



A NEW WAY TO BE HUMAN

By Robert V. Taylor

Story Angles

Headline: Hairpin Curves of Life: Cultivating Compassion

Hairpin curves are those events that throw life off-balance by interrupting our **routine, security and path**. Major events like divorce, losing a job, the death of a loved one, or receiving a diagnosis of cancer are examples of hairpin curves. And so are a myriad of other life events—such as travel delays, conflicts or betrayals of trust at work, disillusionment in a relationship or self-doubt regarding choosing the right path. Happy moments, like the birth of a child or starting a new job or new marriage can also qualify as hairpin curves.

Hairpin curves shake us up, point to unexpected invitations, and, depending on how we respond—draw us into new experiences of being embraced by life and becoming more fully alive. Our response is key. We can choose to brush hairpin curves off, let them bury us alive, or choose to welcome them as a teacher who has entered our lives.

A New Way to Be Human explores how to leverage hairpin curves as a way to **cultivate compassion for ourselves**—even as we reimagine fear, embrace doubt and become awake to life.

Headline: A New Way to Be Human begins with you.

In the old way of being human, the global economy, global conflicts and the seismic shifts of social media technology result in uncertainty, anxiety and apprehension about the unknown. The old way accepts the cynicism of the world with a resigned, bystander-victim mentality about life. It is built on compromises, resulting in choices that compartmentalize our lives and keep us from being authentically ourselves. In the old way, spirituality soothes our yearnings but keeps us sedated on a stunted journey that ignores much of what life has to offer. Our lives are deeply affected by the old way.

And yet, we have a choice. Our unique humanity is part of the spiritual fabric of the entire human story. In fact, the Holy *yearns* for us to be 100% alive and profoundly

Warwick Associates (707) 939-9212 www.warwickassociates.net 18340 Sonoma Hwy, Sonoma CA 95476

authentic—because without our full participation, those who need us most will miss out on what only each of us as individuals can give.

What if we quit accepting life as it is, and stop settling for so little? What if the world really can change? And what if that change begins with you? If you are willing to do the work that transformation offers, the old way of clutching at life and accepting a compromised life will give way to a life marked by vibrancy, gratitude and authenticity about who you are. You will discover a new tenderness toward yourself, resulting in a renewed way of engaging with others and the world.

Headline: Connecting Stories: Robert Taylor and Desmond Tutu

Stories reveal common sacred ground for meeting our deepest self and others, inviting us onto unexpected terrain while shifting and shaping the journey that lies ahead. Cultivating attention, inviting self-compassion and sharing our stories create profound connections in the world and create a spiritual pathway to becoming more fully alive.

At the time of their first meeting, Robert was 22. Tutu was 49. Robert was a white South African young adult trying to figure out who he was. Tutu was a black anti-apartheid activist and priest, considered public enemy number one by the South African government at that time. **What could they possibly have in common?**

At the age of 15, Robert's spine had grown out of place, forcing him to endure major spinal surgeries, followed by six weeks of lying flat on his back in a hospital bed. The pain was relentless. During his long hospital stays Robert found inspiration through the writing of an individual who inspired him to come to terms with his physical constraints even while discovering the shameful truth of how apartheid intentionally denied the humanity of others. In the process of Robert sharing this story with Tutu, they discover a powerful, multi-faceted shared connection they never could have imagined.

***A New Way to Be Human* unfolds the intriguing connecting story of the ongoing, unlikely 30-year friendship** between Robert Taylor and Desmond Tutu, coming full circle to Tutu's recent 80th birthday celebration.

Headline: Breaking Free of Enclosures

Enclosures are self-fulfilling actions and beliefs that keep us from being who you are meant to be. When we allow ourselves to be confined by unacceptable expectations and boundaries drawn by others – such as family, culture, religion and politics – we accept an enclosure, and so define a limited us.

Being healed of a congenital spinal deformity at the age of 15 opened Robert Taylor's eyes to the possibility of freedom from other enclosures in his world, such as apartheid – or, his choice to hide the fact he was gay. When hiding behind our own particular enclosure we choose to live with a cramped heart, a squelched voice, and often, a lack of compassion for ourselves – and others.

While the choice to be enclosed can happen subtly over time, enclosure is no small thing. Our lives are at stake! Enclosures lock us away from the fullness of joy intended for us by the Holy, and deprive the world of the gifts that only we can give. The good news is this – since we choose our way into an enclosure, we can choose to break out. Life presents us with such invitations each day.