

Awakening The Global Heart: Compassionate Activists Unite To Write Earth's New Story

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As individuals and in groups, more people today are expressing deep inner caring and compassion for fellow humans and all life on this planet by hitching their heartfelt energies to powerful actions that hold the promise of a sustainable future.

In *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, author Naomi Klein attests that the power of ferocious love is underestimated by companies and their government

advocates. Suggesting that climate change be considered a framework for broader social improvements instead of a single issue, she invites “seizing the moment of discontent” to advance healing the planet and its broken economies and communities.

Stories about how ordinary people are energizing local and online communities of practice to improve intergenerational communication, eliminate monetary influence in politics and restore democracy, and support social justice, community wealth building, independent media, sound health care and clean food and water are frequently missing from mainstream media. Pioneering efforts by activists such as Mario Tigueros, Pachamama Alliance program manager for the Game Changer Intensive; Joshua Gorman, founder of Generation Waking Up; and Cole Kleitsch, founder and director of Walking Civics, warrant widespread attention and support.

Hearts Afire

When hundreds of participants in Pachamama’s Awakening the Dreamer symposium, held in cities throughout the U.S., kept asking “What’s next?” Tigueros facilitated the creation of Game Changers, which explores present challenges and possibilities and ways to create a new future. He says, “We wanted to help them in awakening to their personal qualities and strengths before setting out to change the world. While engaging with others and creating a global society for all beings to flourish is a goal to strive for, we came to recognize that it takes a collective and collaborative approach within a community of practice to keep the message alive and implement what’s learned in the 12-week training.”

People have the power, when we choose to use it, to act
on it, to dedicate ourselves to change.

~Rebecca Solnit

A love for social justice prompted Tigueros to recognize the corporate capture of America’s democracy. “Suggesting that symposium participants work with Move to Amend and Citizens’ Climate Lobby made sense,” he explains. One is a nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals seeking to end corporate personhood and demand true democracy; the other empowers individuals to exercise their political power.

It takes love to inspire the youth of GenY, Generation We and the Digital Generation, all names for the Millennials, to create a new story and transform their lives and communities. Gorman is counting on his peers to help make it happen.

"We're writing a different story than the worn-out one we've been led to believe is inevitable," he says. Some of Generation Waking Up's young leaders have formed local communities of practice that campaign to get big money out of politics, pressure universities to divest fossil fuel investments, build local and just food systems, end mass incarceration, enroll residents to go solar and inspire everyday citizens to live in more just, sustainable ways.

"Young people have a leadership role in spearheading the change our world is calling for. Ultimately, it will only come about with every generation working together," observes Gorman, who operates from Oakland, California. He's encouraged when Generation Waking Up members say they want to learn from older adults that spent decades struggling for positive social change.

If we are brave enough, often enough, we will fall. When we own our stories of struggle, we can write our own new endings.

~Brené Brown, *Rising Strong*

A deep love for the potential of civic engagement prompted Gladstone, New Jersey, resident Kleitsch's Walking Civics initiative. The intergenerational nonprofit, endorsed by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, trains military veterans and students as young as 16 as poll workers.

"I want to inspire future voters by letting them learn how to do the job competently and with integrity, and lead them to participate in democracy's most cherished act of voting," advises Kleitsch. It's currently active in several jurisdictions across the country and will scale up for 2016 and beyond.

Hearts Joining Hearts

At 15, Kelsey Juliana's love of family, friends and future generations far outweighed any trepidation she felt in acting as one of two plaintiffs in a legal strategy to protect the

atmosphere, guided by Mary Christina Wood, a law professor and author of *Nature's Trust*.



Corralling Ocean Plastics

Boyan Slat, 21, of the Netherlands, has devoted his youth to founding and forwarding The Ocean Cleanup, a system in which plastics in our oceans, driven by currents, would amass in accessible zones, reducing cleanup time from theoretical millennia to a manageable period. Leading a team of 100 scientists and engineers for one year, they turned the concept into a potentially viable method to clean up half the Great Pacific Garbage Patch in 10 years. Crowdfunding will launch the pilot phase in Japanese waters in 2016.

Slat has been named a United Nations Champion of the Earth. The Ocean Cleanup is a recognized Design of the Year by the London Design Museum.

Wood created the Oregon nonprofit Our Children's Trust, now operating in all 50 states and internationally, to enforce the duty of government to protect natural resources for present and future generations. It supports youth in bringing legal action in courts, administrative agencies and local legislative bodies. In local Sierra Club chapters, organizers work with facilitators to educate and empower youth to lead campaigns with town councils, legislative chambers and the courts.

