



**Views** from the  
**Borderland**

An Esoteric Journal by  
**David Spangler**  
Year 2, Volume III

## INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh issue of my journal of esoteric explorations, a compilation of “field notes” from the past three months based on contacts and observations within the subtle worlds. As you read these “notes,” as always I offer the following caveat:

*All the material contained in this journal is based on my personal observation and experience. While I present it as accurately and clearly as I am able, it is subject to the limitations of my own background, understanding, bias, perceptual abilities, and skills of interpretation. While I have years of experience in this area, I am most certainly not infallible. I am still exploring and learning. The subtle worlds and the beings within them often configure to the thoughts and feelings of a particular observer. Another person, making the same contacts or observing the same phenomena as I, might have a different perception or a different interpretation and understanding. This being said, I invite you to join with me in exploration. If anything here resonates with your mind and heart, may it be a blessing and a help to you.*

## PREFACE

Since the last issue of Views from the Borderland, I've undergone the final (I hope!) of a series of operations I've had this year to repair a blocked kidney. This latest surgery was the most extensive, and I am still recovering three months later. The prognosis is good, and as my energy returns and my body heals, I'm able to regain a more or less normal lifestyle.

While rarely exhausting, the kind of inner work I do does use energy, and after surgery, I simply didn't have any energy to spare. Consequently, immediately following the operation and for most of the past three months, my contact with the subtle worlds has been greatly diminished. As one of my inner colleagues said to me, "We're shutting you down for awhile so your body can heal uninterrupted."

An explorer who can't access the terrain he's exploring doesn't produce many field notes, so I wondered just what I would have to share with you in this issue. I remembered that one topic I'd been considering exploring earlier in the year was subtle activism, so I began thinking about describing the process I use in working with subtle energies. It would certainly fit in with the first issue of this year in which I gave an overview of the subtle environment and my experience with subtle perception. My thoughts were further focused in this direction when I was asked to give a couple of talks on the topic via Skype to a class being held at the Findhorn community in northern Scotland.

So this issue is devoted to exploring subtle activism as I understand and practice it. My hope is that this will empower your own collaborative engagement with the subtle worlds and provide some practical tools and concepts for you to use.

## AN OVERVIEW

Subtle activism is a modern name for the ancient practice of invoking and directing non-physical, spiritual energies, forces and influences to give help for physical situations and individuals. One of the traditional ways of doing this, practiced by millions of people in all cultures around the world for thousands of years, is prayer.

Prayer is a powerful tool and should never be overlooked as one of the ways we can interact with the spiritual worlds. But prayer is often simply asking someone else to do the work. What it doesn't offer us is an opportunity to participate in a process and thereby learn from it. For example, if my next door neighbor is having a hard time remodeling his house, I can pray that God will inspire him and awaken within him the skills and capacities to do a good job. Having done so, I can leave it at that. Alternatively, I can go next door and talk the project over with him, bounce ideas around—which may be helpful to him—and offer what assistance I can, even taking part in some of the work and thereby possibly learning some new skills myself. I can still pray for a good outcome, but I am participating and engaging more fully in my environment which may have the happy result of bringing my neighbor and me more closely together and building a deeper sense of community.

I can certainly pray—and I do—but by itself it doesn't give me a chance to engage with the subtle world around me, a world of which I am a part as much as I'm a part of my physical environment. It doesn't enable me to learn about my own subtle nature, which is every bit as complex and wondrous as my physical life.

Subtle activism rests on certain key ideas. They include the following:

- We are each a coherent system of living, subtle energy clothed by a physical form.
- Each of us is a dynamic, radiating source of subtle energy. This energy is generated by our thinking and feeling, our life force, the presence of our indwelling spirit, the processes of incarnation, and our interactions with the physical and energetic environment.

- We each affect energetically everything around us and are affected in turn by energies given off by others in our environment.
- Subtle energies allow us to participate in a world where proximity is determined by affinity and resonance rather than by space. Thus the environment that we can affect is not limited by physical considerations of distance or time.

## SUBTLE NEIGHBORLINESS

Subtle energies are affected by my thinking and feeling. Images I hold in mind can shape the kind of subtle forces I radiate and offer to my world. For this reason, I want to be clear about what I'm doing and how I'm thinking about it when I'm doing inner work.

With this in mind, I must confess that I have been dissatisfied of late with the term "subtle activism." It has points in its favor. An activist is someone who takes action on behalf of someone else or in support of a cause. It can be a positive image of participation to advance the greater good of the whole. At the same time, the terms "activist" and "activism" are often used to describe particular kinds of actions that are defined by their opposition to something. We've all seen images in the media of people called "activists" carrying signs and banners in protest against some organization or person and their economic, social or political policies. This makes activism seem like an adversarial activity.

Because of the power of thought and emotions and of the images I hold, if I enter into subtle energy work holding this idea of activism, it can shape what I do—the energies I carry and the energies I radiate—in an adversarial way. I can find myself taking on the stance of a warrior, of someone in opposition to something else. There's a place for this in both the physical and non-physical worlds, but as I understand and practice it, subtle activism is a different process. It is definitely non-adversarial.

When I think of doing this kind of inner work, the image that most often comes to mind might better be called "subtle neighborliness." In a healthy neighborhood or community, people look out for each other and extend a helping hand when needed. They come together to solve common problems and share resources when necessary. Giving encouragement and aid to someone who is looking for a job or bringing food to a person who's sick doesn't require me to be an activist; I just need to be a good neighbor.

