-women>

Dear Joris,

I read with great interest your article in the Guardian UK, regarding the inside view of twelve women in finance. I am a woman who was in the financial services industry for over 25 years (former insider) and sold my financial investment practice in October 2010 (now an outsider).

I am a writer and speaker (see attached business card), and I contribute periodically to a leading financial magazine in Canada, www.advisor.ca writing for the section called, Take her Lead: a new hub for the woman advisor. It was through the editor-in-chief of that magazine that the link was made to your publication.

Many of the comments of the women in finance resonated with me and as per your request that more of us write in, it calls to me to share some of my own personal experiences, insights, growth and discoveries.

In order to put things into context and share the relevance of my thoughts, I have broken my writings into the following chunks and sections: -

- 1) The connection for me with anthropology
- 2) The truth of my experience with my clients
- 3) The truth of my experience with my colleagues and workplace
- 4) Vision, Voice, Choice: a different place for women to stand
- 5) Why it all matters: pathways to ongoing evolution

As you read, I ask for your patience and indulgence in seeing how all the pieces fit together.

1) The connection for me with anthropology

At the onset, I was interested to note that you are not only a journalist but also an anthropologist. As per the dictionary, if anthropology is the scientific study (from what I consider to be a Newtonian, analytical, historical perspective) of the origin, the behavior, the physical, social and cultural development of humans, I embarked 12 years ago, on my own scientific journey of self-discovery. It was a scientific study of a very different journey & perspective, which ultimately allowed me to see new things about myself and others, through very different eyes.

I learnt that for more than 75 years the quantum sciences have been influencing our world, (new ways of considering communication; new ways of considering health & wellness; new diagnostic discoveries like CAT scans & MRIs; non-invasive surgeries, etc, etc): making it possible for us to re-define how we live. Yet, what seemed to be lagging behind was the impact of the genius of the quantum perspective on who we are becoming as human beings. What do the quantum sciences have to say about, what a human being is?

My quest and journey for discovery brought me to a place of a more expanded world-view – to the WEL-Systems® Institute and body of knowledge: a gateway to a paradigm shift. It is a process that allows us to apply the quantum sciences to us: to our development as humans. It is a massive gateway for us to transform our Selves, so that we can begin to see that we are not our habits, we are not our histories, we are not our memories, we are not our self-imposed limitations that come to us through our beliefs, values, attitudes that are simply passed down inter-generationally about the truth of our reality. We are so very much more than all that.

Along the WEL-Systems® pathway and framework, I found answers to such questions as, how do we as humans, get to be who we are? How do you and I discover our behaviour? What propels us forward into our fullest human potential? What holds us back and keeps us small, and in isolation and fear? What keeps us locked into the limitations of what we've been brought up to believe ourselves to be? How do we reconcile/integrate our deeply personal thoughts, beliefs, feelings, emotions (going on inside the body & ultimately driving the bus of our lives) with the external demands, pressures, rules, expectations of our frantic lives (going on outside the body) and still stay healthy and well?

The scientific work of Dr Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. (Cellular Biologist) and other leading edge scientists, have radically changed our understanding of life. Their work has proven that we do have choice and that we are not stuck with or at the mercy of, the genes and the DNA that supposedly control our biology. The literature in cell biology and quantum physics spoke of the awakening of the quantum biological human. Yet, how do we embrace and engage the genius of the body, the quantum biological processor that the body is, and learn to integrate it all ... the inside and the outside?

The pathways and connections through the WEL-Systems® cutting-edge body of knowledge allowed me to experience the answers to my questions, first-hand. It profoundly transformed my life. It made it possible for me to create something unique and meaningful for myself and my clients. It is a living body of knowledge. It has been field tested for over 20 years. It is abundant in its impact and outcomes. It is a constant evolutionary process. It is a way of being. And it started with women re-awakening.

