

A Word from Mack

Relationships form the foundation

The question is often asked: What is CRI? What do you do? And how and why do you do it? I believe that it is vital to share with you the conceptual underpinnings of our mission, model, and methods. Simply put, Community Renewal brings together caring partners to make our world a home where every single child is safe and loved.

Lewis Mumford, one of the great minds of the last century, once observed, “The chief enigma of history is ‘Why do we keep collapsing the societies we construct?’” He points to a mystery of the human condition, to wit: Over and over again we find ourselves caught in a cycle of “begin, grow, flourish, decline, decay” – and human beings, have never grown a large society that actually gets better and better. Is it a pipedream to think we are capable of that achievement? Can we so live that our children and their children and all who follow can become living agents of an ever-renewed and renewing way of living with one another? The answer I believe is a resounding yes!

To have a “better society,” you must find a way to have “better” people. We define a “better” person with the description what we consider to be “A Whole Person.” A whole person is both competent and compassionate. We have to walk a balanced life on those two legs if we are to journey to wholeness.

Competent people are “those who have the willingness and the ability to access and to appropriate resources within and outside of themselves which enable them to grow, actualizing their highest potential.” Competent persons are always growing in skillful living, spiritual living, social living, physical, emotional, and intellectual living. Compassionate persons are “those who regularly and consistently exercise their empathic nature seeking the ‘good’ of others as they do their own.”

So, it only makes sense that to have a society on the road leading to wholeness, we must have human beings embarked upon and dedicated to treading that same luminous path. But the question of the ages is this: “How?”

Now here is a profound truth. We cannot become a whole person by ourselves, for ourselves, and only with ourselves! And while it is true that only we alone can choose to grow, it is also true that we cannot grow alone. I can deice in isolation. It is an act of my will. I am responsible for choosing. But once I have chosen to grow, I can only mature in positive relationships with others. (The same Greek word is the root for “perfect,” “whole” and “mature.”) Therefore human competency and compassion are inextricably connected to human relationships

This is the entire thesis of Community Renewal International. Society is a system of relationships. And relationships have rules. So we believe that cyclical societal collapse is not an enigma! It is a breakdown of relationships and it can only be understood by looking through the prism of the truths of human relationships. If you wish to grow, then you must follow the absolute rules that govern caring and loving relationships. That is why we believe that the most profound truth of all reality is found in the truth of the deep and devoted relationship which we call “friendship.”

We believe that we must rebuild the “relational foundation” upon which all society rests, then continue to nourish that foundation with intentional attention. That is how you stay in a relationship. It is a rule. And when you stay in a friendship, you grow. And when you grow, you get “better.” Now we must apply these “rules” to whole cities. That is where CRI and the partnership you bring is blazing a path which can be a trail for all to follow. In the next issue, I will share how we grow positive relationships city-wide with a method that be replicated in every city. So please hang on to this issue as reference for the next.