

## **Why Was Wycliffe Beaten to Death?**

**So many reasons for violence – how many reasons for love?**

**An Activist's Handbook Compiled by Iona**



Dedicated to the future  
and  
to my best friend who spent hours and hours  
giving me ideas as this book was being born.

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**THE ORDINARY STORIES OF OUR ORDINARY LIVES  
HAVE EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS CODED WITHIN THEM.**

~ Christina Baldwin ~

## ***50-Years-Into-the-Future Dream***

*(When I woke up, I wished I had known a good movie producer to bring this dream to large audiences. Sometime after the Gulf War, around 1993. Thirty years have already gone by and we have 20 left before the horrors of this dream come true, or are we already here?)*

**WHIRLWIND** – John and I are doing our work, getting ready for a meeting in some building.

**TORNADO** – We're lifted off our feet – everything is turning GRAY – we're bumped into walls

but not hurt – we're both airborne – spinning from one wall to another individually

Trying to get to him – success – Now WE'RE TOGETHER – holding on to each other

**ROOM FLOATING** – not much fear: I say to him for encouragement: "THINK OF GOD!"

**MY OWN THOUGHTS** – Our work (I was not a Christian – did not think of God for my own comfort)

**CYCLONE STOPS – ALL IS GRAY – ALL FACES NOW PRETTY MUCH  
THE SAME!**

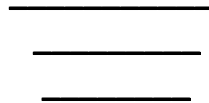
My face looks like all the other women's; John's like all the other men's – like an old "TWILIGHT  
ZONE" show

Clothes, ages, facial hair, and hairdos are different BUT –

Basic men's faces are all the same

Women's, too – very little difference

### **PEOPLE EVERYWHERE**



**EVERYTHING ARTIFICIAL – ARTIFICIALLY BRIGHT COLORS**

**NO EARTH**

**NO GRASS**

**NO TREES**

**NO FLOWERS**

**NO ANIMALS**

**NO SKY**

**NO NOISE**

**SILENT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE; PEOPLE – LOTS OF THEM**

Aimless, all moving as a herd

**LARGE BUILDINGS – FOUR STORIES HIGH**

**ALL GRAY**

**ALL CRUMBLING**

**PEOPLE SLOWLY, CONSTANTLY MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION**

Faces coming out of a GRAY building – Smoothly – constant silent motion  
They have faces of shiny, colored plastic with slits for mouths which don't move or speak.  
NO HORROR OR PAIN – Just coming out of the building like roaches as building is about to . . . . .  
. . . . . disintegrate

NOBODY TALKS TO ANYBODY, LOOKS AT ANYBODY  
NO SIGN OF INTERACTION OR CONCERN  
SLOW, STEADY MOVEMENTS – NO PANIC, SAME PACE, NO RHYTHM OR BEAT  
ONE HOMOGENIOUS MOVEMENT

NEXT BIG GRAY BUILDING CRUMBLING  
PHONE PHONES BEING HANDED DOWN AND AROUND  
(like Dr. Seuss's Whisper-ma-phone in *The Lorax*)  
PHONES MADE OF LEGO-TYPE MATERIAL  
POOR SECTION – EVERYBODY USED SAME PHONE – COULDN'T PAY THE PHONE BILL  
"EVERYBODY" SLOWLY LEAVES BUILDING AS BUILDING  
C R U M B L E S  
F A L L S  
S L O W L Y  
C R U M B L I N G

NOT REAL PEOPLE ANYMORE – LIKE LEGO PEOPLE – PLASTIC BROWNISH, BLUISH  
SMOOTH, SHINY, PLASTIC FACES  
NO PAIN  
NO FEAR

## A N A E S T H E T I Z E D

Occasionally John reappears – not much like himself but somebody to talk with as I'm walking through this

STERILE, CRUMBLING CIVILIZATION  
LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE THE SAME  
WALKING AIMLESSLY  
NO EMOTION  
JUST GOING ALONG  
NO NATURE LEFT

GRAY BUILDING (NOT DARK)

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L  
E

OF WATER

Building had been made of recycled, GRAY material, did not last!

RECYCLED PAPER – **ALL** THE BUILDINGS WERE MADE OF RECYCLED GRAY CARDBOARD

NOT LASTING  
NOTHING IS LASTING  
EVERYTHING IS CRUMBLING  
NOTHING IS "REAL"  
NO CHILDREN  
NO CARS  
NO MORE TECHNOLOGY  
NO MORE NATURAL RESOURCES

# NOBODY CARES!!!

EVERYBODY JUST KEEPS MOVING IN ONE DIRECTION AS IF IN A

DAZE/HAZE



THE WHOLE MOOD CHANGES



I find an old, cotton book cover on the ground on which I had written a letter to John when I was in Israel. I'm excitedly showing it to him – the cloth feels good – it's REAL cotton, well-made, worn but holding up after all these years. It had endured! Natural cotton. One could see the threads woven together.

It was reddish in one corner – blood? paint? Not startling, just a curious stain.

BRIEF IMAGE OF WAR  
ALL OF THE GLORY BOYS HAVE MELDED INTO ONE EVIL IMPRESSION FROM  
SADDAM HUSSEIN TO  
NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF  
ALL THE KILLERS  
ALL THE FEROCIOUS MALE WARRIORS  
BECOME ONE EVIL IMPRESSION  
NOT ONE STANDS OUT  
ALL EQUALLY AWFUL  
DEADLY MEN

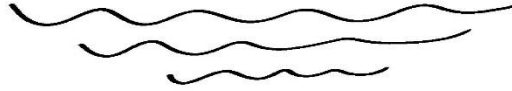
ONE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN COMES LOPING, BOPPING OUR WAY

BOUNCY  
HAPPY

She wears a T-shirt full of slogans.



SHE IS ALIVE

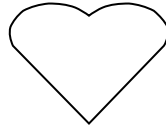


She has messages of hope on her T-shirt.

SHE HAS  
A S M I L E

The first smile in the whole damn dream –

**SHE'S REAL**



She's got some quirky religion – New Age? Fundamentalist?  
WHO CARES?

She is the first human being who is awake mentally in the entire dream!

She's not "pretty" by Hollywood standards but she's much more beautiful than all the actresses in the world because she is

HERSELF.

She is not made up to be anybody else.

SHE IS HERSELF

She wears glasses and has a pocketbook slung recklessly over her shoulder. Her religion is not exactly mine but she's

VIBRANT

HAPPY

ALIVE

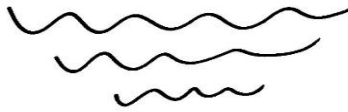
and willing/eager to

**THINK AND TALK**

S H E H A S E N E R G Y

S H E H A S H O P E

S H E I S R E A L



### *Epilogue*

John and she and I are now together – we have somebody to talk with and to plan with and to work with to change the world.

As I woke up I wondered whether John and I got our own faces back.

The answer has to be

YES!

# Why?

**AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, I WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND MORE BECAUSE THE  
WORK OF THE HEART IS NEVER DONE.**

~ Muhammad Ali ~

I want to understand the world better. I am neither a scientist nor a researcher; I am a curious woman. I have a bachelor's degree in education, a certificate in public health and environmental law, plus numerous other certificates, not to mention a hell of a lot of life experience. I do not think like most people.

The last 57 years of my life were spent working on environmental issues, but I have not given much thought to violence. Allow me to delve more deeply into the heart of mankind – men and women alike. Why do some people think they are better than others? Who gives them the right to hurt others and destroy the living Earth?

Here are some causes of violence:

1. Jealousy,
2. Poverty,
3. Anger,
4. Revenge,
5. Envy,
6. Lust,
7. Greed,
8. Colonialism,
9. Nationalism,
10. Racism,
11. Football,
12. Competition,
13. Possessions,
14. Religion,
15. Freedom,
16. Fear,
17. Love of money,
18. Mental illness,
19. Lifestyles,
20. Psychotic personality,
21. Personal gain,
22. The unknown,
23. Alcohol,
24. Drug addiction, and
25. Cabbage Patch dolls ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabbage\\_Patch\\_riots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabbage_Patch_riots))

When I list “poverty” in #2, I am not talking about millions of people living happily in community with the bare minimum for life following the ways of their ancestors, treasuring the land and each other. These are peaceful, thriving people. I’m thinking about those whose poverty is inflicted on them due to racism, colonialism, slavery, etc. If someone is starving, it’s no surprise that they turn to crime to get money for food. They are desperate. That is entirely different from the question that’s haunting me.

What is in the souls of people that makes them commit brutal actions?

**WHEN THE POWER OF LOVE OVERCOMES THE LOVE OF POWER,  
THE WORLD WILL KNOW PEACE.**

~ Jimi Hendrix ~

## Introduction

The start of this investigation was 36 years ago when, after many years of environmental activism and working at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, I asked myself, "How can I get more people to care?"

Twenty-five years ago, I gave an environmental talk to a high school class, the teacher asked her students what they had learned. One student raised his hand and summed it all up, "Think and act, man; think and act."

Two recent experiences – Wycliffe's death in Africa and watching the movie *Braveheart*. – profoundly affected me. In trying to understand mankind's brutality, the idea for this book was born.

I emailed Robert J. Burrowes in Australia on August 28, 2023. He is the person I consider most knowledgeable about nonviolence.

On 2023-08-28 21:26, Iona Conner wrote:

**Subject line = Deep Thinking**

Dearest Robert,

I'm not exactly known for my "deep thinking" but recently I've learned some new things that touch my soul and brain.

First, Wycliffe is beaten to death in Uganda and dies slowly in a hospital over several days.

Then, when I was taking Mare Cromwell's Great Mother Love course, I got the impression that baby boys being circumcised can set the stage for them turning into angry men later in life.

A few days ago, my friend wanted to watch *Braveheart* again and considered it important, so I watched it with him. I was horrified. He offered me the chance to stop watching if my spirit couldn't take it, but I "soldiered" on, promising that I'll never watch it again!

You are the one person I know in the entire world who has studied and tried to prevent violence, to humans and non-humans.

Derrick Jensen is my "folk hero." I love his writing. He is giving me the opportunity to audit his writing class for three months. It starts September 8.

I have no idea what our lessons or assignments will be but I'm already thinking about things I want to write. Maybe at this point I'll copy Derrick so he can see how I'm trying to prepare myself for the unknown.

I started by telling Derrick that for decades I've wondered how I can be instrumental in getting people to care about the environment. I have no answer and no real sense of accomplishment in that, but I persist. He told me that's what he's been trying to do, too, for 30 years via his writing.

I used to love writing and considered myself OK but I've never had an official writing course so I'm pretty excited about this. I think I have more to give the world than I'm currently giving.

So, I'm turning to you, my friend. You may be busy and/or may not feel like answering me and I would certainly understand and not be offended.

Thanks for even reading this!

\* \* \*

On 8/29/2023 11:43 PM, RJBurrowes & AMcKone wrote:

Hi Iona (and hello Derrick)!

Hmm. Here's a brief attempt to answer your question.

The question of human violence has always been central to me for one reason. My father, now aged 100 years old, had two brothers killed in World War II. My father survived his own service, which he has documented in recent years, including explaining the fate of his brothers. <https://thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com/>

Why do human beings kill each other? Why are human beings violent? How can we end this? Questions I committed myself to answering in 1966, the year I turned 14.

I felt that I understood human violence after many decades of research, on 12 October 2007. I started documenting my explanation in 'Why Violence?' which is now in its 9th edition. <https://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>

In essence, human adults (parents, teachers, religious figures...) inflict 'unending' visible, 'invisible' and 'utterly invisible' violence on children, leaving them a shell of their evolutionary potential. In essence: Unconsciously terrified, self-hating and powerless. And thus, submissively obedient to parental (and other adult) control.

Those of us who work to change the world for the better inevitably run into this unconscious terror, self-hatred, and powerlessness all of the time.

Want to end war? Most people are (unconsciously) too frightened to take the strategic action that is necessary.

Want to end environmental destruction? Most people are (unconsciously) too frightened to take the strategic action that is necessary.

Want people to fight for social justice? Most people are (unconsciously) too frightened to take the strategic action that is necessary.

Want....? Most people are (unconsciously) too frightened to take the strategic action that is necessary.

The bottom line is that activists like us (who somehow 'survived', at least in part, the worst horrors of our own childhoods) are always aiming at the small percentile of people who 'survived' the worst of their own terrorization endured during childhood. And these are difficult enough to mobilize to act powerfully, let alone the vast bulk who are so (unconsciously) terrified that doing anything other than what they are told is simply beyond them.

So that is it, in a nutshell. Plenty more in places like 'Why Violence?' (above), the website 'Feelings First' <https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/> and Anita's explanation of the process we used during the 14 years (1996-2010) we lived in seclusion 'unravelling our own minds:' 'Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice' at <https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/articles-2/fearless-and-fearful-psychology/>

Decades of research (in various disciplines) and nonviolent activism (with about 25 arrests in peace/environment campaigns) prior to that time had been unproductive in answering my fundamental questions.

While Anita and I spend some time 'nisteling' – see explanation on 'Feelings First' – to activists interested in understanding themselves better, we still work mainly to mobilize activists (even while deeply aware of the futility of this), focusing now on the encroaching technocracy.

Why do something we understand is futile? Because we hope there is some variable for which we cannot account that might yet play a part. Some might call this 'faith' I guess. (Or, as I have admitted, I am too stupid to quit!)

Anyway, the essence of our own understanding is this: the impediments to realizing a human future worth living on a sustainably-nurtured Earth are monumental and founded on a dysfunctional psychology deeply embedded during childhood. Which suits an Elite intent on killing off most of us and imprisoning those left alive as transhuman slaves in one of their 'smart' cities.

And getting people to pay attention to their fear and many other deeply suppressed feelings is infinitely more difficult than whatever you want to put second on any list of 'What are the ten most difficult things to get people to pay attention to?'

Sincerely appreciate the fine work you both do. And hope you enjoy Derrick's writing course, Iona.

Love,

Robert J. Burrowes and Anita McKone, Australia

Email: [flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net)

**I SWEAR I WILL NOT DISHONOR MY SOUL WITH HATRED, BUT OFFER MYSELF HUMBLY AS A GUARDIAN OF NATURE, AS A HEALER OF MISERY, AS A MESSENGER OF WONDER, AS AN ARCHITECT OF PEACE.**

~ Diane Ackerman ~

# Part One: Violence on a Personal Level

## Chapter One: An African Tragedy

**Note:** *All the emails I received during this period were from Mukama's email address. Wycliffe used Mukama's email and when a worker in an internet café (Siraji) contacted me, he also used it, as did a man named William in Tanzania; therefore, it was sometimes hard to figure out who was emailing me. I have saved hundreds of emails from them and am doing my best to reconstruct this story, substituting the probable author's name for Mukama's.*

Wycliffe was a kind, intelligent man. He worked as a policeman in a prison in Africa where my friend Mukama had been unjustly sent for failure to pay his rent.

This story goes back a few years to the time when I was working intensely with dozens of African climate activists and orphanage managers. My husband and I had started the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice in 1990. We devoted our lives to bettering the planet and all its inhabitants. After John died in 2019, I moved back to New Jersey and continued running the Coalition alone.

A young Nigerian man and I had become friends thanks to one of my American friends who had met him when her nonprofit work took her to the Niger Delta, where he was doing his required community service work after getting a bachelor's degree. I was publishing a global warming newspaper, which she thought he would appreciate. We began an email friendship, during the course of which I learned how extraordinarily difficult life is in Africa.

After I had settled into my new home, I chose a more enthusiastic Board of Directors and included a few Africans. I had been encountering many African activists on Facebook and publishing their stories. Some were orphanage managers, including Mukama in Uganda.

Mukama was one of my favorites – a quiet, thoughtful, professional plumber who also cleaned gutters and was training a friend to become a plumber. He used his earnings to feed 35 orphans and street children and to pay a few adults to help care for the little ones. When the children had basics like food and clothes, he would treat them to ice cream. We grew so close through email and my international Zoom meetings, that he started calling me “Mom.”







About two years ago, Mukama (in the brown shirt above) had a fall. Residual damage caused him to go into a coma a few months later. He awoke after six weeks but was too weak to return to work. He sent an email asking for \$400 to pay his rent. I couldn't do it. Even though I had worked hard to raise thousands of dollars under the umbrella of the Coalition to save a baby orphan's life and then that of his orphanage manager, I was drained emotionally and financially. Because of endless requests for money to help other Africans, I became so stressed

and sad about the fact that I could no longer help, that the Board of Directors approved dissolution of the nonprofit.

My umbrella was gone. Mukama was still too weak to work. Not only did he get evicted, but his landlady had him arrested and imprisoned where Wycliffe worked. Wycliffe could see that Mukama was an innocent man, so he contacted me about this situation. I asked Wycliffe if he would be willing to negotiate with the landlady to get Mukama released. I had \$250 he could offer her, but it worked. She dropped the charges.

Mukama was a free man again, but a very sick one. He had picked up tuberculosis and conjunctivitis in prison. Wycliffe (who had a wife and three children), took Mukama to the doctor and paid that first bill. Mukama, close to death, was admitted to the hospital. Wycliffe stayed by his side whenever possible for several weeks, overseeing his care.