2) The truth of my experience with my Clients

As a well qualified, intellectual, logical, analytical, highly credentialed, financial professional, I am very knowledgeable about the inner workings of the financial/investment field. At the same time, I also know that no matter how analytical, statistical, intellectual, logical, reasonable, requiring discipline, rigorous planning, and evaluation: as devoid of emotion as this profession can be at times, working in the industry involves relationships and people.

With people and the giving of advice, come emotions, feelings, behaviors and the personal. I came to recognize over time, it is not just about the money. It is about the relationships I build with my clients and it starts with the relationship and connection that I have with myself first.

I also knew that investment excellence and the importance of the client experience were becoming ever more critical again.

One of the many challenges that advisors still face is around the topic of adding value, building trust and depth of rapport in the advisor/client relationship. Connecting with clients on a more personal or so-called emotional basis is becoming more prevalent in order to add true value and enhance the client experience. I too wanted to add-value to the relationship and the experience that I had with my clients.

In a world that is collapsing and dysfunctional on a number of fronts, clients are more skeptical, demanding and wary than ever. I discovered that trying to engage with just the professional side was not enough. My clients weren't looking to connect with my credentials or the analytical side of me; rather they wanted to connect with the authentic presence of me. I had to find that authentic connection to mySelf first.

Mind you at the time, I had not got a clue where to begin. Nobody could tell me that I was being inauthentic. I was very proud of my multi-tasking skills. I was very proud to be up at 4:30 a.m., and at my office at 6:00 a.m. to be in control and to get a grip on my day: keeping pace with the many challenges and opportunities that present. Sleep who needed it: that was for wimps: I got on with the task at hand. I used to say to myself, "Suck it up cupcake and get on with it". I'd dig my heels in, soldier-on and be very proud of my multi-tasking abilities.

I was very proud of the frantic, juggling, balancing, bouncing speed with which I sought to engage and control my life and my professional and personal relationships. And yet, when I was moving that fast, on autopilot at times, it was very difficult to notice anything outside the range of normal. My capacity to constantly react and to keep up with the rapid pace of my ever-evolving, ever-changing life, left me feeling exhausted, fatigued and vulnerable.

In March 2000, over a period of 3 months, I conducted a series of financial literacy educational-type seminars for my female clients, their daughters and other potential female candidates. To round off and close the series, I was seeking an inspirational and motivational speaker in order to leave the participants feeling good about themselves and on a high note. I felt it was a way for me to go above and beyond the clients/participants expectations and enhance their experience.

I also upped the ante. I wanted my audience to be inspired over and above what I have termed, the soufflé effect: of hearing the best and latest motivational speaker-du-jour and noticing that nothing in our lives seems to change. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted impact.

My search led me to Louise LeBrun, Founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute and WEL-Systems® body of knowledge, with its well laid-out processes, simple and powerful models.

What I came to notice and discover was that my clients were starved, absolutely starved for intimate, authentic contact. They were not starved for techniques and strategies to try to enhance my experience with them. They were not starved for my investment philosophy. They were not starved for my holistic approach to comprehensive financial planning. They were starved for presence. They were starved for authenticity. They were starved for me to show up 100%. They were starved for me to be able to engage with them in ways that were open, clear, honest and direct.

And the irony for me was in owning up to the fact that I had to be that way with myself first. My willingness to be curious and committed to discovering more about myself; my desire for my life to have meaning, purpose, impact; my willingness to accept an invitation to awaken to new enhanced ways of being, opened new vistas and expanded my horizons.

I was willing to engage in WEL-Systems® programs which set the context in which my journey of my emerging authentic Self unfolded. For example, I immersed myself in a 6-day program experience called, “Manifesting a Meaningful Life”, which nourished my soul and left me eager to examine such big-picture questions as, What am I doing? What am I doing for me, about my life, in my world, in a way that has meaning for me and in a way that I want my life to unfold?

