To the Occupy Kids — Some Words from a Geezer

written by George Fish | February 3, 2012

I

I was your age
back in the tumultuous Sixties;
and like you,
I was determined,
feisty,
and idealistic—
unwilling
then
(or later)
to make all those
rotten compromises
that supposedly come
with “adulthood;”
or blind myself with
all those facile rationalizations
that make those
rotten compromises
palatable and acceptable
for that “higher” purpose
of “making a living”
rather than living properly.
(Yeah, I’m like you,
right? Won’t grow up,
won’t take a bath,
won’t get a job!)
Well, I guess
that’s why
you Occupy kids
give me hope
and determination
to still carry on
the good fight,
and I’m immensely grateful
for that.
Don’t ever forget it!

II

I was proud to stand with you

and participate as I could,
and I welcomed your
welcoming me,
and your asking me
What could we learn
from older radicals
like myself?
For I was different
from the rest
of these older
talking heads
in that I stood with you
and didn't feel the need
to stand above you;
had no desire
to preach to you,
or most of all,
to "lead" you,
as my "vast experience"
and "standing in the community"
would wont.
No desire to be a
Rt. Rev. Progressive
Spiritual Guru,
freely telling you
what you should
and should not do;
nor to be yet another
"community political leader,"
complete with his
own web site
and his own
miniscule paper organization
where he's Executive Director.
You kids did an
excellent job of
leading yourselves;
and you made us follow you.
That's enough—
in fact, more than enough!

III

But if you don't mind
a little advice
from one who
grew up back
in the age of the dinosaurs,
but who has fought for
social justice all his life,

Even though
you're right to realize
that "leadership"
often veils elitism,
take a lesson
from that
musical group
popular back
in the age of those
dinosaurs,
the Beatles,
who also protested,
"We have no leaders,"
but who did have
a "chief Beatle,"
John Lennon.
Because you will need
"chief Beatles,"
you will need
leadership
you can respect
and look up to,
those who are your
First among Equals.
But keep up
with the democracy
and the vigilance,
and don't swallow that
Orwellian
"Some are more equal
than others,"
or even worse,
"One is more equal than
all of us put together."
And develop a program
for the 99%
that's based on
your real needs, and
the real needs of the 99%.
But let it flow,
let it come out of
your discussions,
and your fervor.
For you will need it.
But just your fight-back
is the beginning
of a program in itself.
Don't forget that, either.

Kurt Vonnegut
so aptly wrote,
“What should young people do with their lives today? Many
things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable
communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be
cured.”
Che Guevara said,
again so aptly,
“The revolutionary
is motivated
by feelings of love.”
But you feisty Occupy youth
did both, showed both,
proved both of them right,
all by yourselves.
Be proud of yourselves,
and of the toughlove
you showed through
your determination.
(Toughlove being
the only concept
to come out of
the Religious Right
that has any validity
whatsoever.)
You woke us up,
we slumbering
demoralized of the
quiet and quietistic 99%.
Your insouciant toughlove
hurled missiles
of defiant truth
at those who
though it was
all about the
Kardashians,
and not about democracy,
equality and freedom.
You rudely woke up
all those
who’d forgotten about
The 1%
as they gleefully followed
The Kardashians’
“reality” fantasy,
were too preoccupied
with Kim’s marriage
or her booty,
and couldn’t understand
that your protest
wasn’t about the

Kardashians at all!
You also showed
your loving toughlove
as you behaved as
Confucius' man,
giving him a fish to
feed him one day
and teaching him
how to fish
to feed him for a lifetime—
bringing in that
fecund harvest,
nets overflowing,
with the empowerment,
determination
and hope
that comes from
direct action
and bold moves,
that comes from
standing up
and saying "Enough!"
And though you did not
personally hate
the 1%,
you hated correctly
their oppression,
their avarice,
their greed
which they identified
with the good
and the right,
even with Jesus
himself;
Jesus on the Cross
which the 1%
mass-marketed
into Crucifixes
for sale at all
better retail outlets
for a mere
$15.99 apiece!

V

For how could anyone
want something better
than a "shopping experience"?
You Occupy kids did;
and you showed us

of the 99%
a much, much
better way
because you did.
That’s another thing
you should never forget.