From an inner perspective, we are all part of Gaia's neighborhood, all residents of the planetary community, which includes the subtle environment I've been calling the Borderland and of higher realms beyond. As I said, given the nature of these non-physical realms, time and space are not an issue. Wherever there is affinity and resonance, there is proximity: wear the same feathers and you're neighbors together

The most powerful force of affinity and resonance and therefore at

the heart of all inner work on behalf of others is love. Love makes me a neighbor, a principle beautifully illustrated by Jesus in his parable of the Good Samaritan. Love, not an adversarial spirit, brings my presence into proximity with another and thus allows my energy field to make a contribution

More than the idea of activism or of being an activist, for me the image of neighborliness and of being a neighbor conveys a sense of loving helpfulness and caring. It helps me feel imaginatively closer to the person or situation that I may be doing inner work for. It helps to ground the process in my own mind and heart, strips it of any glamour of specialness, and makes it more down to earth. My inner question to myself becomes “How can I help my neighbor?” It brings the whole proceeding closer to home and opens up a heart connection for me that the image of being an activist doesn’t always invoke.

You may find the image of being an activist more congenial for you. If so, please use it, by all means. For myself, I like doing subtle neighborliness. It fits my style and personality.

## **THE PRIME DIRECTIVE**

In the Star Trek universe conceived by the television writer and producer Gene Roddenberry, all starship captains serving the United Federation of Planets must obey Starfleet’s General Order #1, the Prime Directive. This states that there can be no interference in the technological and social development of alien civilizations, particularly those that have not yet developed interstellar spaceflight.

For me, there is a similar prime directive in doing subtle energy work for another person or for a situation: I must do my best not to interfere with the sovereignty and free will of another. Subtle activism (or subtle neighborliness) cannot be used to impose anything upon another or force a specific outcome into being. Inner work of this nature is in service to freedom, a proper respect and honoring of boundaries, and an organic (“from-the-inside-out”) unfoldment of possibilities or potentials.

It’s not hard to understand this. Imagine if you are the recipient of someone else’s subtle activism. Do you want to be pushed about energetically? Would you want your choices and your future actions shaped by someone else, no matter how well-meaning and loving, even if their intentions might lead to a better outcome? Or would you prefer

the freedom to figure it out for yourself, drawing on the help others can provide, and then engage your own will to make your own choices?

In this work, we enter our “neighbor’s house” with respect and an intent to serve, not to coerce.

### **WHAT DOES IT DO?**

We can understand the good that physical assistance can render to a person or a situation, and we can understand the value that mental and emotional help can have. But subtle activism (or neighborliness) takes place in a realm beyond the physical. What does it do? What value does it have?

To understand what subtle activism can do, we need to see the physical and non-physical realms as part of an integrated whole in which conditions in the one can affect conditions in the other. This effect is not always a straight correspondence; the influence can be indirect and synchronistic, showing up in unexpected ways. But it can open up possibilities and outcomes that might otherwise have been missed.

There are two areas that inner work of this nature can affect: the subtle environment and the personal subtle field of individuals. Focusing directly upon another person’s subtle energy field is something I never do unless directly invited by the individual to do so, and even then, I would proceed cautiously. We are each complex energy systems and it’s not easy to predict just what consequences may result from the addition of further subtle energies, no matter how well intentioned. For this reason, I don’t “send” energies to anyone, at least not in a manner that would be directed at the individual himself or herself. Rather I work with the subtle environment itself.

The subtle environment is filled with various kinds of non-physical forces: vital, life energies; mental and emotional energies; spiritual impulses; emanations from the physical environment itself; and the influence of subtle beings of one kind or another. All of these impact to some degree upon the individual’s own energy field with positive or negative effects. If I’m in a happy environment and something wonderful is going on, the subtle environment may be filled with nourishing and uplifting energies; on the other hand, if I’m in a place where people have been injured and killed, perhaps due to a natural catastrophe such as an earthquake or a flood, then the local subtle environment may be

turbulent and filled with negative and fearful energies. At the very least the subtle environment is impacted by the thoughts and feelings of the people who are in it.

As I practice it, subtle activism is a way of bringing a particular presence into an environment where it can act as a catalyst, modeling the kind of energies that could be there. If I hold a quality of peace, for instance, it can provide a model that stimulates the local subtle environment to begin manifesting peace. This quality of peace can then be taken up by the individual in whatever way he or she is able. There is no imposition, and the peaceful quality is not forced upon the person.

To go back to the metaphor of helping a neighbor, it's the difference between going next door to my neighbor's house and trying to force feed him, and offering him food that I've prepared, perhaps even laying it out on the dining room table so it's more easily accessible and he can choose what he wants.

Any kind of inner work needs to honor the sovereignty of those for whom you are working and empower their freedom to choose their response.

Affecting the subtle environment can have another consequence. The subtle world often holds seed images and patterns that are capable of manifesting in physical ways and may be in the process of doing so. Whether such a pattern does indeed manifest is a matter of probability governed by variables that are part of the situation or local environment. Bringing a particular quality or subtle energy into this environment can alter the probabilities, nudging outcomes in one way or another, all other factors being equal.

In other words, subtle neighborliness can have a powerful effect upon that inner world from which we call forth our inspiration, our insights, and our qualities of courage, compassion, and wisdom. And when our inner world changes, our outer one is likely to follow suit in some way.

## **THE ALGORITHM**

An *algorithm* is simply a way of doing something, a repeatable process that achieves an end or solves a problem. There are many ways of doing subtle neighborliness (or subtle activism), and in the end, you need to find the way that works best for you individually. Inner work of this nature is essentially a relationship between two or more beings, and like

## Views from the Borderlands

any relationship, it is affected and modified by the unique nature of the participants.

