

Winter 2009

DON'T JUST BAIL OUT—REBUILD

yes!

Building a Just and Sustainable World

ISSUE 48

10 Things Science Says
Will Make You Happy

No Gifts? One Family's
Amazing Green Holiday

Why is the Dalai Lama
Always Smiling?

Dee Williams Lives
Large in 84 Square Feet

Sustainable Happiness

THE GOOD LIFE
DOESN'T HAVE
TO COST
THE PLANET

Dee Williams
in her tiny house

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Mass pillow fight in New York's Union Square, March 2008

WAISUM TAM/FICKR: URBANBLITZ



**“ Happiness is excitement that has found
a settling down place. But there is always a little
corner that keeps flapping around. ”**

E.L. KONIGSBURG

AMERICAN AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



A New American Dream

When we decided to focus this issue of YES! on the theme of happiness, we didn't know the bottom would be falling out of the world economy just as the articles started rolling in. And we didn't know we'd be watching poll results down to the wire on election day.

We gathered around our recycled barnwood conference table as the stories of bank collapses and foreclosures grew more ominous, and we wondered aloud whether people who were losing their retirement savings, jobs, or homes would get anything out of an issue on happiness? And what might we hope for from an Obama presidency?

The more we thought about it, the more certain we became that an issue on happiness is, if anything, more relevant in a time of political transformation and economic crisis.

For one thing, most of the factors that make us happy have little to do with money, stuff, or the stock market. True, the economic downturn threatens many people's sense of security. But it's a mistake to assume that the expanding, speculative market we are used to resulted in a joyful society.

During the supposed boom times of the '80s, '90s and '00s, even while money was flowing through the country at a dizzying rate, the average citizen was just getting by. A small fraction at the top accumulated enormous wealth, but most of us saw our incomes stagnate while the price of food, energy, and housing rose dramatically.

Nor was income inequality the only problem. The lopsided power and overconsumption at the top actually *diminished* our real wealth, which is found in resilient and diverse ecosystems, clean water and air, strong communities, healthy and educated people, a government that serves everyone, and an economy that provides meaningful work and produces things we need.

So maybe it's better that we go through this crisis now, while we have some ecological resilience, while some of our Main Street

economy remains, and—especially with fresh leadership in the White House—an ability to seek solutions together.

It's not only financial markets that have collapsed; it's also the philosophy that gave money precedence over all else. With market fundamentalism and the politics of divisiveness crumbling, spaces are opening for new approaches. Divisive me-first politics and trash-the-planet-to-make-money economics are on the way out.

So what ideas and guiding principles will take their place?

In a time of chaos, those who are clear about what's important, who listen and create inclusive conversations, and who work across race, class, gender, and age lines, may have far more influence than they imagine.

This is a time when new ideas and structures can take root and quickly flourish in the spaces left vacant by dying hidebound institutions. We'll want to base this new world on our sense of connection, joy, and gratitude—not on fear and exclusion. So exploring happiness may be just what is called for.

In these pages, you'll find people who are creating their own forms of happiness: a homeowner who turned to extreme downsizing and a former drug dealer who found healing through restoring prairie ecosystems. A family experiments with a no-impact Christmas, and a daughter discovers a gift embedded in the grief of losing her mother.

You'll find out what scientists and spiritual practitioners say about happiness. And you'll learn practices that can help you access a reservoir of well-being that can get you through rocky times while we work together for a happier world for all people and all life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah van Gelder".

Sarah van Gelder
Executive Editor



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the inspiration.

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WORLD & COMMUNITY

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THE POWER OF ONE

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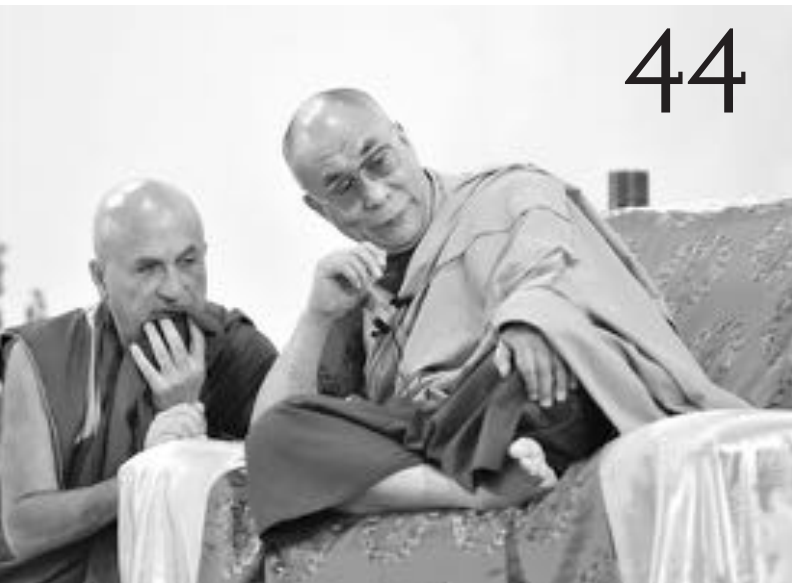
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READERS FORUM

Tell us. Send your response to an article, stories about making the world a better place, and ideas for connecting with readers to 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or to editors@yesmagazine.org.



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What About Education?

After reading through the Fall 2008 issue I was excited to come across the 10 Policies For A Better America. Health care, immigration, economy, and elections all matter a great deal, but what about public education? Our children need and deserve education to be at the top of their agendas. Our federal No Child Left Behind policy does not serve all students and has wreaked havoc on learning communities. It is more important than ever for Americans to take an interest in what is being asked of students and teachers.

BROOKE O'CONNOR
Portland, OR

Running for Office

Your "From the Editor" page in the Fall 2008 issue inspired me. As a first-time candidate for county legislature, I want my agenda to be in the purview of the people I serve. I intend to serve the residents of this legislative district based on their priorities, to draw on our collective creativity and intelligence to bring us together with all hands on deck for solutions, and to reach beyond my comfort zone to find common ground.

CYNTHIA S. AIKMAN
Auburn, NY

A Trojan Horse

I always am excited to get YES! in the mail as antidote to the corporate media I can't avoid. I was almost brought to tears when I

read the Working Families Party described as "bringing people together for economic fairness." Nothing could be further from the truth. The Working Families Party is merely an organ of the Democratic Party.

In 2006, Working Families tricked tens of thousands of voters into thinking they were anti-war, yet voted for pro-war candidates like Hillary Clinton and Eliot Spitzer. The party is now hawking the same insurance-company-based healthcare that Obama is trying to sell, repackaging it to make supporters think it is as good as single-payer, universal healthcare.

I am upset that you are promoting Trojan horse politics rather than the truly independent progressive parties that exist in this country.

IAN WILDER
North Babylon, NY

Include Fox Viewers

My husband picked up a copy of your magazine at an Earthfare store. We had recently been discussing how "divided" our country is and how concerning that is to us. The cover of your Fall 2008 magazine seemed to be non-partisan and there

were several topics that attracted him and that he knew I would be interested in too.

I opened the cover and started reading "From the Editor" and immediately was insulted by "as ill-informed and jargon-filled as Fox News." We have watched Fox News for years and thoroughly enjoy it. Even though you have insulted me right off the bat, I will read your magazine to determine if all of it is as biased as the editor's statements or if your staff is truly trying to bring folks together.

But I felt like I should point out that if you're truly trying to fulfill your mission—"just, sustainable, and compassionate"—then you should be inclusive of all people—even Fox News viewers.

CINDI STRAUGHN
Siler City, NC

Family Political Feuds

I am a senior in high school, and I could completely relate to Kate Sheppard's article, "Why My Dad's Going Green." The experiences and feuds with her dad are classic examples of what occurs not only in my household, but in other



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households throughout America that have family members with different political views.

I'm anxiously awaiting the winter issue, knowing that this magazine expresses my views on life and the world.

LINDSEY LACHNER
Lake Forest, IL

Ready to Compromise?

I love YES! Keep it up! A little comment/suggestion:

I read your Purple America issue and really liked it, but as a former conservative it seems like the issue did not discuss where liberals will compromise. Reading the issue, it looked like it was just assumed that conservatives will join the green anti-corporate movement.

Any type of real change will involve listening to uncomfortable truths as

well as spreading what we know to be right and good.

PAUL BENNETT
via email

Not Just Wages

One could examine the "time-adjusted wages" graph in David Sirota's provocative article on economic populism (Fall 2008) and reach the conclusion that the working class is better off than they were in 1975.

Graphs of "real wages" don't take into account the widespread stripping of retirement benefits. Few of us would maintain that two workers earning the same nominal wage, with one of them entitled to a pension (and perhaps retirement health benefits too) and one not, are being compensated the same.

JIM SHAW
Grand Blanc, MI



Hey, look! This is no ordinary dull white paper with occasional imperfections. The paper you are holding is New Leaf 100% recycled, 100% post-consumer waste, process chlorine-free paper. Wow.



YES! ONLINE

TAKE THE HAPPINESS TEST: Altruism, love, gratitude, appreciation... Do these add up to happiness?

AUDIO: Hear Frances Moore Lappé on finding the good life after her world crumbled.

FILM: Travel with musician and human-rights worker Michael Franti to find hope in war zones.

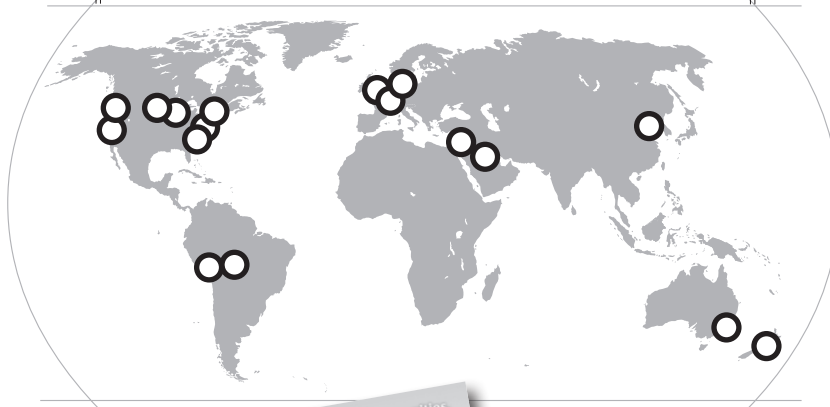
PHOTO ESSAY: Let the people of Bhutan lift your soul!

ALSO: Tried and true green living advice ... Must-see film picks ... Uplifting music ... Cartoon caption contest

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Signs of Life

SMALL STORIES ABOUT BIG CHANGE



ECONOMY

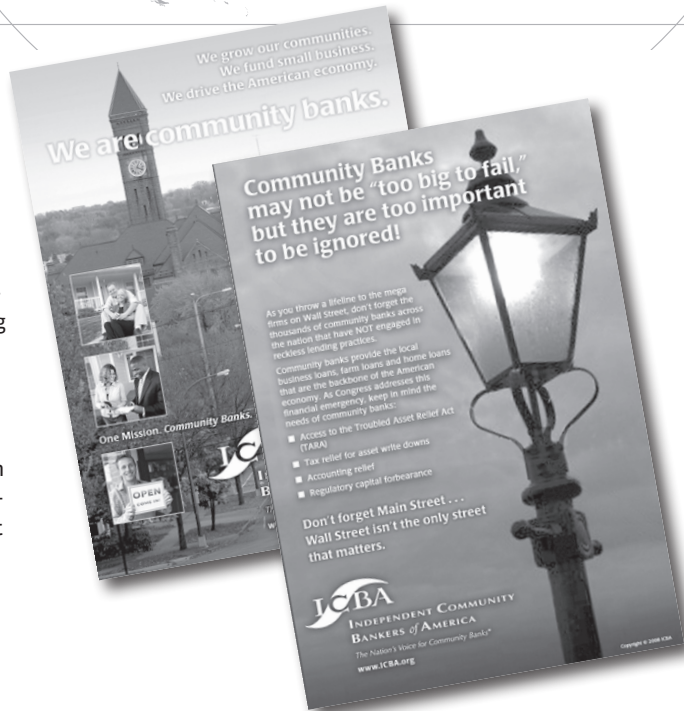
Community Banks Provide Safe Haven in Economic Storm

👍 As the financial crisis continues, many people are turning away from the large corporate banks that have been targeted for government capital injection and bailout—and placing their money in community banks. In an informal survey released September 22, 36 percent of Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) members reported an increase in deposits.

Of the roughly 8,500 bank charters in the United States, 8,000 are held by community banks, which tend to be locally managed, cover relatively small geographical areas, and have under \$1 billion in capital.

“The overwhelming message is that community banks didn’t have anything to do with the mess on Wall Street,” said Steve Verdier, senior vice president and director of congressional affairs at ICBA. “We made commonsense loans that people could pay back. The last thing that community bankers want to do is make a loan that is bad for the bank, the people, and the community.”

Community banks were attracting a growing number



of customers even before the crash. ICBA reports that over the last three quarters, outstanding mortgage loans at community banks grew at an average of over 2 percent per quarter, compared to negligible growth for the industry overall. In the second quarter of 2008, the growth of commercial and industrial loans at community banks was nearly three times that of the overall industry, at around 3 percent.

As corporate banks continue to look shaky, community banks are an increasingly appealing option. In addition to providing FDIC deposit insurance, offered

by all U.S. banks, community banks foster economic security for their entire communities because deposits are kept local.

“We know who we are lending to. We know the local economy. We know the house we’re lending on. If someone gets into trouble, we work with them,” says Jim Brown, president of Bank of Bennington in Vermont. With \$250 million in capital and deposits up 20 percent over 2007, The Bank of Bennington is coming off the best year in its 91-year history, Brown reports.

Anne Moore Odell is a freelance writer based in Brattleboro, VT.

ALSO ...

A new report by the Government Accountability Office finds that nearly two-thirds of U.S. companies paid no corporate income taxes for at least one year between 1998 and 2005.

In October, both the Institute for Policy Studies and an editorial in *The Boston Globe* cited the GAO study, calling on Congress to enact a corporate minimum tax. They projected \$60 billion in revenue from the tax, which they said could be used to stimulate the real economy.

CLIMATE

Climate Direct Action Wins Support

👍 As warnings about the potentially disastrous effects of climate change become even more severe, direct action tactics and civil disobedience have received acknowledgment and legitimacy from some unusual sources. On September 10, a British court ruled that it was warranted for six Greenpeace activists to deface property in order to prevent the much greater damage that will result from global warming.

Police arrested the activists after they began painting

“We will not stop mobilizing ... until the Millennium Development Goals are achieved for the poorest people in the world.”



SALIL SHETTY, DIRECTOR OF THE U.N. MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN,
ON A GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST POVERTY THAT DREW
116 MILLION PEOPLE IN MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES.
THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AIM TO HALVE POVERTY BY 2015.

a chimney at the Kingsnorth coal power plant in Kent with a message urging Prime Minister Gordon Brown to phase out the aging plant, and not replace it with a new one.


NASA climate scientist James Hansen testified on behalf of the activists. “The court was told that some of the property in immediate need of protection [from climate change] included parts of Kent at risk from rising sea levels,” Hansen said.

Nobel laureate and former Vice President Al Gore has also recently voiced support for more radical means to oppose climate change. Gore told the Clinton Global Initiative in September that “we have reached the stage where it is time for civil disobedience to prevent the construction of new coal plants that do not have carbon capture and sequestration.”

A small but growing movement has also begun organizing “climate camps,” which teach direct action and organizing tactics in the U.S., U.K., Australia, Germany, New Zealand, and Canada. The weeklong events culminate in a direct action targeting a source of carbon emissions. The U.K. climate camp in August, attended by 1,500 people, also made an attempt to shut down the Kingsnorth power station.

—Noah Grant

ALSO ...

 **Scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** say world carbon emissions are worse than previously thought, greater than the worst-case scenario the group predicted in 2007.



WORLD DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

A U.K. Climate Camp participant wears a Gordon Brown mask and gestures to show that the Prime Minister is ignoring climate change. The Camp protested Kingsnorth coal power station, which appears on the horizon.

 www.YesMagazine.org/climatecamp
More stories and photos on climate camp

World carbon dioxide output rose 3 percent from 2006 to 2007. Although several developed countries reduced their emissions, U.S. carbon output rose, while China was responsible for more than half of the worldwide increase.


If current trends continue through 2100, “you’d have to be luckier than hell for [the outcome] just to be bad, as opposed to catastrophic,” says Stanford University climate scientist Stephen Schneider.

States Hold First Carbon Auction

 Policymakers and environmental groups across the country are keenly watching the progress of the nation’s first mandatory carbon cap-and-trade program, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which held its first carbon auction in September. Ten Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states are participating in RGGI, considered a possible test case

for federal legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The auction is step one in a market-based strategy that will ratchet down carbon emissions by 10 percent over 10 years. All power plants in participating states must buy permits to emit carbon. Those who reduce their emissions will be able to save by purchasing fewer permits. Gradually, states will lower the total amount of allowable emissions sold in each auction.

The initiative also allows 



FREEGAZA.ORG

Activists celebrate on a wooden boat sailing from Cyprus to the Gaza strip to protest the Israeli blockade of Gaza and show support for Palestinians living there.

» other groups to purchase permits: The Adirondack Council, an environmental organization, bought 1,000 credits for about \$3,000. The \$38.5 million raised in this auction will be spent on investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency and assistance to consumers struggling to afford electricity costs.

Meanwhile, seven Western states, along with British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, have drafted the nation's farthest-reaching cap-and-trade plan to date. If approved by the state and provincial governments, the plan would reduce carbon from all major sources—including electricity, industry, transportation, and fuel use—

by 15 percent by 2020.

California, arguably the nation's leading state on climate change, has already granted its Air Resources Board the authority to begin instituting the program, and has also recently passed a landmark bill that will fight climate change by providing financial incentives to local governments to reduce urban sprawl, cut back car travel and encourage public transit use.

To avert disastrous climate change, states across the U.S. will need deeper reductions than provided by such initiatives, but many environmentalists and policymakers believe these programs are important first steps.

—Madeline Ostrander

ALSO ...

» This summer, more than 5,000 youth and students participated in relay teams on China's Green Long March—a 2,008-kilometer trek through 26 provinces. The event's name is intended to stir up patriotism and evokes the 1934 Long March by the Red Army, which led up to the Chinese Revolution.

The youth march highlighted issues like carbon footprints, conservation, and green business. The march received some corporate sponsorship and was organized with the permission of the Chinese government.



www.YesMagazine.org/longmarch

Video of Chinese youth on the march

MIDDLE EAST

Iraqis Organize for Peaceful Elections

» More than 100 citizen groups in all 18 Iraqi provinces participated in a mid-October week of activities aimed at reducing violence in the January 2009 provincial elections. A coalition called La'Onf ("No to Violence" in Arabic) led the Week of Nonviolence.

Among many highlights, Iraqis in Sadr City and Al-Anbar province held conferences to encourage women to vote. Youth in Salahuddin played soccer in uniforms that bore the slogan, "Nonviolence is Our Choice." In Babil, children performed an operetta about how Iraqis can face violence and find unity. The al-Iraqiyah media outlet and members of the Islamic Union of Iraqi Students and Youth gathered with other civic groups at a peace festival. La'Onf participants also appeared on Arabic radio, television, and satellite broadcasts.

"Within the polarized and dangerous political environment of Iraq ... if you speak about resistance you are accused of supporting terrorists ... but if you speak about nonviolence you are accused of supporting the occupation," says Ismaeel Dawood, a La'Onf founder. La'Onf is working to create a third way in which "nonviolence is a tool to resist occupation, terrorism, and corruption."

—Kristin Carlsen

“ We should withdraw from almost all of the [occupied Palestinian] territories, including in East Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights. ”



EHUD OLMERT, OUTGOING ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH ISRAEL'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER.

ALSO ...

👍 Nearly 50 peace activists from more than a dozen countries sailed two wooden boats carrying basic medical supplies from Cyprus to the Gaza Strip in an effort to break the Israeli blockade on Gaza and express solidarity with Palestinians living there.

“We are out to show that the people of Gaza have human rights ... Israel completely blocks them from travel. And right now, [Israel is] trying to starve and humiliate an entire people,” said Huwaida Arraf, cofounder of the International Solidarity Movement, who sailed on the boat *Liberty*.



LA FRONTERA DOS

LATIN AMERICA

Bolivia Constitution Reform Likely

👍 Bolivia is poised to pass a new constitution aimed at providing indigenous autonomy, land reform, and popular control of natural resources. The proposed constitution comes out of decades of campaigning by social movements among Bolivia's impoverished and indigenous people. It has garnered fierce opposition from the nation's wealthier elites and become one of the most divisive issues in Morales' presidency.

In August, after winning support from 67 percent of voters in a recall referendum, Morales sought to jump-start a long-stalled national vote on the new constitution, which was drafted

Bolivian President Evo Morales leads tens of thousands of his supporters on October 20 into El Alto on their way to La Paz demanding lawmakers approve a referendum on a new constitution.

by his backers more than a year ago. That move provoked a violent reaction by Morales' opponents in two of the nation's eastern states, including the September massacre in Pando of more than 30 peasant supporters of the president, and the torching and sacking of public buildings by Morales adversaries in Santa Cruz.

Amid charges of U.S. interference, the September conflicts led Bolivia to expel Washington's ambassador. The Bush administration retaliated by expelling Bolivia's ambassador and moving to eliminate Bolivian participation in an Andean trade pact, which could cost the country 20,000 jobs.

In mid-October, Morales backers returned to the streets, and 100,000 marched to the national capital in La Paz to surround the congress. Under pressure both from protesters and other South American governments, Morales and the opposition reached a compromise allowing a revised constitution to be put to a national vote next January.

After Morales' August victory, it seems likely the proposed constitution will win the simple majority required for enactment. Once passed, it will set up a new round of presidential elections at the end of 2009, a vote Morales is favored to win.

Jim Shultz is executive director of the Democracy Center in Cochabamba,

Bolivia, and coauthor of *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization*.

ALSO ...

