

3. Competitiveness

U.S. culture is permeated by and obsessed with competition. We spend huge parts of our lives “playing” and watching sports, in which people and groups are pitted against and urged to prevail over the other. Competitive sports thrive in education systems, as arts, life skills, humanities and even science are cut. Political elections are set up like sporting events, with one side battling the other for power. Businesses compete for market share, image, trade and profits. Individuals compete for wealth, status and power. Religions compete for believers. Academic institutions compete for rankings, donations and applicants. Humanity competes against nature, absurdly. We are taught to believe life is inherently competitive.

Implicit in competition is a belief in winners versus losers. Whoever wins gets the glory, respect, assets, appreciation, popularity, money, members, sex, spoils or power. Whoever loses, at best we don't think or care much about them. At worst, we denigrate, belittle, exploit and abuse them. We indoctrinate people in our culture to compete to be winners and not care about losers. It pits us versus them, creates separation and strife, and couches all of that in a culture that tells us that's all OK and good.

Fundamentally, competition is male-dominated mentality and behavior based in war, us versus them conflict, where the winner takes from the loser, and the loser dies, suffers or experiences some loss. The winner gains wealth, glory, lands, power, slaves, sex, property and awards, which the loser loses. It's male apes clubbing each other over the heads and biting each other for alpha status, for power and mating privileges. It is primitive. It is testosterone driven lower brain function. It is might over right. It's brutal, harmful, destructive and distracting.

In U.S. culture, that is all considered AOK. It is expected, taken for granted and accepted that far too many things are competitions, in which one wins over another; the winner should take from the loser; and the loser must accept losing. We teach people to be good losers, to accept losing, let winners take things from us without resisting and a whole paradigm of competition in which winners take from losers. The U.S. glorifies competition. It is a fundamental, deeply embedded dimension of culture.

However, competition creates stress, fear of loss, loss, anxiety, suffering, emotional and psychological problems. It destroys creative expressions. It holds some down. It creates disparity and fragmentation. It harms many. It's fun and motivating for some, but miserable and demotivating for others. It rewards the insensitive and uncaring over the sensitive and caring. It degrades compassion and understanding. It glorifies war, creates ego problems, harms many people's feelings of self-worth, and incents cheating. We have a culture in which winning is more important than most other things. That is wrong.

Competition is an expression of patriarchal dominated thinking and values that suppress, subjugate and control female sensibilities, values and thinking. Creating, nurturing, cooperating, helping, supporting, understanding and other aspects of predominantly and traditionally female nature are held down by male dominated competitive behaviors. The lack of balance between male and female natures creates and maintains an enormous array of problems, for women, men, individuals, groups, other species, natural systems, and social systems. It's a huge part of gender inequality and its perpetuation.

There is no them. There's only us. If they lose, we lose. If women are held down, so is humanity. Cooperation and collaboration are more important than competition, and until competition is degraded as a cultural value and set of behaviors, we'll keep experiencing a host of problems in individual lives, social and natural systems. There's abundance for all if we create and share it with love and cooperate.

Politics is not about the blue team or the red team winning; it's about creating a world we all thrive in.
Commerce is not about one business getting more than others; it's about sharing what we need fairly.
Athletics is not about one team beating another; it is about cultivating physical health and fitness.
Religion is not about which dogma converts the most believers; it is about growing in consciousness.
Education isn't about which is the "best" school; it's about developing knowledge, thinking and skills.
Work is not about gaining more than others; it's about personal contribution, growth and fulfillment.
Nature's what we're integrated and cooperative parts and expressions of, not what we compete against.

Let's stop competing against each other and start cooperating and collaborating with each other, respectfully, to create, nurture and maintain worlds we all thrive in! No more winners and losers!