My algorithm is based on my observations and understanding of both the incarnational process and the nature of subtle energies and the environment in which they function. It has seven parts:

1. Anchoring: This is the preparatory step. *It's what I do in "my house" before attempting to help my neighbor.*

2. Shaping: This step invokes and shapes the subtle energies and qualities I wish to bring to help another person or a situation. It is the step of creating the energetic and physical "felt sense" of what you wish to offer. *It's putting together the package of aid to take to my neighbor.*

3. Affinity and Resonance: This is the step of entering the subtle environment of the person or situation I wish to help. *It's traveling next door to my neighbor's house.*

4. Allies: This step is optional but can be very helpful. It's the invocation of or alignment with subtle and spiritual allies that can help in the process. *It's asking friends to come with me to my neighbor's house as well as asking those living in my neighbor's house to help as well.*

5. Holding: This is whatever I do to assist and contribute to the situation or individual I seek to help. *It's what I do in my neighbor's house to fulfill the reason for going there.*

6. Closure: This is the step of closing down the connections and letting go of the energies I've invoked, creating closure for the process. *It's leaving my neighbor's house, shutting the door behind me and coming back into my own house.*

These steps represent a process that is actually very flowing and continuous. With practice, the steps blend into each other and become second nature. Other than step 5, the actual inner work itself that I call "Holding," none of these steps need take very long. An act of subtle activism or neighborliness can be done in a matter of just a few minutes. It's the quality of presence and spirit that fills the action and not its duration that makes the difference.

## FELT SENSE

In the work we'll be undertaking, I'll be asking you to take on the felt sense of the quality or qualities you wish to bring to a situation or person. What does this mean?

Here's a little experiment. I'd like you to try out four different postures.

First, just stand normally, your hands at your side. Then raise your arms up as if in jubilation and open your hands out as if you are receiving blessings from heaven (or celebrating a point scored by your favorite team). Then let your shoulders slump and your head droop as if experiencing sadness or depression; cross your arms across your chest as if protecting yourself. Finally, drop to your knees as if in prayer, hands together, head upraised.

What did you feel with each of these postures? Each had its own physical sensation, I'm sure, but it probably had an emotional component as well. Did you feel happier or more empowered in a posture of jubilation and outpouring than in one of depression and self-containment? What did kneeling feel like?

It's been shown in laboratory studies that physical posture can affect our moods and thoughts, and vice versa. This correlation between mind and body creates a felt sense. A posture where the spine is straight and the limbs extended can create a felt sense of joy or power, whereas a posture that is closed in with the spine bent, the arms crossed and perhaps the legs crossed as well creates a felt sense of enclosure and protectiveness.

When I began doing this inner work under the tutelage of my mentor, a non-physical being I called "John," he would expose me to various kinds of subtle energies or have me invoke and experience different qualities, thoughts and emotions. In every case he would ask me, "What does this feel like to you? What is your felt sense?" I began to realize that this felt sense affected the "shape" or configuration of my subtle energy field and thus affected the kind of subtle presence and energies I was presenting to the world. The analogy was that of putting a boulder in a stream. The shape of the boulder shapes the flow of water around it.

What I call "felt sense" is the experience of an energetic "shape" or configuration, one with the power of shaping the subtle energy environment around it. It is the experience of a quality or subtle energy as a sensation in your body and also in your heart and mind as if you

are that quality. It is a description of forming and taking on a specific presence.

For instance, if I want to bring the quality of peace into a situation, then I ask myself, “What is the felt sense of peace? When I’m at peace in my life, how do I feel in my body? What do I feel in my mind and heart? What is “being at peace” not just as an abstract idea but as a grounded experience in my life?” To arrive at the felt sense of peace, I use questions such as these to open my mind and heart to actually being at peace in a way that I can feel in my body as well. This sensation is my felt sense of peace.

Felt sense is an embodiment of presence. I’m not just thinking about or having an emotion of peace. I am peace. I am embodying peace in my body, my emotions, and my thoughts. And when I do, my subtle energy field conforms to this felt sense. It takes on the energetic “shape” of peace. Like the boulder in the stream, it is this “shape,” this energetic presence that I bring to the individual or the situation with which I seek to work as a subtle neighbor.

Please remember that felt sense is an embodied physical state as much as a subtle energetic one. It carries “physical vibes,” if I may call it that, as much as emotional, mental, and spiritual ones. Why this is important we’ll see as we go along.

### 1. ANCHORING

Anchoring is my term for the preparatory step I take that is common to any and all work with the subtle environment and the realms beyond. Essentially it is a step of acknowledging our own integrity and sovereignty, honoring our identity as an evolving being, and attuning to the sacred essence of this identity. It is an act of blending personality and soul together as partners and then extending this partnership into the life of the local environment, creating a “grail of collaboration.”

My image of this is that of creating a tower that links heaven and earth and then anchoring that tower to the land with guy wires so that it is steady and won’t blow over. In terms of Incarnational Spirituality, it is the creation of a Grail Space so that whatever forces and qualities I invoke in order to do my inner work are held and supported not by me alone but by my surroundings as well.

I learned this process of anchoring back in the Sixties when I first

began working with John. Initially, he contracted and toned down his own energy field so that I could handle it, but as the work evolved, he had to stop doing this. I had to learn to hold and integrate with an increasingly more powerful field of presence and energy when we worked together. It was not easy, and I would find myself “spacing out” or collapsing back into my body, unable to maintain the balanced joint energy field necessary for our working partnership.

It was then that I began to reach out to the things around me—the chair in which I sat, the floor on which my feet rested, the other furniture, the walls, the ceiling, and so forth. To me, all these things possess life and sentience and are manifestations of an evolving sacred life as much as I am, though of course very different than I am. It’s not so much that the chair is alive *as a chair* but the substance of the chair, whatever it may be, is part of the living universe. So I would extend my love to the life deep within this substance and ask it to connect to me and be my ally in holding John’s energy. Like extending guy wires around me, I would do this to several objects in my vicinity, in effect extending a sphere of love and respect into my immediate physical surroundings. I felt my own energy field expanding and steadying and becoming part of a larger sphere of collaborative living energy that was then able to hold John’s energy without any trouble. By attuning to and blending in love with my local environment, I had greatly expanded my own working capacity. This was the beginning of what I later called “Grail Space.”