Wycliffe sent dozens of emails telling me about Mukama's condition and asking for money. Mukama was vomiting blood and needed six transfusions. We raised that money plus more for long-term TB treatment.

I reached out to all the friends who had helped previously, plus a few new ones, and during the following weeks, we raised enough to pay off the hospital. Mukama was released but still very weak. Wycliffe took Mukama home to live with him and his family until he could regain enough strength to return to his plumbing business. These two men had bonded like brothers.

\* \* \*

Wycliffe spent so much time away from his job caring for Mukama that he was demoted and sent to work in another prison near the Congo. He planned to move everyone there with him until he realized it was a violent area. At this point, Mukama remained home and became the unofficial head of Wycliffe's family.

In the meantime, we had sent enough money for Mukama to set up a plumbing supply booth in the local market. He paid the necessary rent and fees, bought inventory, and sent me a picture of his fully-stocked "store" with PCV pipes, tubes, and fittings plus a nice shower head dangling behind him from a wooden board.



Now Mukama was going to earn enough to supplement Wycliffe's pay, much of which went for medicine to treat Wycliffe's three-year-old daughter with sickle cell anemia.

Things were looking good....

UNTIL ....

word got back that Wycliffe had been brutally beaten by Congo rebels and was in the hospital far away. First his wife and little girl left home to be with him, leaving Mukama with the 12- and 14-year-old children. Mukama sold his entire inventory to save Wycliffe's life and travel to be by his side.

It took several days for Wycliffe to die; he never regained consciousness.

\* \* \*

Wycliffe entered eternity on July 24. He had sacrificed a good job and his life for his brother. Mukama, with help from us, arranged to have Wycliffe's body transported back to his hometown, bought a casket, and planned a funeral service August 3<sup>rd</sup>.



*Mukama is the man in blue jeans sitting at the head of the casket in front of the man sitting on the white chair.*



**From:** mukama Awali <mukamaawali02@gmail.com>

**Date:** August 4, 2023 at 11:34:07 AM EDT

**To:** Iona Conner <ionaconner@pa.net>

**Subject: Re: Wyclif's burial**

I continue appreciate each and everyone support and love towards our family

One of Mukama's benefactors wrote this when she got news about Wycliffe's death:

"No, no, no..... this isn't right! This man understandably gave his life for another who was being wronged but it's far too tragic to accept! Our world is MAD!! I don't even know him, and the tears won't stop..."

\* \* \*

Following the funeral, Wycliffe's little girl with sickle cell anemia *and* his wife were hospitalized. The girl died. Weeks later, Wycliffe's wife (Suzan) was still in the hospital; Mukama and the two older girls were being evicted and they had no food so they were living on the streets. One day they walked into an internet cafe to email me; then they left.

A worker in the café, Siraji, came to the rescue and started emailing me after he found Mukama's and my email addresses on a computer.

\* \* \*

On Fri, Aug 18, 2023, 6:12 PM Siraji wrote:

*Suzan is totally in bad condition*

On 9/28/2023 2:30 PM, mukama Awali wrote:

*Mom I can't tell you exactly what happened to my brother because I also found him in the hospital and I didn't have a chance to talk with him at that moment because he was seriously in the bed condition and he couldn't talk. But what I heard from the man who rescue him is it that he told me he found him on the way well he was unconscious. I didn't get a chance to talk with him but the main cause was he was beaten by the rebels*

*Actually Mom we are going to be in the same dilemma as it was before on me because this one lady seriously there wants chase us from the house and he's waiting open up a file on us*

I had reached Burnout and could not help any more. In desperation, I sent the following collection of emails to my other friends in Uganda, hoping that one of them would come through with a place to shelter this little family.

On Sat, Oct 7, 2023, 5:12 PM **Iona Conner** wrote:

*Dearest Mukama,*

*I had a new idea I'm willing to try. I can contact all of our Ugandan Global Family people and see if any of them are close enough to you to help but I need to be sure I have the details correct. 1. Are you with the 2 girls now, ages 12 and 14? So if someone could offer shelter it would be for 3 of you.*



2. *Why is Suzan still in the hospital?*

3. *Most important, where exactly are you?*

*I know you might not see this for a while but once I have the answers, I'll go ahead with this idea as soon as possible.*

*Love, Mom*

On 10/8/2023 9:29 AM, Siraji wrote:

*And am also finding a way to find them so that I can hear from him, He doesn't know me just he left his email in my computer*

On Sun, Oct 8, 2023, 4:26 PM Siraji wrote:

*Am sorry for answering this email but according to the way I saw this guy here at my internet cafe it seems he is really in bad condition. He was here with two little girls but very dirty as if they sleep on street*

On 10/8/2023 5:36 PM, Siraji wrote:

*Am called Siraji and am found in Budibujo district in eastern Uganda, today I tried to look for him but I never found him*

On 10/8/2023 6:06 PM, Siraji wrote:

*Ok but the way I saw him made me feel like crying but I didn't want to show him , the two little girls were crying 🥹🥹 because of hunger I tried to ask him but he never told me anything till I saw your email*

On 10/8/2023 6:19 PM, Siraji wrote:

*But now we can't do anything unless we find him*

On 10/8/2023 6:23 PM, Siraji wrote:

*Am 39 years old*

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023, 12:20 AM **Iona Conner** wrote:

*Oh my goodness, it sounds like Mukama has a guardian angel. I'm not sure who has his phone or who will get this email but I'm trying to help from the U.S. in ways NOT involving money. If you're the person who is trying to help, please contact me. you have my email address.*

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023, 12:57 AM **Iona Conner** wrote:

*WOW, Siraji, he's a wonderful man with a very sad story. He needs a friend. The man who befriended him (Wycliffe) was beaten to death. Mukama has been sick and the two girls are Wycliffe's daughters. Their mother is in the hospital. Since Mukama couldn't pay the rent, they were evicted. Thank you for trying to find him and help him.*

*I ran a nonprofit for a long time and did some fundraising for him and others but I can't do that anymore. I have other friends in Uganda and I was going to contact them to see if any of them are close enough to help. Mukama used to be a professional plumber but had a fall and went into a coma. He used his earnings to care for 35 orphans and street children but those days are over.*

*It's wonderful that you are a compassionate man. If you find him and he comes back to your internet cafe, please ask him to answer my questions so I can also try helping him and the two young girls by reaching out to the others.*

*Thank you from my heart.*

*Sincerely,*

*Iona Conner*

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023, 1:17 AM **Iona Conner** wrote:

*Mukama was setting up a plumbing supply booth in the market but he sold all his inventory to help save Wycliffe's life. That's why the family is in such trouble now. Wycliffe had a decent job but in a dangerous area near Congo where rebels beat him into unconsciousness and he spent many days in the hospital before he died. He never regained consciousness. He was a good, kind, honorable, innocent man. I loved him and I love Mukama. I just wish I could do more but I can't.*

(from Siraji, unknown date)

*I wonder why our government can't help starving people many of them are on streets suffering like now Mukama*

10/9/2023 7:12 am Siraji wrote:

*Have found Mukama with the two little girls and he took me in the hospital where Suzan is now but I have nothing to help them out apart from giving them the little food I have . They have no where to stay just staying on streets perhaps I found them in Budumba village Budibujo district*

10/9/2023 7:14 am Siraji wrote:

*He told me the landlord took his cell phone and I gave him a simple button phone*

10/9/2023 8:05 am Siraji wrote:

*But now how are we going to help them out especially where they can stay and removing Suzan in hospital*

10/9/2023 8:18 am Siraji wrote:

*Yeah Suzan is still sick but in a bad shape and according to the doctors they told we have to pay 600\$ but on my side am going to use my two months salary of 200\$ to pay the hospital bill. And we shall be remaining with \$400. To be honest that's what I can only do*

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023, 3:11 PM Siraji wrote:

*He is now using +256753737651 the same number he has been using just the landlord took his cell phone, second one it cost money to get where they can sleep and thirdly he can see all the emails am sending to you*

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023, 3:25 PM Siraji wrote:

*Ok Mom but seriously even if it was you won't let these innocent kids suffer their situation is totally bad*

*Our main aim now is to get where they can stay and removing Suzan from hospital others will follow*

I sent this whole chapter as written up to this point to several other Ugandans in our Global Family asking if any of them could help. No reply. Then I thought of one other Ugandan activist who helped young people start businesses and asked him if he could hire Mukama to train others in his network to become plumbers. No reply.

\* \* \*

10/14 Siraji wrote: *Really the kids are sick because they always sleep in rain since it's a rainy season*

10/17 Mukama wrote: *I haven't got any help Mom but as I talk now the two little girls are in bad shape now have just come here to Siraji just to let you know this situation, we really need some medication*

10/18 Mukama wrote: *We understand you can't help us but even food mom Mom please get us something to eat for sure 🙏🙏🙏 this is worse than ever before. Get us something to eat am begging and on my knees because we are going to die seriously*

10/22 Siraji wrote: *Madam Iona you won't understand how much I suffer with these innocent people to the extent that I also lack what to eat just to sacrifice for the little two girls and their mom. So let us not lose this opportunity*

10/24 Siraji wrote: *That's the condition Mukama is in right now they just sleep on streets*





I started sending money again. The girls were naked until my money arrived and Siraji bought them clothes. He also used his own money to get Suzan out of the hospital.

Mukama had a chance to get a primitive building for shelter. On October 29 and 30, I sent \$190 to help with this little home before my WorldRemit and Remitly accounts stopped working, so even if I had extra money, I was unable to send it.



10/31 Siraji wrote: *Thank you for your understanding madam Iona but if God allows us and get some money we need to paint it as early as possible because it will be affected by termites and I will need to get one or two bags of cement for the floor*

10/31 Siraji wrote: *Ok, thanks for letting me know. But have got the place and a small mattress for the kids*

11/1 On Wed, Nov 1, 2023, 8:19 PM Siraji wrote:  
*Am done with roofing have used my salary but now we need \$80 for the cement and iron bar for the floor because it's really raining heavily. Today I went there but it was like floods.*

In early November, Siraji wrote that one of the girls had died.

Around the same time, a man from Tanzania who had spoken with Mukama offered him the opportunity to be a plumbing teacher at Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology, saying he would pay for Mukama's flight if Mukama could get a passport and visa. Taking a bus would not have required a passport and visa but it would have traveled through the deadly Congo area.

Mukama hoped to take Suzan and the surviving daughter with him but they did not have Uganda IDs. Our most generous donor sent enough money for Mukama to get to Tanzania alone but the man whose idea this was in the first place was not to be found so Mukama used some of the money for his flight and gave some to Suzan to help her and her daughter survive. The last thing we learned was that Mukama had arrived safely but needed even more money to get working papers. We had to "pull the money plug" at that point. All I could do was put Mukama in touch with our amazing Ubuntu friend in Tanzania (Sengo), who has also been through some traumatic times, hoping they could at least give each other moral support.

#### THEN OTHERS CAME THROUGH FOR MUKAMA!!!!

On 2/22/2024 1:40 PM, mukama Awali wrote:

You are so sweet, thank you brother sengo, Between thanks so much mom Iona for your prayers the company is going to get for me the identity card , thank God

On 2/22/2024 2:29 PM, mukama Awali wrote:

You are so welcome mom, And I will start my serious work in April am so happy 🙏🙏 Mom

#### BUT THEN SUZAN (SUZAN) WAS IN A HORRIBLE ACCIDENT

On 2/28/2024 2:18 PM, mukama Awali wrote:

Really Mummy Iona, Suzan needs your help and prayers in whatever you can since they haven't started working on her because of money. Perhaps according to the messages from the person near her doctors haven't started working on her

On 2/28/2024 2:35 AM, mukama Awali wrote:

Hello Mom Iona, hopefully I think you're doing well. Mrs Iona, this is a text clip of information to you please. Having taken a couple of months in Tanzania and moreover without a phone as I told you last time, yesterday I picked a sense of care and responsibility to check on my family fraternity situation who reside in my home country Uganda. I ensured this possible by asking for a smartphone from one of my colleagues I stay with, I put in my personal google email and started linking up with them. Upon conversation, I was unfortunately told about some absurd news about Suzan, Suzan few days back got a fatal accident when she was traveling in a taxi turning back home, a speedily moving trailer knocked them off the highway road and the taxi overturned so terribly leaving four of the passengers dead on spot there and then including the driver himself. The rest including Suzan got serious wounds and fractures and were rushed to nearby hospitals for immediate medical attention.

On 2/28/2024 2:38 PM, mukama Awali wrote:

The truth is I would have not bothered you because you really stood up for me in many difficult times and I appreciate everything but I have no other option you are the only family am having, no one can help me 😭😭 apart from you

On Wed, Feb 28, 2024, 5:33 PM mukama Awali wrote:

Yes my Mom, it was such a fatal accident, indeed she survived death by God's grace but however, the struggle now is solicit the required money for the hospital bill asked for, to ensure she gets the right medical care to regain her usual normal life. It's a dismay that Doctors declined attending to her before the bill is cleared up and yet she is not having enough money to cater for that. Nevertheless, she is in too deep pain as you can imagine brother!! May God's angels visit different individuals hearts who can offer her some possible help towards her outcry for bill clearance. Be blessed my brother

On Wed, Feb 28, 2024, 10:26 PM mukama Awali <mukamaawali02@gmail.com> wrote:

Mom I understand every situation you are in but now even me I can't help Suzan because where am I am now , the truth is we are leaving her to die because according to the information am getting the doctors are not working on her . Actually right now am using a company computer to talk with you

On 2/29/2024 7:14 AM, mukama Awali wrote:

I believe Suzan needs us now Mom please (*crying emojis*) let us give her a chance to get treatment and God will do the rest but after us showing God that we are serious about her life, since God helps those who help themselves so please mom let us not just leave her to die. This situation Suzan is in resembles the one I was in but you never lift me so let us not leave Suzan I beg (*crying emojis*)

On 2/29/2024 7:57 AM, mukama Awali wrote:

Mom do you really think I want to message you about money but I always do that because we have no one to help us (*crying emojis*). And I promise I won't message you again let me leave Suzan to die as you said because she won't survive without help. And am going to block them from messaging me (*crying emojis*) it really hurting but I have to do it

On 2/29/2024 8:45 AM, mukama Awali wrote:

According to the doctors in Uganda they are saying that she can survive if she gets immediate help and so far kind man here in Tanzania have sent to them \$100. But if God touches your heart and you get someone there to help Suzan please 😭 let them use Airtel account in Namwase Fatuma I left it to them in Uganda

On 3/5/2024 9:53 AM, William wrote:

So me and my friend we have managed to send some help of \$200 but still the lady needs our support and prayers. We don't know how long have you been with Mukama but in just few months we have been with Mukama he is such a loving man that's the reason why our company suggested to give him a national identity card

On 3/5/2024 11:34 AM, William wrote:

But doesn't know about this because he can't even work because of Suzan. Today we found him in his room crying. Actually he doesn't know whether am talking with you since he have been using my phone to talk to you

On Thu, Feb 29, 2024, 12:57 AM **Iona Conner** wrote:

My son, honestly from the sounds of Suzan's condition, death might be preferable to all those surgeries.

On 3/5/2024 1:25 PM, William wrote:

I will show it to some of my friends here in Tanzania but Madam Conner we can't do this without your support. To make the matter worse is that we are doing this because of Mukama not Suzan because we don't know her. Mukama's situation here is not good because of Suzan and you may take long without hearing from him

On 3/5/2024 2:22 PM, William wrote:

We know Madam Conner we are becoming so stressful to you but we are doing this because of Mukama. Actually we have a number which we are using to send money directly to Hospital

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 5:47 PM William wrote:

Hello madam Conner, Am William from Tanzania and am working with Mukama as a plumbing teacher at Dar es salaam vocational training institute Am here to let you know that Mukama told me about you helping him to come here in Tanzania. But now he told me one of person in his family involved in a car accident and she is in privilege condition

On 3/5/2024 6:09 PM, William wrote:

It's ok Madam Conner to add my Email, meanwhile we thank God her daughter is still alive and healthy

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 7:13 PM **Iona Conner** wrote:

Hello, William.

Thank you for emailing me and for helping Mukama. You're right, he is a very loving man. Did he tell you he used to run an orphanage and used his plumbing income to help 35 orphans and street children?

It's wonderful that your company gave him an ID card. I know he'll be a great teacher.

Unfortunately, I can't do any more fundraising for anyone. I have a very long story about him in the book I'm writing but it won't be ready for about a month, at which point I'll send it to everyone I know. My hope is that the people who read about Mukama and Wycliffe will help.

The title of my book is *Why Was Wycliffe Beaten to Death? So Many Reasons for Violence, How Many Reasons for Love?* If you'd like to see an unedited version, let me know. I'm still working on it and my husband is proofreading it now.

I'll keep praying for Suzan; it was kind of you and your friend to send \$200. Hopefully that might keep her pain medicines active until more money arrives for the surgery.

