What Is It Like to Be You?
Transcript of Charles Eisenstein's Talk
https://charleseisenstein.org/video/what-is-it-like-to-be-you/

What is it like to be you? What is it like to be Donald Trump? What is it like to be an oil executive? What is it like to be a racist? What is it like to be the person that you vilify and demonize and dehumanize? Because that's kind of the common denominator. When I read right-wing websites, left-wing websites, the comment sections--they disagree about issues, but they agree on one thing, which is that the people on the other side, there's something wrong with them. They're not as intelligent as we are. They're not as open minded as we are. They don't pay attention to facts. They have some moral or intellectual deficiency that explains why they disagree with us: the good people, the smart people, the moral people.

Both sides kind of agree on that. Therefore both sides also agree on certain tactics that come from that.

[Protestors shouting expletives]

These are the tactics of domination, the tactics of war, the general formula being: "find an enemy and defeat that enemy." For example, we don't know how to solve the problem of crime, which is an outgrowth of deep social conditions that go all the way down to our basic financial system, the way that money is created in our society. That's not something we know how to solve. But if you blame it on *criminals*, then you know how to solve it. It's easy. You use the tactics of force and domination. You lock 'em up.

If the problem is terrorism, we don't know how to solve the deep conditions that give birth to terrorism, which implicates our entire world economy and political system. So, let's instead blame it on these scary, horrible terrorists, who are just *bad*. That's why they do it, they're *bad*. The solution then is is easy. Kill the terrorists.

Bombing the terrorists does not solve the problem. It worsens the problem. It adds to the conditions that are part of the problem. It's almost like we don't know how to *be* in the absence of an enemy, the absence of something to blame, so we take every problem and turn it into a war by trying to find an enemy. When we stop blaming the most proximate culprit, we enter a deeper radicalism that says, "I don't know what the real answer is, but I'm going to look." And we become open to understanding the deep conditions that are manifesting as the symptoms that we call terrorism, crime, racism, misogyny, ignorance, greed--and when we become aware of the complexity and the depth of the true causes of the symptoms, we realize that our normal warmaking habits do not work.

[Man: "I see them as human beings, just like I see everybody on this side as human beings."]

[Shouting: "Hugs, not hate! Hugs, not hate!"]

When I understand you're acting in a racist way, not because you're just some bad person, but because you feel betrayed by the system and you want to blame somebody and you're being offered this group of people to blame, then I understand now where it's coming from, and maybe I understand the culture you grew up in, and I understand what hurts you, and so maybe I can meet these conditions somehow.

That's the alternative to a world of endless war. We've been fighting an endless war for thousands of years. And evil has not yet been defeated. Does that mean we have to fight harder, or could it be that the mentality of warmaking creates endless enemies and perpetuates itself? Not that there's never a time to fight, but we're trapped in a habit of fighting.

The question "What is it like to be you?" is a way to heal the separation--not something you do to be a good person, something you do because it brings you to the truth, and it brings you to your creative power as an agent of change in this world.