There is more to anchoring than just this, however, though this is how the process began for me. Creating Grail Space or collaborative space is a horizontal action, like being at the center of a bubble or sphere that expands into and incorporates contributions from the environment. But there is a vertical attunement as well. I discovered in working with John that I could hold his energy more easily if I first spent time attuning to my own soul and inner sacredness—the God Within, as Dorothy Maclean, one of the three founders of the Findhorn community, would say.

Among other things, the soul, like the Sacred from which it emerges, is for me a presence of love. So I would imagine a fire of love within my heart into which I would enter and sit, drawing into my being, into my body, as clear a presence of love as I could. Whatever inner work I wished to do, whether it was energy work of the kind I’m describing here or the work of contacting a subtle being or visiting a particular subtle environment, I wished this love to be the motivating and empowering

force within it.

So over the years, I evolved this simple two-step approach to beginning any inner work:

1. Attune to a deep source of love such as your soul or the sacred presence indwelling within you and within the universe.
2. Attune to the immediate surroundings and the life and light within it, extending this love outward as a gift and an invitation to join with you in creating that collaborative energy field I call Grail Space.

I find this anchoring to be important for two reasons. In the first place it puts me in touch with larger dimensions of myself which will enable me to bring more to the inner work than just what my personality can provide. In particular, I wish to bring the power of an inclusive and unconditional love.

In the second place, it emphasizes my connection to the physical world. This may seem paradoxical since I'm working with non-physical forces within an immaterial environment, but my objective is to work with people and situations who share the physical world with me. If my inner work is not simply to be diffuse and abstract, I want it to contain a vibration of connection with the physical plane.

## 2. SHAPING

As I wrote above, the act of anchoring horizontally into the physical world and vertically into the subtle realm of the soul (as well as into the Sacredness that is everywhere present) is how I begin all inner work that I do, especially any form of subtle activism. But once I have this attunement in place, then I need to respond to the specific nature and characteristics of the person or situation on whose behalf I am doing this inner work. The first step into this specificity is to be clear about my objective and what I wish to bring. I call this step *Shaping* since I am shaping the subtle energies and forces around myself, turning myself into that which I wish to offer.

I was trained by John that the way to generate a particular quality or subtle energy is to be that quality or energy. This means experiencing it as a felt sense. This embodiment of a quality in turn creates and shapes a

subtle presence that coalesces around me containing the information (in the form of vibration and energy) of what I wish to bring to my “target” situation or individual.

A biological metaphor (my favorite kind) for this is that of messenger RNA or Mrna. When the DNA in the cell nucleus wishes to produce a particular protein within the body of the cell—the cytoplasm—it generates a “model” of the amino acid structure of this protein. This model is the Mrna which travels out of the nucleus and into the cytoplasm. There it acts as a template of information that is read and transcribed by the ribosome, a protein-creating structure within the cell, which in turn produces the required protein.

When you intentionally hold and embody a particular quality as a felt sense, you are creating and shaping an energy shape around you that is metaphorically your messenger RNA. It will be used to replicate that quality within the subtle environment where the individual or situation for which you are doing the inner work is located.

### 3. AFFINITY AND RESONANCE

Once I have the felt sense of the qualities and energies I wish to offer to the “target” of my inner work, how do I deliver it? In the metaphor of being a neighbor, how do I carry my gifts to my neighbor’s house? The answer lies in a fundamental difference between the physical and subtle worlds. In the former distance is measured in inches, feet and miles (or if you prefer, in centimeters, meters, and kilometers); it is a function of space. In the subtle realms, however, distance is a function of affinity and resonance. If I can come into attunement with an individual, then in the subtle realms, he or she really is my next door neighbor no matter where he or she may be in the world.

If I’m working on behalf of someone I know, then I may already have a sense of affinity and resonance. I know him or her and can tune into his or her energy and presence through the links of familiarity and connection that we share. But what if it’s a stranger? How do I make someone I don’t know my “subtle neighbor?”

One way is through the help of inner allies. I’ll talk more about this in the next section. What can I do, though, just on my own?

Again, I want to work with felt sense, in this case the felt sense of being connected to the individual or situation that is my focus for

the work. What are the points of connection I feel with this person or situation? What might we have in common? Can I imagine being with this person or in this situation? What would it be like? It might be a tenuous connection that I feel, but can I expand it into something deeper, perhaps by attuning to that sacredness in which we are all connected, all part of a larger whole?

I have found over the years that my desire to serve and offer support and help can become the thread of connection. After all, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was the desire to help and be of assistance that made a stranger a neighbor. So if I have no other link to draw on, I hold in my mind an image of the person or situation I wish to assist and build up within me a felt sense of the love and compassion that I feel and that I wish to offer. I use the image of service itself to establish the affinity and a resonance that I need.

In the end, no matter how many or how few points of connection we may feel with a person or situation, love can bring us into resonance and affinity, or at least greatly enhance the possibility for such attunement. In the inner worlds, love is like the Internet, the ultimate social medium that links and networks us all together.

How do I, then, use my felt sense of connection, affinity and resonance to “go to my neighbor’s house,” so to speak? This is where the seemingly magical nature of the subtle world comes into play, focused by my own powers of imagination. If I am holding and radiating into my own subtle environment the felt sense of being with the desired person or situation, then in a manner of speaking, my own inner world shifts and I find myself in the subtle environment of that person or situation. I don’t “travel.” I’m not having an out-of-body experience. I’m simply there. I am in the environment that matches and configures to my felt sense of connection.

In fact, to be effective, I don’t want to be “out of my body.” As I said in describing Anchoring, I want to carry with me the vibration of being part of the physical plane just as the person or situation I’m working with is part of the physical plane. To do this, I remain attuned to my own body, aware of it as part of my overall presence.

This is important because in most cases in my experience, when I shift into the presence of someone, I am in touch with their own subtle being within the non-physical dimension. I am in communion with their non-physical astral self, at times even with their soul. Or I am in a

subtle dimension corresponding to the situation to which I am attuning. Metaphorically, it's as if I take off, attain a certain altitude, and then drop back to earth where my "target" is. However, I haven't "landed." I'm only in contact with part of them or with part of the situation.