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 7:30 PM William wrote:

He told me everything about him and how he found Wycliffe really Mukama is such a very important person in this world, he is such a great young man. Actually me and my friend have an idea of writing a letter to our company asking them to help Mukama but according to our company you must have at least half of the money so that they can start from there. I continue appreciating you for standing with Mukama and I know you are proud of him

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 9:11 PM **Iona Conner** wrote:

William, I just went through the rough draft of my book and turned it into a pdf so you could see the part about Mukama and Wycliffe, starting on page 16. If you want to show this to others, please let them know that I am not finished editing it. Maybe this will enable you to do some fundraising.

Thank you for letting me know what's going on. It is really sad but I cannot be involved in any more fundraising; Mukama knows this.

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 9:30 PM **Iona Conner** wrote:

I understand this, William. Thank you for showing his story to your friends. I'm sure Mukama feels an enormous sense of responsibility for Suzan but from what I hear, she has multiple injuries and it will take lots of money for her surgeries and recovery. Once Mukama starts working, he can support her but there's nothing he nor I can do now about money. You're an angel to be helping him. Thank you from my heart for befriending him.

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 9:37 PM William wrote:

Madam Conner what am trying to say is that we won't pay all the money for her to recover but at least let us be with something small, so in case our company asks what we have we can tell them. Madam Conner we also don't earn much money actually we get \$300 a month but we do have families. But let us do this as a way of saving Mukama I know you love him and you can do anything to save him

On Tue, Mar 5, 2024, 9:41 PM William wrote:

And we are going to send someone in Uganda who is going to help us with that

On 3/6/2024 9:06 AM, William wrote:

Madam Conner we already sent a person in Uganda

On 3/13/2024 3:15 PM, William wrote:

Hello madam Conner am sorry for sending this message but Mukama was given a permission to go with someone here at the institute to Uganda since he haven't started seriously working because of an identity card which is in process by the institute. So by tomorrow Mukama will start traveling and he is going with my phone so that he can meet Suzan in hospital

**WHAT HAPPENS TO ONE HAPPENS TO US ALL.  
WE CAN STARVE TOGETHER OR FEAST TOGETHER.**

~ Robin Wall Kimmerer ~

## Chapter Two: Curiosity about Brutality

I want to know how this could happen to perfectly good people. I have led a sheltered, suburban life. I know very little about violence. We in the United States have so many riches and conveniences. For 57 years, my life has been dedicated to environmental work and now I'm studying brutality, hoping it helps me design future work for myself in a more intelligent way.

*Braveheart* embodied Medieval times, but isn't it the same as what is streaming today, especially now with the Israel-Palestine war, the Russia-Ukraine war, the Kurdish-ISIS war? None are as important as the War Against the Earth and that gets little news coverage until there's a major disaster. Why is activist work on prevention or peace not newsworthy?

Angry, hurt women can be vicious on a small scale but looking at the world today, it's men who commit mass shootings, men who are savage terrorists, men who rule, men who create and use weapons of mass destruction, men who clearcut forests. The innocents suffer, be they women and children or trees and ecosystems or even other men.



*Kurdish Female Fighters outside of Kobani in Rojava, the Kurdish region of Syria, one of two Kurdish frontlines in the war with ISIS. The region is attracting worldwide attention for the Battle for Kobane, and the Kurdish democratic system that is emerging in an otherwise chaotic country. It was reported that up to 40% of the resistance fighting force against ISIS was made up of Kurdish women. Photo: rudaw.com.*

Women are *sometimes* in the forefront of fighting; we are certainly in the background, raising men to be tough and hide their emotions while some of us are expecting an affluent life of comfort and ease. It all flows together, most at fault are wealthy nations, where colonization has crippled poorer countries, stealing land and resources, enslaving people, and creating burdensome debt.

On the other hand, it's mostly men defending the Earth, fighting back physically to protect the planet, women, and children. A few of my folk heroes are the people in Greenpeace and Sea Shephard, where men dominate. Their courage astounds me. Then there are martyrs like Chico Mendez in the Amazon rainforest, who was murdered defending his home.

Collectively, males are fighters and women are nurturers. Patriarchy is to blame for the mess we're in today.

\* \* \*

My first proofreader (a man) told me that it sounds as if I hate men. I don't! Actually, I love them individually. So, I asked a few friends what they thought.

Lara wrote: *For both of my daughters growing up I would let them see stuff that had sex in it (we didn't watch anything gratuitous and screens were very limited in my house), but not violence.*

*I think the culture glorifies violence. It is one thing in a long line of disconnecting us for our bodies and selves. It also helps to keep people thinking it's common and doesn't hurt so when someone gets hurt and feels the pain they want to stop it with drugs instead of realizing we hurt. More of that disconnection.*

*Anyway that's a lot of why I don't partake in violence and didn't let them.*

Susie told me: *I hate what the patriarchs have done to us women, blocking our every advance and trying to domesticate our wild and wonderful spirits, while depriving us of a voice in how the world is run.*

Angela replied, *"Don't worry, in 30 years women will rule the world."*

Nicole gave me her ideas: *What I was going to say about women and men and Angela's statement about women running the world is, I sure hope not!!!! I am all in favor of supporting women in business and many women's issues but I strongly feel women and men need to run the world together... one not being better than the other and one not lording over the other.*

*I was lucky to be raised by an independent woman who always worked outside the home and struggled to educate herself and improve herself to get better jobs. My dad worked also and at home they both worked. My dad cooked and helped clean. My brother and I were both taught to do housework, make our own beds, clean our own rooms, cook, and do yard work. We both mowed the lawn and folded clothes and cleaned the house. And washed and dried dishes. My parents both worked in the garden. They both cooked and baked. They were a team. There was no "women's work" or "man's jobs," other than my dad could fix the car. But when my sister came along and we moved to another state, my sister was taught to drive tractor and fix mechanical things on machinery. My dad also taught me how to change a tire and check the oil and do some mechanical things on my car. So, I've always had a different take on roles within the sexes. I never felt inferior to men or felt put down as a woman. I don't like the "good old boys" attitude and I don't like the women's view that "we are better than men."*

*We can do some things better and we are definitely stronger in giving birth and emotionally and usually men are stronger physically. But I fully believe God made men and women as companions to enjoy each other and help and work together. So, there's my 2 cents!*

*As far as violence goes... men definitely take the lead there, but I think video games and sports support that.*



*Sports were not a big thing in my family growing up. My dad never watched football or anything. But my husband's family was totally different! I enjoy watching a good game once in a while and I enjoyed watching my girls play basketball and volleyball. I used to watch BSU football (Boise State) and occasionally I'll watch a Super Bowl game.*

When I asked Jessica (a social worker) why she thought men were so violent, she said, *"It's a learned behavior from their surroundings and environment, a drive to live, violence helps some people survive, thinking, "If I had this, my life would be better" (land, money, women, etc.). It's really survival based.*

Kim states, *"Some violence is from generational trauma, also the domination mindset of capitalism."*

Joe reflected on Freud's aggression and sex theories.

Now we have the word "sex." I got a spam email reading, "Bigger male organ. Explosive growth in 27 days now possible." Is there competition among men to have bigger penises? Bigger everything? The trans-gender perversion is incomprehensible to me, but I want to at least mention it. What about pedophilia and pornography – definitely two forms of violence.

There is enough publicity regarding these issues that anyone with eyes, ears, a heart, and a brain knows what's going on.

\* \* \*

Just when I thought my book was done and it was actually being proofread, I stumbled upon a seven-volume study of violence by William T. Vollman. Its title is *Rising Up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*. It cost \$1,200 from my used book dealer so I bought the condensed version of 733 pages for \$9.56 including shipping, then read half carefully, while skimming the other half. Then I looked Vollmann up on Wikipedia and found these two paragraphs:

*"William Tanner Vollmann (born July 28, 1959) is an American novelist, journalist, war correspondent, short story writer, and essayist. He won the 2005 National Book Award for Fiction with the novel Europe Central. In November 2003 (after many delays), his book Rising Up and Rising Down was published. It is a 3,300-page, heavily illustrated, seven-volume treatise on violence. It was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award. A single-volume condensed version was published at the end of the following year by Ecco Press. Vollmann justified the abridgment, saying, 'I did it for the money.'"*

*"Rising Up and Rising Down represents more than 20 years of work in which he tries to establish a moral calculus to consider the causes, effects, and ethics of violence. Vollmann based it on his reporting from places of warfare, including Cambodia, Somalia, and Iraq."*

If you really want to know more about the roots of violence and how it's been used throughout the ages (up until 2003, when the condensed version was published), be my guest.

Although there were many pages worth sharing, the process of getting permission was too cumbersome to approach at this late stage and I didn't want to hold up the release of this book any longer. The most powerful summary I found in Vollmann's book is on page 150: "The real aim of violence is to conquer, direct, instruct, mark, warn, punish, injure, suppress, reduce, destroy, or obliterate the consciousness within the body."



## Chapter Three: Update on War in Congo, Rebels

On 2/12/2024 7:15 AM, Climate Actions Congo wrote:

Hello Iona

I hope you are doing well. Please, I just want to update you on the war situation, our activities here in DR Congo and request for your support.

- Up to today the fighting between government army and M23 rebels is continuing in North Kivu, the City of Goma is now surrounded by the rebels, with at least more than 2.2 million displaced in camps around Goma,

- Otherwise, our campaign Fossil Free DRC and other climate actions are continuing, we are waiting for the installation of the government so that we can work on a framework with other civil society and some parliaments so that we can debate on this issue and other climate crises, energy poverty and transition issues.

- As representatives of civil society of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Energy for all departments, we have been invited to participate to Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue that will take place in 18 to 24 March 2024, we are now mobilising financial supports that will allow us to pay for travel facilities (flight, visa) and to host some similar workshop with civil society, scientific before the Berlin dialogue.

So, we are mobilising about \$5,000 that can help our delegation (2 persons) to participate in this high-level Energy transition debate.

I hope you can find interested donors, interested in fighting energy poverty and climate actions.

Please find attached the invitation letters.

Hope to get your favorable feedback.

Best regards,

Leon Simwerayi

CCL/Goma - DR Congo

Tel: +243992570911

\* \* \*

I'm so excited that someone in our Global Family was invited to this major international event. Leon sent me his invitation from the Senior Project Manager dated February 5<sup>th</sup>. Here's how the letter described their goal:

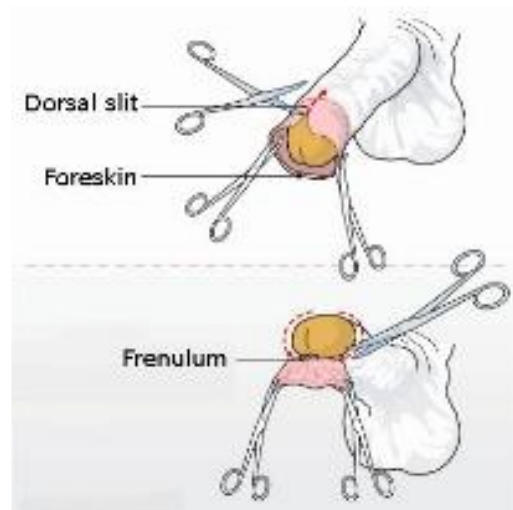
*The Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue 2024 ([www.energydialogue.berlin](http://www.energydialogue.berlin)) is an international energy transition summit to which the German Federal Government invites the international energy elite to Berlin.*

*With a focus on international energy stakeholders, the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue aims both to strengthen intergovernmental dialogue and to foster exchange between high-level decision makers from governments and regulatory bodies and leaders of businesses, trade associations, science, academia, NGOs and civil society. . . .*

## Chapter Four: Circumcision



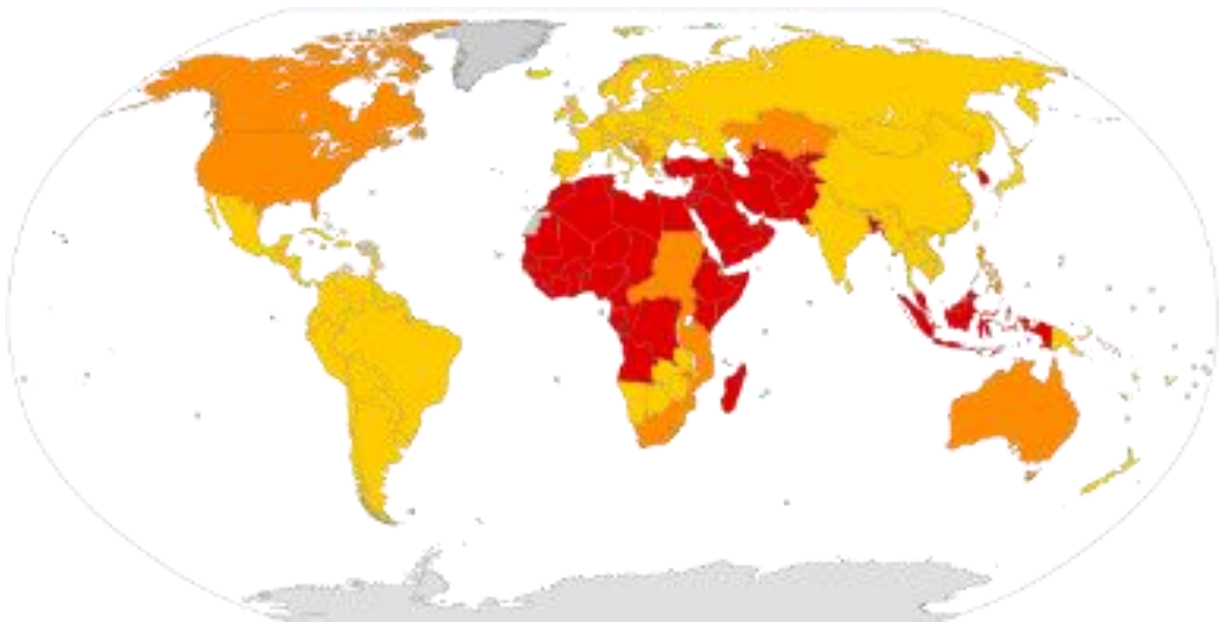
*How baby boys are restrained for circumcision.*  
This device costs \$1,216.99 as shown at [www.axiommedicals.com](http://www.axiommedicals.com).



*Circumcision surgery with hemostats and scissors.*  
*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

I recently came upon something I had never considered before – circumcision. What does that do to babies, boys, or men who are circumcised later in life? What lingering effects does this surgery have on them?

I do not know. I have never been circumcised. Men are circumcised; women are not, other than female genital mutilation but that's not what I'm discussing here.



Map of circumcision prevalence, based on a 2007 [WHO](#) report

- Widespread, near-universal: >80% prevalence
- Widespread, common: 20–80% prevalence
- Uncommon: <20% prevalence
- N/A

The more I researched, the more horrified I became. Wikipedia has basic history and by following one link after the other, an entire world of medical studies and anti-circumcision activism appeared.

When I consider three major religions in which cutting infant boys is practiced (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), I see multitudes of men who have become mega-murderers. Does this mean that there is a connection between circumcision and future bloodshed? Not necessarily. But if I look at unresolved early childhood trauma and its effects on potential adult outcomes, the possibility grows. Maybe we don't end up with savage killers, but we may well end up with other forms of anti-social or self-destructive behaviors.

These three religions historically used circumcision in ritual ways, sometimes surrounded by festivities or coming of age ceremonies, but today circumcision is done almost automatically without considering its long-term impact or even the blood-curdling wails of a baby boy having his foreskin removed with various levels of anesthesia or not.

Would an omniscient deity create an imperfect baby requiring surgery soon after birth?

How does the Hippocratic Oath – DO NO HARM – apply to the medical profession and others in this case?

On the next few pages are some resources I found.

## Intact America: Skin in the Game, Circumcision Cuts Through All of Us

<https://skininthegame.org/> and [www.IntactAmerica.org](http://www.IntactAmerica.org)

**Our Vision:** Intact America envisions a world where children are free from medically unnecessary surgeries carried out on them without their consent in the name of culture, religion, profit, parental preference, or false benefit.

### **Our Approach**

**Education:** Raising consumer awareness, particularly among millennials, through outreach, conversation, information, and support.

**Advocacy:** Influencing government, insurers, physicians, midwives, nurses, and birth planners, and working to alter their perceptions and attitudes toward male child genital cutting (MCGC, aka circumcision).

**Activism:** Attracting attention and mobilizing support, and conducting campaigns and initiatives against child genital cutting.

**Empowerment:** Providing our supporters, partners, and volunteers with the principles and language of intactivism (*sic*, intact foreskin), so they can effectively communicate the message to others.

**SKIN IN THE GAME** Intact America's new storytelling campaign shows how "routine" circumcision cuts through us all. Part of the campaign are two new memoirs written by intactivist leaders:

- ***This Penis Business***, by Georganne Chapin
- ***Please Don't Cut the Baby!*** by Marilyn Fayre Milos

The following was listed under "10 Disadvantages of Circumcision & Horrifying Facts."

