Reader Responses: Positive Steps and Strategy

Contributed by Various Authors
28 May 2009

Here we present our readers' responses to a recent questionaire about positive steps and strategy for dealing with petrocollapse.

Q.#1: Living life to the fullest means...

Living in integrative harmony with a universe that is friendly to life and its evolution.
This requires accepting the carrying capacity requirement of the concept of
sustainability, which can be both defined and legally defended.

Living in nature with like-minded people, plants, rock, earth, sea... To work on the land, to beautify the dwelling place, to grow food, to paint, to read...

Avoiding stupidity, the insipid, the inane, etc. at all times.

Living life: I try to help my two young children appreciate and respect the beauties, pleasures, and excitements of the natural world, without being judgmental towards the many contrary examples they obviously are also exposed to. The idea being, they will be more critically aware later on if they come to sensible insights on their own, after being gently guided rather than sharply steered and directed in their early years.

Living life to the fullest means finding and staying in the
Human Animal Zone by taking care of our bodies, our minds, our emotional
health, and our natural habitats. When we are in the Zone we care for and
nourish these things more than we exploit and deplete them.

LIFE, at its fullest is to make models of what the future should be, not to waste time answering questionaires or protesting. I have known about global warming for at least 40 years, I have planted more than 5005 trees, Iown and caretake more than 400 acres of forestland, I have initiated projects to preserve many more acres.

#1: Living life to the fullest means...
Not running or hiding, but not standing before the train either. Find a way to provide for your needs in times of uncertainty and turmoil while still offering yourself as a living example of potential options that your neighbors might never have considered. Look for opportunities in the challenges, celebrate the small joys of life that are always in abundance even in lean times and don’t let yourself get so beat down that you forget why you’re here.

My philosophical purpose is to establish real and beneficial-to-people economic structures instead of continuing to line the vaults of the institutions that aim to perpetually enslave the world with indebtedness.
A multi-faceted approach embraces all my loves, including:

1) biodynamic, permaculture, natural, "no-medicine," you name it, you get the gist - food security in joyfully and locally produced food.

2) local economic structures based on all hours performed being of equal value.

3) community resource assessment and enhancement - a basic survey of who and what are available within a given community, i.e. provide a directory, services to get those resources known/available and in some cases, legally protected.

4) promote "gift societies" - engendering volunteerism and providing opportunities for groups/businesses with surplus to support local community through gifting their surplus.

5) promote collaborative and resource sharing efforts between the many already existing organisations that are working to bring positive culture change to humanity from all sectors of society.

Being present and reverent for the earth and all of it's creatures, trying to tread lightly by using as few as possible petrochemical products, using organic/natural methods for our ranch.

I was just thinking today: living life to the fullest means minimizing pollution-output in one's life and also getting active to stop it in general. Just think of the unimaginative souls polluting us and themselves daily, mostly because they have assumed there's no other way to behave or to survive.

In cheerful opposition to such spiritual self-defeat, think of the rewarding feeling of using your body instead of the internal-combustion engine, thereby saving money while curbing greenhouse-gas emissions and oil wars!

For the activist it may not be super rewarding to endure frustration repeatedly, as one advocates a gentler impact on the Earth. But at least there's the positive feeling from knowing that one still tried; as non- or low-polluters we set an example. For the future must be made now: treading lightly.

Q.#2: Taking action, for solving a crisis or making a vital change, means... what?

Assuming the responsibility to be a responsibly contributing member of the web of life.

To escape from the hell of the city, to radically change the life habits. To be the challenge to the consumptive people by living simply and creatively.

Awareness followed by a lifetime change. Example: electrical generation produces greenhouse gases (for the foreseeable future), therefore religiously turn off lights the moment they are no longer needed.

Vital changes: I basically believe that the fundamental environmental problems of coming decades will be solved on a large national and international scale or they will be not be solved. While there is obviously scope for considerable individual and local action either way, when it comes to specific major issues and changes, I tend to focus on writing letters to the editor, to Congress, etc., and I share and exchange my views with close family and friends, and vote in every U.S. election even though I live in Europe.

Taking action means changing ourselves and our natural habitats by moving away from the capitalist-industrial model of exploitation and abuse.