To go further, I need to use my own connection with the physical plane and my physical body—the physical "vibe" I mentioned earlier—to anchor my presence in the subtle environment closest to the physical level (traditionally called the etheric plane) in which my "target" is located. I need to step into contact with the wholeness of the individual with whom I'm working or the situation I wish to serve, and part of that wholeness is embodied and connected to the physical plane.

Using the metaphor of neighborliness, when I cross over to my neighbor's house, I end up standing on his porch or just in the doorway. I need to take that further step into the house, into contact with the full living space of my neighbor.

Doing this is partly an act of imagination, partly an act of communion with the physical plane which, of course, I inhabit as well. So I imagine being with the person physically or I imagine being in the place where the events are happening that I want to serve. But at the same time, I link this imagination to the actual sensation of being in a physical place. For instance, I might have my eyes closed, focusing on the felt sense of being with the individual I wish to help, imagining being by his or her side, while at the same time feeling the arms of the chair in which I'm sitting and using that tactile experience to reinforce the sense of being part of the physical world as well as being part of the subtle dimension.

Another way to say this is that the person whom I wish to help is a being who straddles many levels of consciousness and life, from the level of his or her physical body to the level of his or her soul and beyond that the transcendent levels of his or her sacred Identity and Beingness. But I am a multi-layered being as well—each of us is—and I want to meet this other person as a "full-bodied" presence, in touch with as many of my own levels as I can be. So I want to be as aware of my own physical being as I am of higher levels of consciousness.

The more I can have a felt sense of sharing the physical dimension with the person for whom I'm doing the inner work, the more the energy I have to offer can anchor itself in that person's local subtle environment and act as a template; in biological metaphor, the more powerful and clear it is as a messenger RNA. In fact, this is exactly why subtle beings need

our help to connect with and bless the physical level of life. On their own level, their “Mrna” lacks the “physical amino acid” from which a fully embodied “blessing protein” can be built. Not that they are ineffective, but they can be more effective when working in cooperation with an embodied person who can supply the needed connections and resonances with the physical plane.

### 4. ALLIES

This leads us nicely to the subject of allies.

An ally is a non-physical being with whom you establish a collaborative relationship. This could be a long-lasting relationship—John was an ally of mine for twenty-seven years—or one that lasts only for the duration of a specific act of subtle activism.

Having an ally when it comes to doing inner work is an asset. It’s like hiring a native guide to help us navigate and operate in unfamiliar terrain: not absolutely necessary but a huge benefit. An ally can be helpful in a number of different ways. In subtle activism, it can help us make connection with the person or situation we wish to help; in effect, it can help us get to our “neighbor’s house.” It can also add its energy to our own, augmenting what we’re able to do. And because it’s operating in its native environment, it can offer the wisdom, insight, and protection that comes from knowing the terrain and being able to see what we do not.

There are three kinds of allies that a person can work with in collaboration when being a subtle neighbor. These are:

1. Personal Allies: These allies are any spiritual beings or forces with whom you already feel attuned or whom you invoke regularly when seeking spiritual or energetic assistance. John was a personal ally for me. If, for instance, it’s part of your practice to ask for the help of the Christ when doing inner work, then He would fall into this category as well. If you have an animal power with which you do shamanic work, then this being would be another form of personal ally.

2. Allies of Context: All situations exist within a particular context; that is, they are part of a larger field of energy and spirit. Some presence already overlights the situation or the people involved. For instance, if you are doing subtle activism for a town that has been struck by a natural disaster, then the angel overlighting that town or the Deva of

the local ecosystem would be an “ally of context.” If you were going to do subtle activism on behalf of the President of the United States or a Congressional leader, then the ally of context would be the Angel of America. Generally speaking, it’s the spiritual presence that has responsibility and accountability over the larger area or context in which the specific situation or individual you wish to help is embedded.

3. Allies of Relevance: Whatever the situation is, it already has spiritual forces within it working for coherency, integration, wholeness, and the highest good. They are spiritual forces attuned to and resonant with the situation and relevant to its unfoldment and resolution. If I’m doing inner work on behalf of an individual, such an ally would be the soul of the person concerned or his or her own personal allies. When doing subtle activism, the intent is not to impose but to enter into collaboration through respect and resonance with the spiritual forces that are already involved. Such forces then may become our allies of relevance.

When one works seriously and in depth with subtle energies, then having a partner in the subtle realms can be most useful as shamanic practitioners the world over have found through the millennia. But for simple forms of subtle neighborliness, working with an ally is certainly not required; no ally is needed to hold another in love and compassion or to send blessings to a situation somewhere in the world. For that matter, prayer is a form of working with an ally, where the ally in this case is the Sacred itself.

One place where connecting with an ally is helpful is when I don’t know the people involved or don’t have any real insights into or understanding of the situation. Then, rather than trying to engage with it myself, I offer my blessings or subtle energies to an “ally of context,” a being—usually an angel or Deva—that is overlighting the situation. This is particularly true in working with natural disasters involving a great many people and a wide landscape. If I don’t know someone involved with whom I can form a specific connection and I’m not familiar with the area, then I want to offer my inner services, my energy and blessings, to the Devas and nature spirits and the angels who are the inner plane “first responders.” Or I can simply offer my contributions of love and compassion to the “Forces of Light,” which is rather like making a donation to the Red Cross. I don’t know who the specific Red Cross volunteers are but I assume that any contribution to the organization as

a whole will help them in their specific work. While there is no inner plane organization called “Forces of Light,” the phrase represents a clear vibration of love and compassionate service which, if I attune to it, will carry and distribute my “donations” of energy to where and to whom they are needed and can be of help.

