

When

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Oil sands, pipelines, ports, railroads and tankers bring hope and hopelessness.

So much hate, fear and misunderstanding.

So much self righteous damage from every side.

We know that this public conflict may destroy great possibilities for all.

Yet we fail to change our course. We stick with what “looks strong” to our respective sides.

We speak of continually earning our “social licence to operate”. Our licence is being suspended.

And where is the accountability from the environmentalists, the first nations and the political leaders?

We are all failing in this international endeavour.

The sky is falling, the earth dying, our nation fracturing and business faltering.

“The Tar Sands are the tipping point”, my New York client passionately warns.

Tar Sands and pipelines are evil. Oil sands are a blessing and pipelines are the safest method of transporting oil. Where do you stand? How do you know?

Tar Sands and pipelines are ignorantly targeted as the primary villain; not coal, not consumption, not regulatory quagmires...

People are. We are the primary villain.

When?

When will you come?

When will you come together?

“There is a field beyond right and wrong.”

Thirteenth century Persian poet Rumi wrote.

We’ll meet you there.

Beyond right and wrong.

Beyond the hostile and ignorant declarations from all sides.

To a circle, campfire or round table where we may hear one another and see one another.

We have been calling you.

To this place of learning.

To this place of collaboration.

To this place of breakthrough.

So much is possible.

Until now, much has been destroyed through “rights” and “holier than thou” declarations.

So much energy around energy infrastructure projects.

Frustration, sadness, anger and judgement.

Loss.

When?

When will they come?

When will they come together?

Listen to the news; hear the positioning, the destruction of trust and knowledge.

Wonder what our fore fathers would ask of us.

Wonder what our great grandchildren will say of us.

Supposed leaders on all sides declare;

We know better than you. We understand everything. We are right. You are wrong.

Come together to hear one another and integrate wisdom to significance outcomes that serve all in our one world.

We are interested, the oil companies declare, but we have rights, regulatory, legal and political processes that serve us just fine. Our technical knowledge trumps their emotional opinions. We have the economy, jobs and prosperity on our side.

We are interested, the first nations declare, but we have been hurt and we have rights, regulatory, legal and political processes that serve us just fine. We must stick with what we know to be true. We hold the cards in this game.

We are interested, the environmentalists declare, but we can never collaborate with the devil. We must stop these developments or else our planet will die. We must stick with what we know to be true. And without villains, our funding will die. We have the majority on our side.

We are interested, the community leaders declare, but we take a back seat to the regulatory, legal and political processes. We do not have the resources to work this issue.

We are interested, the political leaders declare, but the public mood is sour and we must first get (re-) elected. We will run in front of the parade wherever it may go.

We are interested, the construction workers say, but we are torn by all the misunderstandings and are not sure where to stand. We want this work and, yet, fear our community will be against us.

We are worried the earth and the sky say. A small risk can have major traumatic impacts on us.

We are interested, the future declares, but everyone else is speaking for us. Where is our voice?

There is so much possibility and opportunity to serve all the needs and interests.

There is so little known together. Hostility and ignorance separate us.

What if this is not a discussion about pipelines, positions or power?

What if we explored interests together; fears, hopes, dreams, values?

What if we came together as people to hear, see and learn from one another?

What if we did that without attachment to outcomes?

What if we became curious and respectful?

What might arise?

What outcomes might then be generated?

When?

When will we come?

When will we come together?

There is a field beyond right and wrong.

Come together and co-create our shared respectful, healthy and abundant future.

We are setting this table for all. This round table is our future.

Like the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table, with chivalry and honour, we will engage, learn and succeed together.

This will take time.

As do all legal and regulatory processes.

This will take strength of character.

This will take leadership.

Let the "little" ones play their games in the mud outside.

If you are bigger, creative, curious and far sighted, step forward to our round table.

Now is When.

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