**#9. "Foreskins are sometimes sold to biomedical companies, which use them for various types of research, often related to wound healing." – *The Atlantic***

*The commercial motivations surrounding circumcision extend far beyond the immediate costs of the procedure itself. One particularly contentious aspect of the commercial side of circumcision revolves around the market for products derived from the foreskin. Foreskin fibroblasts, cells crucial for collagen production, have attracted the interest of bio-research companies. These cells are obtained from donated foreskin tissue and utilized in creating various commercial products, such as luxurious facial creams and rejuvenating treatments. These harvested cells are also sometimes utilized in biochemical research to generate new skin for burn victims and individuals with specific skin conditions.*

*The commercialization of foreskin tissue raises ethical concerns, particularly since the donors, who are circumcised infants, cannot provide consent. On top of that, the potential profits from these products derived from foreskin inadvertently create a financial incentive to promote circumcision, necessitating a careful evaluation of the medical justifications against commercial interests.*

Reprinted with permission.

## Doctors Opposing Circumcision

<https://www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org/>

Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.), Protecting Children’s Rights since 1995 is dedicated to ending routine, non-therapeutic circumcision – the genital cutting of infants. Babies are born with perfectly designed genitalia, and no one has the right to inflict this unnecessary procedure on them as they grow – for any reason.

We endeavor to raise awareness and challenge prevailing opinion. We provide support and guidance to parents and medical providers who wish to make honest and thoughtful decisions, regardless of tradition or cultural pressures. D.O.C. envisions a world where children are protected from unnecessary genital reduction surgeries and are free to develop as nature intended. And with your support, we will get there.

### Did you know?

- Aside from the United States, no other country in the world routinely circumcises its baby boys for non-religious reasons.
- The foreskin is perfectly normal, healthy tissue that plays an important role in sexuality.
- Circumcision has no justifiable benefits and is in fact harmful – from pain and suffering, to surgical botches, to reduced maternal-child bonding.
- Medical authorities throughout the world consider circumcision medically unnecessary and unethical.

On 2/5/2024 1:12 PM, John Geisheker wrote:

*Dear Ms. Conner,*

*We are pleased you found your way to our thoughts about the gratuitous cruelty that is circumcision. The situation, on the ground, as it were, is far worse than you imagine. Even a urologist friend agrees that if circumcised American men knew the amount of sexual function they have lost forever, they would march as a mob toward their local hospital with torches and pitchforks. (But she adds, it is lucky they don't know and can't ever know.)*

*...but don't let me get started. . . .*

*Best of luck with your project. It certainly is comprehensive.*

*John Geisheker, Director, General Counsel, D.O.C.*

Mr. Geisheker has written a 45-page report titled “The Completely Unregulated Practice of Male Circumcision: Human Rights’ Abuse Enshrined in Law?”

Here’s an excerpt:

*In June, 2012, a court in Cologne, Germany, declared that the circumcision of a healthy four-year-old Muslim boy was an illegal assault which, in addition, infringed upon the child’s own right to religious freedom. Religious minorities in Germany, like their co-religionists in San*

*Francisco, were soon up in arms, and petitioned the Merkel government for special protection. On December 12, 2012, the German parliament, the Bundestag, on a vote of 433 to 100, passed a law ‘enshrining’ male circumcision as an adult right that may be imposed on children freely. The law provided negligible precautions for the child, even stripping him of legal recourse no matter the physical result. A compromise proposal, which would have postponed circumcision until the child could consent at age 14, failed by a similar vote.*

*Meanwhile, experiencing an influx of Eastern European and Middle Eastern migrants importing traditions which include mass circumcisions, without anesthesia or antiseptics, of pre-teen boys in public squares, authorities in various Scandinavian countries have explored imposing limitations on what were previously unfamiliar, infrequent, and secretive rituals well below their radar.*

*The Royal Dutch Medical Association, the KNMG, an umbrella organization encompassing numerous medical specialties in the Netherlands, and under similar migrant pressure, has released a declaration dismissing medical claims made for circumcision, and condemning, outright, non-therapeutic cutting of minors.*

*Jurists at the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute have debated, in depth, the legality of non-therapeutic, medically unnecessary genital reduction surgeries for boys in Tasmania. In August 2012, they issued recommendations which, if adopted countrywide, would significantly restrict the practice in Australia.*

*Consequently, those of us who have been monitoring this issue for decades were caught off-guard, when in September 2012, an eight-member “Task Force” of the American Academy of Pediatrics, moving in precisely the opposite direction from human rights’ advocates and medical authorities overseas, proclaimed that the adult sexual hygiene benefits of infant circumcision “outweigh the risks.”*

*It is against this backdrop of competing interests – the rights of the boy to bodily integrity and security of his person, and even his own religious choice, vs. the rights of adults to indulge their deeply imbedded religious urges, and, in the U.S., the secular freedom to freely “sculpt” a healthy child – that we confront two uncomfortable facts:*

- *While genital cutting of female minors, for any reason, whether with pious intentions or not, has been fully proscribed in most Western countries, nowhere is medically unnecessary male genital cutting of minors illegal. In fact, the practice is completely unregulated, even in the U.S. and the latest trend is to prevent, by law, any possible safety regulation.*

*AND*

- *Secondly, as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) itself acknowledges, very little is known about the ultimate morbidity (medical complications) of circumcision in clinical settings, let alone in non-clinical, ritual, and domestic settings.*

*The latest AAP statement, for instance, in an unusual moment of candor which fully undermined their prior 18-page recitation, states: “The true incidence of complications after newborn circumcision is unknown...” and they freely admit: “There are no adequate analytic studies of late complications in boys undergoing circumcision in the post-newborn period.”*

*“I believe the time has come to acknowledge that the practice of routine circumcision rests on the absurd premise that the only mammal in creation born in the condition that requires immediate surgical correction is the human male.”*

Thomas Szasz, M.D.

John V. Geisheker is currently the full-time pro bono Director and General Counsel for Doctors Opposing Circumcision (DOC), based in Seattle, Washington, an international physicians’ charity whose members oppose merely cultural, nontherapeutic, genital cutting of children, male or female, on human rights’ grounds. He may be reached via the DOC website, or at [docdirector.geisheker@gmail.com](mailto:docdirector.geisheker@gmail.com). You can read the whole report at <https://newmalestudies.com/OJS/index.php/nms/article/view/60>.

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\* \* \*

### **The Circumcision Movie**

A movie made by midwives, The Circumcision Movie, includes good discussions about sexuality between those with foreskin left on and those who are circumcised. You can see it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1gt3kSMUK8>.

“As nurse-midwives in clinical practice in Minnesota, we were dissatisfied by the lack of resources for families regarding circumcision. A patient brochure could not possibly cover all the medical, personal, cultural, and ethical layers of this topic. A book or website can lay out the facts but lacks the power of the human voice. So, we teamed up with midwives, physicians, academics, parents, and others to make a movie centered on this decision. It took us over four years of free time, and the result is The Circumcision Movie, a 35-minute documentary we call “a teaching tool for expecting parents.” Blending accurate health information with historical and clinical expertise, personal experiences, statistics, and bioethics, this documentary questions routine male circumcision and promotes the tools parents need to make an informed decision.”

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\* \* \*

When I brought up the subject of circumcision, one of my friends said, “Good! It’s about time people stood up against this!” Then he added, “It’s against nature to be circumcised!”

Dr. Benjamin Spock, renowned pediatrician who at first promoted circumcision, later said, “My own preference, if I had the good fortune to have another son, would be to leave his little penis alone.”

I can’t help wondering what the world might be like in 100 years if circumcision were banned today – no matter what religious or cultural beliefs people held onto.

## Chapter Five: Domestic Violence, One Woman's Story

The most aggressive thing I ever did was when I was in third grade. I punched a boy who called me "Fatso." I don't recall him punching me back but we both got sent to the principal's office. That ended my fighting career. Thankfully, I was never physically abused, so I turned to my friend for some help.

Dear Iona,

If it is useful, I am happy to help you in any way I can re: my personal experience of an abusive relationship. It is such an important topic. If anyone had told me I would find myself in a relationship like that I would not have believed them. I see how easy it is now. I want others to learn from my mistakes. If one woman can be helped either avoid or escape an abusive relationship, how wonderful a contribution that would be.

Lots of love,

Fliss

P.S. I think domestic violence is a microcosm of societal violence, so the two are intertwined. As such, this little-discussed topic is so important in relation to the whole violence thing.

### **He swept me off my feet!**

The attention was so flattering for someone who lacked confidence and never quite fitted in; someone who didn't feel worthy of being loved. Normal guys seemed an improbable match for a tom-boy who was more concerned with new adventures and experiences than her appearance. I suppose he wasn't quite mainstream either.

"You certainly bring out the best in me," he would say in the early days. It made me feel needed, made me feel special. It reassured me that I could "bring out the best in him," and the best appeared to be wonderful. Initially, at least. I was naive, non-judgmental, idealistic; he could see that, and played on it.

I think the type of people who are vulnerable to ending up in abusive relationships are often the type of people who might be vulnerable to ending up in cults. Which are abusive relationships, I suppose. Both play on similar personality traits.

We shared many altruistic interests. That's partly why I dismissed the early warning signs; they didn't fit the picture of who he appeared to be. In hindsight, I think he joined such groups to meet naïve women like me, and to be able to present a public image that looked good. There was always a hint of inauthenticity about him though. "No one's perfect," I would think to myself, and move on.

I should have heeded warning signs in the early days, like the time I felt terrified of him because he flew into an unprovoked rage when he was doing some DIY and he seemed to be a completely different person. Or the time he had been drinking and pinned me to the wall with his knee in my stomach and I had a horrible feeling he would punch me. But he didn't, and he excused his behavior the next day.



After all, I could bring out the best in him, couldn't I? So that's what I had to focus on doing. After the children arrived things got so much worse. I started to realize how much of what I thought was really him, had been a show.

He hated to see me happy. If I was playing with the children, he would find something to shout about so that we would stop. It was a regular pattern. In retrospect, I think it was because he was never happy himself and couldn't bear to see anyone else being happy.

He had two types of temper. The explosive violent rages that wouldn't last long but were frightening when they happened; then the feigned anger, which he used to manipulate. I think he modelled those upon his uncontrollable rages, knowing the effect they had. I could tell them apart well over time. If I spoke normally during the feigned tempers he would quickly revert to normal.

I began to notice my family being a little awkward with me; if we bumped into his work colleagues, they would eye me suspiciously and not talk to me. I realize now that he was working hard behind the scenes to alienate me from everyone he could. I think this was in preparation to deflect any blame from himself when things inevitably went wrong.

He knew there was something the matter with him. He knew he would struggle to maintain a relationship. I can see that now from the things he said. I suppose many of his actions were to try to keep control of some things that he couldn't – me and the relationship. I had free will and autonomy; he didn't like that. It was a variable he needed to try to control.

After several years of treading on eggshells at home, I developed cancer. His behavior during that time was atrocious; he constantly questioned my health, and when the prognosis looked good, appeared disappointed and refused to believe what the doctors were telling me. Or at least, refused to believe what I was saying. He looked me in the eye one time and said he would have to "be careful what he wished for."

After two physical attacks, my doctor begged me to leave. I had young children; what was I to do? Give up my home and go to a refuge? But I knew she was right.

By this time, I felt ashamed of having ended up in such a terrible situation; I felt I could no longer trust my judgment, and wasn't confident I could make the right decisions; I had misjudged him initially, how could I trust myself to do the right thing again?

The gaslighting ramped up.

Perhaps he recognized I was thinking about leaving.

He accused me of using his razor to shave my armpits. At that time, I had literally no body hair at all due to chemotherapy. It didn't matter. The accusation was vehemently maintained. His car got a small dent in the side panel one day. He accused me of parking it badly and said someone must have hit it with a stick. It was a ridiculous thing to say. I wonder now if he had made the dent himself. I think he was telling my family and my friends that he knew that I was crazy. None of them have said so openly since, but hinted at it nonetheless. It served his purpose, as I could sense that they would not support me if I left him. I felt so isolated.

He openly said our two gorgeous bright beautiful young children were boring and spent as little time with them as he could. That suited me actually; he often shouted at my son, and told him he was a problem, and he would make my daughter dependent upon him instead of encouraging her independence.

He bought vintage cars and motorbikes, went around Europe one summer (with a female work colleague) while I clothed myself and the children from charity shops, and fished out yellow-sticker bargain foods and eked out packets of lentils to feed us with.

I don't know how I found the resolve to make him leave eventually. It was some inner strength that I hadn't realized I was capable of. I realized that I couldn't show a whisper of doubt, a hint of weakness; I had to be so strong. I think it phased him that after all he had done to me, I could still find psychological strength like that. For once, I was in control.

Thankfully, a few good friends rallied round and supported me. He took us almost straight away to family court to try to get legally enforceable access, even though I had encouraged contact between him and the children. I still hoped at that time, that he might be a better father if he wasn't living at home. When he instigated court proceedings, I knew that if he had it all his own way the abuse would continue and the children be weaponized, and I knew I had to resist that before he destroyed us all.

The courts eventually refused him face-to-face contact with the children. After many months of hearings and interventions from social services, they allowed him telephone contact weekly, which soon petered out because the children said he only ever wanted to talk about himself and never them. The family solicitor I had used, and paid handsomely, seemed more on his side than mine; there is such pressure in family courts to allow parents access. He must have spun a web of lies to his own solicitor, who was constantly networking with mine; I was horrified one day when she said that our relationship had been a "volatile one." And shocked that she could think it. It hadn't. It simply hadn't. I had spent years tip-toeing around an abject bully. And I'm one of the least volatile people I know. I guess it's a standard portrayal of abusive partners to say their relationships were volatile, to deflect responsibility for their actions. I felt so betrayed by my solicitor.

The Judge thought differently though.

After the court case and phone calls had stopped, my former partner told me that he never wanted to hear from the children again, and that if they ever did contact him, they would have to give a full account of their actions. It was all about winning to him. I think everything in life was about winning to him. The Judge saw it.

I would have done all I could for my children to have a good relationship with their father. For a long time, I felt guilty, and a failure for not having achieved that. I felt guilty as well for not having chosen a better father for my children. I also felt relief that he was out of our lives. I know I did the right thing, even if I muddled through it all. His presence was dangerous on every level.

I didn't ever say a bad thing about him to the children. I would say that we would be happier living apart, and that while we weren't perfect, we both loved them and wanted the best for them. I would tell them that they were the very best of both their parents. I meant it, and it's true. I couldn't bear them to think their father wasn't a good man.

I don't look for the best in people anymore. Now, I'm searching for signs that they will turn bad; I'll never miss the red flags again for sure. I'm probably hyper vigilant now. And have trust issues. I would rather be too wary than risk getting into a situation like that again.

The effects of violence do not cease at the point of contact. Or even with the bruises or injuries healing. Anticipation of the next onslaught haunts every waking moment and disrupts

sleep, chemical mediators of stress constantly triggering cellular inflammatory reactions and perpetuating psychological and emotional distress.

I am so proud of my children. I think we got through ok. I wish I could have kept a family together for them. But at least one loving parent is better than what we had.

**Predispositions to abusive relationships:**

- 1) Open/naïve/explorative nature
- 2) Low self esteem
- 3) Don't fit in

**Ignoring the warning signs:**

- 1) "No one's perfect"
- 2) "Bringing out the best" (try harder to)
- 3) Dependency (I loved him!)

**Difficulty leaving:**

- 1) Loss of confidence
- 2) Loss of supportive networks (alienated by partner)
- 3) Expecting things to improve

## **Chapter Six: Pornography**

[Anti-Pornography.org](http://Anti-Pornography.org)

*Welcome to AntiPornography.org, a nonprofit organization and a website full of helpful resources on the devastating harms of pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, and sexual slavery. Hopefully you will use these resources to become better educated, as well as become inspired to help out with the cause yourself. Your help is needed to make the world a better place for everyone!*

*We have over 40 powerful anti-porn, anti-prostitution, and anti-sex slavery documentaries, 200 videos, 100 pages of helpful information, and 100 personal harm stories, so there is a lot to check out at AntiPornography.org.*

*Preventing and combating the devastating harms of pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, and sexual slavery. Nonreligious, nonpartisan, anti-censorship, anti-violence, pro education, pro free speech, pro safe, healthy, equality-based sex, love, and relationships.*

*Please share this page and our website with your friends & others to help support the cause! Thanks!*

## How Pornography Ruined My Marriage and My Husband

By Sharon

Many people today embrace pornography as a normal activity for both men and women. Many people say, "It's wonderful for your marriage or relationship" or "It really has helped our sex life." But psychologists will tell you that it can destroy a person and a relationship/marriage/family. It is an addiction, just like alcohol or drugs. Once addicted you want more and more. And that is exactly what happened to my husband.

This is my story.

I was married for 30 years before I gave up on my marriage and filed for divorce. When I married my husband, Daniel, he was honest, kind, and had integrity and his love of God was strong. I had known him for years and we dated two years before marrying. Little did I know that Daniel had a secret that he was hiding for our entire married life. It began about the second year we were married.

I went on a trip out of state to visit family for a week. Daniel had to work and stayed home. When I came home, I found a couple of Playboy-type magazines under the bed. I didn't think a whole lot about it at that time. But I wondered why my husband needed to look at these other women when he had me. I had a good figure and was attractive and we enjoyed a good sex life. As time went on, he continued to buy and hide magazines, each one a little more graphic than others. He thought he had them hidden but I knew all his hiding places. At first, I thought, "Oh it's just a man thing, that's what men do." Some people may ask, "Why didn't you confront him about these magazines and tell him how you felt?"

