

Dr. Edgar Mitchell – A Tribute

Eulogy

There is so much to say about Edgar but so little time to say it. In the time I have, I would like to share with you my personal views of why Edgar is worthy of being recognized as a true Renaissance man of our time.

We all know that he was an explorer of outer space. But there are other sides of Edgar's many interests less well known that I believe history will recognize as his most important contributions to humanity.

On his historic journey to the moon, Edgar had an opportunity to view Earth from a very unique and privileged vantage point. From it, Edgar saw the entire Earth as our home, an interconnected, living system, and a beautiful oasis in the vast and hostile blackness of empty space.

He often said in reflecting on seeing the Earth from the moon, that he felt both euphoric and despondent; euphoric because his journey into space epitomized the amazing accomplishments we, as a species, have achieved during the past century and because of the insights gained from the new appreciation of the magnificence and unimaginable vastness of the heavens. At the same time Edgar would also say that his despondent feeling came from the recognition of the often unwitting, irresponsible and foolish behaviors he saw that humans exhibiting

toward Earth and all its inhabitants, our only home and only habitable planet in our solar system.

From shortly after the time of his historic voyage to the end of his life, Edgar would often point to the unmistakable evidence that humanity is seriously endangering its very own existence as well as that of most life on the planet. This was the motivation and his intense interest in promoting his message of sustainability at every opportunity long before it was popular to do so.

As an incredibly deep thinker, Edgar went much further than most. He recognized that many of the problems humanity faced were due to our limited world view, our incomplete knowledge of nature and our misunderstood relationship to each other and to the web of life on the planet. Then he would often add that our long held individual, cultural and institutionalized beliefs have been vastly outpaced by the rapid changes we are now facing on so many fronts. This, coupled with our technologies and large increasing population would surely lead to our undoing as well as that of much of the life on our planet.

He knew that if humanity was ever to succeed in meeting these challenges that we and future generations would face, we must begin by understanding the nature of consciousness, the most profound mystery of existence. And thus he began his quest upon his leaving NASA to understand the human mind. For this,

he knew, is what humanity uses to perceive, interpret and act in the reality in which we live.

Edgar was a man ahead of his time exploring many subjects long before it became fashionable to do so. Because of it he often had to deal with the skepticism and sometimes ridicule that comes with the territory of being of a true pioneer. His understandings of the sciences and the laws of nature led him to the conclusion that the universe must be teeming with life, and perhaps some of it intelligent.

A man of conviction, Edgar would never back down from this position in spite of the intense skepticism he faced. But he didn't stop there. He would often speculate on the profound implications for humanity of such a discovery. Like so many other things that Edgar contemplated, new discoveries from space telescopes to robotic explorations are now revealing the true visionary that Edgar was. Indeed, now NASA estimates that there may be up to 1 billion earth-like planets in our own Milky Way galaxy alone.

Over the last 20 years or so, I accompanied Edgar at many conferences and workshops. He was often a featured speaker or would serve on a prestigious panel usually discussing various esoteric topics. I remember on so many occasions of people walking up to Edgar, shaking his hand, and tearfully expressing heartfelt gratitude for the profound impact and influence he had on their own and so many other lives. Edgar legitimized and helped them understand unfamiliar areas of

human existence that they either experienced personally or intuitively knew to be true but were outside the norms of established and accepted mainstream of human knowledge or understanding.

In spite of the accolades and his accomplishments, Edgar was a very humble individual. He would often remind the people he met that he was no different than anyone else. That he would take out the garbage just like anyone else and that he would put his pants on one leg at a time just like anyone else. He had his good points and his faults just like anyone else. But boy, was he also so different than anyone else!

Edgar's perspectives, like the great mystics and sages of the ages, were those of a unified world view that advocated oneness, unconditional love, living harmoniously with nature and with one's fellow humans and one that recognized the interconnectedness and interdependence of all creation.

Edgar believed that humankind's next phase of evolution would be more of a conscious evolution in thought, in knowledge and in awareness and not one involving our biology or physiology. He believed it would be an evolution triggered by a dramatic change in perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that would lead to profound shifts in human behavior. And they would be grounded in the love for all things; a love which he believed was the organizing principle of the universe...

That, I think, is the legacy of Dr. Edgar Dean Mitchell, an explorer, a colleague, a futurist, a scientist, a friend, a confident and someone that the world shall truly miss!

Thank You