At the time, I wanted to bring into alignment some of the conflicts & paradoxes that were going on inside myself. A big one for me was, “I love my family and I love my job”. How do I hold two things, which were apparently diametrically opposed, as true? I was able to find the resourcefulness inside myself and bring into alignment the internal conflict that was going on inside my body.

The ferociously competitive nature from which I ran my life started to lose its appeal. I was willing to take a personal pause that caused me to consider, how else I might choose to live my life.

Over time, the bonds and depth of rapport that I formed with my clients weren't just at the intellectual level, but with the whole person. I came to realize that for my clients as it was for me; it was the soft emotional issues that were indeed driving the bus.

I began to create experiences where I could be my authentic self and engage in meaningful ways with my clients. I engaged with my clients in ways that presented opportunities for them to see beyond their own limitations. The shift in perspective came when I began to engage with my clients from a place of curiosity and because I wanted to understand, not because I needed to make a sale or to measure up and keep score with the rest of the pack or to feed the bottom line. I was willing to bring something new to the party by observing what was happening with a number of my clients, who despite the wealth or lavish lifestyles lived troubled and tangled lives which were at times very chaotic or falling apart (debilitating diseases; alcoholism; marriages on the rocks; abusive relationships; children on mood altering drugs; suicide) leaving them feeling resource-less, lost and trapped.

For me the shift in perspective and turn on the kaleidoscope starts with the question, “there are lots of ways to see the world; are you willing to consider another way to consider making choices for yourself?”

I incorporated into my financial practice, WEL-Systems® CODE Model™ conversations. My engaging with others in such a manner sourced my own evolution. The conversations kept me enlivened; they kept me awake, creative and resourceful; they kept me connected to myself; they were compelling and propelling in my own Life. I pressed myself against my own

limitations to really discover more about myself. And in so doing the paradox is that I become the invitation and have awakened others to find that space and place for them to unfold also.

Through WEL-Systems® I became a published author and received the opportunity to be interviewed and conduct several radio shows and presentations as a result. I shared with my clients my books that I co-authored, “Sekhmet Rising: the Restlessness of Women’s Genius” (2006) and “Guardians of the Vision: Parenting for the Birthright of Potential” (2009).

The irony for me was in realizing that I was not merely building a successful business but that I was also transforming lives ([see clients’ testimonials on my website www.noreenmejias.com](http://www.noreenmejias.com)) and it began with transforming and re-designing my own life, first. I put the oxygen mask on my own Self first, before I was able to effectively engage with my clients.

3) The truth of my experience with my colleagues and workplace

Like many of the women in finance that you interviewed, I know the pressures of work and what it takes to be highly credentialed and certified. I know the costs that are part of being a highly successful professional in the field of finance.

I also know well the competitive game that I played with myself and with others: I enjoyed the thrill of it all. I looked to stoke and feed the frenzy of my busy life: upping the stakes with greater speed, intensity, density, greed and consumption. Knowingly and unknowingly, I was in a frantic search to feel, to be alive and to be enlivened again, to re-connect again, to find meaning in my life: doing, doing, doing, rather than being. Yet having no idea of what was missing when I was in the state of the insatiable search and feeding frenzy. And I know the sacrifices in my own personal life and the states of near collapse.

We seemingly have-it-all and yet hunger for more, having no real sense of what that more is. We finally come to the realization that we can only distract ourselves with so much golf; so many world cruises; so many fast cars; so many properties; so many shopping expeditions; so much food; so much alcohol; so much plastic surgery; so much philanthropy and so much volunteer work. It is a scary place it seems when we wake up to our lives that have become routine and habituated.

I remember hearing a statistic once that said that stockbrokers / people in finance / the high-rollers, have one of the highest rates for heart attacks and related dis-eases in the body.

Your comment on greed for me was a poignant one and caught my attention.

“The crisis is caused by greed says one consultant. But what is driving it? I’d say the competitive macho culture, testosterone ... I have to be better than the next guy, so I have to make more money than him because that is proof that I am better. How to change this? They try it with ever more regulation. That’s attacking the symptom. I genuinely have no idea.”

