

PAUL H. RAY, PH.D., AND SHERRY RUTH ANDERSON, PH.D.

"Essential reading for understanding the converging forces for profound social change in the coming decades."

—Duane Elgin, author of *Promise Ahead* and *Voluntary Simplicity*



THE CULTURAL CREATIVES



10 W 50 MILLION PEOPLE  
RE CHANGING THE WORLD

*Paul H. Ray, Ph.D.,*

*and*

*Sherry Ruth Anderson, Ph.D.*

# creatives



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## praise for *The Cultural Creatives*

“There is a quiet revolution of values afoot in America with the potential to change the planet. Ray and Anderson have done a splendid job defining and interviewing the cultural creative revolutionaries, astounding us with the good news that we are not lone voices crying in the wilderness, but a vanguard of hope over 50 million strong.”

JOAN BORYSENKO, PH.D., author of  
*A Woman's Book of Life* and *A Woman's Journey to God*

“When people identify themselves as cultural creatives through reading this book, the transformation of society will be accelerated. The book itself will be a force for change.”

JEAN SHINODA BOLEN, M.D., author of  
*Goddesses in Everywoman* and *The Millionth Circle*

“*The Cultural Creatives* provides a vital mirror for a multifaceted ‘social uprising of wellness’ to see itself as a powerful movement, to gain the collective authority and a shared sense of direction required to seed the culture with health and vitality in the third millennium.”

BARBARA MARX HUBBARD, author, speaker,  
and president, Foundation for Conscious Evolution

“Paul Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson eloquently envision that, as the media fog clears, seemingly isolated islands of progressive change prove to be towering peaks of a big mountain chain. This book grounds that vision convincingly, and the world grows more hopeful for it.”

KENNY AUSUBEL, author of *When Healing Becomes a Crime*  
and *Restoring the Earth* and founder of the Bioneers Conference

“Paul Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson’s research shows that we are not alone in our yearning for a sane, sustainable future and that human creativity can actually shift the course of events. . . . This is a landmark book which deserves to be a landslide success.”

VICKI ROBIN, coauthor of *Your Money or Your Life*

“Paul and Sherry give life and character to a great social movement before it has even recognized itself. . . . This is but a stepping stone along the path of human emergence, not the end point, and the authors offer good counsel on how to navigate even further.”

CHRIS COWAN, founder of the National Values Center

the  
cultural

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*How  
50 Million People  
Are Changing  
the World*

*We dedicate this book  
with gratitude to those who have walked ahead of us:*

*Willis Harman • Marion Woodman • Jeanne Hay*

*and with blessings to those who will come after us:*

*Spike, Catherine, and Jake Anderson • Andrea Chandler  
and Larissa Odell*

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# preface

We had a good time writing this book together. This surprised everyone we know. They asked: Are you divorced yet? Are you still talking to each other? In fact we were worried too. We wondered how in the world we were going to reconcile our two voices and different professional backgrounds to tell the story of a very big new baby on the cultural scene. Paul's background as a macrosociologist concerned with the evolution of culture was not an obvious fit with Sherry's perspective as a psychologist focusing on the qualities of inner experience. But the story we wanted to tell seemed to need both the big picture and the intimate details of people's lives, as well as a blending of other opposites: masculine and feminine, science and spirituality, consciousness and social action. Each time we thought in terms of these opposites, we found ourselves ridiculously hemmed in. To write this book, we had to meet outside the old categories, beyond the walls that divide and restrict new ways of thinking. The convergence of social movements and consciousness, the odd and creative mixtures of business and personal growth, sustainable development and feminism and health—these and many more new solutions to old problems demanded that we, too, be open to wholly new possibilities.