A little about me. I was raised in a family where there was never conflict. I hate conflict and I would do just about anything to avoid it. And being very young, I didn't really know how to bring up the subject without getting into a fight. So, I kept quiet and buried my feelings deep inside myself. I chose to think about the good things in our marriage. And I was pregnant and excited with our first child.

The world changed and moved into videotapes and pornography was readily available in stores. And porn stores also. Daniel started renting these sex tapes and going to the pornography stores where he could view XXX movies. He would watch these when I wasn't home.

What you need to know is these first movies they made were showing couples having sex and different positions but as years went on, they became more violent and degrading to women and more depraved. The women getting younger and younger. Men having sex with lots of people. Men having sex with animals, sex with the use of whips and chains and even cutting and drawing blood, defecating on each other, etc.

I was not working at the time and by then we had two young children. We struggled to make ends meet and I would find receipts from the video store or the porn store which would make me very angry that he was wasting money on this kind of thing when we really needed every penny.

Fast forward a bit to when computers became affordable. And we got a computer. He started going to porn sites and I would find the history on the computer because he wasn't

smart enough to think that I knew about that. I had gone back to college and was taking some computer classes so I could get a good job and help support the family.

We joined a church and we both became very active in it. Daniel was even called to give sermons sometimes. I was so proud of him being a strong leader that I tried to forget about the pornography. After all it wasn't every day, just once in a while. And I was so busy being a wife and mother. And he was a good father and we got along great. Our sex life was fine too, so I had no reason to worry.

Daniel had started working less and less but staying away from home more and more.

I got a good job and helped support the family. One day I was invited to a women's conference.

One of the speakers spoke about pornography. She said that pornography was definitely an addiction and she told us to be aware because as addictions go, the addiction will get stronger and take control of the person. I was crushed when I heard this and realized this was exactly what was happening. Little by little I could see it happening to Daniel and to our marriage.

Then came cell phones and he said he needed one for work. I got very busy in my job and we were constantly busy with our son's and daughter's various activities.

One day I came home, and Daniel was on his cell phone and hung up immediately when he saw me. This happened several times. I began to think he was having an affair. I started watching the mail and watching for his cell phone bill because those beginning bills would tell you every number that you had called and how long the call was. I found a bill and saw a number that I did not recognize so I called the number. It was a sex line. I had seen these advertised on late night TV.

I began watching the mail every month for this bill. He would open it and I would find it after he had gone to work. And I would look at it and every month there began to be more and more calls to these numbers like this. They were all called while I was at work. Pretty soon the bills would be \$200 to \$300. Money we truly did not have to waste. And Daniel began working less. Also at this time, Daniel started becoming less and less interested in sex with me. And he began calling the sex lines several times a day. Next, he moved on to porn sights and one day I found a picture of him naked with a full erection. He was sending this out to people on the internet.

As all this was happening, he started making excuses for not going to church and family functions. He eventually quit going to church completely and quit being friends with our friends from church. His personality started to change. He continued to work less. And the money he did make all went to paying for porn sites and pornography. He cashed in our life insurance policies and quit paying car insurance on our cars. I was working longer hours and he would be home and so he would get the mail and hide these bills.

I did not find out until I started getting calls at work asking for payment. I was embarrassed, furious, and angry. One day after one of these calls, I went home to confront him. He wasn't there but one of his work trucks was there. I opened the door and looked everywhere... looking for bills. I found some but was shocked when I found a man's leather thong! I became so angry I slammed the truck door and screaming at the top of my lungs I went to the front of the truck and kicked the front grill while yelling, "I hate you!" I don't know how

many times I kicked it but I smashed in the whole grill. It looked as though someone had backed into it. He never found out that I had done this in a fit of rage.

Later I found out he was spending up to \$500 or more a month on his porn addiction. I confronted him. He became mad, saying I was acting ridiculous and didn't trust him. He started to become grumpy and argued more with family. He said it was nothing. He would stop. It had nothing to do with me.

Daniel was offered a really good job where he worked a couple of afternoons a week and several evenings. After a few months he was fired. I never knew why until years later. It was because he was caught using pornography and also having a prostitute come to the office after hours to meet him. He was caught in the act.

But he didn't stop. His addiction grew deeper. He started emailing and meeting with groups for group sex and sadomasochism. At this time, we were not having sex at all. I didn't know all this was happening until I found various emails and sex paraphernalia from porn shops. When I found receipts from a motel, I would confront him and he would make up lies.

Our son was a senior in high school by then and I was busy taking him to visit colleges. One of those times our daughter found several of his videos and emails and told me. Both our children were disgusted with their father, and this put a rift between them.

During these years, I asked him to tell me the truth. I begged him to go to counseling with me. He refused everything. He continued to say it had nothing to do with me and he still loved me. But he was not the person I married – not at all. I was very angry, and I felt very unloved. I also had moved up in my job and it was extremely stressful. I spent more than 60 hours a week at work and the rest of the time I spent going to my kids' activities.

Eventually I found out he started meeting with men in sex groups and calling sex lines with men for phone sex. He also went from a non-drinker to a drinker.

Many people asked why I didn't leave him sooner. To be honest I just wasn't strong enough and I had little support because it was embarrassing to tell anyone about this! I wanted to keep my family together. I didn't want to be a divorced woman.

I had become an angry person also. When I would find something, I would scream and yell... when no one was around. I would cry and cry. I began to get depressed. I knew I needed help. I had no one I could talk to.

So, I went to counseling.

The first time I met with the counselor, and she asked me why I was there I told her the whole story. I asked, "How can I fix my husband and help him?"

The counselor told me, "Sharon, instead of you trying to fix Daniel, you need to work on yourself and become a stronger, happier person. I will never forget these words. She also said to me, "You cannot help a person with an addiction if they don't want to be helped." And he didn't!

I joined a Christian wives' on-line group. My counselor told me about this. It helped to read that thousands of other women were going through this. Some were pastors' wives, judges' wives, sheriff's wives, and couldn't tell anyone. Others told how when they did mention a problem like this, they were questioned if they liked sex or if they were prudish and they were blamed for not dressing sexy enough or not being available to their husbands! Others were scared to confront their husbands because they were police officers or lawyers... men in high-power jobs and they could be abusive!!

I went to counseling for four years and I became stronger. By this time, both of our children were out of the house. Both working and living on their own. I was financially able to support myself and I decided it was time to finally leave him. I had two close friends that I had confided in and they were very supportive.

When I told Daniel, he acted devastated and wanted to know why I didn't love him anymore. "How could I do this to him?" I told him everything I knew about what he had been hiding all these years. I told him I just couldn't live in this kind of marriage. I asked him again to be honest with me. He would not. He was angry and threatened me and I became afraid of him.

I left him and moved in with my sister who lived close to my work. After leaving him, he would drive by my work and leave notes on my car. I met with him twice and he really scared me by the things he said to me. I was done. He wasn't going to change. So I filed for divorce.

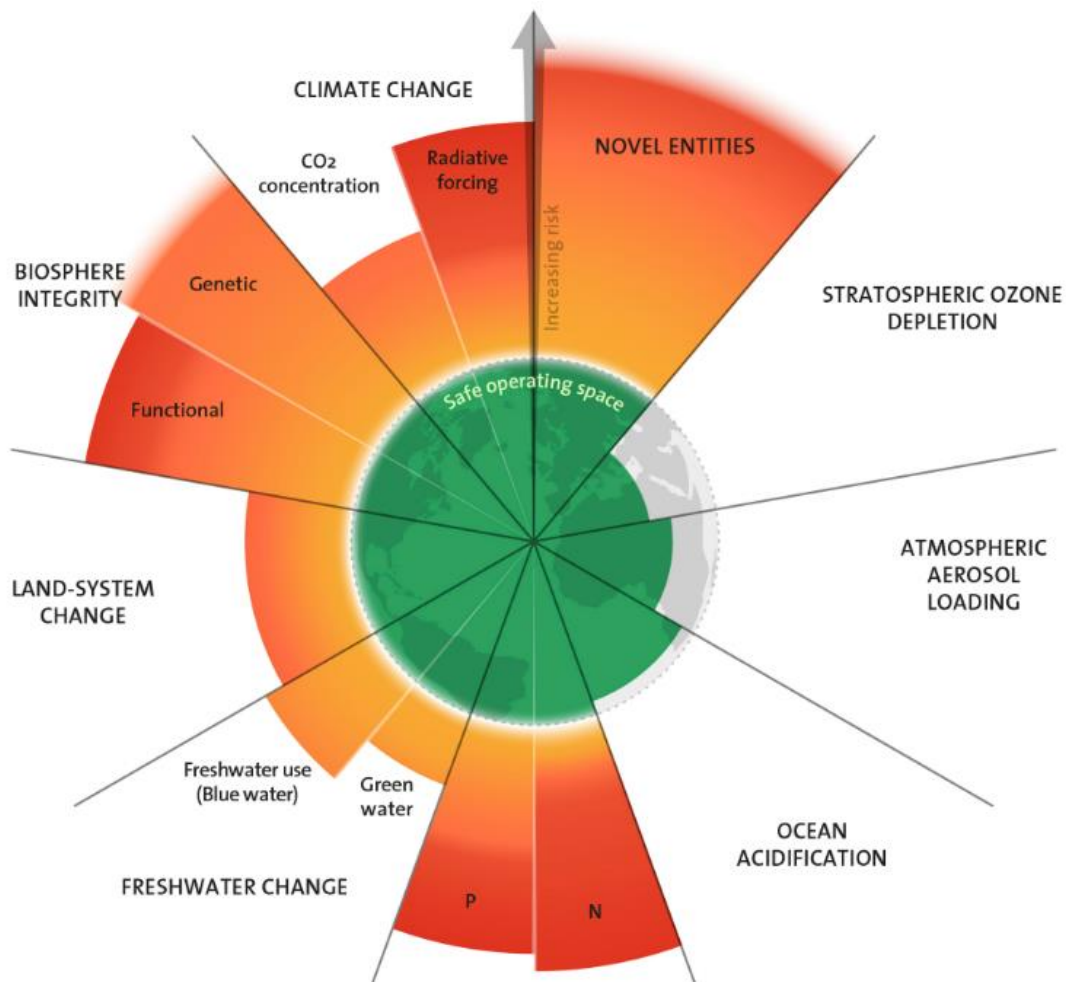
When he was served with the divorce papers, he was furious at me. He stayed angry for over 10 years, and I had to move to a different town almost two hours away so I wouldn't run into him and he couldn't find me. I told no one in his family about the real reason for the divorce. Nor did I tell my children everything. Only a very few friends knew the truth.

I have no idea if he has gotten over his addiction. I hope so. I have moved on with my life and am happy. It still makes me sad to think of the wonderful, good man he was once and the angry and sad man he became.

## Part Two: Environment

THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL LAW IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE SHARE THE PLANET WITH OTHER BEINGS, AND THAT WE HAVE A DUTY TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME.

~ Vandana Shiva ~



*Planetary Boundaries: Nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come. Nine boundaries assessed, six crossed. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 Credit: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University.*

*Based on Richardson et al. 2023, Steffen et al. 2015, and Rockström et al. 2009.*

<https://stockholmuniversit.app.box.com/s/sr0nfknm95oydnsm1zi0c526qzjn1vs/file/1305811057353>



## Chapter One: War Against the Earth (and Against Environmentalists)

There are many environmental issues I could discuss but I'll limit this to the most important and universal ones as I perceive them. Once we have an understanding of how things ought to be, we can adjust our thinking and actions to bring us into greater harmony with the whole. When we find our way and throw ourselves wholeheartedly into protecting what we love, our lives take on purpose. If things get too difficult or we burn out, as I did, then we know it's time to go deeper into our hearts and souls for direction. Sometimes we need a break; sometimes we need to change direction entirely.

<h3>OUR INSPIRATION</h3> <p>NAMES OF THOSE MURDERED IN 2022</p>					
<p><b>BRAZIL</b></p> <p>Clebson Barra Portilho José Lopes Rodrigues Jonatas de Oliveira dos Santos Ana Yanomami Xevana Eduardo Pereira Rocha Moacir de Jesus dos Santos Correia Vitorino Sanches Arcelino Soares de Souza Rafael Bini Dom Phillips Bruno Pereira Cleomar Xirixana José Gomes Márcia Nunes Lisboa Joane Nunes Lisboa Elias Penha Gibson Gedeão Dias de Oliveira Eliseu Santos Cardoso Alex Recarte Vasques Lopes Normandes Mariano Barbosa Jhelson Batista Pecla Cordeiro Maria Aristides da Silva Sebastião David Pereira Ilma Rodrigues dos Santos Edson Lima Rodrigues Josias Vicente Mafra Wesley Flávio da Silva Márcio Moreira Raimundo Nonato Silva Oliveira Estela Verá Guarani Jeferson Nunes de Souza Vitor Fernandes Gustavo Silva da Conceição Janildo Oliveira Guajajara</p>	<p><b>COLOMBIA</b></p> <p>Gustavo Antonio Torres José Mauricio Sepúlveda Lozano Édgar Quintero Mario Óscar Solarte Ferrej Morales Rigo Alape Libardo Castillo Ortiz Teófilo Acuña Jorge Alberto Tafur Jorge Santofimio Yepes Dilson Arbey Borja Roldán José Pascual Quevedo Velásquez Pablo Emilio Baquero Cárdenas John Jairo Esquivel Yesid Caña Hery Olivero Vallesilla Pedro Nel Sánchez Sanabria Edison Gómez Ortiz Jesúsita Moreno Mosquera Libardo Perdomo Molano Julio César Buitrago Hernández Jorge Elicer Mejía José Edilson Vargas Monroy Maritón Jusayu Ipuana William Pedraza Diecelino García Bisbicús Edinson Murillo Ararat Freddy Mena Obregón Adelmo Balanta Juan Alberto Guejía Petchete Arcelia Fernández Filadelfo Anzola Padilla Luis Antonio Tombé Menza Guillermo Chicame Ipia</p>	<p>Breiner David Cucuñame López José Albeiro Camayo Güetio Luis Chamaguro Quiro Julio Victoria Cárdenas Sarcelino Lana María José Arciniegas Salinas Jancy Muñoz Avirama Wilson Nixon Melón Robles Juan Orlando Moreno John Faver Nasatacuas Carlos José García Jonás Carabalí Faustino Carabalí Francisco Sarco Pipicay Carlitos Uragama Cano Juvencio Cerquera Manquillo Luz Marina Arteaga Julio César Bravo José Miller Correa Vásquez Larry Reinoso Sánchez Yermi Chocué Camayo José Luis Quiñones Julián David Ochoa Javier Usechi Luis Eduardo Montoya Jaramillo Neiber Pertuz</p>	<p><b>ECUADOR</b></p> <p>Alba Bermeo Puin</p>	<p><b>MADAGASCAR</b></p> <p>Henri Rakotoarisoa</p>	<p><b>NICARAGUA</b></p> <p>Tránsito Gutiérrez Melgara Terin Gutiérrez Medina Salomón López Smith</p>
			<p><b>GUATEMALA</b></p> <p>Pablo Ramos Tereso Cárcamo Flores</p>	<p><b>MALAWI</b></p> <p>Bendius Amasi</p>	<p><b>PARAGUAY</b></p> <p>Edgar Emiliano Centurión Almirón Artemio Cabral López Francisco Villalba Cubas</p>
			<p><b>HONDURAS</b></p> <p>Pablo Isabel Hernández Rivera Melvin Geovany Mejía Rodríguez Justo Benítez Sánchez Alonso Salgado Cabalero Francisco Ruiz Marco Tulio Paredes Molina Marion Feliciano Montes Nuñez Marta Elizabeth Colindres Marco Antonio Pineda José Santos Godínez Ruiz Wilmer Alexis Domínguez Madrid Mauricio Ezquivel Santiago Chacón Donaldo Rosales Meza</p>	<p><b>MEXICO</b></p> <p>Antonio de la Cruz Cynthia de la Cruz Noé Godínez Arredondo Francisco Vázquez Domínguez Filogonio Martínez Merino Patricia Rivera Reyes Iván Merino Flores Héctor Soto Rodríguez Luis Donato Ortiz Humberto Valdovinos Fuentes Alberto Morales Sebastián Crispín Reyes Pablo Nicolás Pérez Xoyateco Teófilo Barrera Herrera Marcelo Carrera Reyes Omar Herrera Raymundo Marcos Campos Aheujote Lorena Chantzin Paxacuasingo Adán Linares Silverio Guillermo Hilario Morales Moisés Cuapipistenco Javier Campos Morales Joaquín César Mora Salazar Pedro Palma José Trinidad Baldenegro Pedro Pascual Cruz Rosendo González Torres Estanislao González Carrillo Verónica Patricia Guerrero Vinueza Jesús Bañuelos Acevedo Jesús Manuel García Martínez</p>	<p><b>PERU</b></p> <p>Genaro Comisario Bitap Ulises Rumlche Quintimari Juan Julio Fernández Hanco</p>
		<p><b>DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO</b></p> <p>Mahomet Meddy Kengu Benoit Hakizimana Ndamira</p>	<p><b>INDIA</b></p> <p>Mr Jeganathan Narendra Balia</p>		<p><b>PHILIPPINES</b></p> <p>Richard Mendoza Chad Errol Booc Gelejurain Ngujo II Elgyn Balonga Robert Aragon Tirso Añar Joseph Jimenez Ericson Acosta Silvestre Fortades Jr Rose Marie Galias Eugene Lastrella</p>
		<p><b>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</b></p> <p>Orlando Jorge Mera</p>	<p><b>INDONESIA</b></p> <p>Danil Erni Pinem Erfaldi Erwin Lahadado</p>		<p><b>SOUTH AFRICA</b></p> <p>Anton Mzimba</p>
					<p><b>VENEZUELA</b></p> <p>Wilmer Rodríguez Pérez Divier Rodríguez Pérez Jesús Dadure González Virgilio Trujillo Arana</p>

*The Land and Environmental Defenders on the Frontlines of the Climate Crisis*  
Chart Courtesy Global Witness, <https://www.globalwitness.org>

### Our Inspiration: Names of Those Murdered in 2022

Global Witness released a report called "Standing Firm;" download it at <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/standing-firm/>.