You don’t need to be psychic or clairvoyant to work with allies. Again, this is where felt sense works its magic of connection. You can formulate an image of the kind of help you would like and hold it as a felt sense as you do your inner work. You may not feel sensitive to inner beings—at least as far as you know—but they have a sensitivity to you if your desire, thought, and intention concerning them and what you wish to accomplish are clear and strong.

### 5. HOLDING

Everything I’ve described up to this point has been preparation, attunement and connection. Now what? Now that you’re metaphorically in your neighbor’s house, what do you do? What is the actual act of subtle activism or subtle neighborliness?

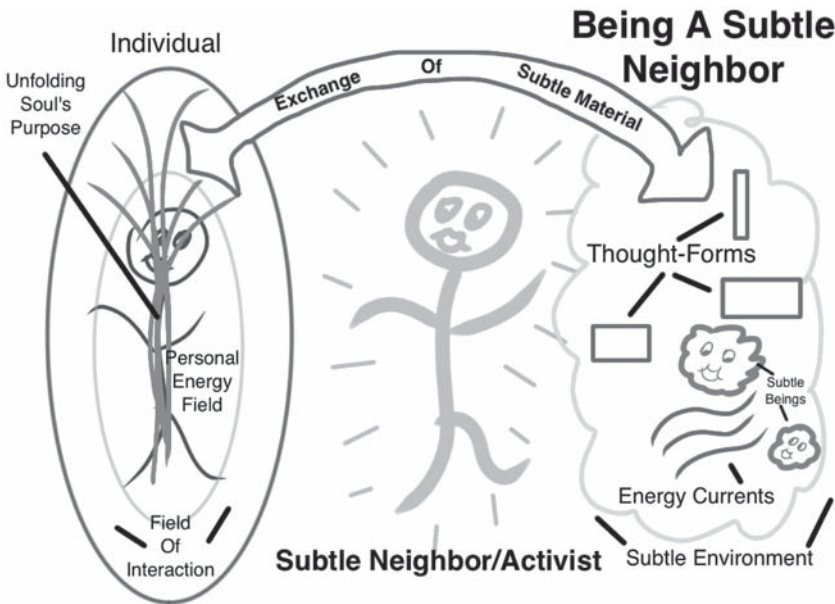


FIGURE 1

Figure 1 diagrams the areas where we might have an effect when being a subtle neighbor and doing subtle activism. On the one hand, there is the subtle environment of the “target” area. Like any area of the Borderland, it contains subtle currents made up of mental, emotional, vital (or etheric), and spiritual energies; it is likely that it also contains mental and emotional content usually in the form of ideas, feelings, and thought-forms which represent specific configurations of thought and emotion bound together around a central image or intent. All subtle environments contain this kind of material to one degree or another, and they may contain subtle beings as well.

On the other hand is the physical individual who is in this environment. He has his own subtle energy fields surrounding him. His personal energy field, which itself may have several layers, is most directly tied to his individuality and sovereignty. I do not attempt to engage with this field directly. To do so could risk interference with this person’s sovereignty; it could constitute an imposition of my presence upon his.

There is an intermediate zone, presented in Figure 1 as a separate “Field of Interaction,” which is continually in contact and engagement with the surrounding subtle environment. Subtle energies, impressions, sensations, mental and emotional content, thought-forms, and the energetic impact of subtle beings constantly enter and leave this zone, and it is in turn where the subtle energies of thought, feeling, and so on generated by the individual enter the subtle environment. There is an exchange of material going on naturally whether any kind of subtle activism or neighborliness is taking place or not. The fact is that we are all picking up impressions and qualities from the subtle world and broadcasting our own in return. How much material we pick up and its nature, quality and intensity depends on what’s happening in the environment around us and on our own inner state.

We may pick up subtle material from the Borderland environment around us (though depending on our sensitivity, we may not be consciously aware that we are doing so or of the nature of its content), but that doesn’t mean we take it in and make it part of ourselves. It may never penetrate beyond this outermost zone into our personal energy field which has its own equivalent to the physical body’s immune system. Thus this material may never become part of our thinking and feeling life. Again, affinity and resonance play a role here as well as the overall

health of our incarnational system (physical body and energy field taken as a whole).

There is another factor which I show by the lines arising fountain-like from the individual and labeled “unfolding soul’s purpose.” Within each of us—and within many situations and events as well—there is an underlying purpose and developmental arc. It represents those actions and outcomes that are most representative and fulfilling of the soul’s life and purpose within the individual or the sacred potentials within a situation. Generally, these are the potentials, actions and outcomes that go the furthest to creating wholeness and coherency, benefitting all involved. Just what this means depends on the specific circumstances of the individual’s life or the situation in question; it will express what is meant by “the highest good” for that person or that situation in that moment and going forward. This might not be a single, particular outcome; it’s possible this “highest good” could take more than one possible form.

In doing subtle activism, our objective is to enable this highest good to come to the fore. This cannot be forced. It needs to arise organically in freedom out of the individual or the situation. But one can increase the odds that it will happen.

As a result of the previous steps in the algorithm, you are now energetically engaged with your objective. At this point, in the way that I was trained, there are three things you can do.

1. Affect the local subtle environment.
2. Create a sphere of energy and intent that can potentially filter the exchange of material between an individual or individuals and the local subtle environment, thus providing a form of protection.
3. Call forth to the unfolding intent of the individual (or to the innate unfolding sacredness of the situation), in effect evoking the “highest good.”