However, this is not about doom and gloom and attributing blame as to who is responsible for causing the problems: myriads and volumes have already been written on the subject matter. The irony of it is, is that as soon as we attempt to attribute blame (be it to the organizational system or to our family systems), we give away all our power to do something about it.

Most of us readily admit that the financial industry, like so many of our other organizational systems (health-care, political, military, religious, family, etc): have become dysfunctional and are in a state of decline, if not total collapse. No matter how much we try to deny, to dismiss, to pretend it isn't so, to ignore it all, yet the inner truth in the very fiber of our being, compels us to see what we see, hear what we hear and know what we know.

I attended a conference earlier this year where the discussion was around global economic and financial challenges, (*the international debt bubble; the uneven economic recovery; the need for extra vigilance; more & tighter rules and regulations to be implemented*), one solution, which was offered, was that we need to grow our way out of the global financial crisis we'd fallen into.

For me, that growth in itself is a dilemma. My contention is that there can be no growth while we are still in the protection mode of holding-on to our limited thinking, trying to devise various strategies, despite wanting to change the status quo. When we remain stuck at any one level of thinking (*and there are 7 levels-of-thinking*), we become like the proverbial, reverberating record, swirling around and around; caught, seemingly trapped, dabbling & floundering about (*consciously or unconsciously*), trying to fool and/or convince ourselves that we are moving forward and making progress by frantically seeking various how-to strategies to do it differently.

*"The problems of today cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."
Albert Einstein.*

For many, there is abject terror with the notion of losing power and control. After all, we say to ourselves, I'm the intellectual expert. If I don't know, what will others think of me? If I don't know, I am at risk. And when I see/believe myself at risk then logically and intellectually, I want more protection, more control. In my particular case that meant more designations, more credentials, more titles, more letters after my name: continuing to study and work even harder. I wanted to hunker down, peddle faster, build higher walls, pull the covers over my head, pretend it isn't so and long for the good old days when life was less complicated.

Yet you and I have a sense of knowingness or restlessness deep inside us, when all is not well. We want more, and things and our lives, to be different. However, with more control, risk and fear, there is no growth. There is no way for us to grow our way out of the various crises that we have created. And yet as quantum biological humans, (the body is a quantum biological device processing information: we are much more than our bodies) we are reminded that our biological imperative is growth.

The WEL-Systems® paradigm shift was for me the turn on the kaleidoscope: the different context of an expanded worldview. I was willing to allow my body to engage in program experiences that invited curiosity, growth and transformation. I could see a whole new different life. I came to know in the very fiber of my being that my world in which I engage in day to day is a safe and abundant place.

I came to know that safety is an inside job. Nobody outside of me can make me feel safe. Safety is something that comes from inside of me and it is an experience of reclamation of territory inside myself where I live. I stand solid and can say to myself, this is mine ... my life, my thoughts, my creations. I stand solid in that knowingness and I become willing to engage: trusting that my resourcefulness will be present as I go.

“An unshakeable trust in knowing that creation lies in allowing the inner cues to override the force of reason and the tidy package of our own habits of mind.”

Louise LeBrun, Founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute.

New information, like fresh air in the form of fresh thoughts, is the key to creating new perspectives and producing different results. It has been said, that it is better to fear the unknown than to continue to fear what we already know. At least the unknown carries the potential for more. And the joke was that there was no-thing for me to fear at all. There was no black seething cauldron or bottom-less pit to be afraid of. What I had believed and feared was the very limitation that prevented me from seeing my potential. I am so much more than I have been taught to believe I am.

The unknown for me was the personal. I got honest with myself. I was willing to climb out of my bunker, suspend my intellect and allow my body to lead: relaxing into the waves (energy & information) that my body carried with quantum processing and Quantum TLC™. I sought to find answers from myself by asking questions such as who am I? Who am I becoming? Why am I here? What is my purpose? What is it that calls and propels me forward into my own ever-evolving life? What is my *raison d'être*?