👍 After more than 10 days of protests throughout the Peruvian Amazon, indigenous groups scored a major win: Peru's Congress repealed two presidential decrees that had lowered government requirements on land sales, making it easier for large energy companies to seize indigenous land. An estimated 14,000 indigenous people participated in the protests by blockading a river, intercepting boats belonging to a gas company, and shutting down an oil pipeline.



Michael Franti
Spearhead
Rocks the Talk

“YOU CAN BOMB the world to pieces, but you can’t bomb it into peace.” These are the words of Michael Franti of the band Spearhead on the hit CD “Everyone Deserves Music.”

Franti has been making music for more than two decades, and themes of social justice are always central to his songs. His pleas for peace and understanding blend with his rhythms—reggae, hip-hop, and rock, with a global flair—exhilarating audiences around the world.

Beyond making music, Franti helps organize the annual Power to the Peaceful concert in San Francisco, where environmental sustainability and non-violence take center stage.

In 2006 he shot a documentary in Iraq and Israel/Palestine that departs from most political films by showing where people turn to overcome the stresses of war and occupation—“chief among these,” Franti says, are “friendship, humor, art, and music.” Spearhead’s latest album is “All Rebel Rockers.”

 www.YesMagazine.org/franti
Check out his documentary
I Know I'm Not Alone



Matthew LaClair
Reading, Writing,
and Rights

WHEN HIS 11TH-GRADE history teacher told the class that they would go to hell if they rejected God’s salvation, Matthew LaClair thought the remarks crossed a line.

He brought the issue to the attention of school administrators. After stalling by officials and harassment (including a death threat) from students who supported the teacher, LaClair and his parents ultimately reached a settlement with the school district. Students and teachers received training on the separation of church and state.

LaClair has continued to work for civil liberties, and he received an ACLU Youth Activist scholarship this spring.

This fall, he started his first year at Eugene Lang College, where he works with the Secular Student Alliance and serves as president of the Center for Inquiry on Campus, which promotes science and freedom of inquiry in education.



Thomas Dart
Cook County Sheriff
Stands Up

WITH ALL THE RECENT PANIC over rescuing the banking system, there has been little action to protect those losing their homes.

Sheriff Thomas Dart of Chicago’s Cook County is an exception. On October 9, he ordered his deputies to freeze all evictions. Banks are required to give advance notice to renters before evicting them, but they often ignore the law. One in three occupants of foreclosed properties are actually rent-paying tenants, Dart noted. Many don’t know of their landlord’s financial troubles until deputies arrive and tell them to leave, or worse, until they return home to find their possessions out on the curb.

“I think there is this sense that people have right now that the larger entities treat people like numbers and pieces of paper,” Dart said.

After negotiating with court officials, Sheriff Dart has resumed evictions, but only after assuring that tenants will receive legal notifications prior to evictions.



Carol Bailey
Bringing Dialogue
to Divorce Courts

OVER YEARS WORKING as a family law attorney, Carol Bailey repeatedly saw the pain divorce brings to couples and their children. Convinced that there must be less damaging ways to dissolve a dysfunctional marriage, she developed a new approach based on her belief that “dialogue is the highest calling of the human mind.”

Bailey emphasizes communication and conflict resolution. She urges couples to try to work out their differences outside the courtroom, although they have the option of going to trial if necessary. Bailey counsels couples to avoid the mud-slinging and winner-take-all tactics that often characterize divorces.

The response to her approach has been overwhelmingly positive, according to Bailey. Spouses tell her they have maintained their self-respect and avoided damaging their relationships with children and relatives. She is now promoting her integrative approach to other lawyers and hopes to create a new family law curriculum.

COMMENTARY :: *Carlos Pérez de Alejo
and Robert Jensen*

WORKER-OWNED CAFÉ OFFERS LOCAL FOOD, SPACE TO TALK

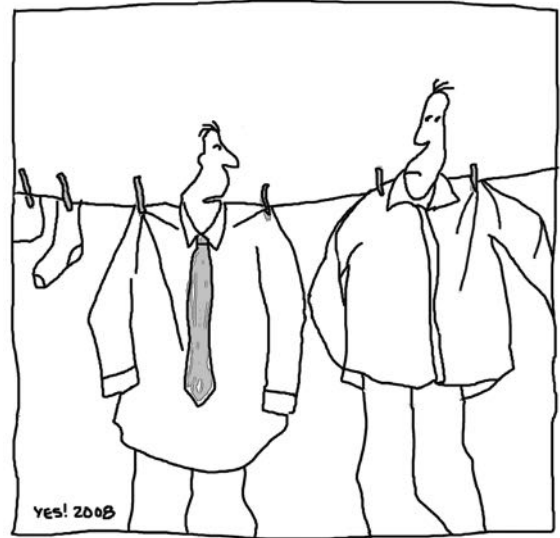
In a world structured on hierarchy, infused with inequality, and dominated by elites, progressive politics has to focus on what needs to be torn down. But just as important is the process of building alternatives to replace this exploitative system. What kinds of institutions can meet human needs rather than serve the power-and-profit desires of the few?

When we're honest about the depth and scope of the problems we face today—when we abandon the fantasies that market forces or politicians will lead us to the promised land—these building projects become even more important.

Here in Austin, Texas, we're involved in one such experiment. Although in its infancy, we write about it both to suggest others consider similar projects and to solicit feedback from those who have been successful in such endeavors. In planning a worker-owned-and-operated café that would be the nucleus of a progressive social center, we recognize that others in the cooperative movement have been where we are now.

Austin prides itself on its commitment to locally owned businesses, socially conscious consumerism, and progressive politics. Our hope is that "Piqueteros" (a name drawn from the movement of un- and under-employed workers in Argentina) will embody all of these qualities and more through a worker-owned-and-operated café—one of the few operating in the United States, and the first of its kind in Austin. Over the past decade, a network of worker-run businesses has emerged in Austin, including a recycling center, thrift store, brew-pub, and bookstore. Piqueteros seeks to complement this growing movement of cooperative enterprises.

Our goal is to offer wholesome food at the lowest price possible using local and seasonal ingredients, but we will also provide a community space for people to raise awareness about the pressing issues of our day. Though it may sound hokey to those who don't know the history of ordinary people's struggles for dignity (that is, to those who believe the capitalist story that says we need corporations to be productive), we strive to be a successful example of ethical, non-hierarchical business, building on the energy and passion of fellow workers and of the surrounding community.



*Usually she puts me in the dryer,
but we're trying to save energy.*

LINDA PESCATORE

It beats being taken to the cleaners.

NICK HEIN

*So now we white-collar types also know what it's
like to be hung out to dry.*

ED MEYER



www.YesMagazine.org/cartoon for more reader captions

Worker self-management offers a powerful alternative to the exploitation, hierarchy, and greed of corporate management systems. While capitalism systematically undermines the ability of employees to participate in workplace decisions, worker co-ops—owned and operated by the workers themselves—allow us to practice direct democracy and nurture our human capacity for self-governance.

We have much work to do to make Piqueteros a reality. But it is such work that has helped create a more progressive world in the past and can animate our politics in the present.

When we critique capitalism, people often respond with a reasonable question: What system would you put in its place? No one should pretend to have a fully worked out economic system that we can just take off the shelf and apply. A just and sustainable economy will be built, not imposed. Experiments such as Piqueteros are part of that construction project. ▼



Robert Jensen is a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Carlos Pérez de Alejo is a community organizer and independent journalist based in Austin.



LILLI DAY, ISTOCK

Beyond Bailouts, Let's Put Life Ahead of Money

The financial crisis has put to rest the myths that our economic institutions are sound and markets work best when deregulated. It creates an opportune moment for deep change.



David Korten

THE RECENT MARKET MELTDOWN AND THE RESULTING bailout commitments of more than a trillion dollars have focused the nation's attention on the devastating consequences of Wall Street deregulation. This, however, is but the tip of the iceberg of a failed economy in serious need of basic redesign.

Our economy is wildly out of balance with human needs and the natural environment. The result is disaster for both. Wages are falling in the face of soaring food and energy prices. Consumer debt and housing foreclosures are setting historic records. The middle class is shrinking. The unconscionable and growing worldwide gap between rich and poor with its related social alienation is producing social collapse, which in turn produces crime, terrorism, and genocide.

At the same time, excessive consumption is pushing Earth's ecosystem into collapse. Scientists are in almost universal agreement that human activity bears substantial responsibility for climate change and the related increase in droughts, floods, and wildfires.

We face a monumental economic challenge that goes far beyond anything being discussed in the U.S. Congress. The hardships imposed by temporarily frozen credit markets pale by comparison.

The Wall Street bailout package that Congress passed in its moment of panic did nothing to address the structural cause of the credit freeze, let alone the structural cause of the economy's even more serious environmental and social failures. On the positive side, the financial crisis has put to rest the myths that our economic institutions are sound and that markets work best when deregulated. It creates an opportune moment for deep change.

Here are some essential steps toward a system redesign that can put us on the path to a just and sustainable economy that works for all.



CLEAN UP WALL STREET

The first item of business is to get the immediate crisis under control. Wall Street institutions have long claimed their trading activities create wealth, provide the funds that keep business moving, increase economic efficiency, and stabilize markets. The financial meltdown pulled away the curtain to reveal a corrupt system that runs on speculation, the stripping of corporate assets, predatory lending, and asset bubbles like the real estate and dot-com "booms."

If the people involved produce anything of value, it is purely incidental

to their primary quest for speculative gains, which placed the entire global economy at risk and led to extortionate demands for taxpayer bailouts when their bets went bad. For these labors, the 50 highest-paid private investment fund managers in 2007 averaged \$588 million in compensation—19,000 times as much as average worker pay.

We must hold Wall Street accountable, recover some of our losses from those responsible, and preclude a repetition of the credit collapse. The recommendations of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a Washington, D.C., think tank, are a good place to start. In "A Sensible Plan for Recovery," IPS calls on Congress to make Wall Street pay for both the bailout and a true economic stimulus package. The plan recommends a securities transactions tax, a minimum corporate income tax, recovery of bonuses paid to Wall Street CEOs responsible for the crisis, an end to corporate tax havens, and an end to tax loopholes for CEO pay. IPS also calls for extensive federal regulation to limit speculation and assert real oversight over financial markets.

Implementing these recommendations would be an excellent start on limiting speculation and restoring a progressive tax system to achieve a more equitable distribution of economic power. Additional steps are needed to break up concentrations of corporate power, beginning with Wall Street, and to hold the remaining banks accountable to the public interest. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson's decision to buy a government equity stake in troubled banks is a positive step that may open the way to a deeper restructuring of the financial system.

The federal government should immediately reinstate the provisions of the Glass-Steagall Act prohibiting the merger of commercial and investment banks, and force the breakup of financial conglomerates and any other Wall Street institutions that are too

big to fail. As Senator Bernie Sanders has observed, "If a company is too big to fail, it is too big to exist."



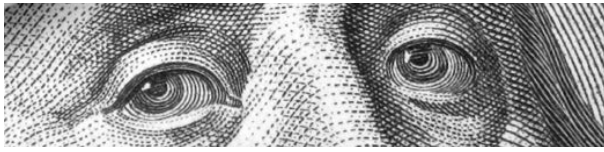
PLAY BY MARKET RULES

Once we extinguish the immediate fire, we can turn our attention to redesigning the institutions of finance to align with the imperatives of sustainability and equity. Ironically, given the excesses committed by Wall Street in the name of market freedom, the economy we need to create looks remarkably like the market economy vision of Adam Smith, revered by many as the father of capitalism.

Smith envisioned a world of local market economies populated by small entrepreneurs, artisans, and family farmers with strong community roots engaged in producing and exchanging goods and services to meet the needs of themselves and their neighbors. His vision bears little resemblance to the Wall Street economy of footloose global capital, credit default swaps, reckless speculation, and global corporate empires.

As I elaborated in *When Corporations Rule the World* and *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism*, socially efficient market allocation depends on a number of important conditions that Wall Street and those economists devoted to the ideology of neoliberal market fundamentalism routinely ignore. These include:

- Market prices must internalize full social and environmental costs.
- Trade between nations must be in balance.
- Investment must be local.
- No player can be big enough to directly influence market price.
- Economic power must be equitably distributed.
- Every player must have complete information and there can be no trade >>>



Beyond Bailouts, Let's Put Life Ahead of Money

» secrets (read: no government-enforced intellectual property rights).

To avoid the distortion of unfair competitive practices, markets must be regulated to assure that these essential conditions are maintained. Think of them as basic principles for securing the healthy, just, and sustainable function of Main Street economies.



SELF-FINANCE THE REAL ECONOMY

Far from serving the financial needs of Main Street, Wall Street treats Main Street like a colony to be managed for the benefit of its colonial master. In alliance with the Federal Reserve, Wall Street players have used a combination of control over the money supply, predatory lending practices, and lobbying and campaign contributions to suppress wages, dismantle social safety nets, and capture the value of productivity gains for themselves. The top 1 percent of U.S. income earners increased their share of national cash income from 9 percent to 19 percent between 1980 and 2005, according to Charles R. Morris in *The Trillion Dollar Meltdown*. Income for 90 percent of households fell relative to inflation, household savings rates dropped to less than 1 percent, and household debt soared as Main Street workers struggled to hold their lives together.

Creating a fair distribution of wealth by restoring progressive tax rates, increasing the minimum wage, containing health care costs, and reg-

ulating mortgage and credit card interest rates is an essential element of a post-bailout economic agenda. This will help those at the bottom, restore household savings and purchasing power, and, combined with the debt-free money system proposed below, eliminate Main Street dependence on Wall Street financing. The financial services needs of Main Street economies are best served by a federally regulated network of independent, locally owned community banks that fulfill the classic textbook banking function of acting as intermediaries between local people looking for a secure place for their savings and local people who need loans to buy a home or finance a business. Evidence that people with savings are moving their accounts from the giant banks with questionable balance sheets to smaller local banks is a positive step.

Wall Street interests have also rigged the economic game to give a competitive advantage to mega-corporations over the local independent businesses that are the heart and soul of Main Street economies. The New Rules Project of the Institute for Local Self Reliance provides a wealth of recommendations for restoring a proper balance in favor of Main Street that also merit serious consideration.



SERVE LIFE, NOT MONEY

Now we come to two foundational design issues that strike at the root

of the current economic failure. We must measure economic performance against the results we really want and we must move to the public issuance of debt-free money.

Measure what we really want

The only legitimate function of an economic system is to serve life. At present, however, we assess economic performance solely against financial indicators—gross domestic product (GDP) and stock prices—while disregarding social and environmental consequences. We are now paying the price for years of managing the economy for financial performance, which translates into making money for people who have money—that is, making rich people richer. It was not a wise choice. We now bear the devastating costs of this foolishness in the form of massive social and environmental damage and financial instability.

This would be a good time to start evaluating economic performance against indicators of what we really want—healthy children, families, communities, and natural systems. This would place life values ahead of money values and dramatically reframe the public policy side of our economic decision-making. Happiness, by the way, is an important indicator of physical and psychological health.

We might well continue to track GDP, a measure of economic throughput, as a quite useful indicator of the economic cost of producing a given level of health and well-being. When we recognize that GDP represents cost, not gain, it becomes clear why making it grow is a mistake. A

This would be a good time to start evaluating economic performance against indicators of what we really want—healthy children, families, communities, and natural systems.

number of researchers have been pointing out that happiness, as well as other indicators of human, social, and environmental health, have been declining even as GDP increased, but their appeals have been largely ignored. We continue to manage our economies to maximize the cost, rather than the benefit, of economic activity. The shock of financial collapse creates an opportunity to draw attention to this substantial anomaly. We will know we have turned an important corner when business news reporters happily announce, “It has been a successful quarter. Happiness rose by two points and GDP is down by one point.”

Convert to debt-free money

This brings us to the most important reform of all: changing the way we create money. One key to Wall Street’s power and to the inherent instability of the financial system is the current practice of private banks creating money with a simple bookkeeping entry each time they make a loan. Because the bookkeeping entry creates only the principal, but not the interest, unless the economy grows fast enough to generate sufficient demand for loans to create the new money required to make the interest payments on the previous loans, debts go into default and the financial system and the economy collapse. The demand for repayment with interest of nearly every dollar in circulation virtually assures the economy will fail unless GDP and inequality are constantly growing.

Leading economists and political figures, including Thomas Jeffer-

son and Benjamin Franklin, have advocated replacing the system of bank-created debt-money with an alternative system in which the government creates debt-free money by spending it into existence to fund public goods like infrastructure or education. The suggestion that government create money with the stroke of a pen sets off all sorts of alarm bells about runaway inflation. The primary change, however, would simply be that the entry is made by government for a public good rather than by a private bank for private profit. Ellen Hodgson Brown’s *The Web of Debt* is an informative current review of issues and options.

Privately issued debt-money adds to debt and taxes and bears major responsibility for environmental destruction because it requires infinite growth, extreme inequality because it assures an upward flow of wealth from Main Street to Wall Street, and economic instability because issuing loans to fuel reckless speculation generates handsome short-term bank profits. Publicly issued debt-free money would greatly reduce debt, taxes, and environmental harm, be more equitable, and increase financial stability. In a democracy, it should be ours to choose.

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO MOVE FORWARD an agenda to replace the failed money-serving institutions of our present economy with the institutions of a new economy dedicated to serving life. The idea that we humans might put life ahead of money may seem unrealistic and contrary to our

human nature. Surely, that is what our prevailing cultural story would have us believe. That story, however, has no more validity than the story that Wall Street speculation serves a higher public purpose. As I noted in my article “We are Hard-Wired to Care and Connect” in the Fall 2008 issue of YES!, scientists have found that the human brain is hard-wired for compassion and connection.

My many years living abroad in Africa, Latin America, and Asia taught me that people of every race, religion, and nationality the world over share a dream of a world of happy, healthy children, families, and communities living in vibrant, healthy, natural environments. When they see an opportunity, people are willing to make extraordinary investments of their life energy in an effort to actualize this dream, as regularly documented in the pages of YES! Liberated from the predatory grip of Wall Street, this long-suppressed energy has the potential to transform our relationships with one another and Earth, and to realize our shared dream of a world that works for all. 7



David Korten is author of the international bestseller *When Corporations Rule the World* and *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. He is co-founder and board chair of YES! Magazine, and a board member of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies.

Interested? New Rules Project: www.newrules.org.
The Web of Debt: www.webofdebt.com

 www.YesMagazine.org/bailout
Read the YES! Take on economic and financial solutions, including the IPS Plan for Recovery.

THE PAGE THAT COUNTS

Global average gallons of water used each year to produce goods and services, per capita: **328,366**

Annual per capita water use in the U.S.: **655,939**

Annual per capita water use in China: **185,449**¹

Number of people worldwide who do not have access to fresh water: **1.2 billion**

Number of children who die each year for lack of access to clean water and adequate sanitation: **almost 2 million**²

Number of foreign-exchange high school students studying in the U.S. during the 2007-08 school year: **29,004**

Number of American high schoolers studying abroad, 2007-08: **2,255**³

Cost of a barrel of oil on May 25, 2007: **\$66.75**

Cost of a barrel of oil on May 30, 2008: **\$126.06**⁴

Decrease in miles Americans drove in May 2008 compared to May 2007: **9.6 billion**⁵

Increase in public transit trips Americans took in the first quarter of 2008 from the first quarter of 2007: **88 million**⁶

Year by which lifting the ban on offshore drilling is projected to impact the price of crude oil and natural gas: **2030**⁷

Temperature, in degrees Fahrenheit, on a synthetic turf field in New York City on July 6, 2007: **140**

Temperature on an adjacent grass field receiving direct sunlight: **85**

Atmospheric temperature of the area that afternoon: **78**

Length of time, in minutes, at which exposure to surface temperatures above 122 degrees can result in skin injuries: **10**⁸

Percentage of 648 terrorist groups that ended between 1968 and 2006 because they entered the political process: **43**

Percentage of terrorist groups that ended through police work and intelligence gathering: **40**

Percentage of terrorist groups that ended due to military force: **7**⁹

Number of weddings that took place in Beijing on August 8, 2008: **15,646**

Number of weddings in Beijing on August 8, 2007: **3,390**¹⁰

Estimated number of Community Supported Agriculture programs in the U.S. in 1990: **50**

Number of CSA programs recorded in Local Harvest's database as of September 2008: **2,098**¹¹

Millions of hectares of cropland lost each year worldwide due to soil erosion: **10**

Factor by which soil erosion exceeds soil replenishment in the U.S.: **10**

In China and India: **30 to 40**

Percentage of the world's arable land that has become unproductive as a result of erosion in the last 40 years: **30**¹²

Complete citations at www.yesmagazine.org/ptc

1. A.K. Chapagain and A.Y. Hoekstra, Value of Water Research Report Series No. 16, UNESCO-IHE, 2004. **2.** United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report, 2006. **3.** Council for Standards on International Educational Travel, January 2008. **4.** Energy Information Administration, September 10, 2008. **5.** U.S. Department of Transportation, July 2008. **6.** American Public Transportation Association, June 2008. **7.** Energy Information Administration, 2007. **8.** Luz Claudio, Environmental Health Perspectives, March 2008. **9.** Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, RAND Corporation, 2008. **10.** China Daily, August 9, 2008. **11.** LocalHarvest, September 2008. **12.** Susan S. Lang, Cornell Chronicle Online, 2006.

Sustainable Happiness

What makes us happy? It's a question we could leave to philosophers and poets, except for this: the pursuit of happiness, as now defined, is running our world into the ground. So the question that may turn out to be key to our future is: How can we have happy people *and* a happy planet?