"Our campaign is dedicated to all those individuals, communities, and organizations that are bravely taking a stand to defend human rights, their land, and our environment. Last year,

177 people were murdered for doing this work. We remember their names and celebrate their activism. We also acknowledge that the names of many defenders who were killed last year may be missing, and we may never know how many more gave their lives to protect our planet. We honor their work, too.”

### Top findings – 2022

“For the past 11 years, Global Witness has documented and denounced waves of threats, violence, and killings of land and environmental defenders across the world, and 2022 marks the beginning of our second decade documenting lethal attacks. The world has changed dramatically since we started documenting these in 2012. But one thing that has not changed is the relentlessness of the killings.

“Last year, **at least 177 defenders lost their lives for protecting our planet, bringing the total number of killings to 1,910 since 2012.** At least 1,390 of these killings took place between the adoption of the Paris Agreement on 12 December 2015 and 31 December 2022.

“On average, a **defender was killed every other day in 2022**, just as was the case in 2021. Although the overall figure is slightly lower last year than in 2021, when we recorded 200 killings, this does not mean that the situation has significantly improved. The worsening climate crisis and the ever-increasing demand for agricultural commodities, fuel, and minerals will only intensify the pressure on the environment – and those who risk their lives to defend it.

“Increasingly, non-lethal strategies such as criminalization, harassment, and digital attacks are also being used to silence defenders.”

Source: <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/standing-firm/>

\* \* \*

I listened to a four-hour webinar sponsored by Deep Green Resistance: Strategy to Save the Planet. The program was “Ecology of Spirit: Biocentrism, Animism, and the Environment.” Here is a small excerpt from my notes. *“All across the world, an epidemic of backlash towards environmentalists, huge amounts of violence – state-sanctioned and vigilante – makes this work very difficult. On top of that we have this very powerful moderating force in the environmental movement where funding gets funneled toward organizations that don’t challenge the status quo. So, if you’re an organization like a mainstream nonprofit that is going to promote wind and solar energy or nuclear power as the solution to these issues, these technologies are compatible with capitalism, compatible with the ruling class as it currently exists. These activist groups who were once protecting the land, that were once protecting territory, wild beings, and wild places are now getting billions and billions of dollars – trillions even. They have been co-opted into promoting a certain type of industrial technology, certain sectors of the industrial economy, and calling that “defense of the land.” Because we take a more radical stance, we can’t get funding from big foundations, from major donors, so we rely on donations from folks like you.”*

You can watch this program at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=302136579260866>.

Four hours wasn’t enough for me, so I attended an all-day webinar January 24, 2024 hosted by CLIMOBILIZE called “Speak Your Mind!” It was advertised as: “The major climate-

related issues of our times are not being presented on mainstream media. Voices that need to be heard are being ignored. So, we're giving them the stage. 24 thought leaders. 3 topics.”

Max Wilbert (co-author of *Bright Green Lies*) gave a passionate speech about the situation and then presented this:

## Our Generational Task

1. Challenge false solutions and greenwashing.
2. Emergency degrowth programs to rapidly reduce consumption and “power down” society while preserving human rights.
3. Re-localize sustainable food systems and other necessities.
4. Address overpopulation humanely.
5. Stop destructive projects & industries by any means necessary.
6. Support the land in healing.

We are not static, programmed robots – at least I hope we are not – though Western Civilization may try to lock us into predictable behaviors, so we glide through life without feeling or being aware of the deadening nature of conformity.

Long ago, I read Chellis Glendinning’s book, *My Name Is Chellis, and I’m in Recovery from Western Civilization*. It woke me up. Maybe you can find a book, a movie, a friend who can help you figure things out. That’s what I keep doing. I mean, it’s an endless process.

Two people who have inspired me enormously are Derrick Jensen and Lierre Keith, both of whom are prolific writers and speakers. Lierre has often said, “If there is anyone alive in a hundred years, they’re going to ask what the fuck was wrong with us that we didn’t fight like hell when the world was going down.” And at the conclusion of Derrick’s new book, *The Boy in the Box*, he writes, “I know that life on this beautiful, wonderful planet is at stake, and it’s time for us to fight harder than we ever thought possible. It’s time for every last one of us to pick up whatever tools or weapons or gifts that we have, and to use them, and to keep using them till our very last breath on this planet we call home.”

## Chapter Two: A Little History

By Iona, first published in her memoir, *How on Earth Did I Become a Radical Environmentalist Grandmother?*

In 1987, I got a job as an air-pollution inspector with the Middlesex County Health Department and my life changed dramatically. I was in an office where everyone cared about the environment – especially my boss, who was a tiger about enforcing the law. He taught us the codes so we could write up every single violation we found once we entered a facility. I was fit-tested for a respirator by standing in an enclosed booth with a mask on while the operator pumped in some harmless, smelly substance. She adjusted my respirator until I could smell nothing.

I asked myself, "What have I gotten into this time?"

Gloria, a petite and wiry woman with exuberant dark curls, trained me. As we entered our first factory together, she carried her clipboard and did not smile. She meant business. She had an engineer's awareness of what to look for and a policewoman's knowledge of which laws were being broken. I, a wide-eyed novice who smiled readily, served as her foil.

Gloria and I returned to our cramped office and she showed me how to fill out the Notice of Violation, which would be submitted to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and force the company to amend their ways "or else" ... fines or court.

We could only enter a factory if we received a complaint from neighbors as we were a public health agency. Our tools were primitive by today's standards – an anemometer in the office to show wind direction, little county cars with radios, and our noses. We provided 24-hour coverage, rotated shifts, and were required to be on the scene within half an hour.

The protocol was to arrive at the complainant's home, compare odors with them (in New Jersey the law essentially stated that you could stink up your own property but nobody else's), then drive a 360° circle around the suspected source, check the wind direction and, if it was blowing over the resident's home, we could enter and inspect. We not only looked for the cause of foul emissions but unfulfilled requirements of other permits.

I was horrified at the things I saw. Again, no suburban housewife duties had prepared me for the assault on my nostrils and eyeballs from the toxic chemicals, Dark-Ages scenes, and ghastly worker exposures found inside the worst of these plants – and it was often the worst ones which drew us inside.

I inspected chemical plants, a leather-tanning and dyeing facility with colorful hides hanging all over (think: car and airplane seat covers), steel mills spreading red dust on their neighbors, oil refineries, a tape-manufacturing factory, electroplating plants, an automobile factory, dye houses, boilers, and many others.

In 11 months, I wrote 90 violations before realizing that a job with more preventative possibilities might be preferable as, in these situations, the damage had already occurred: the people had been poisoned (it's important to remember that with carcinogens the only safe limit is zero), the air and water had been contaminated, and the workers had been at risk. It was especially shocking to see so many people (usually men) with such awful jobs making ordinary household products for us without adequate protection.

During one of my forays coming back from an inspection, my county car broke down on Route 287. As I sat at the edge of a stream of fast-moving traffic waiting for help, my gut told me that I was living at the wrong time. I wanted a life without TV and without cars. The Amish have such a life. Mine is only minus TV – a very extraordinary way to live. When we are watching TV, we are not really living. We sit around watching people pretend to be someone they are not.

I had a few minutes to sit and think about all the air pollution these cars were creating as they whizzed past me. I had already been to "Smoke School" where we learned how to gauge the degree of opacity from various plumes of smoke emitted by a contraption on the lawn at Rutgers, so my eyes were trained to evaluate smokestacks and nearly every single factory, business, store or home has a chimney of some sort to allow the by-products of burning fossil-fuels to escape.

As I sat on Route 287 awaiting rescue, I had another revelation. If one combines all the vertical stacks in the world AND all the horizontal ones on these hundreds of cars and trucks passing me, it is clear that we are COOKING THE EARTH!

That was in 1988, long before Global Warming became a common phrase.

### **Chapter Three: Who are the “real” environmentalists?**

I saw Michael Moore’s movie “Planet of the Humans” several years ago and cried at the end when the baby orangutan was dying with a compassionate human trying to comfort her. I knew Moore was onto something important, but major U.S. environmental groups went wild trying to get the film blocked. Moore showed that these groups get funding from corporations and how the “clean energy” technologies they promote are destroying the Earth. Some people are working hard to save this American way of life called “civilization;” some are working hard to save life on Earth and protect ecosystems. Some aren’t doing a damned thing!

I started thinking about all the years I’d been publishing stories promoting solar and wind without understanding how much damage they do. I had also been publishing excerpts from *Bright Green Lies: How the Environmental Movement Lost Its Way and What We Can Do about It* by Max Wilbert, Derrick Jensen, and Lierre Keith, which has the same themes as “Planet of the Humans” in vivid detail, yet I had not fully comprehended the connection until recently.

After being a registered member of the Green Party for 37 years, I suddenly found myself on the same side as Republicans fighting a massive wind farm right off the coast of the Jersey Shore, where I live and swim. It was shocking to read about dead whales and dolphins washing ashore. Groups I had trusted were saying these deaths were caused by boat strikes, not the seismic testing going on by the wind farm developer. If these marine mammals were indeed hit by boats, it’s natural to think that their sensitive navigational systems were out of whack; otherwise, they would not have been anywhere near boats. In 2016, I had published a front-page story, “Court Rules Against U.S. Navy’s Current Use of Whale-Harming Sonar” so I knew this sort of human invasion of the ocean was a problem for creatures living there.

During the past year, I started following the windfarm issue and attended a local environmental group’s meetings; they thought the wind farm was a great idea. I was the only one concerned. I dropped out. Then I started reading about and publishing articles about deep

seabed mining for the precious minerals needed to produce electric car batteries, solar panels, windmills, etc. and was horrified to realize that even these deep, untouched ecosystems were not safe from humanity's greedy clutches.

\* \* \*



*Greenpeace International activists from the Rainbow Warrior attach a flag reading, 'Stop Deep Sea Mining' to a cable holding the prototype robot Patania II in April 2021.  
Photo: Marten van Dijk/Greenpeace*

By Julia Conley  
Common Dreams: December 5, 2023

## **'Shameful': Norwegian Government Backs Deep-Sea Mining**

Environmental protection groups on Tuesday warned that the Norwegian government's new deal with two right-wing minority parties to open the Arctic Ocean to deep-sea mining would be "a disaster" and flies in the face of warnings from scientists about companies' exploration of the seabed.

The Labor and Center Parties, which have control of the government, reached an agreement with the right-wing Hoeyre and Progress Parties to allow Stortinget, the Norwegian parliament, to approve the first projects by deep-sea mining firms such as Loke Marine Minerals.

The plan would gradually open areas of the Greenland and Barents seas in the Arctic, and proponents claimed it would set strict environmental survey requirements. The proposal was set to be formally debated by the Stortinget on January 4, followed by a vote.

Despite the promises of environmental protections, Greenpeace Norway said the government cannot claim to know "what consequences this will have for the ecosystems in the sea, for endangered species such as whales and seabirds, or for the fish stocks on which we base our livelihood."

Norway is "giving up any pretense of being an environmental leader" by embracing deep-sea mining, said the group.

The European Academies Science Advisory Council in August said the push to extract metals like cobalt and copper from the fragile seabed – ostensibly to support the production of batteries for electric vehicles, wind turbines, and other products – is "misleading" and could cause "irreparable damage" to ecosystems where thousands of newly discovered species live.

The minerals are already mined elsewhere on Earth, scientists have pointed out, and the deep sea could be at risk for chemical leaks and spills as well as harmful noise and light pollution.

More than 800 marine scientists have called for a global moratorium on deep-sea mining, and 119 members of the European Parliament have called on Norwegian lawmakers to reject the proposed opening process.

Frode Pley, head of Greenpeace Norway, called Tuesday's proposal "shameful" for the country.

"The Norwegian government is not only ignoring hundreds of concerned scientists, but also showing disregard for its international obligations and national environmental legislation," said Pley. "By opening up for deep-sea mining, Norway has lost all credibility as a responsible ocean nation that signed the United Nations ocean treaty."

Martin Sveinsson Melvær of the Bellona environmental group in Norway said it would be "a dangerous derailment in the fight against climate change to open up seabed minerals."

Pley pledged that the fight against deep-sea mining in Norway "doesn't end here."

"Across the Greenpeace network, we will work to stop every deep-sea mining project presented to the Norwegian parliament," he said. "The wave of protests against deep-sea mining has just started to grow... We will not allow Norway to destroy the unique life in the deep sea, not in the Arctic nor anywhere else."

Thanks to Bill Boteler for submitting this article.

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**Source:** <https://www.commondreams.org/news/norway-deep-sea-mining-2666454113>

### **News Flash:** Norway Votes To Allow Deep-Sea Mining In Arctic Waters

Deep Green Resistance News Service: January 26, 2024

"Norway's parliament has voted to allow deep-sea mining to commence in the Norwegian Sea, a move that has garnered criticism from scientists and environmentalists: While the Norwegian government insists that it can conduct deep-sea mining in a sustainable way, critics say these activities will put marine ecosystems and biodiversity at risk.

"The Scandinavian country will open a 281,000-square-kilometer (108,500-square-mile) area of the ocean for deep-sea mining, which mostly falls along its continental shelf. . ."

There is an excellent 5-minute video at the website below.

**Source:** <https://dgrnewsservice.org/civilization/ecocide/extraction/norway-votes-to-allow-deep-sea-mining-in-arctic-waters/>



\* \* \*

My friend in Idaho did a little research:

*Deep seabed mining technology: Hi Iona ... have you heard of this?  
I just watched a video. I came across this after looking into Ocean Sole. And questions about deep sea mining. And pollution of our oceans. I knew a little about deep sea mining from my husband. He had watched several TV shows. Just more destruction to our beautiful world. Anyway... that's what I've been looking at tonight and here's what I found.*

### **Blue Climate Initiative, Ocean-Based Innovation**

The health of our oceans is critical. Oceans generate an astounding one-half of the world's oxygen and absorb one-quarter of its carbon dioxide emissions. Over 3 billion people depend on the oceans for their primary source of nutrition. The oceans' goods and services generate about \$2.5 trillion per year, equivalent to the world's seventh largest economy. Yet these vital services are threatened by global warming, ocean acidification, pollution, unsustainable fishing practices and other threats. We need immediate concerted action.

There is a beautiful 4-minute, 27-second video here titled "Indigenous Voices Against Deep-Sea Mining." You can also sign their petition like I just did at <https://www.blueclimateinitiative.org/>.

\* \* \*

## **Chapter Four: Wind or Whales?**

### **Orsted's decision a 'first step' in exposing the economic unsustainability and environmental dangerousness of ocean wind turbines.**

TOMS RIVER, New Jersey – Rep. Chris Smith (R-Manchester) this week welcomed news that Orsted, a Danish company, has announced that it has "ceased development" of two offshore wind turbine projects – Ocean Wind 1 and 2 – off the coast of New Jersey.

According to an [Orsted press release](#), Orsted cited "anticipated impairments on its U.S. portfolio of up to DKK 16 billion" or approximately \$2.266 billion and said that, "The U.S. offshore wind projects have experienced further negative developments from adverse impacts relating to supply chains, increased interest rates..."

Smith said, "Turns out that despite huge taxpayer subsidies and credible predictions of big increases to ratepayers, Orsted has concluded that they will still lose money. Orsted's decision was a first step in exposing the economic unsustainability and environmental dangerousness of ocean wind turbines – each the size of the Chrysler Building in New York City – and Orsted's pulling out of the deal may help slow and eventually halt similar projects off New Jersey's coast."

Orsted's withdrawal marks a victory for local residents, environmentalists, and NJ commercial and recreational fishermen who have worked alongside Smith and Rep. Jeff Van



Drew to expose the dangers inherent in the massive ocean industrialization plans slated for the Jersey Shore. It also marks a major failure for the Biden and Murphy Administrations who tried to push it through and throw billions of taxpayer dollars at the unsound, improperly vetted projects. . . .

