

Backgrounder

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Vision In Action

Promoting Business and Social Growth Through Integral Thinking, Balance and Dialogue

Vision In Action™ (VIA) is a driving force behind the movement to restore wholeness and balance to a divided world through creative, integral thinking in the areas of personal integrity, business accountability, science, the arts and social endeavors. A public benefit corporation, VIA develops outreach and educational programs in the spirit of quest and discovery. It creates opportunities for multifaceted dialogues that awaken the inherent potential in participants and helps bridge the gap between personal vision and action.

Like its predecessor The Twilight Club, VIA looks to revitalize society by restoring a sense of personal responsibility, integrity and empowerment in individuals. The Twilight Club originally came into being in the 1870s as an informal gathering of leading intellectuals that included Andrew Carnegie, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herbert Spencer, Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, among others. IBM's founder Thomas Watson, Sr. and artist and philosopher Walter Russell later served as presidents and were influential in setting the future tone for the organization.

The most recent steward of The Twilight Club lineage, Yasuhiko Genku Kimura, has been credited with “re-envisioning” the organization for modern times. As its executive director, Mr. Kimura brought a distinctive and effective perspective to the task with a philosophical approach that integrated Eastern inner-directed human development with Western scientific knowledge. As a result, in 2003 he revitalized The Twilight Club for the 21st century by launching Vision In Action as a manifestation of this work.

Today the organization continues to focus on integrating universal values of connectedness, alignment and advanced scientific thought to move society toward a more compassionate existence. VIA also draws on the philosophical works of integral thinkers such as Emerson, Russell and Alfred North Whitehead who understood the world in terms of balance and wholeness. Vision In Action has been described by some as an expression of the Bodhisattva vision and ideal of Mahayana Buddhism in the global context of the 21st century. That is, VIA contributes to world peace and prosperity by stimulating vital thinking that inspires action based in integrity and wholeness which results in the transformation of society.

Implementing a New Vision - Activities of Vision In Action

True to its heritage, VIA (www.via-visioninaction.org) remains an alliance of thought leaders who transcend the mundane and stereotyped thinking so prevalent today and instead strive for a fresh perspective to solving modern challenges. This organic approach embraces both advanced scientific knowledge and ancient philosophies that emphasize an intuitive awareness of the world. VIA accomplishes this by bringing together

diverse people in dialogues intended to nurture personal and social growth. It also publishes a semi-annual journal, *VIA: The Journal of Integral Thinking for Visionary Action*[™] with articles that present a value-based perspective on current social and business topics.

The Institute for Vision In Action[™] is the educational arm of the organization and offers lectures, workshops and courses, develops conferences, and organizes consortia on topics related to personal growth, business development, science and social change. Its programs focus on self-mastery and developing an expansive view of the world, business leadership, and cultural issues.

Although the programs developed by VIA are customized to specific interests, they all integrate a renewed sense of Western entrepreneurial concern with social responsibility and the traditional Eastern affinity for balance and self-reflection. (Note: See “Programs and Services of Vision In Action” for a current list of activities.) The various activities VIA supports include:

- Personal growth workshops developed by Mr. Kimura to help individuals cultivate their innate creativity and nurture their personal vision through a Socratic-style dialogue. VIA also hosts lectures on these topics and Mr. Kimura often is an invited speaker at other organizations.
- Business is a vital concern for Vision In Action as commerce traditionally has been a powerful force in reshaping societies. VIA works to transform core values and foster ethical business entities that can transcend the constant ups and downs of economic cycles. The Institute for Vision In Action offers a series of roundtables, lectures and courses for senior executives on business ethics, the concepts behind strategic leadership, and how to manifest and maintain a personal vision.
- MetaConsulting is the onsite VIA business consulting entity that works with companies to build organizational cultures that can nurture innovation and move beyond short-term sustainability.
- VIA Business Consortia are gatherings of local business leaders who dialogue on establishing strategies and ethics that will lead to long-term growth and promote social prosperity.
- Unified science research and education programs encourage wholeness by advancing science that includes both empirical knowledge and an awareness of the intuitive nature of the world.
- VIA social and cultural programs create a receptive setting for people of varied backgrounds to expand their awareness through personal exchanges. The VIA Trans-Religion Research Seminar[™] brings together people from various religions to explore the sources of living spirituality, particularly of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, in an environment that promotes unity, reconciliation and tolerance. The VIA Project Sage[™], under development, will mobilize the wisdom of the elder community for social and cultural transformation.

History: A Legacy of Personal Vision Leading to Action

British philosopher Herbert Spencer challenged his contemporaries in the 1870s to organize a body of intellectuals committed to enriching modern culture and uplifting the human spirit. The concept was implemented in the United States as The Twilight Club, an informal gathering of influential writers, artists, philosophers and business leaders active in the American Transcendentalism reform movement. In the style of a sapient circle, the extended group of friends, including Carnegie, Emerson, Whitman and Twain, would gather at

members' homes in the evening for lively discussions; hence the name, The Twilight Club.

From its inception, the emphasis was on individual action informed by a personal passion. Twilight Club members transformed their vision for a more fertile and humanistic society into tangible enterprises, and as a result, members were responsible for the formation of several civic organizations including The Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, Better Business Bureau and various social movements.

The Twilight Club continued to meet as a gathering of socially active individuals and in the 1920s and 1930s its leadership fell to IBM founder Thomas Watson, Sr. and artist, philosopher and scientist Walter Russell. The two alternatively served as its president and also worked together to bring ethical practices to the business world. Mr. Russell, among his many other achievements, delivered a series of lectures at IBM on developing human potential in business as part of the company's famous THINK campaign.

During this period the prestigious Society of Arts and Science was organized as an arm of The Twilight Club to promote advancements in various fields. Thomas Edison, astronomer Dr. Harlow Shapley and botanist Dr. William Crocker were recipients of the Society's annual medal for scientific achievement. In 1928, Ernest Hemmingway was recognized with an O. Henry Story Prize; the O. Henry award was conceived by a member and presented at the Society's annual awards dinner. John Philip Sousa received the Society's first gold medal in music. In the same year, the organization mailed 10,000 ballots to the "world's men of talent" in an effort to determine whether the artistic community had come to recognize motion pictures as "the eighth art," a position the Society supported.

By the middle of the 20th century, the Society of Arts and Science had transitioned into The University of Science and Philosophy, also known as The Walter Russell Foundation. The Twilight Club, although still in existence, remained dormant until Mr. Kimura recognized its potential as an instrument of social and cultural evolution. In support of his vision, Mr. Kimura was appointed executive director of The Twilight Club in 1999. Four years later, he established Vision In Action to continue its rich legacy within the structure of modern society.

About Vision In Action Today

Vision In Action (VIA) is an independent 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation established by Founder and Chairman Yasuhiko Genku Kimura in 2003. A recognized author, lecturer, business strategist and integral spiritual philosopher, Mr. Kimura also is editor-in-chief of the organization's journal. VIA is headquartered in Mission Viejo, Calif. and is supported by both a Board of Directors and a Board of Advisors that includes accomplished philosophers and intellectuals from around the world.

A current list of events, selected articles and other details about Vision In Action are available at its Web site www.via-visioninaction.org. In line with its mission, VIA maintains an active schedule of lectures, workshops and courses that promote integral thinking and wholeness through dialogue. It seeks to generate an awareness of the common humanity within society and to build alignment among diverse groups.

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