

Separation Without Separateness: A Day That Changed My Life by Joseph Jaworski

I had been living in London. It was Sunday, July 27, 1980...a day that changed my life forever. I got up before dawn and went for a long, slow, easy run in Hyde Park. When I returned, I picked up the Sunday Times and went into my flat. After showering, I was thumbing through the newspaper, and when I got to page fourteen, I saw a headline in the education section: "How the Universe Hangs Together". There was a picture of Dr. David Bohm, Professor of Theoretical Physics at London's Birbeck College, with a caption underneath: "Bohm and his Algebra of Algebras: Religion is Wholeness." I knew at that moment that this article was speaking to me and that I needed to meet Dr. Bohm.

I went to the telephone and began dialing. After several calls, I found Bohm's home number, and before I knew it, he was at the other end of the line. I was pouring my heart out, telling him what I was about and that I must see him. Almost without hesitation, he agreed to spend the entire next afternoon with me.

The next day, in Bohm's office, we talked about the marriage of the principles of physics and philosophy and its relevance for my dream of founding the American Leadership Forum. Bohm raised questions with me that are both ancient and fundamental. What is mind? What is matter? What is the source of the simple symmetry we see all around us in the natural world? We talked about life in the "bubble chamber". We talked about the then recently confirmed Bell's theorem, which proves beyond question that everything is connected to everything else - that there is "separation without separateness".

Bohm's conversation with me hit me like a bolt of lightning. That day I learned that nothing could be understood in isolation; everything had to be seen as part of the unified whole. Everything is included in everything else. With certainty, we are all connected. And if this could be taught, and if people could understand it, we would have a different consciousness.

The significance of Bohm's conversation is enormous. In David Bohm's words:

"People create barriers between each other by their fragmentary thought. Each one operates separately. When these barriers have dissolved, then there arises one mind, where they are all one unit, but each person also retains his or her own individual awareness. That one mind will still exist even when they separate, and when they come together, it will be as if they hadn't separated. It's actually a single intelligence that works with people who are moving in relationship with one another. Cues that pass from one to the other are being picked up with the same awareness. Therefore, these people are really all one. That separation between them is not blocking. They are all pulling together. If you had a number of people who really pulled together and worked together in this way, it would be remarkable."

Bohm told me that we have capacities within us that we do not recognize - capacities within us that are phenomenal — if we only knew how to release them. These words served me well as I began my journey to found the American Leadership Forum. These words continue to guide me today. Moreover, my encounter with Bohm confirmed my inner knowing that a number of committed people could literally change the world and in fact is the only thing that ever has.