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ECONOMY. *If big spending, debt, and a soaring Dow didn't make us happy, what will?*



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10 THINGS. *Scientists can tell us how to be happy. Really. Here are 10 ways, with the research to prove it.*



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POWER. *Frances Moore Lappé says power isn't something to be afraid of. It's an important part of the good life.*



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HEALING. *In the city, he drank and sold drugs. Then Jarid Manos moved to the prairie.*



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NO PRESENTS? *This family had a merry Christmas without adding to anybody's pile of stuff.*



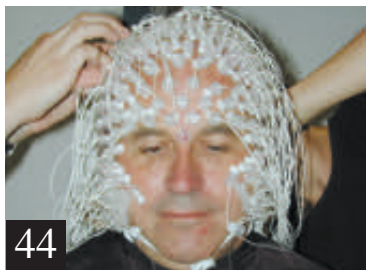
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SUSTAINABILITY. *What Dee Williams learned about freedom when she "downsized" to a tiny house on wheels.*



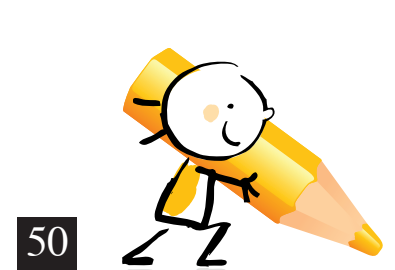
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GRIEF. *She dropped everything to be with her mother at the end of her life. Here's what she learned about living, grieving, and joy.*




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SCIENCE OF BLISS. *A scientist-turned-monk shares the Tibetan Buddhists' secrets of happiness.*



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SAY THANK YOU
Gratitude and happiness are related. Think you're thankful? Take the test.



The economic boom didn't bring us (or the planet) happiness. So maybe there's an upside to the downturn.

Be Happy Anyway :-)

Sarah van Gelder and Doug Pibel

"The pursuit of happiness." It's so American that it's in of our Declaration of Independence, where it's listed along side life and liberty as an inalienable right.

But how successful have we been in that pursuit? And now that the global finance system is imploding, how likely is it that we'll be happy in the coming months and years?

Can't Buy Love

Since roughly the 1970s, Americans have been buying things madly, whether we could afford them or not. We were promised that a bigger car, a more trendy purse, or a flat-screen television would bring us happiness, and we've been acting accordingly. We were promised that an ever-growing econo-

THE SECRET TO YOUR HAPPINESS

Happiness is being grateful for what you have in life and not wanting what others say you need.

Jeff Stone

Integrity makes me happy. It means having my actions be consistent with my belief system.

Gloria Peterson

I am most happy digging in the dirt, growing edible plants, and modeling sustainability for my five-year-old son.

Knowing myself through daily meditation in my “prayer chair” and accepting the person I am and continue to become.

Margie Goulden

Preparing and eating meals together, all the while sharing stories from the day laughing.

The secret to my happiness is to be continuously creative.

The pursuit of a worthwhile goal. In many cases the journey is more rewarding than the end.

Lloyd Anderson

Hanging in there to really forgive and be present to people, while remembering that I am not a doormat.

Riding my bike to work. Spending time in nature on a daily basis is important.

Calan Taylor

my would make us all rich. But while our gross domestic product increased more or less steadily from the 1970s until the onset of the current financial crisis, most of us did not see a rise in our standard of living or our wellbeing. Wages stagnated, while the costs of basic needs—like homes, medical care, food, and energy—climbed rapidly. Those in the top 20 percent increased their net worth by 80 percent over the last 25 years, while the bottom 40 percent actually lost ground.

Few families today can make it on a single wage-earner's income, and a health problem or a job loss can send a middle-class family into poverty or even homelessness.

Yet we continue to buy the products that are supposed to make us happy, driving many of us deeply into debt. Families are carrying an average credit card debt of \$5,100, with interest rates that often make payoff nearly impossible. In recent years, home equity reached record lows as people borrowed against the value of their homes. In 2004, the most recent year for which Federal Reserve figures are available, debt secured by real property exceeded \$290,000 per household, almost three times what it was only 15 years before.

All this debt makes life more precarious. It also increases our dependence on long work hours, which—if we can find work at all—combines with long commutes to eat up the time we might otherwise have for things that research shows actually would make us happy.

It's easy to fall into the trap of believing that having more stuff will lead to happiness, because there's an element of truth in the advertiser's promise. We do need a certain amount of food to live, after all. Shelter is good. We need clothes, tools—a bit beyond the bare necessities can be nice. And having stuff has always been a way to show that you are successful and entitled to respect. But after the novelty of a new outfit or laptop wears off, we're left with a hole in our wallets and an empty feeling, which—advertisers tell us—we

should fill by shopping for yet more new and improved stuff.

Following this advice may keep the corporate economy humming, but has it made us happy?

Many figures suggest the answer is: not really. Broad standards of wellbeing like the Genuine Progress Indicators show that our health, quality of life, economic security, and environment, taken together, stayed flat, although we worked harder. A 20-year study by the OECD found the United States has the highest rate of inequality and poverty among the developed countries, and the income gap has grown steadily since 2000. A recent Gallup poll found that

just half of Americans live free of worries about money or health, compared to 83 percent of those in Denmark. When the World Health Organization and Harvard Medical School studied rates of depression in 14 countries, the U.S. topped the list.

How Many Planets Does it Take?

It's not only Americans who are taking a hit from an economic system that puts money and growth ahead of real wellbeing. People around the world are losing access to their own natural resources and economic sovereignty.

Corporations seeking to profit by stimulating and feeding our appetite >>


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to read more reader responses.
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Sign up for our free online e-newsletter at
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» for stuff have trampled on the livelihood and ways of life of Mexican farmers, indigenous rainforest dwellers, African miners, and Thai factory workers. When land buyouts or subsidized agricultural imports make traditional lifeways impossible, many of these people arrive in crowded cities with no choice but to work for rock-bottom wages or attempt an arduous migration to a higher-wage country.

Champions of globalization like Thomas Friedman tell us that in a few generations these workers will have a standard of living similar to ours in the United States. But ecological footprint analysis shows it would take more than six Earths to give everyone in the world the level of consumption Americans “enjoy.” Of course, we have only one planet, and this one is overheating.

The Pursuit of Happiness

Is this what Thomas Jefferson had in mind when he substituted “the pursuit of happiness” for the phrase contained in the earlier Continental Congress draft, “life, liberty, and *property*?”

Jefferson’s ideal was an economy based on small farmers who produced for themselves most of what they needed. Their happiness was not something they trusted corporations to provide for a fee, but rather something

they created themselves, through their work and human relationships within a community. The economy of the time was founded, in part, on a slave-owning society built on land often stolen from native peoples, but Jefferson’s ideals had a strong influence on the young country. Freedom, independence, and self-sufficiency were all popular values.

The U.S. has moved a long way from the Jeffersonian ideal. Today, we produce little of what we use. We exchange our work for money, and buy food, clothing, and other necessities from big box stores and purchase child care and elder care from corporate chains.

Since we no longer have the time, skills, extended families, and access to land that were commonplace just decades ago, we have become completely dependent on money. That dependency leaves us at the mercy of those who control the economy and the money supply. And those who accumulate the money have inordinate influence over our government. It is the precise opposite of the Jeffersonian ideal. It’s also a departure from the way humans have lived for most of history.

Life After the Crash

So maybe it’s just as well that the crisis is finally upon us. Maybe this time of creative destruction offers us

the chance for a fresh start, a chance to build a society that puts ordinary people first and provides the conditions for their happiness.

After the shock of the crisis wears off, maybe we’ll look around like characters in a Fellini movie who come outside at dawn after a debauched night of excess. We’ll turn off the television, log off the internet, notice the bright colors of sunrise, and speak to the neighbors who we’ve never found time to meet.

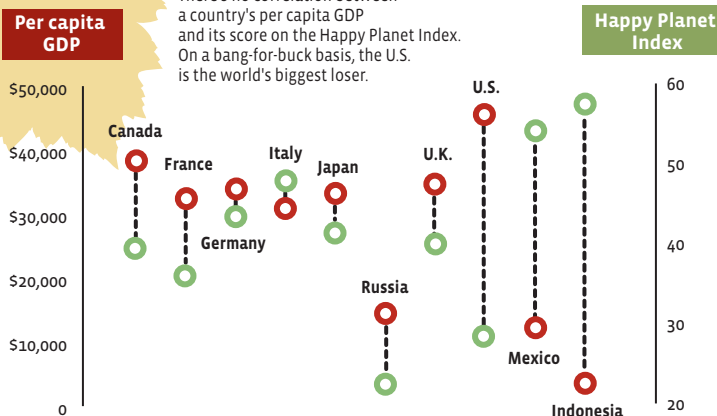
We may spend less of our lives working as the cash economy shrinks and companies close their doors.

But maybe we’ll learn to share the work and reclaim time for the aspects of our lives that research tells us contributes to real happiness—time with families and friends, civic involvement, exercise, creativity. It wouldn’t be the first time. During the Great Depression, for instance, the Kellogg Company cut employee shifts from eight hours to six to extend the number who had jobs. Productivity went up so much that the company could afford to pay the same for the shorter shift. Meanwhile, civic organizations, adult education, and family life in Kalamazoo blossomed.

Maybe we’ll find ways to trade among friends and neighbors—some winter squash or homemade pie for

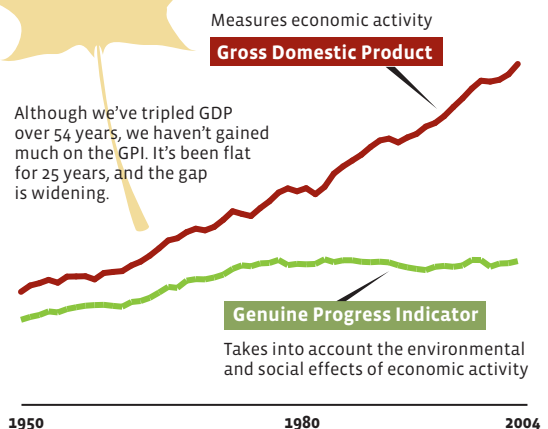
Who Has Money? Who’s Happier?

There’s no correlation between a country’s per capita GDP and its score on the Happy Planet Index. On a bang-for-buck basis, the U.S. is the world’s biggest loser.



Sources: CIA World FactBook. “Rank Order - GDP - per capita (PPP).” Accessed October 16, 2008
New Economics Foundation. “The Happy Planet Index.” Accessed October 16, 2008

GDP Doesn’t Measure Progress



Source: Redefining Progress, rprogress.org

some child care or home repair. Maybe we'll reclaim the skills we used to have, and teach each other how to grow food, fix things ourselves, sew and knit, and pass skills along to our children and grandchildren.

Somehow, in the exuberance of the economic bubbles of the '80s, '90s, and '00s, we lost track of something. Money exists to serve us as a tool, not the other way around. Our lives and society do not have to be turned over to the rulers of high finance and their hired representatives in Washington, D.C. We the people can reject the economic orthodoxy that has served us so poorly, and rebuild our economy on a different foundation.

Rebuilding

What sort of society do we want to rebuild? What will expand our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness without diminishing the chances for other people, now and in the future, to have the same?

Here are some of the things we'll need to do:

- Economic policies for the future must assure that everyone is included, and that we lift up those at the bottom. When we allow inequality to burgeon in our society, we create crime and violence and hate, which damage everyone's ability to find happiness. We can no longer afford nine-figure paychecks for CEOs and double-digit returns on speculative investments. To paraphrase Gandhi, we have enough for everyone's needs, but not for everyone's greed.

- The environmental overshoot game is up. The next economy must function within the present production of our environment. We can no longer afford to live off the bounty of the past, like the millions of years of fossil deposits that make up today's diminishing oil reserves. Instead we must turn to solar energy, wind, and other renewables, and grow food and fiber by building the soil, not by dumping petroleum products on it. We can't continue to use our atmosphere, oceans, aquifers, and soils as dumps. No amount of "Runs for the



ANGEL TRUN

A huge pillow fight in Times Square? Or a game of capture the flag in the streets of Toronto? Across North America and Europe, the **URBAN PLAYGROUND MOVEMENT** is bringing do-it-yourself fun to the heart of big cities. Kevin Bracken, who organizes events in Toronto, says the idea is to create spaces for participatory amusement—to encourage active creation of entertainment instead of passive consumption. Beyond being fun, these pillow fights and street games reclaim public spaces and build community.



www.YesMagazine.org/pillowfight

Cure" will solve the cancer problem if we continue to poison our food, water, and air. And the climate is reaching a dangerous tipping point.

- We can no longer allow the money economy to grow like a cancer on our society, until it takes over all facets of life. The economy needs to serve people, communities, and the health of natural systems, not the other way around. Instead of relying on footloose unaccountable global corporations, we can turn to local and regional production to serve our needs and provide sustainable employment, including small and medium-sized businesses, co-ops, farmer's markets, and so on.

- As we do that, we'll get much clearer on real sources of happiness. Research tells us that the sources of the good life are in loving relationships,

mutual respect, meaningful work, and gratitude, and as we discover the power of these qualities, the lure of advertising and materialism will no longer fool us. Overconsumption will take its place alongside other passing fads.

As we begin to relearn the skills and rebuild the relationships we lost in the pursuit of money and things, we will begin to find a happiness that we are in charge of; one that is not dependent on the fluctuations of the stock market or the amount of stuff we own.

Painful as it may be in the short term, we can emerge from this crisis healthier and wealthier, with the sort of wealth that really matters: strong communities and relationships with loved ones, healthy ecosystems, and the skills to make a living and enjoy life. ⑦



10

Things Science Says Will Make You Happy

Jen Angel

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, psychologists and researchers have been digging up hard data on a question previously left to philosophers: What makes us happy?

Researchers like the father-son team Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener, Stanford psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky, and ethicist Stephen Post have studied people all over the world to find out how things like money, attitude, culture, memory, health, altruism, and our day-to-day habits affect our well-being. The emerging field of positive psychology is bursting with new findings that suggest your actions can have a significant effect on your happiness and satisfaction with life. Here are 10 scientifically proven strategies for getting happy.



Savor Everyday Moments

Pause now and then to smell a rose or watch children at play. Study participants who took time to “savor” ordinary events that they normally hurried through, or to think back on pleasant moments from their day, “showed significant increases in happiness and reductions in depression,” says psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky.



Avoid Comparisons

While keeping up with the Joneses is part of American culture, comparing ourselves with others can be damaging to happiness and self-esteem. Instead of comparing ourselves to others, focusing on our own personal achievement leads to greater satisfaction, according to Lyubomirsky.



Put Money Low on the List

People who put money high on their priority list are more at risk for depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, according to researchers Tim Kasser and Richard Ryan. Their findings hold true across nations and cultures. “The more we seek satisfactions in material goods, the less we find them there,” Ryan says. “The satisfaction has a short half-life—it’s very fleeting.” Money-seekers also score lower on tests of vitality and self-actualization.



Have Meaningful Goals

“People who strive for something significant, whether it’s learning a new craft or raising moral children, are far happier than those who don’t have strong dreams or aspirations,” say Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener. “As humans, we actually require a sense of meaning to thrive.” Harvard’s resident happiness professor, Tal Ben-Shahar, agrees, “Happiness lies at the intersection between pleasure and meaning. Whether at work or at home, the goal is to engage in activities that are both personally significant and enjoyable.”



www.YesMagazine.org/happyscience

For an interactive version, plus citations

www.YesMagazine.org/posters

To buy or download a poster

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Take Initiative at Work

How happy you are at work depends in part on how much initiative you take. Researcher Amy Wrzesniewski says that when we express creativity, help others, suggest improvements, or do additional tasks on the job, we make our work more rewarding and feel more in control.



Smile Even When You Don't Feel Like It

It sounds simple, but it works. "Happy people... see possibilities, opportunities, and success. When they think of the future, they are optimistic, and when they review the past, they tend to savor the high points," say Diener and Biswas-Diener. Even if you weren't born looking at the glass as half-full, with practice, a positive outlook can become a habit.



Get Out and Exercise

A Duke University study shows that exercise may be just as effective as drugs in treating depression, without all the side effects and expense. Other research shows that in addition to health benefits, regular exercise offers a sense of accomplishment and opportunity for social interaction, releases feel-good endorphins, and boosts self-esteem.



Say Thank You Like You Mean It

People who keep gratitude journals on a weekly basis are healthier, more optimistic, and more likely to make progress toward achieving personal goals, according to author Robert Emmons. Research by Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology, revealed that people who write "gratitude letters" to someone who made a difference in their lives score higher on happiness, and lower on depression—and the effect lasts for weeks.



Give It Away, Give It Away Now!

Make altruism and giving part of your life, and be purposeful about it. Researcher Stephen Post says helping a neighbor, volunteering, or donating goods and services results in a "helper's high," and you get more health benefits than you would from exercise or quitting smoking. Listening to a friend, passing on your skills, celebrating others' successes, and forgiveness also contribute to happiness, he says. Researcher Elizabeth Dunn found that those who spend money on others reported much greater happiness than those who spend it on themselves.



Make Friends, Treasure Family

Happier people tend to have good families, friends, and supportive relationships, say Diener and Biswas-Diener. But it's not enough to be the life of the party if you're surrounded by shallow acquaintances. "We don't just need relationships, we need close ones" that involve understanding and caring.



VOICES CARRY

“Most human beings are not couch potatoes and whiners. We are doers and creators. In fact, humans need to ‘make a dent’.”

Frances Moore Lappé

“What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome.” So wrote Friedrich Nietzsche in 1895.

I’m guessing that many of you would feel uncomfortable embracing this definition of happiness, especially coming from one of history’s most famous curmudgeons. If so, maybe in part it’s because too often we’ve nodded in agreement with Lord Acton’s catchy caveat, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” And who would want to risk corruption?

But what if we were to dig to the root, Latin meaning of power, “to be able”? Suddenly the word’s hard edge dissolves; power simply means efficacy—our capacity, as philosopher Erich Fromm put it, to “make a dent.”

Over the last decade the happiness quest has spawned bestselling books, college courses, retreats, and even a “happiness conference.” Most seem to offer similar advice: Once our basic physical needs are covered, more *stuff* does little to boost our happiness. Friendships, family, self-acceptance, and meaning in our lives are the core



Dave Newton, left, is a Voter Empowerment organizer for the citizens’ group Kentuckians For The Commonwealth. Carl Matthews, right, was among 70 participants trained in voter registration on the day of this photograph. Matthews, a former felon, had his own voting right restored just hours before the training. He is now an electoral organizer for the group.

BETH BISSMEYER



BETH BISSMEYER

Students Anda Weaver and Tianna Williams participate in a Voter Empowerment training session on the Berea College campus. More than 50 people turned out, including students, faculty, staff, and members of the Berea community.

determinants of our happiness.

I'm happy we're talking about happiness, but disturbed, too, because I've noticed that most happiness gurus fail to mention power. And why is that a big mistake? Because most human beings are not couch potatoes and whiners. We are doers and creators. In fact, the human need to "make a dent" is so great that Fromm argued we should toss out René Descartes' "I think therefore I am" and replace it with "I am, because I effect."

Even much of what we call "materialism" is, I think, not about "things" at all. It is a distorted, ultimately unsatisfying attempt to feel powerful, with status through possessions forced to stand in for power. If true, then addressing powerlessness is a direct way both to foster happiness and to overcome planet-destroying materialism.

There's just one pathway to happiness in which this deep, human need for power is given pride of place: democracy. By this I mean democracy as a living practice that enables us to have a real say in every dimension of our public lives, from school to workplace and beyond.

Such power is expanding in part through a growing number of largely unseen citizen organizations. Among them is Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC), whose 5,000-plus members address concerns ranging from toxic dumping to open government.

Jean True, a leader in KFTC in the 1990s, told me, "I was home raising kids for 10 years. I didn't know anything about politics. I thought my only job was to vote."

When I asked Jean to tell me why she joined KFTC, she responded, "It's just the fun! That you can get together some regular people, go to the capitol, and make changes in state policy. ... We have a great time doing what we do, going toe to toe and head to head with state legislators. We sometimes know more than they do! It's the fun of power—the ant knocking over the buffalo."

On the other side of the world in the year 2000, I danced with women in a Kenyan village, feeling their exuberant happiness in their newfound power as village tree planters and organizers of women's groups tackling problems from alcoholism to hunger.

That same year, I stood on a railroad platform in rural India with desperately poor people lying only a few steps away on grimy concrete. I turned to Jafri, the young Indian researcher traveling with us—he was helping some of his country's poorest farmers escape the debt-and-toxins trap of chemical agriculture—and I asked: "How do you keep going?"

"I have to feel I am doing something to address the roots of suffering," he replied, "or I couldn't be happy."

Including power in our definition of happiness changes everything.

If happiness lies in covering basic needs plus satisfying personal ties and finding meaning, society's role is limited. It need only ensure that essential needs are met and provide opportunities to pursue personal relationships and meaning. Even a largely totalitarian government could do that.

But, if we add power to the happiness equation, our agenda shifts. Maximizing happiness then requires engaging citizens in changing the rules and norms so that more and more of us are empowered participants. And, of course, joining with others in this exhilarating pursuit we achieve a double whammy: Such activity furthers the widely appreciated relational and meaning aspects of the happiness puzzle.

If, from our nation's founding onward, we Americans have treated freedom and happiness as virtually synonymous, my point is a really old one. We might do well to replace the maxims of Acton and even Nietzsche with one uttered by Roman statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero 2000 years ago: "Freedom is participation in power."



Frances Moore Lappé is the author of many books including *Diet for a Small Planet* and *Get a Grip*, co-founder of Food First and the Small Planet Institute, and a YES! contributing editor.

www.YesMagazine.org/lappe
Walking Through Fear:
an interview with Frances Moore Lappé



LIFE RECLAIMED

After growing up amid violence and harassment, Jarid Manos found a way out for himself and for troubled youth—restoring prairie ecosystems.

Madeline Ostrander interviews Jarid Manos



GREAT PLAINS RESTORATION COUNCIL

Jarid Manos dreamed about buffalo, prairie dogs, and the Great Plains, even while he dealt drugs on the New York City streets. As a child in rural Ohio, Manos coped with neglect, racism, and sexual abuse by seeking refuge in woodlots and prairies and in books about natural history from the local library. He ran away to Texas as a teen, and spent much of his young adulthood drifting between a life of crime in New York and months-long trips through the Plains and the Southwest, where he visited Indian reservations, camped out alone on rangelands and deserts, prayed, and wrestled with depression and anger.