When I was willing to not know and step into the unknown; when I am willing to luxuriate in the questions rather than seeking to select quickly the most familiar answers that quell both agitation and curiosity; from the chaos emerged and surfaced answers and amazing possibilities.

It was being willing to take the personal pause and reflect on my creations that I had made in my life. I didn't always like what I saw; I got to change my mind; I hit the re-set button and created anew.

As an entrepreneurial thinker I engaged in experiences that gave me the personal pause or time out to really reflect what I was shaping and creating for myself on the personal level. Beyond the titles, credentials, roles of spouse, sibling, parent, friend, etc; beyond the beliefs values and attitudes of my cultural conditioning, how did I want to shape my life as a reflection of that which is genuine and whole? Having hit the re-set button what was my intention? What did I want to create in my life?

So often **personal** is the gaping hole; the elephant-in-the-room that nobody wants to talk about. There is a distinction to be made between thinking and habit. Unless I am willing to get personally comfortable with; to make friends with; to get honest with what's really going on personally inside of me; owning it and claiming it, rather than shutting it down, dismissing it, numbing it, hiving it off, not willing to go there, then all that is left becomes repetition and

habit. Like the proverbial hamster on a wheel, it keeps going around and around and around – and so do I.

This is not good, bad, right or wrong. Nevertheless, questions start to emerge over time such as: Why am I getting so stressed out? Why are my relationships with (spouse, children, mother/father, clients, friends, my business) not as fulfilling or as meaningful as before? Why is my body having these health issues? Why do I feel pulled in so many directions? Why is my life seemingly falling apart?

Through WEL-Systems® the quantum biological human is a massive invitation for me in terms of how I live my life; who I am in the world and how I engage with other people. Change, innovation, creativity, new layers of discovery, a sense of wholeness/connectedness, all can come easily and effortlessly, when we are willing to engage and integrate new thoughts and ways of being: not merely with the intellect or talk therapy, but experienced in the body Quantum TLC™ - quantum leaps; instantaneously. It is about reclaiming the personal and the ALL that you are.

With this new information, new skill-set, shifts in perspective and ways-of-being, we become willing and able to create & choose a more fulfilling, life-enhancing future for ourselves. A future that it is not limited or restricted by our thoughts of the past, our genes, the parameters of the intellect, or our external demands. Rather, having found/discovered a new place to stand, we come to have thoughts and make choices that pull & propel us forward into our very own ever-unfolding potential and future.

Through it all, people have judged me, called me names, have opinions, been irritated by, outraged by my very presence, simply because I have dared to think for mySelf and not conform to the collective 'truth'. I am no longer willing to tolerate my own self-betrayal, self-loathing or self-silencing. I tell the truth of my experiences, nobody else's. I am more willing to be offensive to others than to be offensive to mySelf.

I have been willing to come face to face with myself. I now see me and I like what I see with all my glorious imperfections. I actively seek out opportunities for the quantum leaps in my own on-going evolution.

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and Pixar Animation Studios.

When I sold my practice at a time when organizations are desperately trying to recruit more women in finance, it was seen as an act of betrayal. I was willing to risk the disapproval, isolation, dismissal, shunning, abandonment, feelings of betrayal and disappointment by my colleagues and friends. And I was unshakeable; I was willing to stand alone. I felt safe on the inside to deal with whatever consequences presented. I am up to the challenge.

I was shaping and creating new frameworks for myself, not just tolerating the one that I was in. It was a shift from managing my life and coping, to one of creating and living my majestic life. It was a very different way for me to see my world and a very different place to stand.

4) Vision, Voice, Choice: a different place for women to stand.

