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Those of us seeking to retrieve some community and connection today do it with greater awareness of the alternatives. We don't retrieve collectivism by happenstance, but by choice. This enables us to consciously leverage the power of grassroots connections, bottom-up politics, and cooperative businesses—and build a society that is intentionally resilient and resistant to the forces that would conquer us.

Early internet enthusiasts had little understanding of how the network's anticommercial safeguards protected the humanistic values of its fledgling culture. Rave kids didn't understand the real power of their ecstatic rituals, which was to reclaim the public spaces in which to hold them. Many members of Occupy were too dismayed by losing Zuccotti Park to realize that the bigger victory was to develop a new normative behavior for activists and a consensus-driven approach to administering the demos.

Likewise, the members of early communal groups were generally unaware of the real power of solidarity. They weren't collectivist by design so much as by nature. Members of a group just tended to believe the same things. Their labor wasn't particularly specialized, either. They were necessarily bound by their common location, needs, and worldviews.

Only after humans emerged as individuals, with differentiated perspectives, conflicting beliefs, specialized skills, and competing needs could we possibly comprehend collectivism as an active choice. It is in that positive determination to be members of Team Human that we derive the power and facility to take a deliberate stand on our own behalf.