In the late 1980s, Manos learned of the Buffalo Commons, an idea hatched by two Rutgers scholars to reintroduce buffalo to underpopulated counties in middle America. The idea became an inspiration. Manos began developing a vision of an organization that would heal both people and prairies. He cleaned up his life, got a job at a health food store, became a vegan, and took up mountain biking. He networked with social justice and environmental groups and learned how to organize.

Manos founded the Great Plains Restoration Council in 1999 in Fort Worth, Texas. He now

recruits youth from inner city Fort Worth and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota who are victims of violence and poverty, and puts them to work restoring the prairie. His group has also halted housing developments on a southern tallgrass prairie near Fort Worth and is re-establishing a prairie dog town on a new 12,000-acre reserve in West Texas. Partnering with the Oglala Lakota people, Manos' group has hatched a long-term project to connect prairie around Badlands National Park into a million-acre public grassland.

Manos is the father of a 10-year-old adopted son. His journey from despair to activism is recounted in his book, *Ghetto Plainsman* (Temba House, 2008).

I contacted Manos by phone at his Fort Worth office.



JARID MANOS

The Great Plains Restoration Council encourages kids who are survivors of HIV, abuse, violence, and poverty to take leadership in prairie conservation projects. Pictured above, the 2008 GPRC Youth Summit.

Madeline: What was your childhood like?

Jarid: I was a stray dog. I didn't know people actually loved each other and had close family relationships. The only thing my father discussed was my duty to work, always with disapproval.

When I was three, I cracked my head open on a brick ledge. The effects were lasting, and even now, I sometimes pass out.

I was so alienated that even joining a gang would have been way too adjusted for me. I was a pretty boy and hated it. I was constantly harassed by disgusting old men who sexually pursued me, including the vice principal at school. But I never accepted being anybody's victim.

The world felt hostile, guaranteed to get worse without warning. I learned to be like a wild animal and see danger before it saw me.

Nature was my refuge, and I understood on a gut level that it was under threat. I saw prairies, wooded streams, and waterfalls destroyed by bulldozers. I remember looking at

telephone poles, one after another, and mourning all those killed trees.

Madeline: What made you leave Ohio for Texas?

Jarid: I first visited Texas with my father on fishing and duck-hunting trips. The landscape immediately spoke to me. I knew it was home. There was an open, beckoning horizon, and the sky was lit in the most phenomenal, visceral colors. Texas is the only place in the U.S. where the prairie and ocean meet, and it has an almost African feel—like the center of the living world. All I could think about was how to get back there.

Immediately after high school, I hustled my way to Corpus Christi on the pretense of going to community college. I lived in one of the most barren parts of town in a prefab studio apartment on stilts that wouldn't have lasted the first hurricane.

Madeline: But you didn't stay there.

Jarid: I grew restless and left for New York City where I again tried to go to college.

Trouble is, you carry your personal

problems with you wherever you go. I had been a drunk since I was a teen and struggled with extreme depression. I couldn't stay awake or concentrate, or hold a job for long.

I ended up on the Lower East Side, which back then was bombed out, grafittied up, and crawling with crack and heroin dealers. I couldn't make rent. Homelessness loomed. To earn money, I had to sell my body and turn tricks. It was so degrading. I felt tainted and violated just like the Earth.

I sometimes slept on park benches on top of newspapers, then read them. I read about the Exxon-Valdez oil spill, the Tiananmen Square massacre, and the start of the Gulf War. The world got darker.

I had an overwhelming urge to disappear into nature. I traveled west through Texas again, then headed to California. I thought about leaving society and removing myself from the ugliness of the world. I wanted to stop speaking. I was that angry.

But I got an opportunity to make money in New York as a drug dealer, and my only moral equation was, all's fair in hate and war.

Madeline: Did you find the American >>



There is no more exhilarating and realized life, I believe, than a life of service. When you produce tangible change, that's something to look forward to each day.

» West more peaceful than the city?

Jarid: No. It's dangerous and anarchic out here—you could run into somebody with rifles in the back of their truck, and if they don't like the color of your skin or the way you look, they could easily hurt you.

The Plains are a war zone, especially for the animals. There are clubs organized to blow prairie dogs up for sport with propane bombs, or poison them. There's aerial gunning of wildlife, like coyotes. People in pickup trucks deliberately run terrified antelope into barbed wire fences.

Despite these threats, I saw the animals celebrating life. I invite anybody to sleep overnight in a prairie dog town. Watch them jump and tumble over each other as the first flash of sunlight races across the prairie. They literally worship the sun.

I also saw hope on Indian reservations. People who have lost so much and been so traumatized, smiling, laughing, and joking.

Madeline: When did things turn around for you?

Jarid: First, I heard about the Buffalo Commons idea. Almost the entire Great Plains has been ravaged, but as people move out of rural areas, there's an opportunity to create a sustainable economy through ecotourism, restoration, ecological health initiatives, youth work, and education.

At the same time, I knew I couldn't continue on the same self-destructive cycles. I remember lying in a gap beneath a fence out West somewhere, each shoulder on an opposite side of the barbed wire. I thought, "Are you going to roll to the left, head south, disappear into Mexico and accept that the struggle is hopeless; or roll to the

right and get to work?" As I closed my eyes, I thought about the buffalo, prairie dogs, and people who were struggling. That called me to action.

Over the next months, I realized I had survived my depression and anger. I prayed and carved out a safe place inside myself. I had to become healthy. Taking care of your health is the most radical thing you can do, because you are cleaner, stronger, and able to withstand and fight for so much more.

I wanted to be healthier so I could build, create, and bring people together.

Madeline: Coming out of such difficult circumstances, how did you find the resources to start an organization?

Jarid: I was always reading. I'm an information junkie. I knew about activist groups. I learned a lot from an internship with Animal Protection of New Mexico, and from groups like the People of Color Caucus. Those experiences gave me the tools to start the Great Plains Restoration Council and our first campaigns to restore a creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and stop the city of Lubbock from poisoning a prairie dog town.

I had to learn people skills and deal with my remnant anger. But when you produce powerful work to heal the Earth, you can also heal yourself.

It's true that when I looked at the environmental movement, I didn't see many people like me. But I knew we needed to become a cultural and social movement with a shared struggle. The violence people do to the Earth mirrors the violence people do to each other.

Madeline: What's it like for you to lead an organization, after years trying to get away from people?

Jarid: There is no more exhilarating

and realized life, I believe, than a life of service. When you produce tangible change, that's something to look forward to each day.

Years ago I would never have described myself as "happy." I didn't smile most of my life. But I do now.

I love my friends, the kids, and the work—the sense that people are coming together in good faith and accepting that it's an imperfect world, but still working to improve it each day.

I'm not saying life is easy. There's a lot of bad news, and I see people getting overwhelmed all the time. But my stamina is unbreakable.

Madeline: Now you work with youth who have been through their own trauma. How do you help them find fulfillment?

Jarid: Many of the kids we work with were considered disposable. Some of them have lived in places where they didn't have a bathroom—they had to go in the backyard. There are kids whose mothers have been raped, or who are affected by HIV.

But if you give these young people opportunities, they can take leadership. They just need adult role models to help them open doors.

Some of it is about claiming personal power. There's a youth in our program who has been badly burned, but he's the most outgoing, well-adjusted little dude. He makes everybody feel at ease.

Some of it is about speaking out. One of our youth just had his first major speaking engagement at the International Urban Parks Conference in Pittsburgh to an audience with representatives from over 36 countries.

And we teach the kids about the connection between their bodies and the ecosystems they live in. We take them to a tallgrass prairie southwest

2 Happiness-in-Action Heroes



If you're only as old as you feel, then **JOE KING** is 16 when he goes for a run. Not bad for an 82-year-old. He started running in high school, and liked it so much he hasn't stopped. King was a teacher for 31 years, and found that running was the best way to relieve job stress. It also gave him time to work through his ideas without distractions. Beyond that, there's the simple feeling of freedom that running has always given him. King shows no sign of stopping—this year he ran a seven-minute mile to break the world record for runners over 80.

3



Tal Ben-Shahar teaches the **HAPPINESS CLASS** at Harvard University. He says it starts with readings in the research on "how to get happy." But it doesn't stop there—students then apply tested techniques to their own lives to try to increase their happiness. The class has become the most popular at Harvard. Ben-Shahar said he achieved personal happiness by taking himself off the tenure track—because not having to publish makes him happy.

of Fort Worth and learn how the watershed runs through the body of the land. Then we see how the human circulatory system works by looking at the veins in our arms.

We let the kids lead tours of this prairie. We also help them work on language skills. Right now, they're writing a children's book called *Prairie Dogs in the Hood*. In the story, a group of kids encounter a grandma on her porch, and she tells them about the last prairie dogs in Fort Worth.

Madeline: So often troubled youth are medicated to treat behavioral problems. What do you think youth need to be capable and happy?

Jarid: Healing has to happen from the inside out, rather than the outside in. Get kids outside. Give them the opportunity to produce something meaningful with their own minds and hands, and that will far surpass any drugs or medication.

Madeline: Can you describe one of your moments of greatest joy?

Jarid: I'm not sure many activists ever reach sheer joy. There is a dark undercloud of worry that never goes away. But hanging out with my son, Kaiden, on Galveston Island a couple of years ago, I remember a sudden, perfect moment of exhilaration—his laughter, the ocean waves, the hot sun, white sand dunes, and green coastal prairie. It was like the sun had come closer to Earth, blazing everything in blue and yellow light. That moment was overpowering. It was an unusual sensation, because I have always viewed everything through the lens of struggle.

I am flooded by thoughts of the challenges ahead. But moments like that show me it's possible to have happiness even while being a soldier. And I feel a need for other kids to experience those moments. So I get back to the struggle. ▼

Interested? www.ghettoplainman.com and www.gprc.org

Madeline Ostrander is senior editor at YES!



THE GOOD LIFE DOESN'T HAVE TO COST THE PLANET

What if you woke up one day to find that humans eventually did make the right decisions, and those decisions had all the right effects and, well, the world turned out to be a pretty cool place.

Andrew Simms and Joe Smith

For a while, it looked as though everything would fall apart. There was the triple crunch of the global credit crisis, declining oil supplies, and the threat of runaway climate change driven by massive overconsumption by rich countries and the elites in poor countries.

In 2008, humanity overshot its global biocapacity on September 23. It was the world's earliest "ecological debt day" since humanity first started going into the environmental red in the mid-1980s. We were pursuing economic growth for its own sake, but it was completely unsustainable, and the people it was most supposed to benefit—the poorest—were getting a shrinking slice of the benefits. Perversely, because of the way the world economy worked, to get tiny amounts of global poverty reduction required massive amounts of destructive overconsumption by those who were already rich.

In the face of inescapable economic chaos and ecological upheaval, we finally woke to find that we already had most of the solutions under our noses. This is what a day in our lives looks like now, after things turned out right.

On waking

With less time spent working, the choice is yours—sleep in, go for a run, read a novel. Having rediscovered the

real meaning of a good life, previously overconsuming rich countries have now cured most cases of work addiction. In this "downshifted" world the phrase "rush hour" has become a half-remembered curio. Our society has begun to get the hang of how computing and IT can make for smart work, rather than generate slave work.

Those choosing the early morning run enjoy fresh air and clear paths as dramatic reductions in traffic have transformed city air and streets.

Breakfast

No need to sweat over every shopping decision: socially and environmentally sustainable trade are the (carefully checked) norm. The weekly food bill has gone up—but so has the quality, and the damaging consequences of cheap food systems have gradually been rolled back. This is sustainable consumption universalized—no more scanning labels. A few deft moves in boardrooms and government chambers helped to make food markets fair and sustainable.

For an international meeting—step onto your balcony: video-conferencing and networking are so slick and intuitive that you rarely need to travel for work. The hours gained, backache cured, and wrinkles postponed make

you more effective and committed to the work you do. But these changes are about more than work. Social networking software has thrown you together with new people—your desktop gives you a global network, but also connects you in new—live—human ways to the community where you actually live.

Computer connections aside, there are plenty of benefits in the new sense of community that has evolved from the revival of local shops (where the shopkeepers actually remember who you are) and the way that residential streets and town centers have become people-friendly. Streets are safer, with some entirely car-free, and many towns have reclaimed central plots of land as public squares. A calmer environment and more opportunities for casual contact between neighbors means people gather and talk to each other more. Even in cities, people, and especially the elderly, feel less lonely.

Take some time out late morning to plan your long-awaited summer trip. While the big increases in the cost of fossil fuels have made international travel a rarer experience, it tends to be much better—and longer—when you do head off on your travels. In the bad old days you might have dashed off a postcard after thirty-six hours in >>



» a congested foreign capital. These days it is more a matter of picking out a few choice photos from the hundreds you'll take on your once-in-a-lifetime three-month trip to India. Travel has returned to being a pleasure and an adventure.

With more leisure time and good cycle and public transport links, low impact local excursions are a much-loved part of life. But with our experience

of both cities and countryside transformed by investment in really great public spaces, people feel less need to get away in order to unwind.

Lunch

Need to get out of the house? Take a short stroll to one of the thousands of courtyard and street cafés that are enjoying the cleaner air and quiet-

er streets. Plenty of these are cheap workplace and school cafés that have opened their doors to locals. The combination of a few familiar faces, a random mix of new ones, and a daily changing menu of fresh local food makes food a daily pleasure.

Afternoon

A journey to work? Problems are as big as you make them: it used to be said that people wouldn't give up their cars. But instead of denying people their cars, the big breakthroughs were made by offering people really appealing alternatives. Some of these were alternatives to travel (like the conferencing tools). But we all want to move about.

So, by raising revenue from polluting and inefficient fossil fuel-run cars, governments completely transformed people's experience of cities and towns. Owning and driving cars to meet most of your mobility needs has come to seem simply eccentric. Lifespan and quality of life have dramatically increased as a result of cities being redesigned around people—and walking and cycling—not cars. Transport options range from trains, streetcars, and quiet clean buses, to on-demand rural shared taxis and simple car-share schemes that meet the range of needs we have through a year. The common “ting” of the cycle bell is as much to say “hello,” as to remind you that you're stepping across a cycle path. And when we do get in a car, the uncongested roads and beautifully designed hyperefficient vehicles remind us what a great invention these things can be.

Perhaps your office is one of the last bits of the building to have a green makeover. In hot weather you've got to turn the air conditioning on. It is not as wasteful as the old machines, but you know that some of the electricity is still going to be fossil fueled. You can comfort yourself with the knowledge that the increased costs brought about by carbon taxes have got your finance department talking to your building managers who are talking to the build-



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4 Happiness-in-Action Heroes

In 1972, the king of Bhutan changed the way his country measured progress from the traditional gross national product (GNP) to **GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS**. Rather than focusing purely on total output, the alternative metric looks at the equity and sustainability of development, the preservation of culture, conservation, and good governance. Although it's hard to measure the precise effect the change has had on the country, some validation came in 2007, when Bhutan was the only low-GNP nation to rank in the top 20 in a survey of subjective well-being.

Other groups have made similar efforts, most notably with the **GENUINE PROGRESS INDICATOR**. While the traditional GDP includes all goods and services produced in a country, the GPI distinguishes between those that increase well-being (like childcare) and those that represent reduced well-being (like medical services after a car crash).

 www.YesMagazine.org/bhutan
Photos of Bhutan by Jenfu Cheng

ers about natural ventilation systems. In the meantime the tax raised is salving all of your consciences.

In an idle moment you reflect on where this cash goes, and why that matters. One of a series of breakthrough climate deals between north and south ensures that the inhabitants of Brazil, especially those living in the Amazon, are directly rewarded for their stewardship of the ecological services that the rainforest provides to the whole planet. As we gradually descend from our carbon-fix high we can at least ensure that our habit is funding some security for us all by protecting these key carbon sinks. The bill for your air-conditioning that helps you cope with climate change in your office is, in effect, helping to pay the bill to keep the global air-conditioning running in the Amazon basin.

Dinner

Time released from long working days, and the fact that fast food and ready meals have gone up in price now that they reflect their full ecological costs, has seen a revival of home cooking. With lots more single households there are some twists. More people get together to take turns to share informal meals in a neighborhood. There are delivery services providing decent food in returnable containers for people without the time or inclination for the kitchen or company.

Evening

Stories and music are as old as campfires. For a time we forgot it, but being actively involved in making entertainment made us feel much better than just passively watching others perform. One of the first things taught in school now is the medical evidence that watching TV induces a mental state almost identical to clinical depression. It's now common in pubs, clubs, and in any available hall to find groups of friends showing films made by themselves on cheap, easy-to-use equipment, and putting on a wide range of music and other performances.

People are intrigued and drawn in by the fact that they can actually get to know the musicians and filmmakers, because they are likely to live in the area. Just as people are happier to go out more locally during the day, because towns have become more pleasant places to be, the same is true at night. In the early evening people of all ages take to strolling around town, just for the sake of it. The increase in spare time means people start reviving half-forgotten festivals and celebrations, as well as creating new ones to mark everything from important global events, to the seasons, local history, people, and important events. There is much more partying in general.

The good life is active, but it's full in

a good way. By pressing all the right buttons it creates its own energy to thrive. So, by the time evening turns to night, most people are still in the mood to press other right buttons on the one they love. Then we'll settle, tired maybe, satisfied surely, to take stock of how things have gone, round off our day, look forward to the next one, and enjoy our sleep, deeply. 🍷



Andrew Simms, left, is policy director and head of the Climate Change Programme at nef (the new economics foundation);

Joe Smith is a lecturer in the Geography Department at the Open University. They are co-editors of

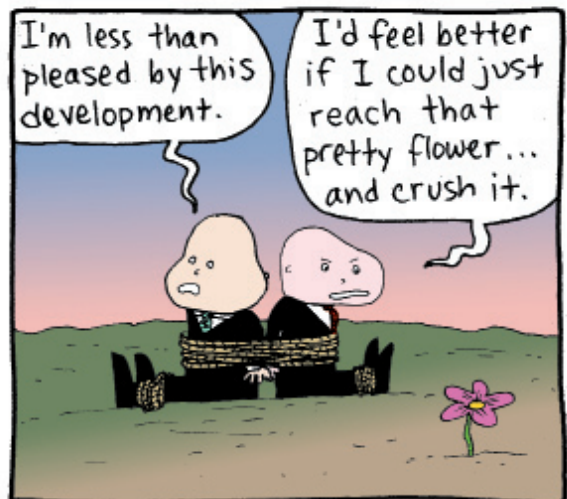
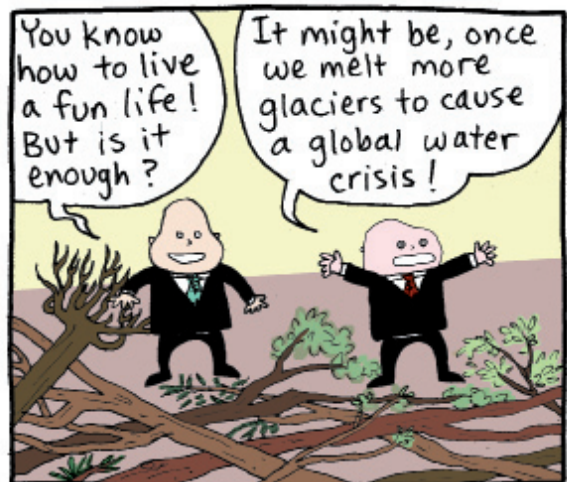
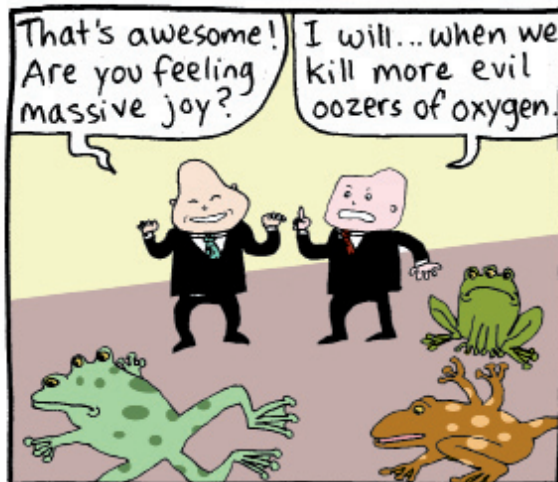
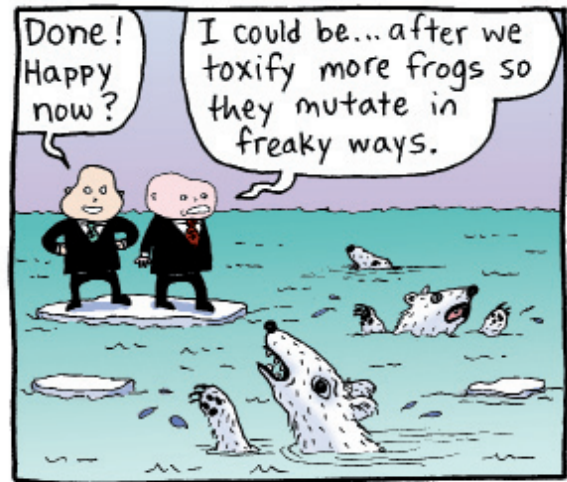
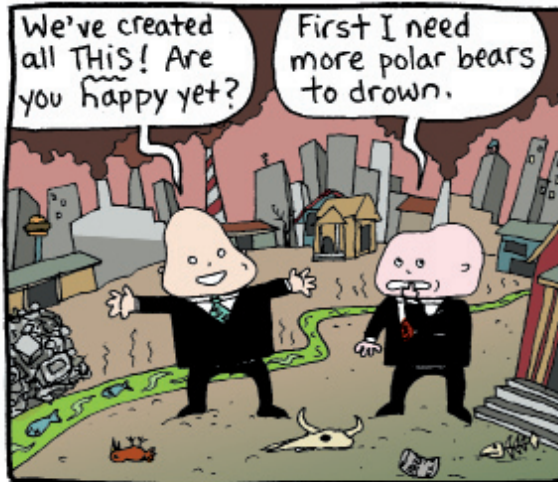
the *Do Good Lives Have to Cost the Earth?* (2008) Constable, London. This article is developed from the book.