Mounting research is confirming what many have long suspected—extensive media coverage of negative news can trigger stress, fear and trauma. Images & Voices of Hope (ivoh) Executive Director Mallary Tenore cares deeply about how the media can benefit the world by catalyzing change and meaningful awareness of issues such as those raised by Our Children’s Trust.

“At ivoh, we believe in focusing on the world we want to live in—not only problem-solving in the world we have. We are currently helping our global community of media practitioners tell ‘restorative narratives’, stories that show how people and communities are making a meaningful progression from despair to resilience. Instead of focusing solely on tragedy and trauma, these narratives extend the storyline by showing signs of renewal, recovery and restoration,” explains Tenore.

On-Task Learning Curve

James Maskell wishes every media outlet would cover the doctors and health professionals that are applying the “functional/integrative/root cause” approaches to health care. Formerly a vendor of supplements to health professionals, Maskell has morphed his focus to found the Evolution of Medicine Functional Forum, a monthly educational Web show for health professionals and industry insiders.

The only ethical decision is to take responsibility for our own existence and that of our children.

~Bill Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer’s Manual*

After becoming captivated by functional medicine at a trade show, he developed this fresh, high-tech concept that combines the latest health news, functional medicine research, practice developments and health technologies in a mixed-media format. Offered free on YouTube, it combines interviews, TED-style talks, videos and audience interaction.

“With health politics raising more questions than answers and with technology changing the healthcare landscape, there’s never been a more ripe time for health innovation and accelerating a shift toward what works for most doctors,” remarks Maskell, who also recently collaborated with the Institute for Functional Medicine to live-stream Genomics and Functional Medicine, the most cutting-edge clinical Functional Forum to date.

Andrew Brandeis, a licensed naturopathic doctor in San Francisco, developed a challenging new skill set in creating the easy-to-use, mobile Share Practice app, launched 18 months ago and now also available on the Internet. It's already used by 15,000 doctors nationwide to rate and review the effectiveness of drugs, herbs and supplements. They also ask questions and receive quick feedback about patient treatments.

Enough of this powerlessness. The actions of a minority
can still make all the difference.

~Rebecca Solnit

Brandeis sees an even bigger future opportunity. "As we spot trends and see what is working where and why, we can direct research dollars. There are all kinds of off-label uses for drugs, herbs and supplements that we'll support when we see that 10,000 doctors are using them in the same way for the same thing," says Brandeis, who enjoys the meaningfulness of this collective contribution.

Gery Juleff, of Hopewell, New Jersey, reinvented himself and his career to serve a greater good. Seeking to inspire change through intelligent discussion on environmental issues he founded and hosts the Green Radio Hour broadcast on GreenHourRadio.com. He was formerly a member of the British Foreign Service, serving for 25 years as a diplomat, mostly in Africa and Brazil.

In Juleff's last London foreign office assignment, he dealt with policies on climate change, renewable energy technology and energy security. "My love of Africa, the continent likely to be affected the most by climate change, quickened my sense of needing to do whatever I could to limit any negative effects," he says. Even though he was innocent about the scope of such an undertaking, "When the station owner suggested I use my knowledge to host a radio show, I said yes."

In *What Then Must We Do? Straight Talk About the Next American Revolution*, economist and co-founder of the Democracy Collaborative Gar Alperovitz provides many examples of successful community wealth building. He's been part of a team partnering with others in cities that include Cleveland, Ohio; Jackson, Mississippi; Rochester, New York; and Washington, D.C. As co-chair of The Next System Project, he's dealing with the bigger picture of long-term systemic change.

We want youths with hope and strength.
~Pope Francis

"The economics of sustainability focus on partnerships with local assets like universities, hospitals and cultural institutions to facilitate broad-based economic security for the entire community," says Alperovitz. He's deeply committed to the concept of an ecologically sustainable society, where problem-solving activities nurture democracy.

Waking Up

This small sampling of individuals whose actions are affirming their heart's directives is not random and signals a larger movement. It represents author Anodea Judith's explanation for the evolution of our human journey, captured in the title and essence of her book *Waking the Global Heart: Humanity's Rite of Passage from the Love of Power to the Power of Love*.

James O'Dea, author of *The Conscious Activist*, says, "As we evolve, we recognize that it's the heart which holds the great key to our collective healing, to real civility, the courage to face our own shadow and true progress."