**Source:** Email received from Chris Smith on November 2, 2023.

## Chapter Five: Bad River Band Fights Pipeline Company



*Bad River, a film about the tribe and its David-versus-Goliath fight against the pipeline company, was to be released in theaters across the U.S. on March 15. The film seeks to put the current pipeline fight in historical context. Screenshot of trailer by Iona*

**Note from Iona:** While watching the trailer (photo above), one male Indian elder explained, “We’re going to protect our water; die for it if we have to.”

The Bad River LaPointe Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians or Bad River Tribe for short are a federally recognized tribe of Ojibwe people. The Bad River Reservation is located on the south shore of Lake Superior and has a land area of about 193.11 square miles in northern Wisconsin. Most of the reservation is managed as undeveloped forest and wetland, providing a habitat for wild rice and other natural resources. (Wikipedia)

**REMEMBER THE PLANTS, TREES, ANIMAL LIFE WHO ALL HAVE THEIR TRIBES, THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR HISTORIES, TOO. TALK TO THEM, LISTEN TO THEM. THEY ARE ALIVE POEMS.**

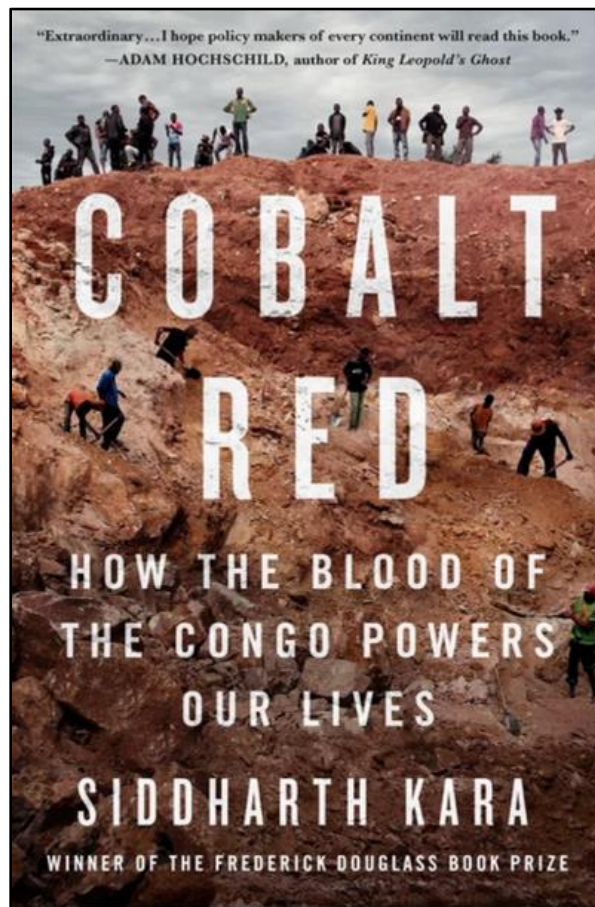
~ Joy Harjo ~

## Chapter Six: Congo Basin

“We must not let a chaotic expansion of fossil fuels in the Congo Basin risk our precious tropical forests, biodiversity hotspots ... and the rights and livelihoods of forest communities who are already feeling the impacts of climate change,” said François Biloko, head of Réseau CREF, an environmental network in the Democratic Republic of Congo. <https://reseaucref.org>

“The area of land allocated to oil and gas production on the African continent is set to quadruple,” according to a new analysis by Rainforest Foundation UK and Earth InSight. “Oil and gas exploration blocks overlap 30% of dense tropical forests in Africa, of which 90% are in the Congo Basin, where 150 distinct ethnic groups live,” it said.

\* \* \*



### **Cobalt Red: Horror Show in Congo**

An unflinching investigation reveals the human rights abuses behind the Congo’s cobalt mining operation – and the moral implications that affect us all.

*Cobalt Red* is the searing, first-ever exposé of the immense toll taken on the people and environment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by cobalt mining, as told through the testimonies of the Congolese people themselves. Activist and researcher Siddharth Kara has traveled deep into cobalt territory to document the testimonies of the people living, working, and dying for cobalt. To uncover the truth about brutal mining practices, Kara investigated militia-controlled mining areas, traced the supply chain of child-mined cobalt from toxic pit to consumer-facing tech giants, and gathered shocking testimonies of people who endure immense suffering and even die mining cobalt.

“Cobalt is an essential component to every lithium-ion rechargeable battery made today, the batteries that power our smartphones, tablets, laptops, and electric vehicles. Roughly 75 percent of the world’s supply of cobalt is mined in the Congo, often by peasants and children in sub-human conditions. Billions of people in the world cannot conduct their daily lives without participating in a human rights and environmental catastrophe in the Congo. In this stark and crucial book, Kara argues that we must all care about what is happening in the Congo – because we are all implicated.”

Quote from *Cobalt Red*: “We shouldn't be transitioning to the use of electric vehicles at the cost of the people and environment of one of the most downtrodden and impoverished corners of the world. The bottom of the supply chain, where almost all the world's cobalt is coming from, is a horror show.”

Source: <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250284297/cobaltred>

## Chapter Seven: Child Labor Behind Smartphones Exposed



Paul, a 14-year-old orphan, told researchers, *“I would spend 24 hours down in the tunnels. I arrived in the morning and would leave the following morning ... I had to relieve myself down in the tunnels ... My foster mother planned to send me to school, but my foster father was against it, he exploited me by making me work in the mine.”*

**Amnesty International: @Amnestyusa, excerpt  
January 19, 2016**

**Note from Iona:** Since this report is outdated, I am only highlighting the photos and a few paragraphs. What comes after this is a current campaign by Amnesty.

**Major electronics brands, including Apple, Samsung, and Sony, are failing to do basic checks to ensure that cobalt mined by child laborers has not been used in their products,** said Amnesty International and Afreewatch in a report published today.

The report, [This is What We Die For: Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Power the Global Trade in Cobalt](https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/this-is-what-we-die-for-human-rights-abuses-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-power-the-global-trade-in-cobalt/), traces the sale of cobalt, used in lithium-ion batteries **from mines where children as young as seven** and adults work in perilous conditions. Read the report at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/this-is-what-we-die-for-human-rights-abuses-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-power-the-global-trade-in-cobalt/>.

“The glamorous shop displays and marketing of state-of-the-art technologies are a stark contrast to the children carrying bags of rocks, and miners in narrow manmade tunnels risking permanent lung damage,” said Mark Dummett, Business & Human Rights Researcher at Amnesty International.

**“Millions of people enjoy the benefits of new technologies but rarely ask how they are made.** It is high time the big brands took some responsibility for the mining of the raw materials that make their lucrative products.”

The report documents how traders buy cobalt from areas where child labor is rife and sell it to Congo Dongfang Mining (CDM), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Chinese mineral giant Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd (Huayou Cobalt). . . .

“The **abuses in mines remain out of sight and out of mind** because in today’s global marketplace consumers have no idea about the conditions at the mine, factory, and assembly line. We found that traders are buying cobalt without asking questions about how and where it was mined.”



*Children sorting and crushing cobalt ore in the neighborhood of Kasulo Kolwezi, DRC.*

## **Fatal mines and child labor**

**The DRC produces at least 50 percent of the world's cobalt.** One of the largest mineral processors in the country is Huayou Cobalt subsidiary CDM. Huayou Cobalt gets more than 40 percent of its cobalt from DRC.

Miners working in areas from which CDM buys cobalt face the risk of long-term health damage and a high risk of fatal accidents. At least 80 artisanal underground miners died in southern DRC between September 2014 and December 2015 alone. The true figure is unknown as many accidents go unrecorded and bodies are left buried in the rubble.

Amnesty International researchers also found that the vast majority of miners spend long hours every day working with cobalt without the most basic of protective equipment, such as gloves, work clothes or face-masks to protect them from lung or skin disease.

Children told Amnesty International they worked for up to 12 hours a day in the mines, carrying heavy loads to earn between one and two dollars a day. **In 2014 approximately 40,000 children worked in mines** across southern DRC, many of them mining cobalt, according to UNICEF.

“The dangers to health and safety make mining one of the worst forms of child labor. **Companies whose global profits total \$125 billion cannot credibly claim that they are unable to check where key minerals in their productions come from,**” said Dummett.

“Mining the basic materials that power an electric car or a smartphone should be a source of prosperity for miners in DRC. The reality is that it is a back-breaking life of misery for almost no money. Big brands have the power to change this. . . .”

A full list of the companies investigated and their responses is available in the annex of the report.

The 16 multinational companies covered in the report are Ahong, Apple, BYD, Daimler, Dell, HP, Huawei, Inventec, Lenovo, LG, Microsoft, Samsung, Sony, Vodafone, Volkswagen, and ZTE. Company responses are available in the report annex.

Thanks to Bill Boteler for submitting this story.

**Source:** <https://www.amnestyusa.org/updates/child-labor-behind-smart-phone-and-electric-car-batteries-exposed/>



## Chapter Eight: Amnesty DCR Campaign: Powering Change or Business as Usual?

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/7010/2023/en/>

Mining Project	Actual or projected annual production according to mining operators	Operating company	Parent companies (share size and place of registration)	Dates of evictions documented in this report
<b>Kolwezi copper and cobalt mine</b>	<b>Copper:</b> 128,000 tonnes <b>Cobalt:</b> 2,506 tonnes	The Compagnie Minière de Musonoie Global SAS	Zijin Mining Group Ltd. 72%, China; Gécamines 28%, DRC	2012 - present
<b>Mutoshi mine</b>	<b>Copper:</b> 20,000 tonnes <b>Cobalt:</b> 16,000 tonnes	Chemaf SA	Chemaf Resources Ltd., 100%, United Arab Emirates / Isle of Man	2016
<b>Metalkol RTR project</b>	<b>Copper:</b> 94,807 tonnes <b>Cobalt:</b> 20,718 tonnes	Metalkol SA	Eurasian Resources Group SARL, 100%, Luxembourg	2017 - 2020
<b>Kamoa-Kakula mine</b>	<b>Copper:</b> 6 - 800,000 tonnes	Kamoa Copper SA	Ivanhoe Mines Ltd., 39.6%, Canada; Zijin Mining, 39.6%, China; DRC government, 20%; Crystal River Global Limited, 0.8%, British Virgin Islands	2017 - 2018

### INTRODUCTION

This document is the Annex to Amnesty International and the Initiative for Good Governance and Human Rights' joint report *Powering Change or Business as Usual? Forced evictions at industrial cobalt and copper mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (AFR 62/7009/2023)*.

The world needs to urgently shift away from fossil fuels – key drivers of the climate crisis, but at what cost? *Powering Change or Business as Usual?* documents how many people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been forcibly evicted from their homes and farmland to make way for the expansion of industrial mining projects extracting copper and

cobalt. The country is a major producer of both of these minerals, which are essential to the global energy transition away from fossil fuels.

But evictions are often carried out by mining companies with little regard for the rights of affected communities or full compliance with national laws. The Congolese government has failed to enforce these legal safeguards, and in some cases, actively facilitated forced evictions. The report urges mining companies to immediately provide effective remedy for the harm they have caused and to avoid future harm. It also calls on Congolese authorities to declare a moratorium on mass evictions until a commission of inquiry completes a review of existing implementation gaps of domestic legal protections against forced evictions and formulates concrete policy reforms.

This Annex contains correspondence received from the mining companies cited in the four case studies featured in the report, including:

- **Case study 1:** Kolwezi copper and cobalt mine, its operating company Compagnie Minière de Musonoie Global SAS (COMMUS) and its parent companies Zijin Mining Group Ltd. (Zijin Mining);
- **Case study 2:** Mutoshi mine, its parent company Chemaf SA (Chemaf);
- **Case study 3:** Metalkol Roan Tailings Reclamation project (Metalkol RTR), its operating company Metalkol SA and its parent company Eurasian Resources Group SARL (ERG); and
- **Case study 4:** Kamo-a-Kakula mine, its operating company Kamo-a and its parent companies Ivanhoe Mines Ltd. and Zijin Mining.

The Annex also includes correspondence from the DRC government. Please see the table on the next page for full details of the ownership structure of mining operators cited in the report.



*Drone photograph of the neighbourhood of Gécamines Kolwezi, on the edge of the Kolwezi copper and cobalt mine operated by Chinese-owned company COMMUS, September 2022 © Amnesty International (videographers: Reportage Sans Frontières)*

Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations. We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better.

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\* \* \*

P.S. I (Iona) want the world to know that we need trees more than we need solar panels, wind farms, smartphones, computers, or electric vehicles. SAVING FORESTS AND TREES IS THE BEST WAY TO FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING. Wherever you live, do your best to save forests and trees. Saving forests is harder work than planting trees, which children can do. Fighting to save forests ensures a lot more CO2 removal faster than planting baby trees. Remember, trees are alive; they are our sisters and brothers in the Universe.

I have been promoting trees as the best “Nature-Based Solution” to climate change, better than solar, wind, EVs, etc., so I was pleased to see an email announcing that our government is trying to address this along with Ecosystem Services and Natural capital (or natural assets).

The United States now has official guidance from the White House on how to consider ecosystem services in the following report, “GUIDANCE FOR ASSESSING CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS.”

**Nature-based solutions** – actions to protect, sustainably manage, or restore natural or modified ecosystems to address societal challenges, simultaneously providing benefits for people and the environment. Nature-based solutions typically provide benefits to people through flows of ecosystem services. For example, an investment in restoring a wetland that is connected to a community’s drinking water supply is a nature-based solution if it improves environmental conditions (e.g., restores native species and ecological processes) and enhances the supply or quality of drinking water (e.g., ecosystem services).

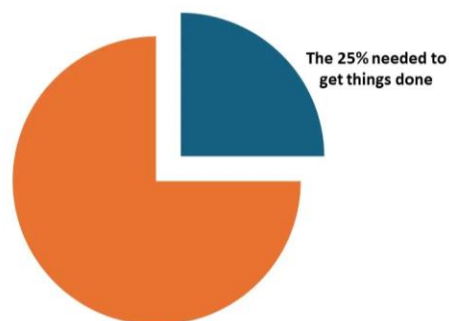
**Source:** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ESGuidance.pdf>



## Chapter Nine: You Don't Need Everyone to Save the World: Just 25% of them.

By Matt Orsagh

Substack: March 7, 2024



Don't despair, you don't need to convince the whole world that climate change is a real problem. You don't need to convince half the world that breaching our planetary boundaries is a real problem. You only have to convince about 25% of the people. Oh, and you've got to make sure those people are passionate about it – not just that they believe someone should do something.

Easy, right?

An influential study published in *Science* in 2018 (“Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention,” <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aas8827>) shows that a committed minority can start moving the majority to change if they have about 25% of the population on their side.

The experiment behind the study was led by Damon Centola, associate professor at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Members of small groups (20 to 30 people) were shown an image of a face and told to name it. In some cases, the researchers planted people who worked to change the minds of those who had originally decided on a name. These “flies in the ointment” were largely unsuccessful in changing the minds of the group until their numbers reached about 25% of the group.

It seems that when about 25% of a group feels strongly about something, they can change the decision-making of the group.

The researchers noted that other competing minority points of view and a lack of cohesion in the group trying to change minds can negatively impact the ability of a minority to change a cultural norm. In such cases, however, the percentage needed to change the cultural norm is still well under 50% +1.

### **Where are we on that 25% threshold?**

Since 2012, the Yale Program on Climate Communication has surveyed Americans about their views on climate change. They have separated survey respondents into six groups or “Six Americas.” The six Americas are:

**Alarmed** – Convinced global warming is real, human-caused, and an urgent threat. Strong policy needed.

**Concerned** – Similar to the alarmed, but think climate impacts are distant, not an immediate priority.

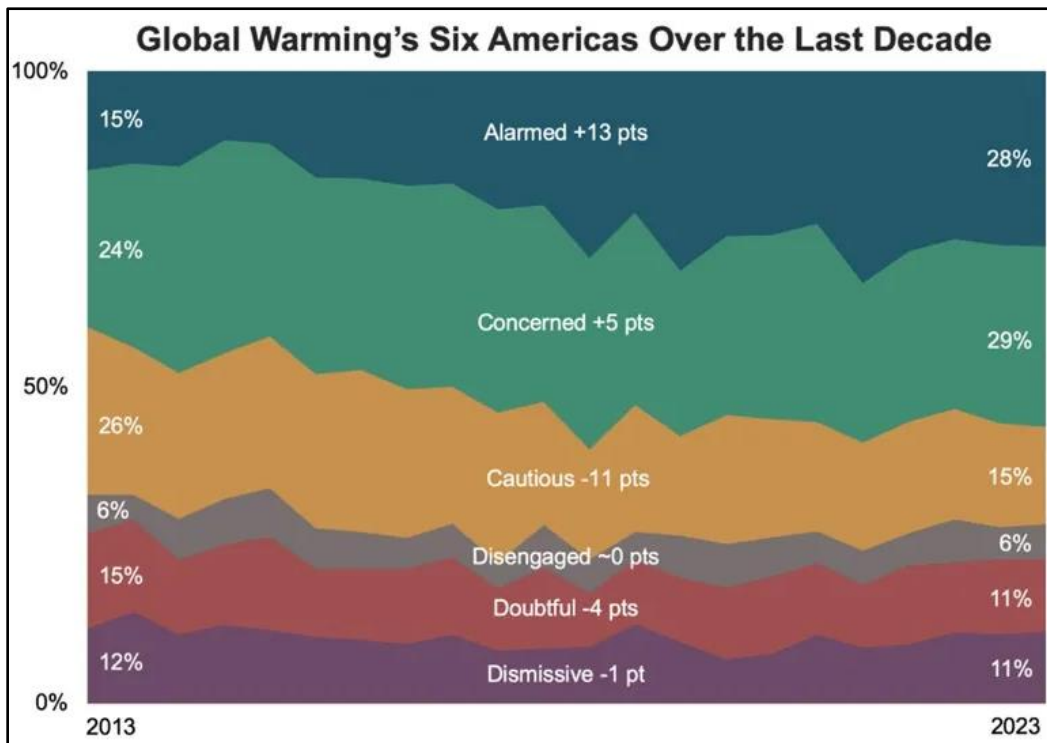
**Cautious** – Haven't made up their minds about the causes of climate change and its seriousness.