ROB BARRICK

KURT HOELTING saw a big gap between his convictions and actions on climate change. So he committed to a year of living car-free and staying within a 62-mile radius of his home on Whidbey Island, Washington. Rather than feeling restricted, Hoelting says that he feels less bored and restless than before, and that the whole experience has been an "adventure and a declaration of independence." He also feels a deeper connection to the small part of the world he has gotten to know so well. He's hopeful that his effort will be one of thousands of creative responses to climate change.

Stephanie McMillan



STEPHANIE MCMILLAN FOR YES! MAGAZINE 2008

Stephanie McMillan's comic strip *Minimum Security*, minimumsecurity.net, appears five times a week on comics.com. She is co-creator of *As the World Burns: 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial*, a graphic novel with writer Derrick Jensen, in which space aliens come to eat the planet, bunnies are imprisoned in detention camps, and energy-efficient light bulbs fail to stop global warming. Seven Stories Press, 2007, 224 pages, \$14.95.





CHRISTMAS WITH NO PRESENTS?

“NO IMPACT MAN” SUSPECTED THE HOLIDAYS WOULD BE JUST AS MERRY WITHOUT ALL THE STUFF

Colin Beavan

If Christmas is about presents, then in 2007, my little family and I had no Christmas. I mean, we had the caroling and the uncle playing the piano and the cousins running around with my three-year-old, Isabella, and the grandfather coaxing her to sit on his lap and the good food.

We had, in other words, an amazingly good time.

What we didn't have, though, was the average American's \$800 hole in our bank accounts, gouged out by Christmas-present spending. Nor did we have the credit card debt still unpaid by June. Nor the forcing of smiles for gifts we didn't really want. Nor the buying of extra luggage to bring home those unwanted gifts. Nor the stressful rush of last-minute crowds at the mall.

Without presents, you see, we didn't have the sensation that I, at least, normally associated with Christmas—the stress. And without stress or presents,

it's not Christmas, right? But of course it was. It was the best of Christmas, the part that, research shows, makes people happiest. It was all the upside without the downside.

Let me back up.

From November 2006 to November 2007, I and my little family—one wife, one toddler, one dog—embarked on a lifestyle experiment in which we tried to live with the lowest possible environmental impact (you can read about it on my blog *NoImpactMan.com*). Among other measures, the experiment included not making trash, not using any form of carbon-producing transportation, and not buying anything new.

This may sound like a lot of meaningless self-deprivation, but the question we wanted to answer was this: Does consuming fewer resources actually feel like deprivation, or is it possible that consuming less opens up another way of life that provides more

enduring satisfaction? Or put another way, could we find a win-win way of life that might be happier both for us and for the planet?

Sometimes the answer was no. It may be better for the planet if we all decided not to buy big hunks of metal otherwise known as washing machines, but—believe me—washing my family's clothes by hand did not make me happier.

On the other hand, eating local and riding bikes instead of driving cars allowed us to lose the spare tires around our guts, cure ourselves of long-standing skin problems and insomnia and become generally healthier. And not using electricity to power entertainment devices drew us closer together as a family and made us spend more time with friends.

Our experiences illustrated that some uses of planetary resources improve quality of life and some may not. Indeed, we could go a long way toward dealing with the crisis in our planetary habitat if we found a way to avoid those uses that don't improve our lives—like the packaging that comprises 40 percent of trash in landfills, for example.

But as Christmas 2007 approached, the more pressing question for us was, did the season's huge consumption of resources add to the Christmas experience or detract from it? Since one-sixth of all American retail sales (and as a consequence, a hefty proportion of our national planetary resource use) occurs >>

Colin Beavan plays with his daughter Isabella at Washington Square Park near their home. As creator of the “No Impact Man” blog, Beavan and his family committed to living in the middle of New York City without making any net impact on the environment.

PAUL DUNN FOR YES! MAGAZINE



Despite the fact that people spend relatively large portions of their income on gifts, as well as time shopping for and wrapping them, such behavior apparently contributes little to holiday joy.

» during the holiday season, it's a question worth asking.

I've already told you enough to let you guess how my little family's experience played out, but you may be surprised to learn that our findings are backed up by bona fide psychological research: Even though oodles of presents at Christmas is the dominant American paradigm, it turns out that people who spend less and have less spent on them at Christmas actually enjoy the season more.

This, anyway, is the conclusion of

a paper published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* by researchers Tim Kasser of Knox College and Kennon M. Sheldon of the University of Missouri-Columbia. After studying the Christmas experiences of 117 individuals, they found that people who emphasized time spent with families and meaningful religious or spiritual activities had merrier Christmases.

"Despite the fact that people spend relatively large portions of their income on gifts, as well as time shop-

ping for and wrapping them," the researchers said, "such behavior apparently contributes little to holiday joy." In fact, subjects who gave or received presents that represented a substantial percentage of their income, Kasser and Sheldon found, actually experienced less Christmas joy.

Of course, this makes perfect sense. We all know in our hearts that treasuring meaningful experiences and spending time in valued relationships—at Christmas or any other part of the year—make us happier than getting more stuff.

But try telling that to the grandparents at Christmas time!

Try living out these lofty principles when the rest of your family and friends are swapping presents at the same rate as ever. You may find "bah humbugs" shouted in your direction more than once. That's problematic, particularly if you're hoping to inspire more sustainable lifestyle choices in other people. Nobody will be convinced by dogmatism or Grinch-like behavior.

The trick to a happy, sustainable, non-consumptive Christmas was not, we discovered, to ignore the expectations of the people we celebrated with. We didn't want our loved ones to feel bad. Those who expected presents should get them, we decided. Gifts, after all, are associated with the exchange of love.

For us, the answer was to buy presents that did not require the exploitation of large amounts of planetary resources. My mother was very happy



Beavan drives the family vehicle. In the NoImpactMan world, cars are a big no. There are others. No trash, no carbon emissions, no toxins in the water, no elevators, no subway, no packaging, no plastics, no air conditioning, no TV ...

PAUL DUNN FOR YES! MAGAZINE

with the two massages she got. My father and his wife enjoyed the gift certificate to the fine dining, local-food restaurant in their neighborhood. Friends appreciated the theater tickets we bought them. And unlike those unwanted trinkets one sometimes buys for the “person who has everything,” our sustainable gifts, we felt, actually improved the recipients’ lives.

Still, my wife, Michelle, worried very much that it would be hard for Isabella if all the cousins had presents to open, but she didn’t. Try saying, “The research says you’ll be happier with less,” to a three-year-old. So Isabella’s Aunt Maureen contributed toys that her children had outgrown, and we wrapped them for Isabella.

When present-opening time came, Isabella didn’t care whether the present she was opening was for her or not. She didn’t even want the presents. She just wanted to open them. She didn’t want something to have later. She wanted to participate now. And when her Uncle Joe started playing the piano and singing, she got bored with the present opening anyway and went to sit with him on the piano bench.

Much to our surprise, she didn’t even want to take her cousins’ old toys home when the Christmas vacation was over. She’d already had her presents. What was important to her was what turned out to be important to us: the singing, the charades, the laughter, the time spent with family, and of course, the celebration. 🎉

Colin Beavan’s book about his No Impact Man experiment will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in September 2009. Visit his blog at NoImpactMan.com.



The Story of Stuff

A fun and fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns.

www.YesMagazine.org/storyofstuff

6
Happiness-in-Action Heroes



JEREMY SAWATZKY

After six years in the tech industry, Tina Su found the more money she made, the less satisfied she became. So she quit her job and appointed herself **CHIEF HAPPINESS OFFICER** of her own life. She had three goals: to complete a triathlon, to learn French, and to live every day fully. Her website thinksimplenow.com was born of her enthusiasm to share the daily joys she discovered in being master of her time. She blogs about passive income, the four-hour workweek lifestyle, and empowering mindsets. While the audience was originally intended to be family and friends, that circle now includes people in 197 countries, 9,000 subscribers, and 200,000 online visitors a month.

7



EVAN SUNG

When Mark Bittman, the popular *The New York Times* “Minimalist” food columnist, wrote earlier this year of his desperate need for the Sabbath as a day of real rest from the mind-numbing pull of wireless internet and cellphones, he found himself speaking for a movement gaining traction everywhere: the **SECULAR SABBATH**, a concept that has time-starved people unplugging one day a week.

Last fall Bittman began a self-imposed Saturday day of rest, with most of the same no-work, no-electronics restrictions as the Jewish Sabbath. Skeptics ask, what’s left? Meals with friends, going for walks, reading, sleeping, singing, and conversation are a few suggestions offered by secularsabbath.org. Bittman says, “There has to be a way to regularly impose some thoughtfulness, or at least calm, into modern life. ... I had time to think, and distance from normal demands. I got to stop.”

www.YesMagazine.org/sabbath
How to start your own Secular Sabbath



LIVING LARGE

IN A TINY HOUSE

“The more intentional you are in your choices, the more every change makes room for more changes ... I just love that there’s this endless potential.” —Dee Williams

Carol Estes

In 2003, Dee Williams was a classic slactivist. She says so herself. Yes, she was passionate about social justice and environmental issues, but she spent most of her free time driving back and forth to Lowe’s and Home Depot for materials to remodel her three-bedroom house in Portland, Oregon. “I would feel like a grand national champion because I’d found a great parking space, or gotten a really great deal on a piece of plywood.”

Then events conspired to deal out a dose of humility.

She went to Guatemala and helped build a school, a friend’s emails from Uganda brought news of malaria and hungry children, and a very dear friend got cancer. It made her remodeling concerns seem trivial.

“He was getting sicker and sicker, and I didn’t have the time or the money to really throw myself into helping him. I was spending a lot of time and money on my house. So the house was the easiest thing to try to get rid of.”

In 2004, Williams sold her bungalow, shedding a mortgage payment of over \$1,000 per month, and bought plans for an 84-square-foot house on wheels. It cost her \$10,000 to build, a quarter of which went for photovoltaic panels that generate her electricity. Now her house is paid for, and her monthly

bills total about \$8—for heating.

Even with the economic freedom she gained, it wasn’t easy to leave her house. “I loved my house and I liked my community in Portland.” And she knew that day-to-day life in the tiny house would be very different. “I’m going to have to carry water, I’m going to have to deal with my compost toilet, find a place to shower.”

“It was scary,” she admits. “But I also felt like, God! This is so cool!”

Leaving her stuff behind was not that hard for Williams. It was liberating. She got rid of photos, old love letters, her college letter jacket—“all that crap that you have because it reminds you of who you used to be.” Her friends and family have quit giving her things for Christmas, she says, “unless I get some kind of, you know, short fork!” She allows herself to own no more than 300 items, and she keeps careful count. “Not because I have obsessive-compulsive disorder,” she laughs, but because she once bet a friend that she had less stuff than he did. She’s kept count ever since.

The hardest part of her drastic downsizing, Williams says, was the loss of autonomy. “I moved into somebody else’s backyard, which felt a little bit like the kind of thing a 25-year-old would do, not a 40-year-old. That’s

been the biggest area of growth for me—living in a small house in somebody’s backyard and having to ask for water.” But it’s okay, she says. It’s brought her into closer relationship with her neighbors. “The neighbors on this side,” she says, pointing to the east, “I helped them build a French drain last year. The neighbors on the other side, I built them a chicken coop. It’s easier to participate when you’ve got more time.”

The big gain, though, was the gift of living intentionally. “It’s kind of a jazz-up,” she says. “The more intentional you are in your choices, the more every change makes room for more changes. It doesn’t make me feel bad about myself. I just love that there’s this endless potential. To see that you have this power. You get to choose what you want. That’s been cool.”

So what will Williams choose next?

She’s thinking of downsizing to a gypsy wagon that wouldn’t have the sleeping loft, “only because sometimes I feel like that’s a lot of wasted space—and I’d have a lower heating bill, greater economy of space. And I’d be just as happy in a smaller space.”



Carol Estes is a contributing editor at YES! Magazine.

When she sold a three-bedroom home and moved into this 84-square-foot house in Olympia, Washington, Dee Williams found freedom.

BETTY UDESEN

 www.YesMagazine.org/dreamhouse
Tour Dee Williams' house





GRIEF'S HIDDEN GIFT

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT HAPPINESS DURING MY MOM'S LAST DAYS WITH CANCER

Wendy Call

My mother stood with the phone cradled to her ear, fist on her hip, shaking her head. “Well, there’s not much chance of that!” She caught my eye as she spoke, her tone friendly but slightly impatient. I smiled; I could guess the other end of the conversation. The calls had come regularly in the months since my mother’s diagnosis. “We’re hoping you’ll get well,” friends and relatives would say. “We’re hoping for a miracle.” But as hard as it was for them to understand, we weren’t chasing any miracle cure. We were simply honoring every moment, miraculous or mundane, that remained of her life.

Nothing in my mother’s medical or family history had prepared us for her sudden diagnosis: terminal pancreatic cancer. On the day we learned her prognosis, my mother, father, and I sat alone in a hospital

examination room, the doctor having left for his next appointment. The ruinous news replaced all the oxygen in the small space as my mind spun forward: How could my mother’s life be ending? My father shook his head and sobbed, repeating, “Why us? Why does this have to happen to us?” My mother, canny and practical to her German-Lutheran-Midwestern core, simply patted his knee. “Now, these things have to happen to someone.” She never suffered the delusion that bad things only befell other people.

While my father and I struggled to accept the situation, my mother made a list of things she wanted to do: ride the Blue Ridge Parkway, stay in North Carolina’s fanciest mountain inn, fly cross-country to visit my home in Seattle, and finish a thousand-piece handmade quilt.



From left: Marilyn Call with the author as a baby, and on her birthday; the author with her parents on vacation in the Blue Ridge Mountains, two months after her mother's diagnosis; at work on the thousand-piece quilt.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CALL FAMILY

Within two days, Mom had started on her list. She and my father watched Blue Ridge sunsets from the top-floor suite of a breathtakingly expensive resort. She selected the few foods her stomach could tolerate from long hors d'oeuvres tables decorated with melons carved in the shapes of dahlias and roses. My father sobbed as my mother savored steamed prawns and asparagus, a live band playing in the background. Mom sang along with the band's John Denver covers and talked about the glorious August dusk. My father marveled at her unflinching cheerfulness and wondered how many more sunsets they would share.

A week later, I quit my job in Seattle and arrived with my suitcases in North Carolina, ready to stay for what we understood would be the remainder of Mom's life. We consulted with an oncologist, who recommend-

ed palliative chemotherapy. The weekly chemo treatments could extend Mom's life by a couple of months, but would probably make her sick for four days out of seven. We did the math and declined treatment, enrolled in home hospice care, and focused on Mom's to-do list.

We sent out the news to friends, relatives, neighbors, and coworkers and waited for them to visit. Most never showed, though some called to wish her well or say they were praying for a miracle. Many, even those who knew the starkness of her diagnosis, sent "get well soon" cards.

There were exceptions. My mother's closest friend, Betty, visited every week. They spent a few afternoons each month chatting, laughing, and piecing fabric triangles and diamonds into quilts, just as they had >>

I tried not to let my dread surface when I was with my mother. Only later would I recognize the irony: I fought to safeguard my mother from the knowledge of how acutely I would miss her.



RON ANTON ROZC

CECILE ANDREWS has learned a thing or two about the joys of simple life. Years ago, she quit her full-time job to throw herself into the Simplicity Movement, pursuing the work she loves: creating community and sustainability in Seattle's Phinney EcoVillage, giving workshops, and writing books.

But Cecile lately does all this in a new spirit. Even after simplifying, she found herself rushing around, often frantic and distracted. ("After all, I was trying to save the world!") But in the process of writing her book *Slow is Beautiful*, she discovered that rushing is incompatible with both happiness and simplicity. "You can't be happy when you rush because you are not able to feel or think deeply: You can't really appreciate others; you can't really notice what's going on around you in nature. You stay on the surface and fail to connect with real life.

"And you certainly can't live more simply: in a time-starved world, you're more likely to drive rather than take public transportation; more likely to eat prepared and processed food rather than cook for yourself; more likely to pay for entertainment rather than entertain yourself. You consume life rather than experience and enjoy life.

"A slower, more reflective approach to life allows happiness to grow."

» done for years. When Mom grew sicker, they just sat and talked.

Mom called her post-diagnosis life "the new normal." As her energy flagged, she calmly revised her criteria for contentment downward. A good afternoon was a few hours of quilting; an exciting weekend was a quiet mountain cabin with a good view; an ideal meal was anything her stomach would accept.

This is not to say she lived in denial. She was 63, and had always known her life might not be long. Her father had suffered a major stroke when he was 62, just a few weeks after his retirement. I remember being three years old and watching my grandfather woodworking in his backyard, the tools comfortable in his broad hands. That is my last memory of him as an able-bodied man. Though he lived another sixteen years after the stroke, longer than anyone else in Mom's family, he could no longer use the tools he loved, read a book, write a letter, or even speak.

My grandfather's ruined retirement taught my mother never to take her health for granted, and to reject my grandparents' post-Depression ideal of delayed gratification. He had never complained in his four decades of service to the local gas company, but the work was too long and tiring for him to enjoy his time off. His entire working life, he and my grandmother had looked forward to the day he would retire. My mother did not make the same mistake. Throughout her life, she followed her passions: teaching as a career, music as an avocation.

The same philosophy led her to focus her energy, after her diagnosis, on enjoying her final months with family and friends rather than chasing dubious medical treatments that might only prolong her suffering. I admired my mother's decision, even as people around us expressed shock or dismay that she had declined chemotherapy.

Mom kept her spirits up even as new bottles of pills lined the kitchen counter and filled her travel bag. Her diet grew more restrictive, and the disease brought on sudden diabetes, endless nausea, and more pain. Yet she spent little time grieving. Sometimes, when she saw one of us crying, she wept with us. But only once, one morning when she awoke feeling particularly ill, did she begin to cry first. "I feel awful," she told me, her voice muffled by despair. She bowed her face into her hands and shook her head. "I'm worried that I'm never going to feel any better than I do today." I realized that what my mother most feared was not death, but the inability to enjoy whatever time she had left.

During the six months of Mom's "new normal," tension clawed deep within me. I wanted to savor her remaining days, but my anguish over her approaching death grew with each passing week. I tried not to let my dread surface when I was with her. Only later would I recognize the irony: I had fought to safeguard my mother from the knowledge of how acutely I would miss her.

I've since come to consider all our moments together as gifts, even those marked by frustration, fear, and despair. During the six months of my mother's illness, I spent more time with her than I had in a decade. People have told me over and over how lucky I was to be able to drop nearly everything to be with her. It's true I have no children and could afford to quit my job. But I've seen many—who could have chosen otherwise—decline to spend time with a dying loved one. Some later expressed regret. Others insist it was out of their control. Either way, they missed something precious. Watching the pounds slip away from my mother's body and seeing the distant stare creep into her gaze had pained me, but it would have been far more painful not to witness those things.

Within a few months of Mom's death, I felt a quiet but growing pressure from those around me to "get back to normal." At first it made me angry, but later my anger turned to bafflement. What was normal? The person I had been before no longer existed, unschooled as she was in the intricacies of losing someone so close. Having grieved the loss of my mother, the quality of the light I saw and tang of the air I breathed were forever different. Not finer, not gloomier, but more precious and fleeting. Happiness comes not from the avoidance of pain and despair, but in the healing from it.

Four months into Mom's "new normal," she and my father celebrated my thirty-eighth birthday with me in Seattle. Mom sampled Whidbey Island chowder as we watched a salmon sun descend into the Pacific. Nearly one year later, my family gathered with Mom's friend Betty to scatter my mother's ashes near a music center in the Blue Ridge Mountains, where Mom had often practiced and performed. After our small ceremony, Betty handed me a large package, my thirty-ninth birthday present. It was my mother's last quilt: one thousand fabric shapes that she had pieced and Betty had backed. 🍷

Wendy Call (www.wendycall.com) is the 2009 Distinguished Northwest Writer in Residence at Seattle University and coeditor of *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide* (Plume/Penguin, 2007).