Amid all this openness, there was one foundation we could count on: the thirteen years of research on values and lifestyles that Paul had been doing with his company, American LIVES, Inc. Over that time, surveys and focus groups showed, month after month, year after year, that an important new subculture was emerging. In the early 1990s, after years of surveys by American LIVES, Paul named this new group the Cultural Creatives because they are literally creating a new culture in America. We have been able to draw upon reliable research findings from what were cumulatively more than 100,000 responses to questionnaires and hundreds of focus groups. We also have been able to rely on the results of two big baseline studies of the role of values in American life. In January of 1995, Paul designed and analyzed a national survey on the role of transformational values in American life, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and the Institute of Noetic Sciences. In January of 1999, Paul helped to design and analyze a study of the role of values and concerns for ecological sustainability in American life, sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

Once the big surveys and focus group data were in, the picture of an emerging subculture was clear. But who were the people? Where did they come from, and where are they

likely to go? Sherry came in at this point, bringing her experience in the personal dimension and the feminine perspective. Her book with Patricia Hopkins on women's spiritual development, *The Feminine Face of God*, provided the groundwork for our interest in the Cultural Creatives' stories in this book. We agreed to use in-depth interviews for the intimate wisdom they can reveal about values and meaning in people's lives. Together we interviewed about sixty people—artists, activists, elders, businesspeople, teachers—anyone we thought was part of the robust group we wanted to describe. And, like many of the people we interviewed, we read hundreds of books that helped us to map the new territory the Cultural Creatives are traversing.

We didn't anticipate how much the Cultural Creatives' story would begin to take shape once the personal stories were added to the large-scale studies and focus group results. That is where the fun (and a few wrestling matches, too) began. Our hope is that what we have begun, with the generosity and great patience of the people we interviewed, will awaken Cultural Creatives' interest in themselves. We imagine them meeting and talking together, laughing and arguing, and very likely disagreeing with some or much of what we've said about them. We believe that their self-awareness as a culture will help us all, help our civilization to develop the fresh solutions that we need so urgently now. In this book, we're able to offer strong empirical evidence for the major change in our culture predicted by hundreds of writers over the past fifty years. The evidence is even more surprising than the futurists imagined. Furthermore, in the last few years, other researchers have been finding results very much like the ones we report in this volume. Their studies start independently from different places and data and yet arrive at very similar conclusions. The conclusions correspond to one another precisely because all of us are looking at values and culture.

Interested readers may want to compare our depiction of the personal values of Cultural Creatives to Don Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan's insightful book connecting values changes with stages of cultural and personality development, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* (1996), and to Brian P. Hall's skillful analysis of values in stages of personal and organizational development, *Values Shift: A Guide to Personal and Organizational Transformation* (1995). Our picture of the role of values in environmental issues is closely matched by the data presented by Willett Kempton, James S. Boster, and Jennifer A. Hartley in *Environmental Values in American Culture* (1997). The sense we have of a major change of worldviews and values is shown by Ronald Inglehart to be happening to some degree all around the planet in *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (1990) and *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies* (1997), and by Paul R. Abramson and Ronald Inglehart in *Value Change in Global Perspective* (1995). Our sense of the immense importance that new social movements have had in shaping the emerging values of the emerging global era is strongly paralleled by the evidence and theories pre-

sented by Alberto Melucci in *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (1996) and Manuel Castells in *The Power of Identity*, volume 2 of *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (1997).<sup>1</sup>

Each of the book's three parts does a different kind of work. Part One describes the Cultural Creatives and contrasts them to the other two major subcultures in Western life. It shows both their "big picture," from thirteen years of surveys and focus groups, and their intimate personal stories, from our in-depth interviews. We show both how individuals changed their personal lives and how Cultural Creatives emerged in American history. This phenomenon can only be understood as part of a huge change in Western culture, on the time scale of centuries.

Part Two is an origins story. Cultural Creatives are the common constituency of the social and consciousness movements. There has been a great convergence of all the movements' constituencies into a common worldview. They were both creators and products of a massive cultural education process that led most Westerners to adopt a new worldview. Crucial was the "reframing" of dozens of areas of social life by all the new social movements and consciousness trends that have been quietly growing since the Sixties. Much of the more recent growth has been invisible to the national media. We retell and reframe that movement history, with more personal stories, because few know the many facets of it. The movements were far more successful in changing our culture and worldviews than in changing our politics, however.

