

SHIFT EMAIL & Petition – “Facing the shadow - important message”

From: Stephen Dinan - The Shift Network <stephen@theshiftnetwork.com>
Subject: Facing the shadow - important message
Date: January 3, 2016 1:53:49 PM PST
To: [REDACTED]



Dear [REDACTED],

I'm writing to you with a heavy heart.

In a time in which so many of us are working to bring more light to our world, it is sometimes essential to face something that is quite dark and unsettling.

Ultimately, it's important that we do so in order to arrive at wholeness, truth, and justice and to become more capable of working with the intense challenges our world faces.

That's why I want to strongly encourage you to read a few links regarding Marc Gafni, someone who has become a teacher in our orbit and is supported by many allies.

The New York Times wrote a balanced but disturbing piece about him last Saturday that explores his “troubled past:” [*A Spiritual Leader Gains Stature, Trailed by a Troubled Past*](#)

And then four days ago more than 100 Jewish rabbis and cultural leaders put out a very strongly worded [Change.org](#) petition that has attracted more than 1900 co-signers, who are calling for organizations such as Whole Foods and Esalen to dissociate from him completely. The comments on this petition are particularly intense to read: [*Stop Marc Gafni from Abusing Again*](#)

There have been many other articles in the last week, including a

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statement from Aleph (the Alliance for Jewish Renewal) which [issued a strong warning](#) as well as a [heartwrenching and prayerful testimony](#) from Gafni's third wife in the *Times of Israel* on Friday. *The New York Daily News* also ran a [disturbing piece this morning](#).

In the last few months, I have personally spoken with nine women and men who have told me they were deeply traumatized by Gafni. Almost all of them have been afraid to speak out. Many are still healing from their experiences. And they have told me about many others they personally know.

Some of you may be familiar with Gafni's journey in Integral circles. Others may not know him at all.

I had an instinct to avoid him for many years despite the fact that multiple people tried to get me to meet with him. I did have a brief conversation at a conference last year and my gut told me to steer clear.

However, life did not let me stay in avoidance. Several of our faculty wanted him to appear in bonus calls for Shift courses and he ended up in one Summit. I now regret those appearances, which have since been removed.

I aim for The Shift Network to be the most trusted brand in transformation and I feel that we failed to live up to that goal in this regard. I apologize to you for that.

After my conversations with brave souls who shared deeply concerning experiences and reading all that has come out in the last week, I am 100% clear that we will no longer feature him in The Shift Network again, nor will we participate in or promote any event or activity in which he is featured.

I have considered many sources of information to come to my own conclusions. I encourage everyone to do the same.

It's worth noting there are many other trusted leaders in our movement who have come to the same conclusion as me and signed a statement to that effect here:

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We, the undersigned, have concluded, based upon direct experience, investigation, or conversation with trusted allies, that we cannot endorse Marc Gafni as a teacher in any way. Furthermore, we will not feature him in any event, publication, or online activity we produce, nor will we participate as a speaker or promote any event in which he is featured.

Signed by:

Sera Beak - Author of *Red Hot and Holy*

Adam Bucko - Hab Community

Rev. Diane Berke - Founder, One Spirit Learning Alliance

Deepak Chopra - *NY Times* bestselling author

Stephen Dinan - CEO, The Shift Network

Scott Edelstein - Author of *Sex and the Spiritual Teacher*

Lion Goodman - founder, Clear Your Beliefs

Andrew Harvey - Founder, Institute for Sacred Activism

Craig Hamilton - CEO, Evolving Wisdom

Harriet Hawkins - Center for Spiritual Living Livermore Valley

Ross Hostetter - Founder, The Fieldwork School

Jean Houston - Author of *The Possible Human*

Kurt Johnson - The Interspiritual Network

Anodea Judith - Founder, Sacred Centers

Bill Kauth - Founder, The ManKind Project

Rory McEntee - Foundation for New Monasticism

Devaa Haley Mitchell - Co-founder, The Shift Network

David Nicol - Founder, Subtle Activism Network

Terry Patten - Integral Evolutionary Practice

John Robbins - Author of *Diet for a New America*

Ocean Robbins - CEO, The Food Revolution Network

Robb Smith - CEO, Integral Life

Mirabai Starr - Author of *Caravan of No Despair*

Marcia Wieder - CEO, Dream University

Claire Zammit - Founder, Feminine Power

I strongly believe that the full truth of this situation needs to be surfaced, witnessed and addressed, not just for the sake of those involved but for the sake of our whole movement so that we may do collective shadow work and face the abuse of power that too often

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happens under the guise of spiritual teaching.

The situation with Gafni is a collective wake-up call and an opportunity for our maturation.

Andrew Harvey, who is one of our most beloved faculty members and who previously endorsed Gafni’s work, including featuring him in a course, offers some insights in an illuminating 12-minute audio that makes it clear why it is so vital that we address this situation with rigor.

You can listen to that here: [Reflections on the Marc Gafni Situation](#)

My hope is that we can address this situation with a commitment to the evolution of all beings (yes, including Marc Gafni).

To serve the Shift to a better world, we all need to be willing to look into the the darkness with open eyes and a commitment to truth and justice. That is what will grow us all into the kind of mature, sacred leaders who can really help change things for the better.

In many ways, how we as a movement choose to navigate situations like this is a reflection of how ready we are to face the shadows in our world and transform them into a higher possibility.

I do sense there is a higher possibility in this very disturbing saga but it will require each of us to cultivate a strong heart, clear discernment and courage to get there.

Thank you for reading this email, reviewing those articles, listening to the message from Andrew Harvey, doing your own research (I particularly recommend reading the [comments on the petition](#) where many people are sharing their direct experiences), and keeping your eyes and heart open.

May we approach this situation with compassion, and may the truth prevail and lead to healing and awakening for all.

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with love, Stephen

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