WADE COGESHALL

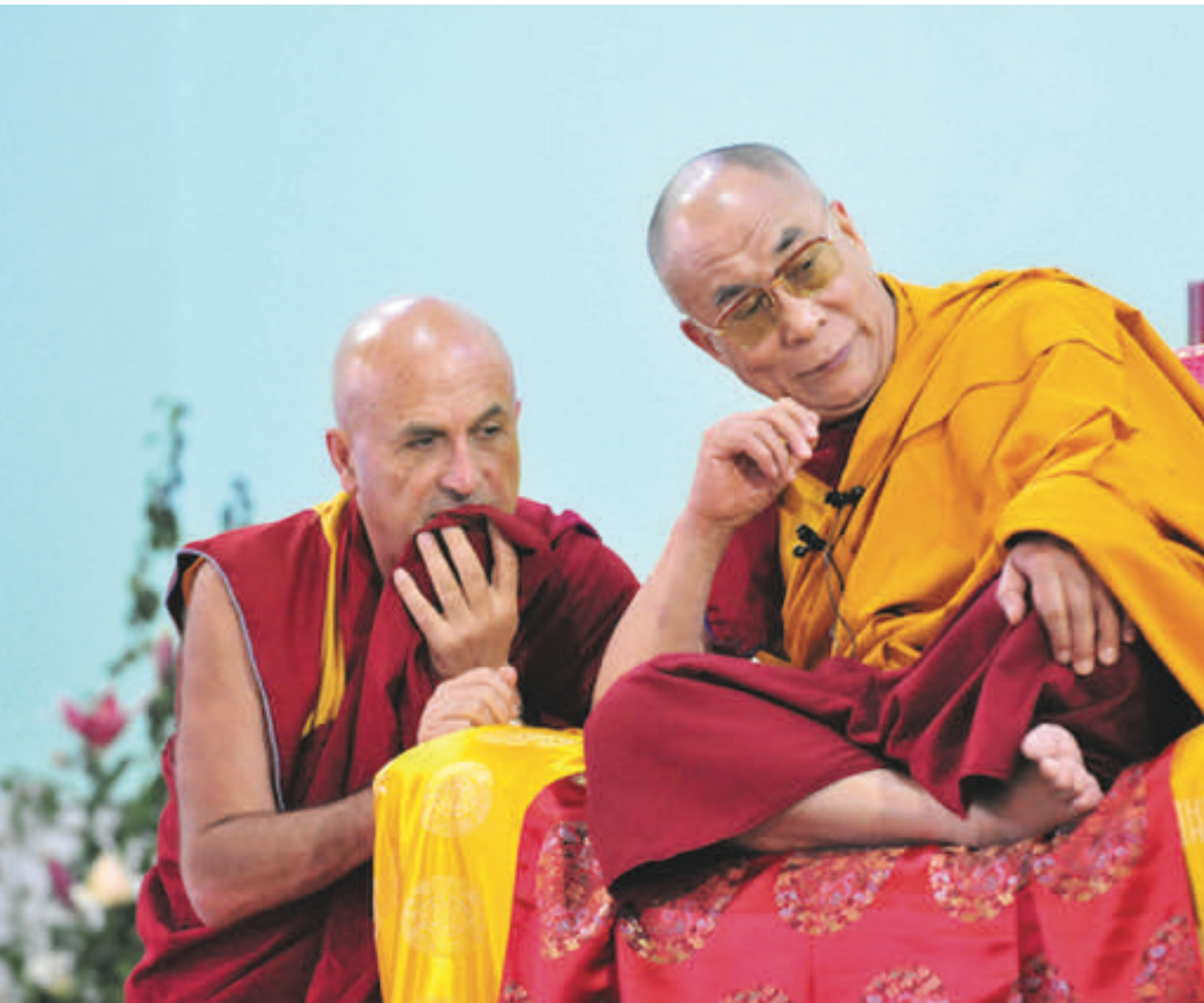
TITUS THE THERAPY DOG, a four-year-old chocolate lab, makes the rounds every Wednesday at Brownsburg Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Indiana to dispense what owner CindyKay Graham calls "The Titus Touch." Dog owners have long known about the healing power of a wet nose and a wagging tail, and the rest of the world seems to be catching on. Therapy dogs are increasingly being trained to bring their stress-reducing balm to Alzheimer's patients, stroke victims, and children in cancer wards. Teams from the Delta Society, Therapy Pet International, and the Good Dog Foundation assisted the Red Cross with comforting rescue workers at Ground Zero after September 11, 2001.

After a 1980 study indicating that pet owners live longer than other people, research on the therapeutic benefits of animals has been on the rise. The *Journal of the American Heart Association* detailed findings from a study of single stockbrokers who had suffered severe hypertension. While a control group took blood pressure medication, other brokers took medication and also took in a dog or a cat. After six months, the pet-owning brokers fared far better under stress.



THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON

AFTER 2,000 YEARS OF PRACTICE,
BUDDHIST MONKS KNOW THAT
ONE SECRET TO HAPPINESS IS
SIMPLY TO PUT YOUR MIND TO IT



BLISS

Matthieu Ricard

What is happiness, and how can we achieve it?

Happiness can't be reduced to a few agreeable sensations. Rather, it is a way of being and of experiencing the world—a profound fulfillment that suffuses every moment and endures despite inevitable setbacks.

The paths we take in search of happiness often lead us to frustration and suffering instead. We try to create outer conditions that we believe will make us happy. But it is the mind itself that translates outer conditions into happiness or suffering. This is why we can be deeply unhappy even though we “have it all”—wealth, power, health, a good family, etc.—and, conversely, we can remain strong and serene in the face of hardship.

Authentic happiness is a way of being and a skill to be cultivated. When we first begin, the mind is vulnerable and untamed, like that of a monkey or a restless child. It takes practice to gain inner peace, inner strength, altruistic love, forbearance, and other qualities that lead to authentic happiness.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama often teaches that, while there are limitations to how much information one can learn and to our physical performance, compassion can be developed boundlessly.

Practicing Happiness

It is not difficult to begin. You just have to sit from time to time, turn your mind within, and let your thoughts calm down. Focus your attention on a chosen object. It can be an object in your room, your breath, or your own mind. Inevitably, your mind will wander as you do this. Each time it does, gently bring it back to the object of concentration, like a butterfly that returns again and again to a flower.

In the freshness of the present moment, past is gone, future is not yet born, and—

if one remains in pure mindfulness and freedom—disturbing thoughts arise and go without leaving a trace. That is basic meditation.

Pure consciousness without content is something all those who meditate regularly and seriously have experienced—it is not just some sort of Buddhist theory. And anyone who takes the trouble to stabilize and clarify his or her mind will be able to experience it, too. It is through this unconditioned aspect of consciousness that we can transform the content of mind through training.

But meditation also means to cultivate basic human qualities, such as attention and compassion, and new ways of experiencing the world. What really matters is that a person gradually changes. Over months and years, we become less impatient, less prone to anger, less torn between hopes and fears. It becomes inconceivable to willingly harm another person. We develop a propensity toward altruistic behavior and the cluster of qualities that give us the resources to deal with the ups and downs of life.

The point here is that you can look at your thoughts, including strong emotions, with a pure mindfulness that is not associated with the contents of the thoughts.

Take the example of malevolent anger. We usually identify with anger. Anger can fill our mental landscape and project its distorted reality on people and events. When we are overwhelmed by anger, we cannot dissociate from it. We perpetuate a vicious circle of affliction by rekindling anger each time we see or remember the person who makes us angry. We become addicted to the cause of suffering.

But if we dissociate from anger and look at it with mindfulness, that which is aware of anger is not angry, and we can see that anger is just a bunch of thoughts. Anger doesn't cut like a knife, burn like a fire, >>

Matthieu Ricard, left, quit his career as a cellular geneticist nearly 40 years ago to study Buddhism. He is the French translator for the Dalai Lama, right.

PAGODA PHAT HUE, PHATHUE.COM

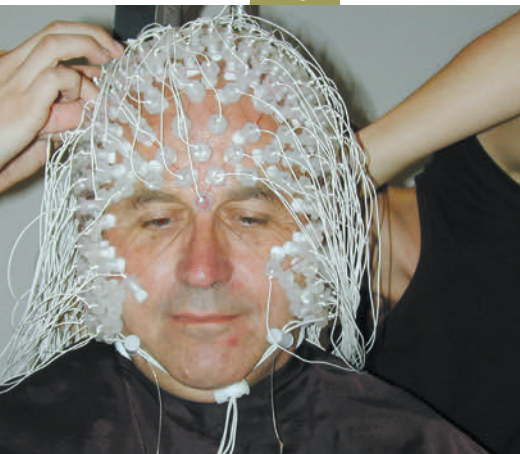


www.YesMagazine.org/dalailama

Dalai Lama Renaissance: The Dalai Lama invited the West's most innovative thinkers, including YES! Magazine's Fran Korten, to discuss solutions to the world's problems.



10



WAISMAN BRAIN IMAGING LAB,
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

When Matthieu Ricard meditates, his mind is filled with infinite compassion. That's his experience. When Dr. Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin used magnetic resonance imaging to look at **MATTHIEU RICARD'S BRAIN** he saw a prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain associated with happiness and other positive emotions—lit up in a way never before seen by researchers. Ricard, a PhD geneticist and Buddhist monk who's been meditating for decades, had off-the-charts gamma wave activity, which corresponds with focused thought. Davidson tested 30 other Buddhist monks and got similar results. Testing of 150 other subjects showed no such patterns, although it did show low-level changes among subjects who were newly trained in meditation techniques.

» or crush like a rock; it is nothing more than a product of our mind. Instead of “being” the anger, we understand that we are not the anger, in the same way that clouds are not the sky.

So, to deal with anger, we avoid letting our mind jump again and again to the trigger for our anger. Then we look at anger itself and keep our attention upon it. If we stop adding wood to a fire and just watch, the fire will die out. Likewise, anger will vanish away, without being forcibly repressed or allowed to explode.

There is no question of not experiencing emotions; it's a question of not being enslaved by them. Let emotions arise, but let them be freed from their afflictive components: distortion of reality, mental confusion, clinging, and suffering for oneself and others.

There is great virtue in resting from time to time in pure awareness of the present moment, and being able to refer to this state when afflictive emotions arise so that we do not identify with them and are not swayed by them.

It is difficult in the beginning, but becomes quite natural as you become increasingly familiar with such an approach. Whenever anger arises, you learn to recognize it right away. If you know someone to be a pickpocket, even if he mingles in a crowd, you will spot him right away and keep a careful eye on him.

Interdependence

Just as you can learn to deal with afflictive thoughts, you can learn to cultivate and enhance wholesome ones. To be filled with love and kindness brings about an optimal way of being. It is a win-win situation: you will enjoy lasting well-being for yourself, you'll act in altruistic ways towards others, and you'll be perceived as a good human being.

If altruistic love is based on an understanding of the interdependence of all beings and of their natural aspiration to happiness, and if this love extends impartially to all beings, then it is a source of genuine happiness. Acts of overflowing love, of pure, disinterested generosity—as when you make a child happy or help someone in need, even if nobody knows what you have done—generate a deep and heartwarming fulfillment.

Human qualities often come in clusters. Altruism, inner peace, strength, freedom, and genuine happiness thrive together like the parts of a nourishing fruit. Likewise, selfishness, animosity, and fear grow together. So, while helping others may not always be “pleasant,” it leads the mind to a sense of inner peace, courage, and harmony with the interdependence of all things and beings.

Afflictive mental states, on the other hand, begin with self-centeredness, with an increase in the gap between self and others. These states are related to excessive self-importance and self-cherishing associated with fear or resentment towards others, and grasping for outer things as part of a hopeless pursuit of selfish happiness. A selfish pursuit of happiness is a lose-lose situation: you make yourself miserable and make others miserable as well.

Inner conflicts are often linked with excessive rumination on the past and anticipation of the future. You are not truly paying attention to the present moment, but are engrossed in your thoughts, going on and on in a vicious circle, feeding your ego and self-centeredness.

This is the opposite of bare attention. To turn your attention inside means to look at pure awareness itself and dwell without distraction, yet effortlessly, in the present moment.

If you cultivate these mental skills, after a while you won't need to apply contrived efforts anymore. You can deal with mental perturbations like the eagles I see from the window of my hermitage in the Himalayas deal with crows. The crows often attack them, diving at the eagles from above. But, instead of doing all kinds of acrobatics, the eagle simply retracts one wing at the last moment, lets the diving crow pass, and then extends its wing again. The whole thing requires minimal effort and causes little disturbance.

Being experienced in dealing with the sudden arising of emotions in the mind works in a similar way.

I have been exposed to the world of humanitarian activities for a number of years since I decided to dedicate the entire royalties of my books to 30 projects on education and health in Tibet, Nepal, and

India, with a group of dedicated volunteers and generous philanthropists. It is easy to see how corruption, clashes of ego, weak empathy, discouragement can plague the humanitarian world. All this stems from a lack of maturity. So the advantages of spending time to develop human altruism and compassionate courage are obvious.

The Fragrance of Peace

The most important time to meditate or do other types of spiritual practices is early in the morning. You set the tone for the day and the “fragrance” of the meditation will remain and give a particular perfume to the whole day. Another important time is before falling asleep. If you clearly generate a positive state of mind, filled with compassion or altruism, this will give a different quality to the whole night.

When people experience “moments of grace”, or “magical moments” in daily life, while walking in the snow under the stars or spending a beautiful moment with dear friends by the seaside, what is really happening? All of a sudden, they have left their burden of inner conflicts behind. They feel in harmony with others, with themselves, with the world. It is wonderful to fully enjoy such magical moments, but it is also revealing to understand why they feel so good: pacification of inner conflicts; a better sense of interdependence with everything rather than fragmenting reality; and a respite from the mental toxins of aggression and obsession. All these qualities can be cultivated through developing wisdom and inner freedom. This will lead not just to a few moments of grace but to a lasting state of well-being that we may call genuine happiness.

In this state, feelings of insecurity gradually give way to a deep confidence that you can deal with life’s ups and downs. Your equanimity will spare you from being swayed like mountain grass in the wind by every possible praise and blame, gain and loss, comfort and discomfort. You can always draw on deep inner peace, and the waves at the surface will not appear as threatening. 🍷

Matthieu Ricard has authored seven books, including *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life’s Most Important Skill*. He lives at the Shechen monastery in Nepal, travels the world for Karuna-shechen (www.karuna-shechen.org) and does an annual solitary retreat in the Himalayas.



RANDALL RODE

11 Happiness-in-Action Heroes

LAUGHTER YOGA practitioners lead a group of about 40 people in an hour of laughing in New York City’s Riverside Park. Dr. Madan Kataria, a Mumbai, India, physician, thinks one of the keys to fighting stress and depression is laughter. So he started the first laughter club in 1995, and has since taken them around the world. Participants start sessions, which normally last 30 minutes, with yoga breathing, then move to fake laughter exercises, accompanied by simple actions, such as acting like a lion. According to Dr. Kataria, the idea is to “fake it, until you make it.” The forced laughter becomes real, and participants come away energized by the experience.

🎥 www.YesMagazine.org/laughteryoga

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Buddhist meditation may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of high-security prisons. For 36 inmates at Alabama’s Donaldson Correctional Facility, a rigorous, silent, nine-day meditation course in 2002 gave them the tools to take a deep look at their lives and to connect with their humanity in the dehumanizing prison setting. Most have continued meditating, and identify themselves as members of a community, “**THE DHAMMA BROTHERS.**” That is also the name of a collection of their letters to workshop organizer Jenny Phillips, in which they describe the profound impact meditation has had on their lives.

🎥 www.YesMagazine.org/prisonmeditation

BLESSINGS REVEALED





PUANANI BURGESS HELPS PEOPLE FIND COMMON GROUND.

A sought-after mediator, poet, community organizer, and Zen priest, Pua attributes her abilities as a cultural translator to a personal heritage as varied as her homeland, Hawai'i. She's Japanese, Chinese, Native Hawai'ian, German, and French, and grew up poor in one of the Islands' roughest towns. It is fostering that connection—with self, with place, with community—that is the key to her success in bringing people together.

Here is a story she told at the Seattle Green Festival that shows the power of discovering your gift.

Puanani Burgess

One of the processes I use to help people talk to each other I call Building the Beloved Community. There's an exercise that requires people to tell three stories.

The first is the story of all of your names. The second is the story of your community. The third story I ask them to tell is the story of your gift.

One time, I did this process with a group in our local high school. We went around the circle and we got to this young man, and he told the story of his names well and the story of his community well, but when it came time to tell the story of his gift, he asked, "What, Miss? What kind gift you think I get, eh? I stay in this special ed class and I get a hard time read and I cannot do that math. And why you make me shame for, ask me that kind question? What kind gift you have? If I had gift, you think I be here?"

He just shut down and shut up, and I felt really shamed. In all the time I have ever done that, I have never, never shamed anybody before.

Two weeks later, I am in our local grocery store, and I see him down one of those aisles and I see his back and I'm going down there with my cart and I think "Nope

I'm not going there." So I start to back up as fast as I can and I'm trying to run away from him. And then he turns around and he sees me, and he throws his arms open, and he says, "Aunty! I have been thinking about you, you know. Two weeks I have been thinking: 'What my gift? What my gift?'"

I say "OK bruddah, so what's your gift?"

He says, "You know, I've been thinking, thinking, thinking. I cannot do that math stuff and I cannot read so good, but Aunty, when I stay in the ocean, I can call the fish, and the fish he come, every time. Every time I can put food on my family table. Every time. And sometimes when I stay in the ocean and the Shark he come, and he look at me and I look at him and I tell him, 'Uncle I not going take plenty fish. I just going to take one, two fish, just for my family. All the rest I leave for you.' And so the Shark he say, 'Oh, you cool, brother.' And I tell the Shark, 'Uncle, you cool.' And the Shark, he go his way and I go my way."

And I look at this boy and I know what a genius he is, and I mean, certifiable. But in our society, the way schools are run, he is rubbish. He is totally destroyed, not appreciated at all. So when I talked to his teacher and the principal of the school, I asked them what would his life have been like if this curriculum were gift-based? If we were able to see the gift in each of our children and taught around that gift? What would happen if our community was gift-based? If we could really understand what the gift of each of our communities were, and really began to support that?

So that for me is a very native approach—being able to see the giftedness in every aspect of life.

Puanani Burgess remembers playing in these giant banyan and kapok trees as a child on the grounds of Iolani Palace in Honolulu.

PAUL DUNN FOR YES! MAGAZINE



Think You're Thankful?

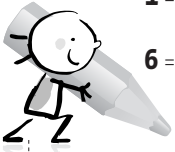
Researchers say thankful people tend to be happy people. Take this test to find out just how thankful you are.

Use this scale to score each statement:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, or 6 = strongly agree

Except, items marked ❖ score this way:

6 = strongly disagree, 5 = disagree, 4 = somewhat disagree, 3 = slightly agree, 2 = agree, or 1 = strongly agree



FAMILY

1. I make a point of letting my family members know how much I appreciate them. _____
2. My loved ones would say that I'm quick to thank them when they do something kind for me. _____
3. I call and write my loved ones to thank them for things they have done for me. _____
4. I feel uncomfortable saying "thank you" to my family members. _____❖
5. Because I have gotten where I am in life pretty much on my own, I don't think I owe my family anything. _____❖

FRIENDS

6. I make it a point to let friends of mine know how much I appreciate them. _____

7. I'm grateful for the things my friends have done for me. _____

8. I would not be where I am in life if it were not for the support of my friends. _____

9. When I think about the good things my friends have done for me, there doesn't seem to be a lot to be grateful for. _____❖

10. I feel like I owe my friends nothing when it comes to any of my accomplishments in life. _____❖

NEIGHBORS AND CO-WORKERS

11. When I think about it, there are many people in my community to whom I should be grateful. _____

12. I try to say "thanks" when I am helped by neighbors or colleagues I do not know very well. _____

13. I see many things that people in my community do for which I am appreciative. _____

14. The people who live in my community almost never do anything that I'm thankful for. _____❖

15. There's not much going on in my community to feel grateful about. _____❖

HUMANITY

16. I appreciate the people who are working to make this world a better place. _____

17. When I hear about someone who has helped others, I feel appreciative that such people exist in the world. _____

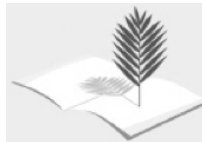
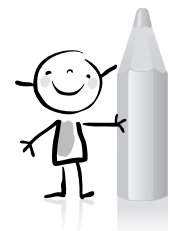
18. I'm thankful to live in a world with people who care about the welfare of others. _____

19. There is not a lot happening in the world to feel grateful about. _____❖

20. It's hard to feel thankful about good things that are happening in another part of the world. _____❖

Add your scores to find out how thankful you are.

High Gratitude (80th percentile) = **105 or higher**; Gratitude (60th percentile) = **99-104**
Moderate Gratitude (40th percentile) = **94-98**; Low Gratitude (20th percentile) = **86-97**



Resource Guide

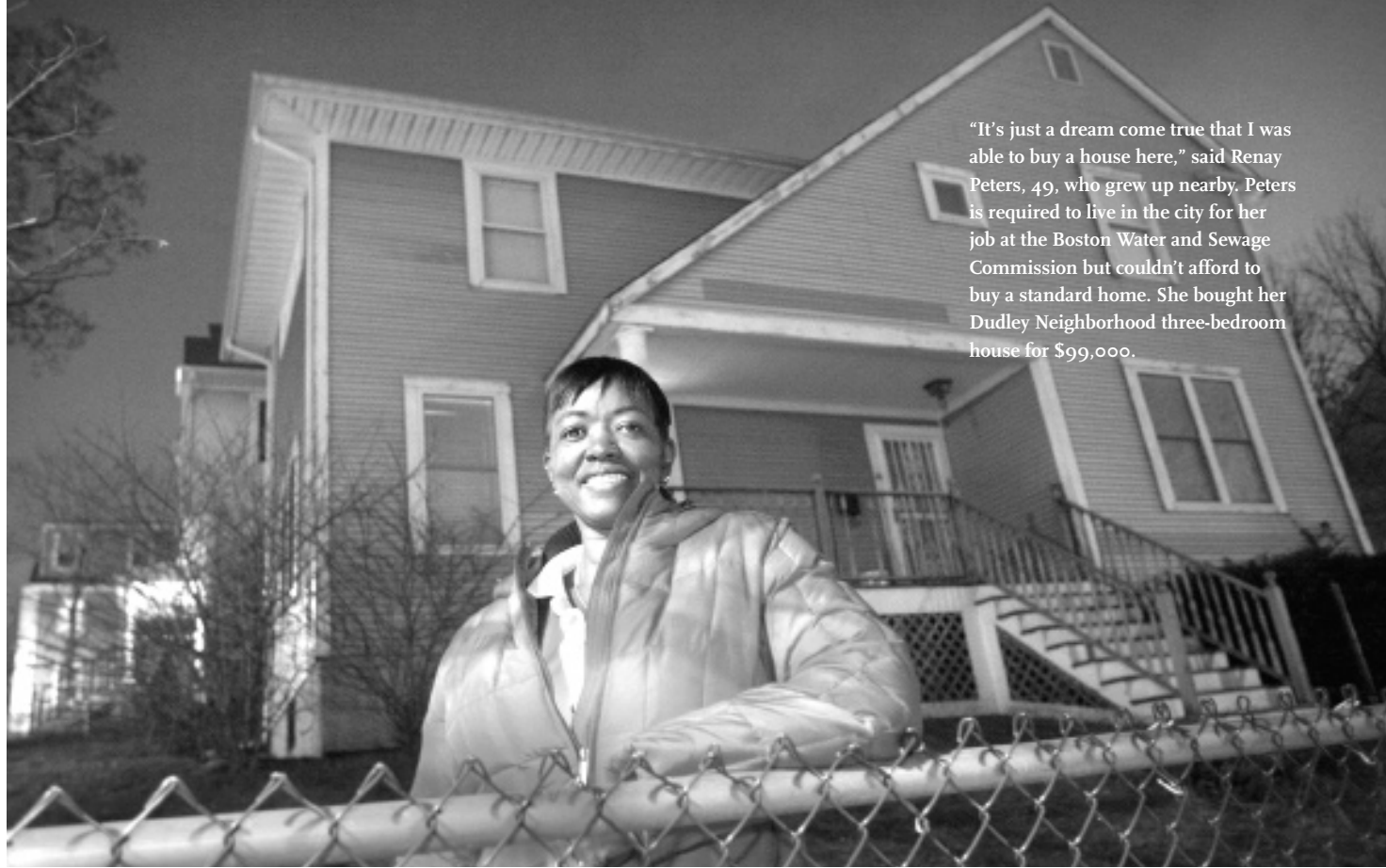
The information and links you need to find out more on Sustainable Happiness.
www.YesMagazine.org/resourceguide48



Discussion Guide

Get a group together and have a conversation on Sustainable Happiness.
www.YesMagazine.org/discuss48

Source: Test developed by Stephen Post, director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics in the School of Medicine, Stony Brook University, and co-author of *Why Good Things Happen to Good People* (Doubleday, Broadway 2007); and researcher Mike McCullough, professor at the University of Miami Department of Psychology.