I am still very passionate and committed to the financial services industry. The focus for me has shifted, and in my own unique way, I am very much involved. This time, with professional women advisors in the field, engaged in meaningful conversations on the personal level. How do we integrate, rather than constantly juggle & balance our personal and professional lives? How do we come to make room for the truth of our experience in a professional domain where we seemingly have to constantly perform?

We live in a very different time, where we readily admit that the status quo is not working. There is so much happening around us with such great intensity and frequency that if we do not have the **vision** and find another place to stand that will take us outside our fear on both the professional and personal level; our fear of daring to do it differently; which only adds to our fear and our notions of scarcity, our world become smaller and tighter as a result.

Some of the skills that we have been taught and perfected over time, driven by the realm of analysis, logic, reason, and understanding are not the skills that will get us to where we want to go, that of shaping, creating and integrating our professional and personal lives so that we have meaningful sustainable, authentic lives and stay healthy and well.

We live in a world of mixed messages. If we say that we want our future to really include women financial advisors, can I really seek to be open, clear, honest and direct with those that I am seeking to follow me, or am I really seeking to hide and to silence myself?

“You cannot change the conversation you have with another person until you change the one you have with yourself – first.” Louise LeBrun, Founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute.

And those of us who have leverage, need to get honest and ask, am I willing to take care of business inside myself first in order to create experiences with other women advisors that nurture and foster creativity, innovation, empowerment and growth: where change is something they participate in willingly because they are not afraid to be harmed in some way ... not physically, but by being humiliated, ridiculed or ostracized? These are the things that prevent people, the culture the organization from being willing to move forward into some kind of meaningful change.

I fervently believe that we as women are tremendously powerful when we get honest with ourselves and find the courage to re-engage our **voice**, to speak up and to speak out and to reclaim the truth of our own experiences. As opposed to being willing to abdicate and to silence ourselves; feeling that we are victims and at the mercy of the systems.

No one can free me from my self-imposed victimization but me. I was willing to grow beyond my own limitations. I was willing to greatly distort the limitations that I saw as my reality.

Leadership comes when I am willing to claim my voice. When I allow my voice to carry the message that it carries deep inside my body, my life changes. My safety lies in being totally visible and present, not hiding behind the compound walls.

Despite what some might say, I believe it is not too late. There is a call for women to lead and this leadership must come from women who are willing to re-awaken and dare to do it differently. If I want to pass on the baton and ensure that those that I want to attract to the business do not get disillusioned and frustrated, I need to make space and room for new thoughts and new ways of thinking to enter the conversation.

For me, it started with leadership of mySelf first. I have awakened the simplicity and strength of my own inner truth, as the place to solidly stand in sustaining and expanding that awakened truth in mySelf and in engaging with other women.

A WEL-Systems® perspective offers a journey of discovery that makes room for the exploration and redefinition of leadership to be discovered and embraced, with outcomes that go far beyond incremental change: rather, change happens instantaneously and in quantum leaps instead.

In **choosing** to stay involved in the financial services industry, I asked myself, what do I want? What do I care about? What is meaningful to me? What is my truth? What do I want to share with others? How do I want to create a meaningful, sustainable life for mySelf and my world?

For me, there is still a call to have impact; to have made a difference; to offer a contribution of my own creation that will become the echo, *I have been here*.

To that end, I run WEL-Systems® based leadership programs and experiences such as Leadership Re-defined and Re-claimed; as it pertains to women in the financial industry field. My interest also lies in helping advisors to integrate it all, so that they can reconnect with themselves, their loved ones and their clients and above all, stay healthy and well. I also offer WEL-Systems® based emerging futures conversations for entrepreneurial women.

These types of program experiences invite women who are willing to engage to explore more compelling, life-sustaining conversations that bring meaning at the professional and personal level: bigger, more expansive, impactful, potent conversations that offer the greater invitation for discovery, integration and transformation.

“Women move through the world with a much greater attentiveness to connection and interconnection – we must engage that fully, to create successful businesses that nourish the soul.” Louise LeBrun, Founder WEL-Systems® Institute.