A few suggestions:

Stop eating animal products. Our physiologies change for the better and our impacts on the planet and our fellow creatures lighten considerably.

Unplug from the corporate media. "The news" is not news at all. It's agitprop that distresses and distracts. The constant din of electronically reproduced music is extremely disruptive of normal, healthy cognitive and emotional functioning. Embrace the quieter, gentler sounds of the planet.

Hollywood diversions are, well, diversions. Need I say more?

ACTION: I feel the only action is our original instruction to "take care of the garden". Although there might have been a second instruction of "don't mess with the thermostat". I am an organic blueberry farmer about to embark on a reinhabitation (remote, self-sufficient community) project. I am convinced that beside reducing emission by 80%, we also need to plant and nurture at least 1.5 trillion trees, or 5000 per person. This whole thing looks like a marketing scam for the energy companies. Trees are the planets air conditioning system, they are not"carbon credits".

Vital change or a solution would have to include action on a scale that our population is not willing to undertake. There is no solution, this will happen. We are better served to focus our efforts on preparing for the transition and building a foundation for a healthier, more sustainable, and loving future afterwards.

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First, educate myself on all the details, then walk the talk, then email/petitions to our state reps if needed, then pass the information on to my kids and others to get the energy/information out there.

I think taking action means breaking a pattern and undergoing some "sacrifice." The routine must be broken; we're not any longer in a healthy tribal Mother Earth-worshipping phase of history where stability reigned -- in comparison with today.

Q.#3: When is it necessary to get angry enough or motivated enough to seriously defend yourself or your ecosystem?

When anything goes against the creative direction of a living world. The only definition of evil I recognize is that which doesn't support life. This basically encompasses the Industrial Growth Society and the force-based ranking hierarchies from which it emerged.

Seems I've been struggling for my life for a very long time (since the empires began to fall). As Japanese poet Jun Takamy once said,

"And today, once again,

I feel hatred towards people;

In the blazing summer light,

this hatred is so vivid.

Does living mean hatred?

In the blinding summer light,

My hatred grieves me so."

Yet, once in a while, I send/read "the messages of truth" from my friends. That keeps me afloat.

Anyone of the age of majority who has survived the Bush administration and is not seriously angered is part of the problem.

The operation of civilization is dependent on using up limited capital and it is now becoming scarce. Society will have to power down. This understanding will help people make sound decisions in the difficult times ahead.

Anger and motivation: There are reasons aplenty for getting angry and motivated. I think, like most people, I get most upset when some area that I care personally about is threatened. For many decades, however, my greater interest has been in identifying the most effective ways of challenging anger and motivation towards tangible achievements. There are many more ways to mess up the planet earth than there are ways to protect it, but there are still many different yet potentially viable approaches to protection. For me the key is: what works? I've been a member of a number of local and international pro-environment organizations over the years, and when I get actively involved from time to time, tend to find sympathetic ears when I emphasize pragmatism, but it is rather disappointing how token, feel-good actions spring to fore again and again like weeds on perpetually disturbed land.

Better than getting angry to defend oneself or the ecosystem is
to find a position of strength in ourselves and display it, model it, and
promote it as though it were the most normal, logical, and sane position
possible. Respond to capitalist-industrial challenges as though they are the
destructive and insane ways of being that they are.

ANGER/MOTIVATION: I try not to let the actions of others affect my feelings. I am motivated, and as I see it, I think I'm doing a lot more than your group. How many trees have you planted?

I don’t believe anger is ever necessary. We can make the choice to defend ourselves and our environment with an open hearted love. Action, even our response to attack, doesn’t have to require us to hold violence in our hearts. Someone may give us no other options than to enact an unfortunate necessity, this is sometimes the way of the life giving sword, but let us first look for creative solutions and win / wins.

I have lived enough years now to have learned that the anger of my youth is formidable and in too many cases was quite damaging. I've learned to refine my deeply held passions to be channelled into constructive, joyful and motivational projects that inspire people through the "being for" rather than "fighting/against" mindset. I find angry people are a liability regardless of whose side they are on and their anger is frequently fueled by a big fat ego that does not really work to serve for the greater good.