"It's just a dream come true that I was able to buy a house here," said Renay Peters, 49, who grew up nearby. Peters is required to live in the city for her job at the Boston Water and Sewage Commission but couldn't afford to buy a standard home. She bought her Dudley Neighborhood three-bedroom house for \$99,000.

EVAN RICHMAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

No Foreclosures Here

With the housing crisis nationwide driving struggling families from their homes, Boston's creative Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative shows how communities can hold their ground.

Holly Sklar

When I first visited the Dudley Street neighborhood in 1988, less than two miles from downtown Boston, it looked like tornadoes had struck, leveling whole sections of homes and shops that were never rebuilt.

Beginning in the 1950s, an escalating unnatural disaster of government negligence, banking discrimination, racism, and arson for profit had stripped the Dudley neighborhood of services and destroyed many homes and businesses. Nighttime often carried the smell of smoke and fear as fires struck abandoned and occupied buildings, orchestrated by absentee

landlords who wanted to collect on insurance and speculators clearing out properties for later redevelopment.

By the early 1980s, nearly one-third of Dudley land lay vacant. The empty lots became illegal dumping grounds for garbage, construction debris, and toxic waste from around the state. The community worried it would be driven out altogether by "urban renewal," favoring costly housing, office towers, upscale retail, and high profits for developers over affordable homes and local businesses.

But instead of leaving their fate in the hands of city planners and private



No Foreclosures Here

» developers, residents did something extraordinary. They founded a community organization called the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). They organized a “Don’t Dump On Us” campaign to fight illegal dumping, clean up the vacant lots, and build community hope and power. They “flipped planning on its head”: Instead

within specific areas like Dudley that were designated by the Boston Bankers Urban Renewal Group (B-BURG). Realtors used racist fear-mongering and arranged break-ins and other “scare the hell out of them” tactics to orchestrate blockbusting and flight by longtime white homeowners with paid-off mortgages. FHA inspections

chance to pursue a coherent plan for the area that would meet community needs.

Dudley’s approach turned the long-abused power of eminent domain into a tool for development without displacement. Eminent domain applied only to vacant land: No one lost their home or business in the process. DSNI

Housing experts across the country have their eye on community land trusts as proven means of preventing foreclosures. A survey released March 2008 found only two foreclosures among a sample of 3,115 land trust homeowners.

of trying to influence a top-down urban renewal process led by city government and developers, they created their own “bottom up” comprehensive revitalization plan and, in 1987, convinced the City of Boston to formally adopt it. Then, DSNI made history in 1988 as the only community group in the nation to win the power of eminent domain to acquire vacant land for resident-led development.

Over the past two decades, the community has rebuilt much of the vacant land with housing affordable to low-income families and revitalized the neighborhood.

Today, Dudley is much more prepared to weather the storm of predatory lending, fraud, and foreclosures sweeping the country.

Residents Claim Control

Dudley was hit hard by the widespread discriminatory practice known as “redlining” that denied home and business loans, insurance, and other services to people in low-income neighborhoods—or offered them only at exorbitant rates. In the late 1960s, Dudley temporarily experienced a reverse form of redlining in a devastating preview of today’s nationwide foreclosure crisis. Mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) were finally made available to black buyers in Boston, but only

deliberately played into the hands of speculators. They undervalued good properties so speculators could buy them cheap, while overvaluing properties that homebuyers would find out later needed major repair. Buyers who had no reserves to pay for repairs and had mortgages that were greater than the actual value of their homes often faced foreclosure. More than half of all B-BURG purchasers lost their homes by 1974. The bankers, meanwhile, made money on mortgage-processing fees while passing on the costs of foreclosure to the federal government—and the Dudley community.

DSNI confronted the devastation by shifting control over development from city planners, speculators and private developers to neighborhood residents. Residents’ vision of a diverse, dynamic, sustainable “urban village” has guided Dudley redevelopment since the late 1980s.

DSNI’s eminent domain proposal targeted the center of the Dudley neighborhood—a 64-acre triangular section with 30 acres of vacant land, nicknamed the “Bermuda Triangle.” About half of this land was city-owned, but scattered throughout were 181 private vacant lots, many held by tax-delinquent absentee owners. Acquiring private lots one by one would have been a complex and piecemeal ordeal. Eminent domain gave DSNI the

worked with residents who owned vacant land in the Triangle and wanted to develop their lots as homes or gardens, for example.

And the strategy placed control over vacant Triangle land in the hands of a community land trust, Dudley Neighbors, Inc., to institutionalize resident control over the land and its development, and ensure that housing created is not only affordable to the first buyers but future homeowners.

How It Works

In a community land trust, families purchase homes but a nonprofit organization owns the land. This approach “protects affordability in perpetuity,” says May Louie, DSNI director of capacity building.

In the Dudley Neighbors land trust, homebuyers receive a 99-year renewable and inheritable lease for use of the land. They agree that all future sales will be made to a low- or moderate-income buyer and follow a resale formula at a price that allows them to recoup the cost of home improvements and benefit from modest price appreciation.

Dudley Neighbors prohibits the shoddy construction that so often undermines affordable housing. Homebuyers often qualify for downpayment and closing cost assistance through the Boston Home Certificate Initiative.

Homeowners benefit from city and



ROBERT HAAS

DSNI director John Barros has his roots here. As a kid in 1993, he helped design the prominent 1993 “Unity Through Diversity” mural that has become a neighborhood icon.

state affordable-housing subsidies, and get a quality home they couldn’t otherwise afford. And land trust homeowners pay significantly lower property taxes because the city recognizes the resale restrictions.

Land trust subsidies aren’t lost if the homeowner leaves. “The subsidies stay with the home generation after generation,” Louie says. “They can’t be cashed out. In the land trust model, the investment is shared, and the equity is shared. It builds family wealth and community wealth.” And the housing remains affordable for future buyers.

Homeowners also get protection from predatory lenders. Dudley Neighbors restricts loans to reasonable terms from approved lenders and steps in to help if homeowners miss payments due to job loss or medical crises.

“Homeowners get more than a financial subsidy,” explains John Barros, executive director of DSNI. “They get an ongoing partner in dealing with lenders.”

The land trust provides stability and opportunity that low-income neighborhoods generally don’t have.

“Turnover in the land trust is very low,” says Jason Webb. “People really plant roots in the community.”

He should know. Jason grew up in the neighborhood and started volunteering with DSNI when he was seven years old. By 13, he knew he wanted to work for the group as an adult, and he’s never wavered, going from volunteer to DSNI board member to full-time community organizer to director of the Dudley community land trust.

John Barros is another of the many residents who prove that moving up in a low-income community doesn’t mean moving out. John’s parents emigrated from Cape Verde to Boston before he was born, and as a teenager, he was the founding co-chair of DSNI’s youth committee and the first youth to serve on the DSNI board. A graduate of Dartmouth College, John became DSNI director in 2000. “It’s a real sign of progress that so many kids move up and stay [in Dudley],” John says.

Weathering the Next Disaster

The strategies that enabled Dudley to overcome the housing disasters of

earlier decades are now helping protect it from today’s foreclosure crisis. There were 713 foreclosures in the city of Boston in the first seven months of 2008, but none in the Dudley land trust.

“The community land trust secures the wealth and assets [people] worked for,” says Barros, “Without the land trust, the risk is not just to homeowners, but the community. Foreclosure destroys communities. With the [land trust], public funds are used more efficiently and responsibly. Society gains from the more stable market the community land trust provides.” DSNI cannot stop all foreclosures on neighborhood homes outside the land trust, but it is helping homeowners negotiate with lenders to avoid foreclosure, and supporting tenant rights in foreclosed apartment buildings. It is also working with the city of Boston to purchase and repair vacant foreclosed neighborhood properties and add them to the community land trust where possible. Without the land trust and these other actions, says Barros, the situation “could have been catastrophic.”

“We’ve learned from the past,” says >>

No Foreclosures Here



Children play in the fountain at the Dennis Street Park, built last year and opened at the end of August. The park is in the middle of several significant Community Land Trust housing developments. The first one, Winthrop Estates, was completed in 1993.

ROBERT HAAS

» Jason Webb. “We want to intervene before the [foreclosed] homes are stripped and burned. We want to rebuild while the homes are still standing.”

DSNI is working with Boston City Council president Maureen Feeny who is exploring whether the community land trust model can help fight foreclosures citywide and strengthen Boston’s affordable housing strategy.

Meanwhile, housing experts across the country have their eye on community land trusts as proven means of preventing foreclosures. In a survey released March 2008, the National Community Land Trust Network found only two foreclosures among a national sample of 3,115 land trust homeowners. A report on land trusts (including the Dudley example) by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy concluded, “The traditional subsidy temporarily creates affordable payments, while the [community land trust] model permanently creates affordable housing.”

A Vision Realized

Dudley’s plans for an urban village are coming to fruition. The Dudley Triangle looks nothing like it did in 1988. The Dudley Town Common, created from fragmented vacant lots, welcomes residents and visitors with colorful permanent artwork, farmer’s markets, performances, and inviting green space. The land trust has 205 affordable homes, including co-ops, rentals, and homeownership units—with plans for more in 2009. There’s a 350-person waiting list to rent apartments in Dudley Village, a new mixed-use development that will have a laundromat, beauty supply store, and Caribbean restaurant. A once-contaminated “brown-field” site is now a greenhouse.

Across the Dudley neighborhood, vacant land once used as a dumping ground now hosts playgrounds, parks, community gardens, and multicultural festivals. More than 450 affordable homes (including those in the land trust) have risen from the ashes of burned-out buildings, along with

businesses, nonprofits and community centers. More than 700 homes have been rehabilitated. And the neighborhood is planning a major new community center for indoor and outdoor recreation, the arts, education, and events. Kids who grew up with DSNI have become community leaders, businesspeople, politicians, and teachers.

“Long-term vision has been the most valuable skill I’ve cultivated over the years,” says Jason Webb.

Long-term vision has guided Dudley’s revitalization for 24 years, and kept Dudley moving forward through economic ups and downs and changing government policies. Today, that vision is helping Dudley confront a widening recession and harsh government cutbacks.

Dudley’s spirit is evident in the preamble to the Declaration of Community Rights written by Dudley residents in 1993. It reads, “We—the youth, adults, seniors of African, Latin American, Caribbean, Native American, Asian, and European ancestry—are the Dudley community ... We were Boston’s dumping ground and forgotten neighborhood. Today, we are on the rise! We are reclaiming our dignity, rebuilding housing, and reknitting the fabric of our communities. Tomorrow, we realize our vision of a vibrant, culturally diverse neighborhood, where everyone is valued for their talents and contribution to the larger community.” 📌



Holly Sklar is coauthor of *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*, about the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (www.dsni.org), and director of Business for Shared Prosperity (www.businessforsharedprosperity.org).

FROM THE PUBLISHER



What once looked to the larger society like “hippie” behavior from the far-out fringe, now simply looks smart.

Sustainability in a Crisis

A SHORT TIME AGO, as the turmoil in the financial system mounted, I saw my friend Laurie Landeros. She’s Vice President of Shorebank Pacific, a Northwest bank committed to sustainable community development. I asked Laurie how the financial mess was affecting her bank. “So far, we’re doing just fine,” she said. “Our loans are all to local businesses that focus on sustainability, and they seem to be doing well. And since we pride ourselves on being a local and regional bank, we never bought into the mortgage-backed securities market. That means we don’t have bad loans to write down. At the end of September, 2008, we experienced our 10th straight quarter of profitability.”

Wow! In the midst of a major financial meltdown bringing pain to the lives of people across the country and the world, here was a bank and its customers that were doing just fine. I suddenly realized that many of us think about our choices for sustainability as something we are doing for the future—for our kids and our grandkids—or for people in other parts of the world. But it turns out that in a crisis-prone period such as we are living through, those choices also benefit ourselves, right now.

Take Doug Pibel, who is YES! Managing Editor. He’s deeply committed to sustainable living and a future that works for everyone. He owns a 1991

Ford Festiva. It’s a small car, nothing fancy, and didn’t require the magnitude of investment of a Prius. It gets around 40 miles per gallon. So when the cost of gas spiked to over \$4.00 a gallon, Doug hardly felt the shock.

It’s the same for my friends at Winslow Cohousing on Bainbridge Island (where three YES! staff members live). The folks who live there made a choice for sustainability. Individual homes are small, as there are many shared spaces designed to build community. All the buildings were built to exceed by a large margin code requirements for energy efficiency. As the cost of heating has soared, the effect on the cohousing families has been small compared to people with large homes. And the cohousing community garden is great both for healthy eating and saving money in a time of rising food prices.

I’ve also spoken with several good friends who have substantial investment portfolios. Each of them resisted the advice of their advisors who urged them to “balance” their portfolio by including some high risk/high return investments—the kind that have crashed as the speculative bubble burst. Instead, these individuals brought their commitment to sustainability into their investment decisions, making choices for responsible businesses, even though those investments brought lower returns than those associated with high-flying

speculation. And now they’re doing fine.

The terrible truth is that the crises we have been experiencing—meltdown of the financial system, hurricanes, floods, high food and energy costs—are part of our new reality. Our society has been living far too recklessly for far too long. We’ve been heating up the planet, shredding the fabric of life, relying on debt—personal and national—to live beyond our means, and assuming the free market can regulate itself. Now we are paying the price.

But if we know that crises will continue to come at us, what’s the best defense—in our personal lives, our communities and our nation? It turns out that the choices for sustainability—the ideas and practical actions we’ve been writing about in YES! for years—are not simply wise for future generations, but valuable immediately.

When we make choices that rely less on fossil fuels, global finance, and long supply chains and more on conservation, savings, and local production, we become less vulnerable to crises and more resilient in recovering from them. What once looked to the larger society like “hippie” behavior from the far-out fringe, now simply looks smart.

Fran Korten, Publisher

WHO WE ARE ::

YES! Magazine is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization supporting people's active engagement in creating a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. The work of the Positive Futures Network is to give visibility and momentum to signs of an emerging society in which life, not money, is what counts; in which everyone matters; and in which vibrant, inclusive communities offer prosperity, security, and meaningful ways of life.

NEWS AND NOTES ::



New Board Member

At its August meeting, the board of the Positive Futures Network elected **Nate Moxley** as its newest member. Nate, 32, served nearly three years as Executive Director of The Service Board, which provides Seattle-area high-school-age youth with experiences that teach practical skills and build self-knowledge, courage, and determination. Nate is a Seattle native and graduate of the Huxley Environmental College at Western Washington University. He and his wife Jessica have two children. —*F. Korten*

YES! Takes on the News

In the last issue of YES!, Fran Korten announced a new initiative, YES! Takes on the News, designed to find positive opportunities for deep change in breaking news stories. YES! has provided immediate responses to the Congressional move to threaten Iran with blockades and to election coverage that ignores the issues most Americans care about. Our coverage of the financial crisis and government bailout featured analysis by Sarah van Gelder and guest columnists David Korten and Leslie Christian. You'll find it all at www.yesmagazine.org. Subscribe to our RSS

feed to get a regular "YES! Take" on the news. —*S. Gleason*

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Tribute to a Dedicated Volunteer

Barbara Kowalski, artist, community leader, and ever-gracious lady, has volunteered every week at YES! since we started in 1996. Her dedication and thoughtfulness have been an inspiration to us all. Her beautiful art adorns our office walls. Now, on the eve of turning 80, she is bowing out of her work at YES! We are grateful for her many years of devoted service. Barbara is part of a wonderful community of volunteers that makes YES! thrive. —*S. Wilson*

YES! PICKS ::

Things To Do, Places To Go



www.YesMagazine.org/events

For an expanded listing of upcoming events

Global Day of Action on Climate

December 6, worldwide. As government representatives gather each year for the United Nations Climate Talks, people across the globe synchronize their voices and local activities in a common day of action, demanding urgent efforts on climate and climate justice. Visit the Global Climate Campaign website to learn about actions in your area. www.globalclimatecampaign.org

Radical Abundance: A Theology of Sustainability

January 21-23, in New York, NY. Join faith leaders and practitioners across the country and across denominational lines for the 39th National Theological Conference at the Trinity Wall Street Church. Keynote speakers include David Korten, YES! board chair, and Majora Carter of Sustainable South Bronx and Green For All. The conference will be webcast to over 70 satellite sites. To organize a site in your city, apply online by December 15. www.trinitywallstreet.org/education/?institute-default

Creating Change Conference

January 28-February 1, in Denver, CO. The 21st National Conference on LGBT equality will bring together over 2,500 campus activists, community organizers, and others committed to justice, freedom, and equality for all. Plenary speakers include Dolores Huerta, Rea Carey, and Kate Clinton. www.thetaskforce.org

Good Jobs, Green Jobs

February 4-6, in Washington, D.C. Join labor, environmental, and business leaders as they gather to forge a green jobs agenda, just weeks after the new Congress and administration are sworn in. Share your ideas for creating careers in renewable energy and other fields related to solving the climate crisis. Educate lawmakers during a special Green Jobs Advocacy Day event. www.greenjobsconference.org

FROM THE PUBLISHER :: A Special Invitation

Become a Dedicated Friend of YES!

Sherry Perkins knows that life can be a struggle. She's the housing coordinator for Operation Nightwatch, a Seattle interdenominational center that helps homeless people find food and shelter.

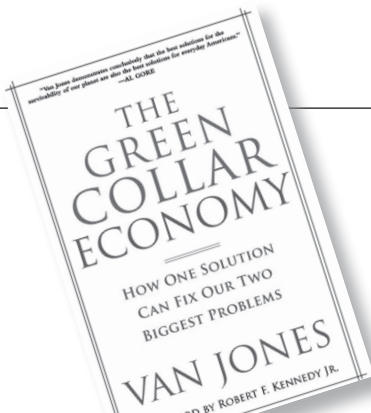
"We work hard because we believe it is the responsibility of society to take care of everyone. The more money you make, the more you owe society because society helps you to become wealthy in the first place."

Sherry values YES! Magazine's positive approach to reporting and its diversity of voices. When she looked into supporting YES!, she learned about the Dedicated Friends program.

"I work for a non-profit, so giving a big donation all at once is a challenge. The Dedicated Friends program allows me to support my favorite magazine by giving a little every month."

Sherry won a travel sweepstakes last year and used it to go to the Tibetan Children's Village in India. Teaching children how to take digital photos to "tell their own story" brought her closer to the mission of YES! and reaffirmed her decision to become a Dedicated Friend.

"There is always something you can do. Whether it's big or small, there's always something."



With a monthly donation of \$10 or more, you'll receive:

- Complimentary copy of Van Jones' N.Y. Times bestseller *The Green Collar Economy* AND the DVD "Good Food"
- Your subscription to YES! included (no more renewal notices!)
- Quarterly updates from our publisher
- Future free gift offers of books, CDs, or calendars
- Invitations to YES! events

YES! I would like to become a Dedicated Friend of YES!

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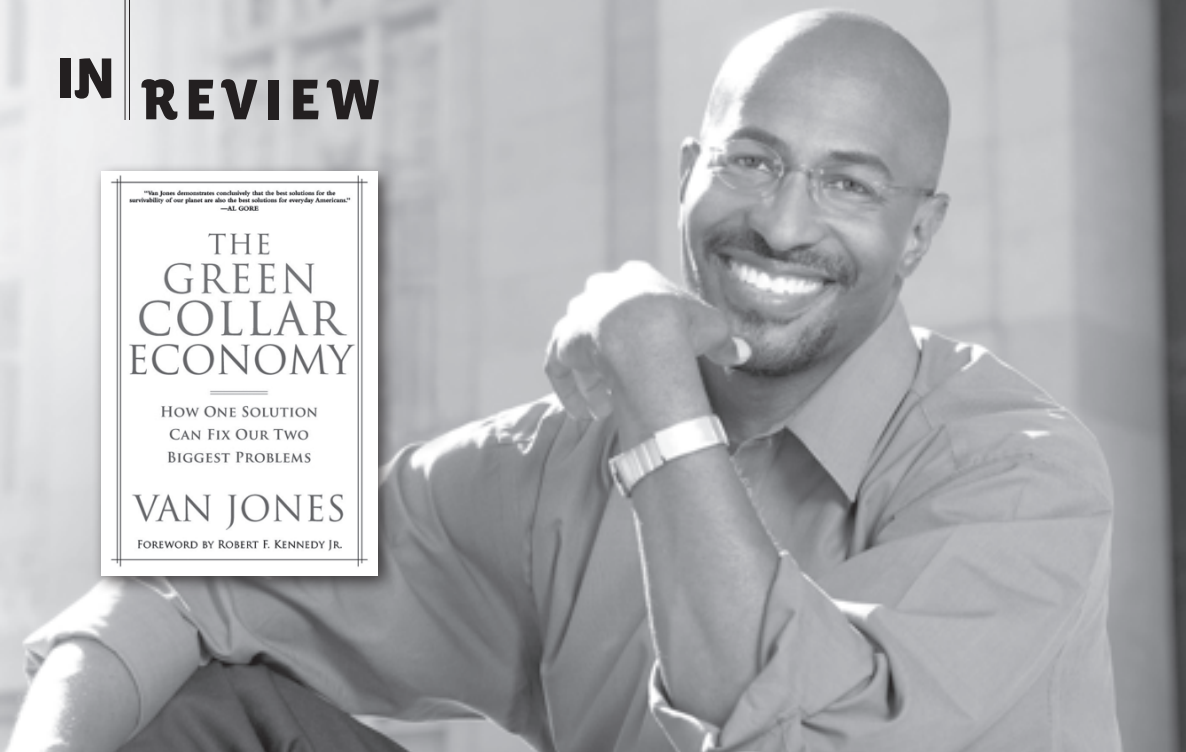
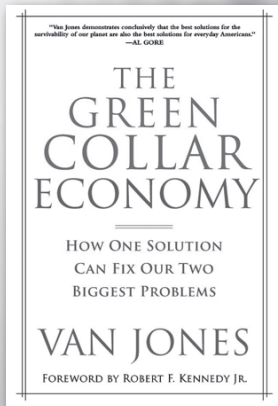
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RICHARD HUME

The Green New Deal

The Green Collar Economy

VAN JONES

HarperOne, 2008, 256 pages, \$25.95

REVIEWED BY ANNA FAHEY

Van Jones has impeccable timing. Just a month ago, these words wouldn't have had nearly the same effect: "To birth a just and green economy, our society needs the government to act as an effective midwife. ... We just want government to be a smart, supportive, reliable partner to the forces that are working for good in this country."