These three possibilities are illustrated in Figure 2:

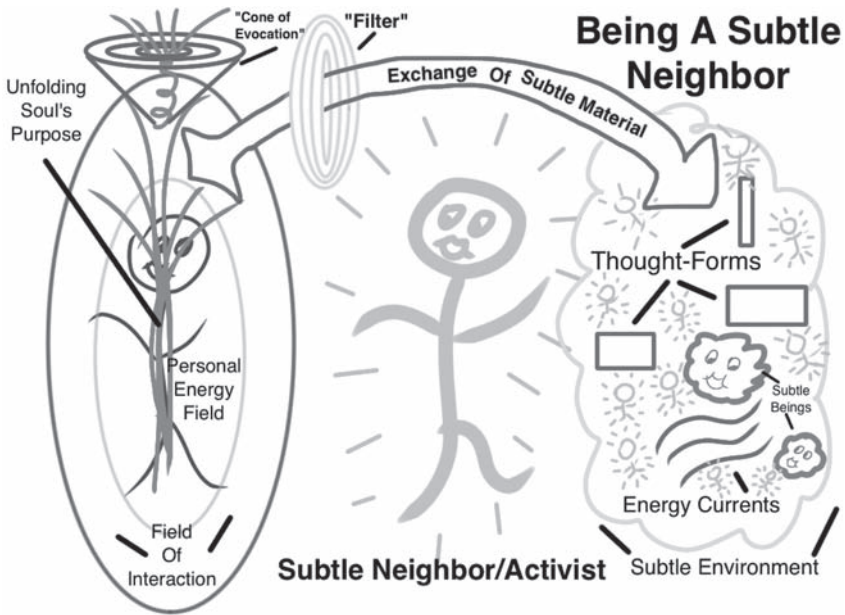


FIGURE 2

In the earlier steps, you created a specific presence which holds and carries the particular qualities and energies you wish to bring to this situation as part of your subtle activism or neighborliness. Now you hold this presence, allowing its character and nature to enter and become part of the local energy environment. To use an earlier metaphor, it's like a boulder placed into a stream which begins to modify and shape the flow of water around and over it. You presence and the qualities it brings takes its place along with any other material that may already be there, but because you are holding this presence with a clear focus and intent, chances are it will create a stronger presence than other material, becoming more available to be felt and picked up by the individuals in the environment. If there are specific thoughts, feelings or images you wish to contribute, you can do so, not forcing them on anyone but making them one of the options present within the subtle environment.

It's also possible to visualize a permeable sphere around the individual or individuals with whom you are working. In your imagination, attune this sphere to the individual's highest good. It doesn't necessarily block the individual from taking material from the subtle environment, but it provides a protective filter should the soul of the individual choose to use

it as such. You can specify the kind of subtle forces it can block, such as energies or thought-forms of fear, hatred, anger, or anything that might hurt the individual, but the person always has the right and freedom to override this filter and draw in whatever he or she chooses. Remember, it's a filter, not a wall and one that's placed at the disposal of the spirit of the individual with whom you're working.

Finally, you can call forth to the soul within the individual (or to the sacred spirit within the situation) and direct your presence as a force of inspiration to support the unfoldment of that soul's purpose and presence. In effect, you are evoking the highest good for this person from within this person. In the picture, this is symbolized by a "cone of evocation" that empowers and draws to the surface the soul's capacities, wisdom and capacities in the moment.

I call this work "Holding" because none of these three possible activities attempts to force anything or make something happen. In keeping with the "Prime Directive," I'm careful not to impose something. Instead, I'm holding possibilities, including the possibility that the individual or individuals involved will rise to the occasion to express the love and wisdom of their own souls within the situation, thereby invoking the highest good for all concerned. Subtle activism is a process of heightening the chances that positive possibilities will manifest while ensuring that individuals retain freedom of thought, feeling and action.

The fact is that we all are vulnerable to acting under the influence of forces and energies moving through our subtle environments. We can pick up thoughts and feelings that do not originate with us but with which we identify in the moment, thinking they are arising from within us. Such thoughts and feelings may not represent the best in us and may lead us to speak and act in ways that make situations worse rather than better. Subtle activism helps open up a subtle environment to higher forces or at least to forces that are positive and supportive of the sovereignty of the individual. It helps to create a space in which an individual can stand in his or her own thoughts and feelings, hopefully attuned to the voice of the soul within and to the creation of wholeness in the larger world.

To put all this in the metaphor of visiting your neighbor, subtle activism is like taking food next door and laying it out on a table. It's like putting up post-it notes with helpful reminders and suggestions on the walls of your neighbor's home. It's like providing a broom and dust-

pan so your neighbor can sweep out the dust bunnies she doesn't want. But it's all up to your neighbor to respond. You can't force feed her or make her eat. You can't make her read the post-it notes or follow their suggestions. You can't make her clean her place up. You can provide options and possibilities, but she has the freedom to make her own choices and take her own actions. And this is how it should be.

## 6. CLOSURE

At some point, you want to return to your own home, close the door and return to your own personal space. Closure is important in many aspects of our lives but particularly so in doing energy work of any kind. Especially if you're doing subtle activism with individuals in difficult circumstances or with challenging and negative situations, such as the aftermath of a natural disaster, you want to be sure you don't bring any unwanted influences or effects back home with you.

With a clear and strong intent, disconnect from the individual or situation with which you have been working. Feel yourself embraced in a cleansing and protective Light as you turn your attention back to where you body is, a Light that fully and firmly separates you from where you have been.

Give thanks to any allies with whom you have been working and disconnect with them as well.

Feel yourself back in your own personal environment. Take a moment of silence to feel fully back and part of your own home.

Give thanks to the allies of place around you, the members of your anchoring collaborative space which you created in step one of this process.

Take a moment to stand in your own sovereignty and wholeness, honoring your own sacredness and its connection to the world.

## EXAMPLE

Here is an example of putting this algorithm to work in response to the aftereffects of Hurricane Sandy.

*Anchoring:* I sit relaxed in a chair in my living room and attune to my own inner Light and to the Light of the Sacred that is at the core of everything around me. From this Light, I invoke love. As the felt sense of this love grows within me, I extend it to the chair in which I'm sitting, thanking it for its support, and then outward into the living room and the various items that it contains. This is my working environment; I connect to the inner life within it, and invite it to be my ally and my support. I create a Grail Space around me. Once I have a clear felt sense of this field of presence, I'm ready to proceed.

