

Address for the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation's Award Ceremony

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In thinking over what has brought me here, I realize how much my life is a story of undeserved luck and help. I owe tremendous thanks to my wonderful mother, father, and life partner. And I am deeply indebted to and inspired by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco for his leadership on harmonizing people and Nature.

In my short time before you, I would like to offer a quote from Confucius that strikes at the heart of this work:

*There are three pathways to wisdom.
The first is through contemplation, and that is the noblest.
The second is through imitation, and that is the easiest.
The third is through experience, and that is the bitterest.*

No one loves contemplation more than professors love contemplation, and we all like feeling noble.

At the same time, we hope (with some fear) that Humanity can avert the bitterest of experience in this age of mass destruction of Earth's life-support systems.

Given the urgency of our problems, I keep wondering how to open up the easiest path: imitation. Doing so requires something hard: moving from contemplation to action, and lighting a way. This means taking *heroic action*, with compassion and a vision for improving the world, and sparking others to do the same. There's not enough luck in the universe to avoid all of Life's bitterness, but I hope that in pressing on the first two pathways we can avert the worst and help secure the future for our children and their children.

So I wish to thank His Serene Highness and all of you for your heroic action and the tremendous thought, work, and spirit that goes into it. None of us will get far alone, so I thank you also for bringing people together in our shared quest.