

VISIONS

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BOOKS

Reviewed by Joseph Terrano

Healing Our World: The Other Piece of the Puzzle

by **Mary J. Ruwart, Ph.D**

SunStar Press

Kalamazoo, MI

\$14.95 (paperback)

Mary Ruwart has written what may be the most important book of this decade. Many are calling it the new pass-it-on book of the new consciousness era. *Healing Our World* is more than a book; it's a challenge to the way we have come to think about our systems of self-regulation and aggression. And, as a reader, you need not be concerned about Ruwart's Ph.D - the book is very readable and enjoyable. A key term I would apply to this book is common sense.

The book revolves around a concept so obvious that when you read about it the number of Ah-Ha! flags that go up are tremendous. The concept is aggression-based means, a manner of doing things in order to accomplish goals. Ruwart suggests an alternative to this means of accomplishing social and economic goals.

Ruwart jumps right into the subject from page one and never stops. The information flows so well that it is a pleasure to read from the beginning. First bit of advice - read the book. Second bit of advice - read it slower than you may be used to reading a non-fiction book.

In chapter one Ruwart gives us a tour of her book and ties all the chapters together through demonstration that as individuals we defer to authority in almost all areas of our lives. As a result of this deferment we do things in the name of authority which we would never do as individuals - mostly atrocious things.

On a more subtle level the deferment to authority discounts the common man's voice. It is as if the everyday person has no thoughts worth lending an ear to unless they have a Ph.D or some degree concerning the regulation of our lives (just watch TV talk shows).

She enters into the subject through the work of Dr. Milgram, at Yale University. The famous experiment - what?... you don't know about it?... don't worry, she explains it very well - demonstrates the difference in the use of aggression by individuals versus the use of aggression (in the same situation) under authoritative direction. From this beginning Ruwart educates and initiates the reader into a whole new world of thought and self apprehension.

This book is so good and healthy. It is like a mega dose of vitamins and a visit to a spa - all at once. This book is full of the ammunition that a thinking and acting (activist) person needs to make a difference on all fronts of the social struggle occurring in America today.

Healing our World is set up as an annotated book. The text is laid-out in column fashion. It is just a few words wider than a newspaper, so it is easy to read. In the wide margins are side-bars containing pictures, graphs, quotes, and information enhancers. There is even an index to the side-bars.

All you have to do, dear reader, in order to get hooked on this book is begin reading it. The view of America's social progress as a continual act of aggression is not a surprise. However, to read about it in vivid terms, without a tirade of accusations is fabulous. Ruwart is presenting the open secret - The Why Things Are The Way They Are.

A for instance: licensing - originally as a way to exclude minorities and immigrants from trades and self-sufficiency. It worked (in its time) Today it's the source of economic problems and professional monopolization. We all pay the price, more so because we (meaning this present generation) probably would not do such a thing. But, we are stuck with it. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons.'

The chapter 'Learning Lessons Our Schools Can't Teach' is so good that this chapter alone is worth the \$14.95 cover price. How can we teach our students to be non-violent when the very system they are in is set-up to be aggressive, competitive, and violent? School, as we know it, is set-up as an aggressive selective elimination process.

Healing Our World is wonderful. It will challenge everything you think you know about how we can accomplish our goals of growth, and prosperity - as a nation of individuals. This

book is good for you, the way a vacation is good for you. What I mean is - the healing is in seeing/experiencing another aspect of life, a different environment, a new approach. Does Ruwart have all the answers? No. But (and that's a BUT with extreme emphasis), she has the germ of the stuff that could help us out of our repetitive problem of aggressive behavior as the means to accomplish our ends.

This book needs to be read, seen, and passed around. Don't wait, don't hesitate - get it. Write to me at Visions and share your opinions, concerns, and thoughts, about *Healing Our World*. This book is truly the stuff of great dialog and I am willing to open this column up to that dialog - take advantage of this offer, my dear readers.