

# How to Begin Together to Fix Our Crisis

## (Part of the Rebuilding Sustainably in the Rogue Valley Series)

Jerry Allen 2021

America, and most of the peoples of Earth are in a complex crisis. Our global crisis--rapidly changing climate with sweltering heat, droughts, fires, floods, storms, mass climate migration and food insecurity, is accompanied by a public health viral crisis and a human crisis of spirit.

**The focus here is the human crisis of spirit** and its impact on solving the other crises, including working together to rebuild our communities. There is now an epidemic of a human "unsettled nervous system" situation. For some that has been brought on by multiple traumas--persecution, climate fear, loss of homes, war, loss of way of life, jobs and income, and loss of family members and friends to Covid 19. It can feel like way too much to handle and can leave us feeling very stressed.

People respond to that unsettled nervous system in varied ways. Neurophysiologists say that when we have an unsettled nervous system our IQ goes down about 25 points. So we don't do our best thinking when we are stressed out. One response is fear. We can be really afraid of all the change and feel threatened by it. That can lead to intense anger and a desire to blame somebody. That, in turn, can lead to partisan, ethnic and religious fights and violence. For some people the stress provokes a mental health crisis or they can become deranged and start shooting people. Or go hide in loneliness. Many are too discouraged, or depressed to get involved with fixing our communities.

One thing we know is that solving our global crisis requires that humans cooperate and "be smart and kind" together, working to heal our communities, our climate and our world. Here are two suggestions to help us settle our nervous systems and get started:

**1. Human "emotional hydration".** We are emotionally dehydrated, with way too much negative input and unkindness. Let's start by saying to those around us our thanks, appreciations--our gratitude to each other for even the small things of kindness that happen every day. When we do that a miracle happens. We get emotionally hydrated, both the giver and the receiver. Do it every day to everyone in your family, friends and community. That settles us amazingly. Spend some time each day being quiet and noting what we feel grateful for.

**2. Support Networks.** Start small gatherings in our families and communities, which you already may be doing. We don't have to formalize it by calling it a fancy name, or you can if you want to. We don't need special training. We need to practice good listening skills and be kind and generous. Listen to what's on each other's hearts. Really listen. Don't give advice unless

someone wants it. Agree to keep each other's confidences so what we say in the group stays in the group. Support combats loneliness and isolation, it improves our mental health and it requires no pharmaceuticals. Don't wait for someone "more qualified" to start a support network. Just do it! Get together as a family or with friends and co-workers. Maybe once a week. Seek out someone you trust and start it together. Need advice on how to start it? Email me at [jerry@gratitudeway.org](mailto:jerry@gratitudeway.org).

Thank you for your courage! We can do this!