

**PAUL SUTHERLAND** will not be voting for his guru, Donald Trump. Instead, he is living in Uganda, teaching the next generation of young people there to kiss their own “ugly” and turn positive intentions into positive action.

## Why Trump Is My Teacher & Guru

When Donald Trump appeared on the political scene he seemed a joke, but now the joke is on us. He’s a wall builder and a hater in a world that desperately needs to tear down walls and end hatred for our very survival. How did this happen? What do we do? Is evil taking over? Is love dead?

**Paul Sutherland:** If Donald Trump has done one great thing, he has put these big questions front and center—and made us as Americans look at ourselves. Trump is playing to our fears, exciting our greed, and selling us a scheme that we can be rich like him. Just vote for his prosperity gospel of deal making, isolation, exploitation, shouting down the opposition, and shunning those who are ignorant, trusting, or different. And he is doing it in a way that is

entertaining. I read a claim that those who love Trump listen to him for one hour a day, while those who loathe him listen for two hours because he is so outrageous.

So Mr. Trump is getting attention, and in a world in which there is no bad press, no bad publicity, and anything that gets your name in the limelight is (politically) positive, he has done this well. So he must be doing something right! Right?

What he is doing right is allowing us to take a long, hard look at our “ugly” as a country, as a democracy, as a people, and as individuals. Liberal or conservative, Christian or Muslim, gay or straight, honest or crooked—Trump holds up a mirror to see our ugly. And our ugly ain’t pretty. We cannot Pollyanna away the reality of his statements and what they say about us.

M.L. King Jr. said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” And a serious look at our country shows that we *are* silent about things that matter. We pass by poverty, injustice, racism, hate, and evil as we walk to our yoga class, go to the co-op for an organic latte, and meditate every morning on happiness. We in the spiritual movement are often indifferent, ignorant, or silent about what matters.

Among those who are *not* silent, many seem to think talking is good and that “awareness changes things.” It does not. Einstein taught us, “Nothing happens till something moves.” Awareness is not movement. Actions change things. Engaged intentions change things. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the sage Simeon ben Gamliel is credited with teaching, “Do not mistake talk for action. Pity fills no stomach. Compassion builds no house. Understanding is not yet justice.” His words ring true today, maybe even more than when he spoke them.

Donald Trump’s message to us is clear: “Hey, now that I have showed you your ugly, your hypocrisy, your own two-faced

bigotry, “Whatcha gonna do about it?”

We have to admit that we have inside us all the beauty of St. Theresa, Jesus, Buddha, or Malala Yousafzai, and all the evil of Hitler, Kony, or Pol Pot. As in the story of the Two Wolves, our question is always, “Which wolf do we choose to feed?”

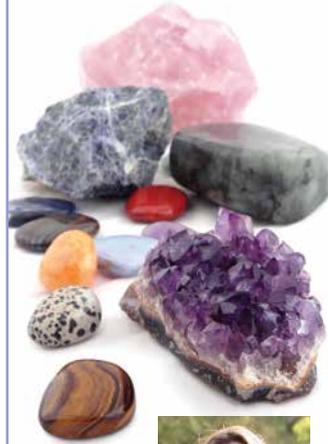
Do we say, “I am not a bigot,” but silently think our born-again friends are a bit fanatical or brainwashed? Do we say, “I care about the environment!” as we fill our closets with more yoga wear, eat organic sea bass flown in from Antarctica, and pass indifferently by the suffering of those who have no home and little food, and wish only to take a bit of the rain forest so their family does not starve? Do we kiss our own ugly? And if we do, do we cultivate right behavior to really live a spiritual life and minimize our ugly behavior?

Buddhist monk and former *S&H* columnist Geri Larkin wrote, “Suffering exists! We can do something about it. We can live a spiritual life.” Your question has its answer embedded in its words: How did this happen? We let Donald Trump happen through our indifference.

Is evil taking over? Is love dead? Does love win? YES is the answer to all three questions.

Donald Trump is a guru, a teacher far more skilled than any I have met. He has made us look at ourselves as we really are—he has showed us our self-deception, showed us where we can improve, and called us to action. But my question for you is simple: Are you going to kiss your ugly and choose to live a truly spiritual life of action? **S&H**

To ask Paul a question, email him directly at paul@spiritualityhealth.com.



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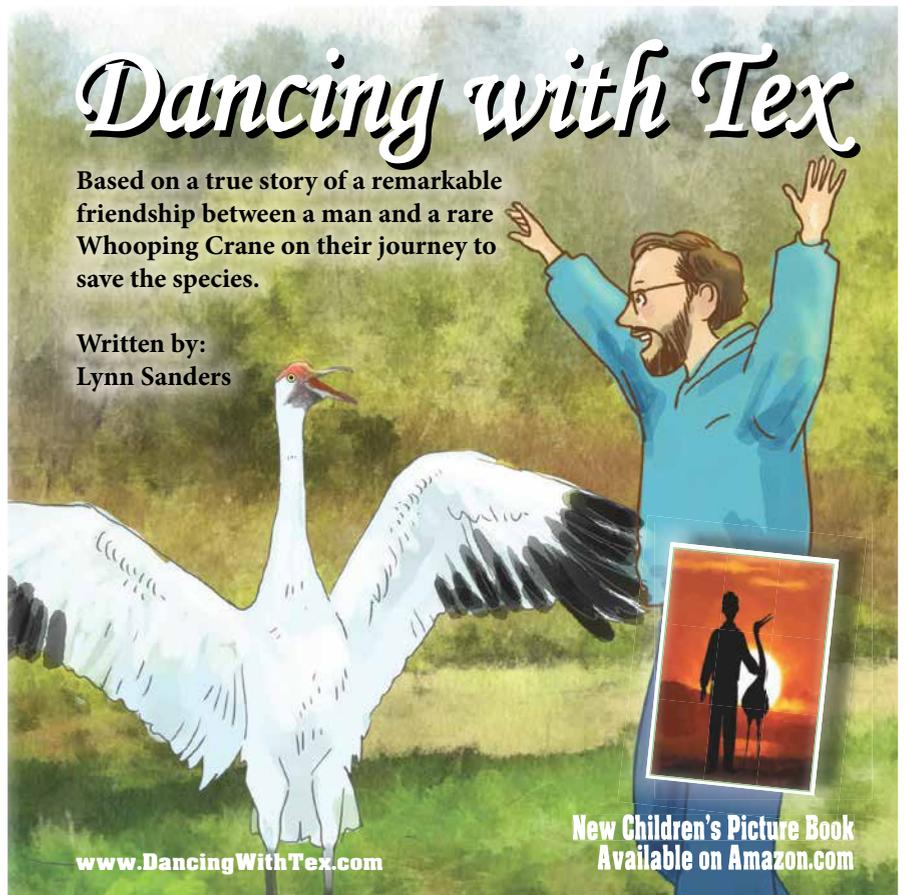
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