Part Three gives the implications for our emerging future. It tells a news story for our times, at both personal and societal levels, giving new maps to help grasp the gigantic transformational change process in which we find ourselves. This new story is more challenging—and vastly more hopeful—than most of us would have guessed. A whole new culture is emerging, with a greater promise than most of us have dared to dream.

For those readers who are in a hurry, the key arguments are in Chapters One to Four, Seven, and Eleven. To focus on the solid evidence, be sure to read the pages accompanying the charts and boxes. If you are interested in personal stories, you'll find Chapters Two, Six, Nine, and Ten valuable.

We hope that the evidence and the stories presented here will support the Cultural Creatives to grow into the promise they carry, not just for themselves but for the sake of all of us, and for the seventh generation.

PAUL H. RAY AND SHERRY RUTH ANDERSON  
San Rafael, CA  
[www.culturalcreatives.org](http://www.culturalcreatives.org)

## are you a cultural creative?

Check the boxes of statements you agree with. If you agree with 10 or more, you probably are one—and a higher score increases the odds. You are likely to be a Cultural Creative if you . . .

- 1. love nature and are deeply concerned about its destruction
- 2. are strongly aware of the problems of the whole planet (global warming, destruction of rain forests, overpopulation, lack of ecological sustainability, exploitation of people in poorer countries) and want to see more action on them, such as limiting economic growth
- 3. would pay more taxes or pay more for consumer goods if you knew the money would go to clean up the environment and to stop global warming
- 4. give a lot of importance to developing and maintaining your relationships
- 5. give a lot of importance to helping other people and bringing out their unique gifts
- 6. volunteer for one or more good causes
- 7. care intensely about both psychological and spiritual development
- 8. see spirituality or religion as important in your life but are also concerned about the role of the Religious Right in politics
- 9. want more equality for women at work, and more women leaders in business and politics
- 10. are concerned about violence and the abuse of women and children around the world
- 11. want our politics and government spending to put more emphasis on children's education and well-being, on rebuilding our neighborhoods and communities, and on creating an ecologically sustainable future
- 12. are unhappy with both the left and the right in politics and want to find a new way that is not in the mushy middle
- 13. tend to be rather optimistic about our future and distrust the cynical and pessimistic view that is given by the media
- 14. want to be involved in creating a new and better way of life in our country
- 15. are concerned about what the big corporations are doing in the name of making more profits: downsizing, creating environmental problems, and exploiting poorer countries
- 16. have your finances and spending under control and are not concerned about overspending
- 17. dislike all the emphasis in modern culture on success and "making it," on getting and spending, on wealth and luxury goods
- 18. like people and places that are exotic and foreign, and like experiencing and learning about other ways of life

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part one

introducing the  
cultural creatives







IMAGINE A COUNTRY the size of France suddenly sprouting in the middle of the United States. It is immensely rich in culture, with new ways of life, values, and world-views. It has its own heroes and its own vision for the future. Think how curious we all would be, how interested to discover who these people are and where they have come from. In Washington and on the Sunday morning news shows, politicians would certainly have strong opinions about what it all means, and pundits would be expressing their views with their usual certainty. Businesses would be planning strategies to market to this population, and political groups would be exploring alliances. The media, of course, would be blazing with first-person interviews and inside stories of the new arrivals, instead of the latest Beltway scandals.

Now imagine something different. There is a new country, just as big and just as rich in culture, but no one sees it. It takes shape silently and almost invisibly, as if flown in under radar in the dark of night. But it's not from somewhere else. This new country is decidedly American. And unlike the first image, it is emerging not only in the cornfields of Iowa but on the streets of the Bronx, all across the country from Seattle to St. Augustine. It is showing up wherever you'd least expect it: in your brother's living room and your sister's backyard, in women's circles and demonstrations to protect the redwoods, in offices and churches and online communities, coffee shops and bookstores, hiking trails and corporate boardrooms.