In this, I do not stand-alone. I am an Affiliate of the WEL-Systems® Institute. http://www.wel-systems.com/engage/?page_id=205 Being an Affiliate® is a process of continued evolution. I stay connected with other successful powerful entrepreneurial women who through the WEL-Systems® body of knowledge, are also creating something unique and meaningful for themselves. Like individual unique droplets we are a wave of transformation,

very visible, very audible, engaging with others who are seeking to live their lives differently, in abundance and in a meaningful and sustainable way. We are leaders in a wave for transforming how we experience ourselves as Quantum Biological Humans.

It starts with Evolution by Intention™. “It starts with us first being willing to re-define who we are as human beings and how we experience our humanity. It starts with us being willing to re-discover and re-claim what has always been there, reawakening to our existing genius and potential to shape our world.”

“As women, we must become more than our histories, greater than our pasts, our rituals, that we might become the seed of potential that sources tomorrow rather than that which protects history our habits and the status quo.” Louise LeBrun, Founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute.

We must be willing to trust our innate genius and recognize, honor and respect the potential in us all ... the entelechy: the life-giving force of being human, that lies waiting to be fully expressed.

*“In order to progress beyond historical notions of evolution through incremental change ... we must be willing to engage life differently through a call to women to lead and co-create with men differently; an invitation for men to relax into new ways of being.”
Louise LeBrun, Founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute.*

5) Why it all matters: pathways for on-going evolution

As women, we are the ones who give birth to a culture and as such, we are long overdue for calling up our courage and our innate truth to guide us through the unpredictable, seething waters of our current world.

“The future of the world is in the hands of women.” Kofi Annan, United Nations

So beginning to pay attention matters. It matters that we wake up to ourselves and the truth of our experiences. The choices that you and I make matter. It matters what you and I say yes to and what you and I say no to. It matters when you and I am silent.

And when I am at the choice-point: in the now and in the moment, do I speak the truth that my body carries (inside me: my internal cues, instinct, impulse, knowingness), my emerging authentic self: my future? Or, do I speak from the past from, who I think I should be; who I've been taught to believe I should want to be: my culturally conditioned self; my past habits; my past stories; my past history (outside me: externally referenced)? Dare I make choices big enough and expansive enough that can support who I am capable of becoming?

Why does it all matter? Because whatever comes out of me shapes my world: it defines my reality. Whatever comes out of me defines my limitations: I am constantly willing to press the boundaries of my limited thinking, knowing that I stand in the good company of other women who are doing the same. What comes out of me (the life-force that I am) creates my life of amazing possibilities, propelling me into the next layer, the next wave of my on-going evolution, with effortless effort: becoming the invitation for others to awaken and find that amazing possibility in themselves also.

Joris, I wrote to share with you and your readers what I have discovered in my own life and in working with others on what's possible. I have truly amazed myself that I have had so much to write about and to say.

That others may have no capacity to read or to tolerate what I have to write/to speak about, is not a reflection of the value of what I have to say. I bring something very different to the experience. And through it all, as I have said to others, I am mindful that it is not my life, it is your life. How you choose to live is entirely up to you.

With a world in crisis, decay and at times collapse

"There is no script, no external advice or tip that will compare and light us up, propelling us into new layers of discovery, like our very own "hunger calling" - beckoning us home to our delightful, imperfect selves. When you and I are able to engage, connect and trust our inner selves, all the authentic, practical, how-to strategies unfold". - Noreen Mejias-Bennett.

I do hope Joris that you will take me up on my invitation to meet with you during my visit to the UK during the period April 10th 2012, to April 25th, 2012.

May I be so bold to say that as an anthropologist, I believe that you are witnessing a paradigm shift in the cultural development of humans: the birth of an emerging species, a whole new way of being.

I look forward to hearing back from you and possibly getting together for a conversation in 2012.

Sincerely,

Noreen Mejias-Bennett