

Talking points

Joanne Poyourow, author of *Legacy: A Story of Hope for a Time of Environmental Crisis*

1. **Our environmental issues are solvable.** There are many experts, worldwide, working on a wide variety of environmental solutions. There are many very workable solutions currently in place – in niche examples here in the U.S. or in other countries around the world.
2. **There's still time for action.** Yes, the news reports that CO2 emissions levels are at the highest ever. Yet these CO2 emissions are still well within the curve projected by IPCC (international) scientists. And those charts say that if we curb our carbon emissions – that means we're actively decreasing our total world carbon emissions – by 2040, IPCC projections show we can slow the planet's warming trends before we reach world-wide catastrophe. But we've got to start forming new habits now in order to achieve that decrease by 2040.
3. **The timeline is very real.** The climate change projections by the Union of Concerned scientists forecast what the year 2070 might look like. 2070 might sound like a long time away. But children who are in elementary school today will live to see that year. Your children, your grandchildren, will live the consequences of your choices today. We can choose the higher-emissions scenarios, which will guarantee extreme temperature increases, the weather changes, the water-supply issues and possible agricultural collapse. We can choose the lower-emissions scenarios, by implementing greener technologies every place opportunity presents.
4. **There is plenty you can do.** Every 'greener' step you take reduces your personal impact on our environmental problems. You are not alone. Your effort adds to the effort of millions of people round the world, striving to make a difference. Plus, every time you take a greener step, you model earth-wiser behavior for others. You make it safer for others to try these new ideas. They gain confidence from your example, they try it, and your greening efforts are suddenly compounded!
5. **The solutions are interrelated.** One environmental solution often works to solve multiple environmental issues. Take organics. Organic food – less chemicals – is clearly better for our health. Growing food organically is better for our planet – organic farms have richer soil life in microorganisms; they have more biodiversity, less soil depletion; they support more birds, butterflies, wildlife. And using certain sustainable agricultural practices can actually help with our global warming issues through soil sequestration of carbon. Since sustainable agriculture is typically a small-farm practice, we're economically supporting our family farms. By encouraging organic farmers and CSAs close to population centers, we can aid in cleaning our air and water supply of chemicals. Health, soils, biodiversity, wildlife, greenhouse gas issues, economics, cleaner air ... all from one environmental solution: choosing to buy organic.
6. **“Greener” can only mean something which takes us closer to Sustainability.** Sustainability means something that is in keeping with the cycles of the earth. Taking no more from the planet than the planet can regenerate. Leaving something for future generations. If a product or idea is touted as “greener,” yet doesn't take us closer to a Sustainable human existence on the planet, it's not really “greener” – we're just kidding ourselves.

LEGACY : A Story of Hope for a Time of Environmental Crisis

by Joanne Poyourow

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7. **Environmental solutions will transform every facet of our lives.** When we think of “The Environment” we typically think of trees and waterways. But our Environment is everything around us. Our city streets, our buildings, our food and water supply, our relationships with our neighbors and with other nations. Environmental solutions beg new practices in our buildings, tools, transport. But environmental solutions also offer new avenues in economics, education, culture, spirit.
8. **Environmentally-friendly doesn't mean Scarcity.** It's beautiful and elegant to serve your guests on reuseable real china rather than earth-wasteful paper plates. There is rich tradition in using and reusing artful cloth for gift wrapping – traditional Japanese furoshiki. Locally grown vine-ripened tomatoes are mind-blowingly flavorful. Delicious! Growing even a small part of our food at home brings deep satisfaction, renews our feeling of connection to the earth, and stirs our spirit.
9. **Do it with a friend.** It's easy to be green, when you're doing it with supportive friends. Cultivate a circle of like-minded people. Share resources. Help each other to seek true solutions, rather than greenwashing. Cheer each others' earth-wiser achievements. Make it fun and cool to be green.
10. **You can do it.** You've thought about it. You know it's the right thing to do, and you put it in your New Year's Resolutions. Start. Pick just one small thing. And pick an easy one. Cloth napkins. Canvas bags. Try it. Rejoice in your courage and your success. And then, try another.

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