

FOR THE PEOPLE OF WHITEHAVEN, CUMBRIA

## A Healing Message to My Heartland

### *Finding The Wisdom Space*

*There was once a story of a wise Indian Chief who sat one day with his grandson and said:  
'My son, there are two wolves fighting in my heart.' 'Which one will win grandpa?' said the little one.  
And the grandfather said: 'Why the one that I feed my son, the one that I feed.'*

My fellow Cumbrian heartlanders, many of you know and love me as a Whitehaven lass born and bred. I'm in my wisdom years now, and you know I'm related to half of you and have worked with the other half during my time at Marchon, High Duty Alloys and BNFL Sellafield. You are in my heart, soul and prayers as I watched astonished and appalled at the tragic events that unfolded in my beautiful home town of Whitehaven, Egremont, Rowrah, Frizington, Gosforth and Seascale. Such loss, such devastation, such carnage in a community known for its connections, community spirit, compassion and humour.

At this point we could get lost in why's. But sometimes you have to be wise about why's. Why's can keep you stuck in suffering. The fact is it has happened, it is. And as the salt of the earth characters you are I know you are grieving, angry, sad, bewildered and yet you will rise from it, that's one of the things our ancestors have passed down the generations to all of us.

That's what we have in these parts, real spirit. Our community has had a heritage of hardship and it has faced difficult times many times before. We have had mining disasters where whole families of men were killed, including those in my own family. And we have stood together, strong, courageous, compassionate and resilient in the face of it all.

I am so thankful for and so appreciate my Whitehaven and Cumbrian heritage which is awash with spiritually strong values that have given me my very foundations, as well as roots to know clearly who I am, and the wings to fly free and adventure. Those Cumbrian values are about the importance of family, love, connection, community, contribution, honour and trust. Don't allow your trust of people to be shattered because of this event. Your trusting open nature is what makes Cumbria unlike any other county in the country.

We're made of strong stuff! And I'm proud of who we are, each one of us strong as part of a bigger group of good people. And we are good people! Derrick Bird's sons, and I send them loving healing

energy today, say their father was a good man. There are many who would perhaps disagree with that. I know that what we do is not who we are. But at times like this it is hard to separate who someone is from their actions. This man's actions have caused great pain and loss, and he has left an appalling legacy. Sadly he will be remembered for all the wrong things. Yet that in itself teaches us. What do you want to be remembered for? What legacy do you want to leave behind you? What stories do you want people to tell about you?

Remember who you are and what this life is about for you. Last week this man forgot who he was and what was really important. He forgot his values and the fact that he was a father and a grandfather with a stake in creating a better future, a better world. He was an angry man in the grip of an emotional hijacking who externalised that anger in such a disturbingly destructive way. Anger is rarely the primary emotion, more often it is a secondary emotion, and often follows a hurt. But somehow it is sometimes easier to express anger, than say how hurt you're feeling. In the ownership of that, a feeling can dissipate and dissolve. Feelings are just energy, just energy that pass through us, unless we fester on them and feed them.

On Facebook last week I saw many expressions of anger in response to Derrick Bird's violent actions. That's absolutely understandable, emotions are still very raw. One thing to remember though is it was that same anger that caused all the pain in the first place. So why perpetuate that destructive energy.

Derrick Bird had temporarily forgotten to run the peace circuitry in his brain. The neurochemistry of peace is very different to that of anger, which is corrosive and toxic. He had forgotten to run the love circuitry. We run our feelings, it's an inside job, when we forget that then our feelings start to run us. Whatever happens 'out there', how we respond to it is a choice we make on the inside. And there are always choices.

I recently did some work for The Environment Agency, great group of people. And we have our own environment agency on the inside of us. We're either polluting the rivers running through our minds, or cleaning up our act. Every thought has a characteristic neurochemistry that gives rise to a feeling. We feel what we think. Then the feelings trigger more thoughts that fuel more of the same feelings, and around and around those feelings can go building up and up, it's like a trance-state. To break the trance we need to think greater than the feeling we're experiencing, or we need to focus on how we want to feel instead, or press the pause button and do a 7-11 breath, or better still three 7-11s in a row. 7-11s like the meerkats in the advert say is 'simples'. It's the fastest state changer this side of the Mississippi. Breathe in to the count of 7, breathe out to the count of 11. The longer out-breath biologically activates your parasympathetic nervous system to dissolve cortisol, the stress hormone, and release serotonin, the happy hormone. Derrick Bird was in the grip of the rage trance, and we all witnessed the tragic outcome of that. There are better trances to be in. Time maybe for us all to dance with a better trance of love and peace.

Forgiveness isn't just a moral and spiritual necessity, it is a physical necessity. Dr Caroline Myss in her powerful book 'Why People Don't Heal & How They Can' says that the key to healing is

forgiveness. Too many people hang on to unforgiveness and it makes for a lonely and pernicious bedfellow. Had Derrick Bird found the grace and peace of forgiveness I would not be writing this, and you would not be reading it now. If forgiveness had entered his heart and his being that day none of those painful events would have happened, all those people would still be alive. But they are not. The tiger of righteous anger, hatred and unforgiveness was focused and targeted and then unleashed in a random tsunami wave of pain and death. And there's no going back, only going forwards ... and hopefully in wisdom. And in forgiveness. Forgiveness remember is the gift you give yourself. It isn't saying that what someone did was right, it most definitely was not. Forgiveness simply frees you from the energy that caused the events in the first place. Forgiveness unhooks you, liberates you, allows grace and peace to enter your inner kingdom, your inner world.

Unforgiveness is like leaving out rat poison, and then consuming it yourself. Bitterness, resentment, hatred, unforgiveness are toxic and penetrate our hearts, minds and bodies contaminating our inner environment. Never let anger and unforgiveness poison you. You are much too precious for that. You have gifts to give this world.

We are here to create a heaven, not a hell. The ancient Egyptians believed that on the gateway to heaven you are only ever asked 2 questions. The first is: Have you found joy in your life? And the second is: And has your life brought joy to others. Make your life count in the best of ways. Find the joy in your life, be a source of joy to others. Remember how you wish to be remembered. Leave a legacy of positive long-lasting change. Touch the future in the right way. Create a heaven on this earth in your world, and begin it now. And as Gandhi says 'be the change you wish to see'.

I wish you joy. I wish you love. I wish you peace.

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