In the thick of economic calamity, words like these—the idea that government is our friend, not our enemy—are on just about everyone's lips, even stalwart laissez-faire free-marketeers. A month ago, *The Green Collar Economy* might have been lost in the usual, happy talk of the power of the free market. Today, the book stands out as a rational, practical guide for national self-help.

Jones' prescription is a sustainable stimulus package with the potential to fix two big problems: economic exclu-

sion and the growing recession, and a dangerous addiction to fossil fuels that's choking the climate. As a civil-rights lawyer and community activist, Jones has a voice that rings out in the chorus calling for climate change solutions as well as the chorus across the street crying out for social justice and equality: "We have a chance to connect the people who most need work with the work that most needs to be done." These are green collar jobs. At the core of his message is the idea that the good jobs we need to cut climate-warming pollution can also keep marginalized youth out of jail and put them on solid career tracks. (And to make it work, Jones insists, those two choruses—and others as well—will need to start harmonizing for the first time.)

Jones' green collar economy is one where we don't need to make the heart-wrenching choice between our children and their immediate need for a viable economy and our grandchildren and their long-term need for a viable planet. He believes it's a false choice.

Basically, his point is this: Climate

legislation is on the way; we'll have to provide the local workforce to make it happen. "We have to retrofit a nation," he writes. He told a Seattle audience earlier this year that "no magical green fairies are going to come down and put up all those solar panels or install insulation. This is going to take skilled labor. We can make a green pathway out of poverty." In his vision, hundreds of thousands of jobs will be created, weatherizing and building efficiency into every building in the country. Jones says we can finance this work with auctioned pollution permits under a cap-and-trade system. Capping emissions puts a firm limit on emissions while generating revenue for efficiency programs, technology investments, and consumer rebates.

And, writes Jones, we should start now, "at the pace of wartime mobilization." For those who've already grown tired of green-collar hype, Jones points out that demand today already exceeds supply—employers can't find enough trained, green-collar workers. The work is out there.

EXCERPT ::

So who will do the hard and noble work of actually building the green economy? The answer: millions of ordinary people, many of whom do not have good jobs right now. According to the National Renewable Energy Lab, the major barriers to a more rapid adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency are not financial, legal, technical, or ideological. One big problem is simply that green employers can't find enough trained, green-collar workers to do all the jobs.

That is good news for people who are being thrown out of work in the present recession. ... And those opportunities for work and wealth creation can be available to all of them—starting right now. Not 20 years from now. Today.

A huge green economy is already developing despite inadequate and inconsistent support from a public sector that is “still easily cowed by the big polluters.” The numbers Jones gives don't lie: In 2006, renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies generated 8.5 million new jobs, nearly \$970 billion in revenue, and more than \$100 billion in industry profits—and the numbers are growing fast. He also debunks the notion that a green work force is decades away—an army of computer technicians tinkering in futuristic laboratories on technologies we haven't even invented yet. No. The main piece of technology in the green economy, Jones writes, is a caulking gun.

The book lays out a bold, comprehensive, New Deal-style program to build a clean energy economy that can do both. In moving but crisp prose, Jones shows the way from a “gray” economy to a bright, new, shiny green one. What occasionally borders on sloganeering in this book is redeemed by thorough analysis and thoughtful, detailed descriptions of how to overcome obstacles, build the necessary coalitions, and take steps to push the right policy through.

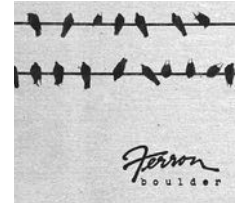
To get there from here, Jones emphatically calls for more eco-populism and less eco-elitism. He doesn't shy away from a blunt rebuke of the environmental establishment for

consistently cutting low-income people and people of color out of the picture. Sure, we could build a green economy in which the economic patterns of the past are institutionalized yet again, one in which certain people prosper and others are shut out. But why would we repeat the inequalities of the very dirty, gray capitalism we're trying to shed? We must instead make a choice to build an economy that takes us beyond what Jones calls eco-apartheid.

The climate movement needs Van Jones. It particularly needs the moral grounding that he articulates. He grew up in the black churches of the rural South, and is at ease making comparisons between the urgency and moral strength of the climate movement and that of the Civil Rights movement. He is an agile ambassador bridging relatively segregated worlds of faith, labor, environmental justice and “traditional” environmentalism. He understands—better than most of us working on climate policy—that people who already live in a constant state of personal crisis are not moved by gloom and doom messages about polar bears and melting glaciers. But when we speak of opportunity, jobs, and economic solutions, we all find common ground.

Anna Fahey is communications strategist at Sightline Institute, a Seattle-based think tank currently focused on climate solutions that are efficient and fair.

YES! PICKS ::
Musical inspiration while putting out this issue



Boulder

Canadian folk legend **Ferron** is not well-known to Americans, but she has influenced the likes of Ani DiFranco and Emily Saliers. Her newest album is lyrical and deeply personal. The opening track “Souvenir” invites you to “close the front door, take your shoes off,” and listen to stories of self-discovery and intimacy.



Songs for Tibet


Twenty artists reflect on peace, from inner to global in studio work from **Suzanne Vega, Moby, Imogen Heap, Ben Harper**, as well as acoustically driven live recordings from **Dave Matthews** and **Ben Harper**. Includes a 15-minute “Discussion with the Dalai Lama on Finding Peace.”

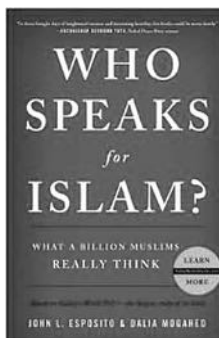


Day After Tomorrow

Baez's voice is heavy with age and mood. With quiet guitars and material from **Elvis Costello, Tom Waits, Patty Griffin** and producer **Steve Earle**, she's made a powerful prayer of an album.

 Have a listen at www.YesMagazine.org/music

 www.YesMagazine.org/greencollar How the Green Collar Economy is already changing lives



Who Speaks for Islam?

JOHN L. ESPOSITO AND
DALIA MOGAHED

Gallup Press, 204 pages, 2007, \$22.95

REVIEWED BY JAMAL RAHMAN

Since 9/11, voices on all sides have expressed shrill opinions about the Muslim World that Islamic sages might describe as “all fireworks and little light.” A new book contributes real data to clear away misunderstandings and challenge stereotypes. *Who Speaks for Islam?* summarizes a six-year Gallup study that sampled from more than 90 percent of the world’s 1.3 billion Muslims in 35 countries.

A major finding: Militant extremism is created not by Islamic principles but by political orientation. In nearly every suicide bombing attack from 1980 to 2004, the primary motive was to overthrow foreign occupation, not further religious views. According to the Gallup study, 93 percent of Muslims who condemn the terrorist act of 9/11 cite the Quran. The 7 percent who consider it “completely justified” cite political grievances.

However, most Muslims are dissatisfied with Western policy toward Islamic nations. The majority, moderate or radicalized, believe the U.S. government is insincere about fostering democracy in Muslim countries and that Western policy is rooted in desire for economic and political domination.

Despite such political frustrations, the book also reveals that most Mus-

lims, moderate and extreme, admire Western technology and democracy. They want better relations with the West, but do not want to share in what they perceive as its moral decay.

Most Muslim men and women want Sharia to be a source of legislation but do not want clerics directly involved in crafting laws. Sharia is the timeless guidance derived primarily from the Quran and Prophetic Tradition. Interpretation of Sharia constitutes Islamic law. Repressive elements of the laws, most women in the Gallup Poll emphasized, are “not Sharia compliant” and must be challenged and changed.

The overwhelming majority of women and a majority of men, even in conservative societies, favor equal rights for women. But Muslim women insist their empowerment cannot be imported and must be consistent with Islamic values. Working within this framework, they have successfully amended rape laws, gotten fatwas issued against female genital mutilation, and overturned unfair rules for women at Mecca’s Grand Mosque. They distrust Western campaigns to “rescue” them because they have often been used to justify colonialism and occupation.

The book offers both warning and hope. It cautions that diagnosing terrorism as a symptom and Islam as the problem only confirms extremists’ beliefs, alienates the moderate majority of Muslims, and reinforces perceptions that the “War on Terror” is an attack on Islam.

On a hopeful note, the book affirms that Islam does not motivate violence, and that many problems can be solved by political negotiation and greater mutual respect. For instance, Americans who know at least one Muslim are likely to view Islam positively. And Muslims say it is their responsibility to help stop terrorism.

Muslims and non-Muslims must reach out to each other. As the Quran says, God created diversity so that we might “get to know one another.”

Jamal Rahman is a Muslim Sufi minister at Interfaith Community Church in Seattle.



How to Rule the World

MARK ENGLER

Nation Books, 384 pages, 2008, \$16.95

REVIEWED BY SARAH VAN GELDER

How to Rule the World was written before the crash, but Mark Engler’s analysis holds up to today’s events. The financial collapse is part of a long-term waning of U.S. world power, and anyhow, the author predicted it.

Engler’s critical insight is that the two dominant approaches to U.S. foreign policy are in trouble. Neoliberalism, the policy of the Clinton administration, centered on facilitating transnational corporations’ global access to natural resources, markets, and cheap labor, and restricting government spending to assure the resulting profits would flow—unencumbered by wage demands, regulations, or taxes—to those at the top. Those policies suffered a setback under the neoconservatism of the Bush administration, which preferred exercising military, often unilateral, power—never mind that segments of the corporate elite suffered and U.S. political and moral legitimacy took a hit.

Engler shows that both neoliberalism and neoconservatism are in disarray. This opens possibilities for new international relationships based on democratic values and aimed at increasing equity and sustainability.

The possibility is there, but it will take a movement—a ramped-up global justice movement, for example—to assure that the next U.S. president doesn’t try to re-establish an old, failed pattern—or create still more chaos in the attempt.

Sarah van Gelder is executive editor at YES!



FILM ::

The Power of Forgiveness

Directed by Martin Doblmeier, 2008, 78 minutes

REVIEWED BY CAROL ESTES

I've always been ambivalent about forgiveness. It's a nice idea, but in practice, I'm skeptical. Like many of us who spend our lives working for peace and social justice, I get energy from my righteous anger. "If you're not angry," we cry, "you're not paying attention!"

And yet, if we are paying attention, we notice that our carefully tended anger at injustice merely begets more resentment and ultimately leads nowhere. "It is not possible," Rev. James Forbes observes in *The Power of Forgiveness*, "to achieve by anger and revenge what the soul is longing for."

This thoughtful film recounts the stories of people who have suffered almost unbearable losses and invites us into their struggles to forgive. We experience how the British government's failure to acknowledge a 1973 shooting of six Northern Irish men leaves a community wrestling with pain three decades later. We watch an Amish community extend compassion to the family of a man who killed five of their children and wounded five more in a school shooting, and learn how three women who lost sons and husbands in the 9/11

attacks search for strength to forgive.

The film also explores the life journeys of Holocaust-survivor Elie Wiesel and Vietnam War-survivor Thich Nhat Hanh. Both found so much power in forgiveness that they have made it the centerpiece of their life's work, Wiesel through peace activism, and Thich Nhat Hanh by promoting nonviolence.

Such stories of hard-won compassion are interwoven with research, such as the pioneering work of educational psychologist Robert Enright, who has tested simple lessons on forgiveness among Irish Catholic and Protestant schoolchildren.

The film teaches skeptics like me that forgiveness is nothing like being "nice" or complacent about injustice. To forgive, as Marianne Williamson tells us, is "to have the moral grandeur and spiritual audacity ... to hold [those who do evil] accountable in appropriate ways ... but to nevertheless stand for the possibility of human redemption that turns even the hardest hearts."

Carol Estes is a contributing editor at YES! Magazine.



www.YesMagazine.org/forgiveness

See the trailer of this award-winning film

YES! PICKS ::

Maddening and motivating independent films

What Would Jesus Buy?

Moving Images, 2008, 72 min.

Follow the infamously funny Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping on a trek across the country that uses farce to spread an urgent message: Stop shopping, accruing debt, and polluting the cheer and faith of Christmas with consumerism. Hallelujah!



www.YesMagazine.org/jesusbuy

The Shopocalypse is coming ...

Beyond Elections

PM Press/Estreito Meios Productions, 2008, 104 min.

To the activists interviewed in *Beyond Elections*, democracy is more than mere voting: It is having a say in daily decisions that affect our lives. Members of cooperatives describe the power of participating in workplace decisions. Delegates to a constitutional assembly discuss reforming government to include historically disenfranchised poor people. And citizens tell how their communities have benefited from participatory budgeting.

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YES! BUT HOW?

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Send questions to YES! But How?, 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or to editors@yesmagazine.org

WINTER WARMER

What's the right long underwear choice for me and the earth: wool or polyester?

With winter just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about how you're going to keep yourself warm, indoors or out. Synthetics and wool are the most common options for a base layer.

Oil and natural gas are the raw materials for most synthetic fibers, and fossil fuels are among the least sustainable resources out there. Producing polyester, the most common synthetic in long underwear, uses about twice the energy as wool production, and generates about four times the amount of CO₂.

In addition, wool comes from a renewable resource. But raising sheep does require a lot of water, and sheep produce large amounts of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Wool becomes the clear winner when you add performance to the equation. It can absorb a lot more moisture than synthetics without feeling wet or cold. Wool also doesn't smell as bad after you've worn it, it's fire resistant, and it usually lasts longer than synthetic fabric.

Wool isn't cost-free, but it is the better environmental choice—and remember that you can cancel out some of its

impacts by turning down the heater at home.—N.G.

HEMP HOORAY

I have a friend who seems to think hemp is the answer to everything. Is it?

Hemp advocates tend to get a rapturous look when they talk about their favorite plant. And they have some very good reasons for that.

You can make hemp into clothing, paper, wood composites, personal care products, paint, and food, among other things. Hemp yields several times the amount of fiber per acre that trees do, and as an annual crop, is easier to manage. It doesn't require the huge amounts of pesticides and herbicides that cotton does, and doesn't come from fossil fuels like synthetic fabrics. Hemp fiber is also particularly strong, meaning that paper can be recycled more times and textiles last longer. And hempseed oil is a great source of healthy essential fatty acids.

But advocates often go a bit overboard when they describe the benefits of hemp. The plant actually has some of the same problems as others grown on a large scale. It requires about as much nitrogen fertilizer as wheat and is comparable to other crops in terms of water use. Also, as an annual crop, hemp doesn't do much to

Our Issue 48 researchers

Noah Grant has had a fine time interning at YES! He's moving right along to a job as a sustainability coordinator with AmeriCorps. While at YES! **Kristin Carlsen** has enjoyed not driving her car for so many days in a row that she regularly forgets where she parked it. She's hoping to keep it that way post-YES!



preserve the soil or provide animal habitat. It requires a lot of energy for harvesting and processing, and like any monoculture crop, it doesn't help biodiversity.

Using hemp will give you some good eco-karma, just not as much as, say, eating all organic or vegetarian. So get some hemp products, but also check out clothes made from organically produced cotton, and paper and wood from sustainably harvested trees or recycled pulp. And as always, look for ways to consume less, rather than just shifting to new sources.—N.G.

GREEN BAMBOO

I was thinking about replacing the old carpeting in my house with bamboo flooring. How green is it really?

Bamboo is popping up every-

where these days—not just in flooring but also in clothing, bowls, cutting boards, and even diapers. Bamboo grows well without pesticides or fertilizers, needs little water, and grows quickly. The roots stay in place after harvest, which stabilizes the soil.

Even though most bamboo comes from China, the energy efficiency of ocean freighters means that “the transportation energy of a Chinese bamboo flooring product may be comparable to a domestic hardwood flooring product,” according to Building Green, a company that focuses on supporting sustainable building. Also, though bamboo can be grown without chemicals, some farmers have begun to raise it more intensively to meet increasing demand—sometimes clearing forest land to do so—and to use pesticides and fertilizers.

YES! PICKS ::

Our Favorite Green Gifts

Fix It

• My family had an old Nintendo sitting broken for over a decade. I found an article on how to fix it. I sneakily stole it from them, fixed it up, and gave it back. I'm not sure if they still use it, but I know they enjoyed it for a while. I imagine you could do this for any broken item sitting in someone's garage. An old bike, a television, a radio, etc. They get a "new" thing without wasting all of the resources that go along with making a new item. —*Jon*

Especially for Me

• My favorite gift ever is a CD that a friend made for me. I like music, but don't really know a lot about it, and he is a DJ. I felt like a V.I.P. getting this personal music selection. And somehow he hit it just right and I have been listening to it for years now. —*Lilja*

• I have a friend who makes her own gifts, and my favorite is a flannel pillowcase with different colorful fabrics for the body and the border pieces. Not only are they beautiful and comfy, but I think of her every night when I go to bed! The perfect gift for someone you care about. —*Sharon*

Re-useful Gifts

- For people with kids, rechargeable batteries and chargers.
- Garage sale garden tools, cleaned with steel wool and sharpened.
- Used books.



www.YesMagazine.org/greengifts
for more of our favorite sustainable gift ideas

It's important to find out how the flooring was manufactured. According to Brad Salmon, president of the American Bamboo Society, "Most bamboo is treated with chemical preservatives, as is the case with other mainstream flooring materials." Look for formaldehyde-free flooring with low- or no-VOC glues and finishes. Look out for dyed bamboo, which may contain heavy metals and other toxic substances.

The bottom line on bamboo? It's an exciting raw material, but not the final answer. Thus far, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has given its stamp of approval to only one manufacturer, Smith & Fong Co., which makes plywood and flooring that are urea formaldehyde-free. If you're in a lumber-producing area, FSC-certified wood is, for the moment, as green as bamboo. If you live elsewhere, bamboo has a bit of an edge. —*K.C.*



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3) Paid distribution outside the mails through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS:	9,375	12,589
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HAS THE PROMISE OF THE STORIES WE'VE PUBLISHED TURNED INTO REALITY?



Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena youth at work in Trincomalee. In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, Trincomalee was a focal point for relief efforts on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka.

SARVODAYA.ORG

Gandhian-Style Revolution

11 years ago in YES! ...

Sharif Abdullah, former board member of YES!, wrote about his visit to the headquarters of the Sri Lankan Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement where he found “what many of us in the States and other places in the world talk about: a true Gandhian-style people’s economic revolution.” At the time, Sarvodaya included water and solar energy projects, a school for the deaf, a library, legal services, orphanages, and 104 village banks. These banks, wrote Abdullah, “lie at the heart of a development plan that harnesses the strength of the village instead of saddling it with crippling debt.”

Today...

Sarvodaya is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Since Abdullah’s article appeared in YES!, the group has extended its reach from 8,000 to 15,000 villages. The 104 village banks have turned into 5,000, and Sarvodaya has achieved its goal of becoming the largest micro-credit organization in Sri Lanka. The movement’s growth is all the more impressive since it was accomplished against a

backdrop of a civil war that has been raging since 1983 and the devastating 2004 tsunami.

What continues to set Sarvodaya apart is that it sees personal awakening as a foundation for economic justice and equity. Sarvodaya is “trying to build a new society,” according to Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, founder of the movement. “First, we develop the individual, then [achieve] family awakening, then village awakening, then self government, then national awakening, then world awakening.”

When asked to identify some of the more significant achievements in the past decade, Richard Brooks, board chair of Sarvodaya USA, spoke about the scores of peace meditations involving more than 2 million people that Sarvodaya has convened over the years. He also described the growth of the village banking system; the expansion of social services, like Ma Sevana, a home and refuge for girls who are victims of sexual abuse and rape; the meditation programs for people ranging from mothers-to-be to prisoners; the further development of Sarvodaya’s legal advocacy for the poor; and the Deshodaya program which explores ways to end the years of violent conflict.

Sarvodaya’s peace efforts include Shanthi Sena, a peace brigade of more than 120,000 youth working for unity among Sri Lanka’s ethnic and religious groups through peace camps, peace dialogues, exchange programs, education, and leadership programs. Sarvodaya has established 10 Peace Resource Centers; the newest one is in the northeast city of Trincomalee, a community that includes a variety of ethnic and religious groups and where tensions are running high after decades of war. The center offers resources and workshops on conflict resolution, job skills, and information technology. —Kristin Carlsen

Interested? www.sarvodaya.org

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