
Human Nature

By Bill Hanson

We humans are what we are because it is our nature to cooperate. As individuals we are easy prey to any number of other creatures and we can be stopped by any number of circumstances. As a species we can defend our selves against any creature and we create our own circumstances. Cooperation is our primary survival characteristic.

Without cooperation the benefits of creative genius die with their creator. With cooperation the benefits of genius can be shared with contemporaries and passed on to succeeding generations. Through cooperation we learn. Our success as a species is measured by the degree to which we, as individuals, have each learned to cooperate with each other.

The less we consciously cooperate with each other the more likely we are to be in conflict with each other. The more our knowledge, skills, energy, resources and creativity are wasted in conflict the less of these things we have available to us to dedicate to achieving our positive purposes. Whenever we do not cooperate in peace we will slip closer to cooperation in violence, the ultimate perversion of human nature. Individual against individual, group against group, nation against nation, species against species. Us against the world!

Moment by moment, action by action, word by word and thought by thought we always have the option of choosing cooperation over conflict. How much can you or I, not distracted by conflict, accomplish? How much can we, fulfilling a shared goal, accomplish? How much if we all help fulfill each others goals? If we truly want to move beyond need, frustration, anger, violence, brutality, war and extinction we need only live in tune with human nature. We need only choose to cooperate. The more effectively we do so the more we fulfill our true nature and the more we live in harmony with our "selves", with each other and with our world.

Harmony is the point of balance that everything stabilizes around. As babies we find harmony in such experiences as becoming sufficiently balanced physically to stand up without hanging on to furniture or a big hand. Subsequently it is found at every point in our lives that we are balanced securely enough in our knowledge, abilities and relationships to make our own life choices. It is found at every point where we take responsibility for the consequences of the choices we make. It is found at every point that we are able to fulfill our selves without imposing on others. It is found at every point where we choose to cooperate with others and with the world we inhabit. It is found whenever, and wherever, we act in a way that fulfills our human nature.

Harmony depends on our learning how to listen openly, to communicate clearly and to understand fully. Harmony is the point where we, as individuals, have learned how to cooperate with our true selves, with each other and with our world so well that there is no reason for disharmony. Harmony is our reward for every success of human nature that we have to celebrate in life.

As individuals we are but sparks in the night. As a species we are a dawning light of awareness. We are recognizing that we are part of the mind of our planet. That we are part of its sinews and its guts. Together, in the growing light of understanding, we will cooperate in creating harmony. It is inevitable. It is our human nature!