*Shaping:* From past experience I know that the subtle environment in a disaster zone can be particularly turbulent. Feelings run high; there is mental anguish and confusion, fear, anger, shock. The natural world has been disrupted, too, so a lot is in flux in the Borderland close to the physical plane. Many connections, both human and non-human, physical and non-physical, have been broken, and the subtle energy state can be chaotic for a time. So what I want to offer is a calming presence, one that holds a space in which connections can be remade.

In particular, I want to offer a calming space so that the people who are making decisions and trying to help within the disaster area are assisted in finding their own inner calm in order to think clearly.

Finally, I want to bring a vitality and energy to the "first responders" on the inner, mainly but not exclusively angelic and Devic beings. They are the "allies of relevance," the ones who best know how to help in the situation. So I want to bring blessings and energy to them.

*Attunement and Resonance:* If I know someone in a disaster area, then I can attune to him or her as a specific point of connection; in such an instance, I will shape my work to provide inner support for this person. One of my friends and colleagues does in fact do work for FEMA in the aftermath of events like Hurricane Sandy, and in the past I have added my energies to his as he works helping disaster victims pick up the pieces of their lives. But in this instance, he is not on the scene. I could, of course,

just simply ask through prayer that everyone involved receive the help they need, but I like to be more specific and particular in my inner work if it's possible.

So I am taking my cue from news reports, particularly those from Staten Island where the devastation and loss is particularly acute. There is one victim, a woman who appears over and over again on the news asking for help for herself and others who are now homeless. I don't know who she is, but I can use her as a point of connection with the situation. As I attune to the situation, I hold her image in my mind. I'm not trying to attune to her specifically but I'm using her image as a symbol both of the place and of those who are in distress. They are the ones I'd like to help if I can.

*Allies:* In a case like this, I definitely want allies. I draw on my own personal allies to be at my side. I also attune to the Angel of New York City, since Staten Island is part of that larger metropolitan area. Finally, I attune to a feminine being who is a representative of compassion and healing for me. She is not Florence Nightingale but she is an equivalent kind of figure, an archetypal nurse and comforter who also has strong organizational skills. There are many human souls who work to help on the inner in scenes of disaster, and this woman represents my contact with them as a group.

In attuning to allies, I ask for their guidance on how best to proceed and I also offer them the energy I'm holding, figuring that they know better than I where it can best be used.

*Holding:* As I attune to the situation, I find myself in my imagination standing on a street in Staten Island surrounded by homes broken up by the flooding and winds; there is water in the street as well. This is most likely an imaginative image representative of the situation, but it puts me in touch with the local subtle environment. I use the sense of my physical body in my chair to attune me to the physical vibes of the local environment as well, as I want to "ground" my presence.

I can feel that I am present to the energies in this place. I am holding calm and a sense of safety. I visualize myself at the center of a sphere of this calming energy and I will this sphere to expand outward into the environment as far as I am able to hold it. I invite the angelic, devic, and human subtle responders to draw upon this calming energy and the

love behind it in whatever way they need to. I also picture the woman who I saw on television that I used as a point of connection and others like her being bathed in this calming Light and reassured. The point is that people can make better decisions when they are not agitated and fearful. I do not know what the victims need to do, but I want them to have whatever inner support I can offer to help them make connections to the help they need and to make good choices.

I hold this bubble of Light and loving calm until I begin to feel restless and tired. Then I know it's time to quit.

*Closure:* I release the bubble of Light that I've been holding into the care and presence of the angelic and Devic beings that I sought out as allies. I then close the door in my mind to the disaster area, passing through a screen of Light that prevents any unwanted energies from accompanying me home. I shift my focus to my body sitting in my chair. I give thanks to all my allies, thanks to the space around me, thanks to my own soul and body. I take a moment of silence to attune to my personal sovereignty and identity and to the Sacred. This completes the action.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The algorithm I've presented is a statement of principles more than it is a rigid technique or recipe to follow. It's based on love, compassion, caring, and a respect for the sovereignty and capacity of others. It's not so much a case of our doing something for someone as it is of providing resources enabling them to do something for themselves.

At the same time, it affirms our native and organic participation in the subtle realms. We don't have to be psychic or occult adepts to be good subtle neighbors. We are always radiating into the Borderland and receiving from it as well. The principle of subtle activism (or neighborliness) is that we can learn to do this more consciously and deliberately. In this way, it becomes part of a spiritual practice of learning how to be masters of our subtle bodies and of the subtle environment around us.

The simplest form of subtle activism, one that we can practice at any time anywhere, is to pay attention to how we're interacting with the subtle environment and with the subtle bodies of other people in the moment where we are. What emotions might we be broadcasting? How are we

holding others in our thoughts? What energies are radiating from us? What do we want to radiate from us? What might we be picking up from the subtle environment around us? Perhaps this irritation I feel isn't originating from me but from someone else. But even if this is the case, I can enfold it in calmness and love and not pass it on. I can take responsibility for what I add to the realm of thought and feeling around me, just as I would take responsibility for not littering or otherwise abusing my physical environment.

The point of all this is to enhance and expand our recognition and experience of ourselves as whole beings that inhabit two different worlds. The Borderland is not an exotic, esoteric locale but all around us, being influenced by and in turn influencing our own energy states. As I begin to see myself through this lens of wholeness, it can be empowering. I realize that while my physical outreach and connections may be limited, my subtle ones are much less so. I truly can be a citizen of the world by participating in its energy life where time and space are not the barriers they are on the physical side.

I hope that this material is useful to you and inspires you to explore the possibilities of being a subtle neighbor. When we have our online forum next spring, we can do some practice work together and deepen the possibilities here.

As my health and energy improve, I am able to re-engage my own inner contacts in a fuller way than they have been since my surgery. I look forward to what may emerge and create the field notes for our next issue in the Spring.

Blessings, everyone!