There are so many works toward positive change that are underway right now, if only every one of the most worthy projects had all the resources and volunteer/for profit endeavors working to provide adequate fuel for their important work. One of the biggest problems in our society is that the majority of people are drowning in perpetual indebtedness which takes all of their time and money away from their ability to participate responsibly in the new culture. We don't need more people getting angry, we need everyone to "snap out of the consumer spell" and we need a helluva lot more volunteerism. The US has one of the lowest statistics on the planet for the presence of volunteer participation, this is one of the greatest debilitating and isolating social maladies we are crippled by. WE DON'T NEED ANGER, WE NEED MORE PEOPLE TO WAKE UP and 1) learn to live within their means 2) learn to share resources within their communities and 3) learn to participate in projects that contribute toward the greater good of people within their community. Remarkably, when people do wake up and live by these concepts, know what happens? They live less stressed, happy and disease-free lives. And people who are already sick get exponentially higher levels of health care from within their holistic community base and social network of volunteers who come to support them through their illness to recovery or their end days.

My story of anger started in 1987 when I became chemically injured and disabled and found no safety net and very little information available. My father was a lifetime employee of Otis Eng., a sister company of Halliburton, and my whole family works in the petro industry, so I was on my own emotionally and financially, living in the state of Louisiana, the most toxic State in the nation. I met my present husband at a toxicologists office in Lafayette, LA, and since then, we have made 3 moves to different locations for cleaner air and water, have had to make each place safe enough for us to live there and begin the transistion to organic pastures, etc.

Now, we are having to downsize and relocate to Ada, OK where I am a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and have medical benefits there. I have never lived in OK and am looking forward to learning of my Chickasaw heritage. (As a child of a petrochem employee/manager, we moved every 2-3 years. I have lived in many states, Texas, of course, Canada, Ventura, California; Louisiana, and Singapore.) "Trying" to stay positive is our everyday adventure since we both have so many health issues to deal with and live in pain especially when exposed to chems. None of our children "get it". Anyway, we are selling our beautiful 170 acre organic ranch here in Mountain View, AR and taking our 4 old mamma cows with us. We found an earth house built in the 1970's in OK and plan to install every solar thing we can and possibly tap into a wind generator.....

I plan to get very involved with the Chickasaw Nation and volunteer to help teach the children about organic gardening, getting their hands in the soil and learning to grow things, whatever I can do with my limitations.....my own kids are in the rat race and do not hear, but maybe I can help some other kids and get to them at a younger age, less resistant.

If you know anyone who is looking to escape the rat race and come to the Ozark Mtns, we have a great place ready to Certify organic, no chems since 2001. We produce hay for our grass-fed cows and have had no "need" to certify. Our place is spectacular, has lots of spring water, several wet water creeks, 65 acres of hay meadows the rest is wooded. There is a rock and cedar 2200sf house and a log cabin built in the 1920's.

We have used all AFM and least toxic products whenever we can. There are deer, turkeys, beavers, roadrunners, coons, bears, bald eagles nest in the bluffs, two spring-fed stocked ponds, it is just a paradise! If you want any info email me back and I'll send you the link to the realtor.

I've enjoyed your newsletter since you are an old petro guy....by the way, my father passed away last year after being killed by the medical/pharma industry and negligent medical community in TX. He was full of undiagnosed cancer that warfin caused him to bleed out and the tumors in his brain ruptured. His last few years were not too good, but he was not in pain. Someone with that much cancer should have been in pain.....Someone with so many neurological impairments should have been diagnosed with something.....

No one in my family "gets it", the chemical connections to anything.....

One must get angry before finding he or she is totally pushed into a corner, say on the death bed from environmentally induced illness. Getting angry about personal loss, such as losing the big old trees in one's home area, is useful and ought to be most normal. We ought to get angry also about what we don't see in front of us: e.g., the accumulation of billions of plastic bags being used every day just once and tossed. Or, just as unpleasant, think of the out-of-view offensive-weapons engineers and salesmen pursuing their business for profit -- regardless of thousands of years' radioactivity generated. The arms race and mega-trade as practiced today is intolerable because the top partiipants are not really defending themselves or their country, although the justification is attempted. Give peace a chance; in our globalized world nothing less will suffice.