**Disengaged** – Know little about climate change, not interested.

**Doubtful** – Do not think climate change is happening or it is just part of a natural cycle.

**Dismissive** – Do not believe that global warming is happening, human-caused, or a threat.

We can assume that if all Americans were in the alarmed camp, climate change action would happen immediately. But we aren't there. The minds of Americans are moving in the right direction, but not fast enough. In 2012, only 12 percent of Americans were alarmed, and 26 percent were concerned. Those numbers were up to 26 percent and 27 percent respectively in 2022. In late 2023, when the study was last updated, there were 28 percent of Americans who said that they were "alarmed" about climate change.



*Base: 25,368 U.S. adults. Data include 22 waves of national surveys spanning April 2013 to October 2023. Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication; George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication.*

You can see that we have passed the 25% tipping point. That is good news, and things related to climate action are happening, but still not fast enough. The challenge of coordination among a large population and competing interests from other minority groups (those opposing

climate action such as the fossil fuel lobby) are pushing against the efforts of the passionate minority pushing for more climate action.

As more of the country becomes “alarmed,” more serious action starts to be taken. We will see more “environmental” candidates winning local elections, and more previous fence-sitters offering slightly more serious plans so that they can get on some committee in the future when something actually happens.

Educate yourself and each other about climate change and the other environmental damage we are doing. A populace that is educated about the devastation that awaits them because of the inaction of our leadership will eventually vote that leadership out. But it needs to happen soon to mitigate as much damage as possible.

#### **A reality check.**

A Pew Research Center poll from June 2023, asked Americans about the country’s top problems. Climate change finished tenth on the list of issues that Americans think are very big problems. Only 39 percent of those surveyed thought that climate change was a very big problem.

I’m sorry, but if climate change is the number 10 problem on a list of problems, it doesn’t get solved.

That 28 percent of Americans are alarmed about climate change shows that these Americans are poised for action. But poised for action is not action. It takes a quarter of a population to be actively working for change for change to take place.

America isn’t there yet.

Actively working for climate change to be addressed doesn’t have to be marching in the streets or knocking on doors. But if you are concerned, it should be something. Think about what you can do and do that. Join like-minded people and educate people who are looking for more information. Educate yourself and figure out what you can do.

Here’s one I’ll throw out to get you started.

Ask every leader in government and at the largest companies where you live – on camera – whether they have an apocalypse bunker. Reporters should be doing this as well. It is a fair question. The question isn’t impolite. It is a practical question when civilization may be ending.

If they answer Yes – Follow up with whether they encourage the populace at large to get bunkers.

If they answer No – Then ask them why not. Isn’t climate change going to make Earth a living hell? If they have the money to escape that, shouldn’t they have a bunker?

Imagine the kinds of discussions a society would start having if the bunker status of the 1,000 most powerful people in their country is public knowledge.

That’s my idea.

What’s yours?

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**Source:** <https://degrowthistheanswer.substack.com/p/you-dont-need-everyone-to-save-the>

# Part Three: Indigenous Peoples

## Chapter One: Race Doesn't Exist

**“IF SUDDENLY THERE WAS A THREAT TO THIS WORLD FROM SOME OTHER SPECIES, FROM ANOTHER PLANET,” THE CONSEQUENCE WOULD BE THIS: “WE’D FORGET ALL THE LITTLE LOCAL DIFFERENCES THAT WE HAVE BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES, AND WE WOULD FIND OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT WE REALLY ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS HERE ON THIS EARTH TOGETHER.”**

~ Ronald Reagan ~

As conscious of racism as I have been for decades, it wasn't until my husband David told me that the concept of race is a fallacy; I suddenly grasped this – it made sense. We all stem from the same people going way back. Our skin colors are determined by where on Earth our ancestors ended up. Race is a concept created to divide and sort people for various violent and virulent purposes.

David sent me an article called “The Concept of ‘Race’ is a Lie, Even the Ancient Greeks Knew It” by Peter G. Prontzos in the May 14, 2019 issue of *Scientific American*.

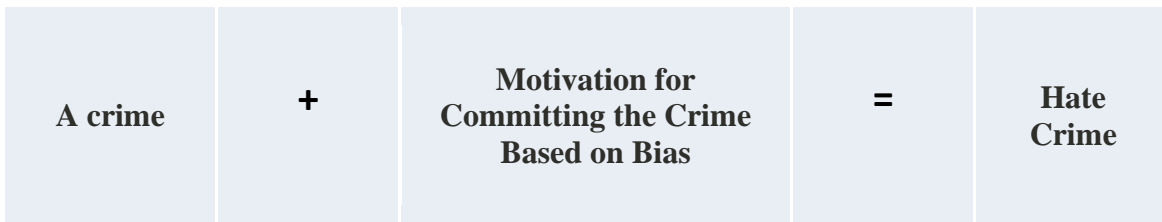
Prontzos quotes American Society of Human Genetics, “*The science of genetics demonstrates that humans cannot be divided into biologically distinct subcategories*”; and it “*challenges the traditional concept of different races of humans as biologically separate and distinct. This is validated by many decades of research.*” In other words, “*race itself is a social construct,*” with no biological basis. He continues to quote a [2018 article also in Scientific American](#) [“Effort to Diversify Medical Research Raises Thorny Questions of Race”]: “*...there is a ‘broad scientific consensus that when it comes to genes there is just as much diversity within racial and ethnic groups as there is across them.’ And the Human Genome Project has confirmed that the genomes found around the globe are 99.9 percent identical in every person. Hence, the very idea of different ‘races’ is nonsense.*”

As David points out in his upcoming book, “There is but one race, the human race.”

These days, the ugliness of racism has reached epidemic proportions here in the U.S. One could say that the increasing hatred here, not only of dark-skinned people but of others, could be considered another Civil War. Our country is torn apart and stigmatized by stereotypes. Those with the most hatred have the most guns. All one needs to do is recall the riot January 6, 2022, in Washington, DC when hate-filled people stormed our Capitol building to prevent Biden from being elected president.

When I Googled “hate crimes,” this is what I found on the Department of Justice website.

## Chapter Two: What is a hate crime?



In the simplest terms, a hate crime must include both "hate" and a "crime."

### Hate

The term "hate" can be misleading. When used in a hate crime law, the word "hate" does not mean rage, anger, or general dislike. In this context **"hate" means bias against people or groups with specific characteristics** that are defined by the law. (*emphasis added*)

At the federal level, hate crime laws include crimes committed on the basis of the victim's **perceived or actual race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability**. (*emphasis added*)

Most state hate crime laws include crimes committed on the basis of race, color, and religion; many also include crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability.

### Crime

The "crime" in hate crime is often a violent crime, such as assault, murder, arson, vandalism, or threats to commit such crimes. It may also cover conspiring or asking another person to commit such crimes, even if the crime was never carried out.

Under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, people cannot be prosecuted simply for their beliefs. People may be offended or upset about beliefs that are untrue or based upon false stereotypes, but it is not a crime to express offensive beliefs, or to join with others who share such views. However, the First Amendment does not protect against committing a crime, just because the conduct is rooted in philosophical beliefs.

### Why have hate crime laws?

Hate crimes have a broader effect than most other kinds of crime. Hate crime victims include not only the crime's immediate target but also others like them. Hate crimes affect families, communities, and at times, the entire nation.

\* \* \*

## FBI Releases 2022 Hate Crime Statistics

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program serves as the national repository for crime data voluntarily collected and submitted by law enforcement. Its primary objective is to generate reliable information for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. The 2022 hate crimes data, submitted by 14,631 law enforcement agencies, provide information about the offenses, victims, offenders, and locations of hate crimes. Of

these agencies who submitted incident reports, there were 11,634 hate crime incidents involving 13,337 offenses.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/learn-about-hate-crimes>

### Chapter Three: Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation



*Monument on Forge Pond, a tributary of the Metedeconk River in Brick, New Jersey reading, "SUMMER MEETING PLACE OF THE LENNI LENAPE INDIANS. HERE THEY MET TO FISH IN THE METEDECONK AND PAINT POTTERY. NEAR THE SITE WAS THE INDIAN STAGE SCENE OF RITES, RITUALS AND CEREMONIAL DANCES."*

*Dedicated by Mr. Brosius' fifth grade class 1968-69, Emma Havens Young School. Photo by Iona.*

February 7, 2024: I nearly cried when I read James Brosius's obituary. I had tried calling Emma Havens to see if they could help me find him. She sent me to their HR department, but they aren't allowed to give anyone's personal information. So, I Googled "Brosius, fifth grade teacher, Emma Havens, Brick, NJ" and found him! Rather, I found his obituary. I taught at Emma Havens the same time he did. His name was familiar, but I didn't remember him. My heart hurts

that such a wonderful man died without my being able to tell him how much I love the monument he and his students erected. All I could do was type a message on the funeral home's Legacy webpage, insert the photo above, and ask anyone in his family to contact me if they happen to see what I wrote. There were many expressions of sympathy; this is from one of his students.

*Wow Mr Brosius what a great man! I have great memories of him and our 5th grade class 1969. We raised money and put up a small stone commemorating the Lenni Lenape Indians campground by Forge Pond I believe its still there. He even came to my house when I broke my leg wrestling in high school to cheer me up. He made going to school a pleasure. He will truly be missed. My condolences and love to his family.*

\* \* \*

My attempts to get permission to use 13 pages with detailed and (to me) fascinating material about the tribe went unanswered so I'll just ask you to go to their website and look at what interests you. <https://nanticoke-lenape.info/> "This website is dedicated to the Ongoing History and Living Culture of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape People. You will find interesting information about us and our Educational Outreach Programs." You can download an extremely informative, detailed book about the Lenni-Lenape Indians called *We Are Still Here! The Tribal Saga of New Jersey's Nanticoke and Lenape Indians* by John R. Norwood.

#### **Chapter Four: Who Cares About Indian Genocide in Canada Anyhow?**



*Joan Morris, a Songhees Indian woman from Victoria, British Columbia, was sterilized by a Dr. Schmidt at the hospital when she reached puberty, which was a common fate of many aboriginal women. Photo supplied by Kevin Annett*



By Iona Conner

March 2018, First published in the *Mercersburg Journal*, Pennsylvania

Seventeen people gathered at an Asian restaurant in Chambersburg on February 26th to hear Nobel-Peace-Prize nominee Kevin D. Annett, MA, MDiv. discuss decades of research he's done documenting crimes against humanity at Indian residential schools and hospitals in Canada between 1889 and 1996. He has written extensively on this issue and led an international movement to win justice for victims of genocide. He displayed several books he's written and one DVD, merely a sampling of his work.

Alanna Hartzok of Scotland, Pennsylvania (PA) had sent an invitation to friends (who she knew to be comfortable with "deep thoughts and feelings") that included a brief bio about Annett. Hartzok has run twice as a candidate for Congress for PA District 9, in 2001 and 2014. She is co-founder of the Earth Rights Institute and author of *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*, containing 30 of her articles and essays revealing, "...a way forward to a possible future of peace and abundance for all. . . ."

The audience consisted of people from Franklin, Fulton, and Huntingdon Counties, but on international and universal issues, do county lines really matter? Crimes like Annett described continue around the world, and even in more subtle and obscure forms exemplified by the incarceration here in the U.S. of a disproportionate percentage of people of color. Annett has a mixed native-white background but has fair skin coloring. "If I were native, I'd be dead by now; the color of my skin saves me," he said. The people who came to listen and learn had a variety of backgrounds. Some were retired from distinguished careers in academia, while others were still working. Their work included social work, farming, teaching, electronics, carpentry, consulting, etc. One man was retired from a job as a nuclear weapons technician for the U.S. Navy. Yet nearly all are, or have been, activists in one form or another, following their deepest concerns and convictions on behalf of others and/or the environment.

In 1990, Annett was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Canada (similar to our U.S. United Church of Christ). In 1992, he was stationed in Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, Canada. He worked with homeless and indigenous people on the street and immediately opened a food bank. He also opened his pulpit to parishioners, numbering around 10 at the time. He wanted to give people a chance to talk and in six months, 100 people were showing up. "Color lines were being crossed as whites and natives gathered to talk and listen to each other," he said.

Annett started hearing stories about native children being hurt, both then and in former times, and Indian land being stolen by missionaries conniving with governments and corporations. He told of the "last missionary invasion" when smallpox epidemics were intentionally introduced to 90% of the Indian population. Even as late as 1996, he discovered that "germ warfare" was being waged against Indian children by housing healthy youngsters in wards with children diagnosed with TB but not being treated. Half of the children never came back.



In Annett's book, *Murder by Decree: The Crime of Genocide in Canada: A Counter Report to the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'*, he describes Joan Morris (see photo), "In 1963, Joan Morris of the Songhees nation on Vancouver Island was imprisoned in the Nanaimo Indian Hospital. She was just five years old. Joan was held there for over six years and experimented on by military doctors." She courageously went public in 2004, even naming some of the doctors who did awful things to her.

Morris told her story in Annett's book. *"They told my mother I had tuberculosis, but I didn't, I was perfectly healthy. That was their excuse. They shipped me off to the Nanaimo Indian Hospital after that ... They used me like a guinea pig. I was strapped down in a bed for months at a time. They took out some of my rib bones and parts of my lungs, and they even broke all the bones in my feet; I've got X rays of that. . . . They also injected me with drugs that made me sick all the time. They made me drink something that later I learned was radioactive iodine. After I was there a while, I did come down with TB but they must have infected me with it because nobody there had TB when they arrived. . . . I saw lots of other Indian kids in there too, all of them like me: healthy when they arrived, then they all got TB and a lot of them died off. The doctors and nurses let it happen ... I remember the doctors there, Dr. Weinrib and Lang, Schmidt and Connelly, they never helped the kids, just stood around and took notes. They'd give kids the shots and they'd get the TB and die."*

Annett added more in a March 2, 2018 email, "Joan was sterilized by a Dr. Schmidt at the hospital when she reached puberty, which was a common fate of many aboriginal women."

Annett is now well known around the world for his investigations, leading up to twice being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The first was because of his "work in Canada documenting and campaigning on the genocide of native children, and because of the Tribunal court case in 2012-13. Three American academics made the nominations, more than once. The Canadian scholars who nominated me were 'convinced' to retract their nominations," he explained. The same people submitted another nomination unsuccessfully in 2015.

It was sobering to listen to the atrocities performed by the rich and powerful against the poor and helpless. To counteract the feelings of despair, Annett said, "Everywhere I go around the world, there are people doing things and it's really empowering."

Then the conversation turned to the subject of violence here in the U.S. as the meeting was held five days after the shooting in Parkland, Florida where 17 people were killed. Some of the concerns people mentioned regarding young people, school shootings, and shooters are:

- The numbers of young people committing suicide.
- School shooters are either coming on or off psychiatric drugs which have a known side effect of the risk of suicide.
- Adults are pushing drugs like Ritalin for HDHD and other disruptive behaviors on increasing numbers of young people.
- Young men are especially at risk because of poor self-image.
- Children and teens need physical activity, but recess is often denied or banned entirely.
- Things like Smart Phones keep kids isolated and video games promote violent thoughts and actions.
- Online education often further isolates young people from social activities with their peers.
- Kids suffer from bullying and their education suffers from truancy.

- Our society is not taking care of the least among us.
- It seems that too often we are being encouraged to hate “the other.”
- We don’t let kids talk about their thoughts and feelings about school shootings; one school had an assembly, a moment of silence and then it was back to work. Many do nothing.

**Here are a few ideas for solutions which were offered:**

- There needs to be an effort to bring kids together to talk about these problems and learn how they can help each other and how adults can help them, too.
- One man’s grandfather was active in the YMCA, so as a youngster, he was part of that culture of being integrated into a group with other boys growing up together.
- Pennsylvania has money for second busses to get students home after two or three hours of meaningful group activities, not just detention.
- Ban or make it more difficult to obtain automatic and semi-automatic weapons.
- Give extra support and attention to young people who seem to be potential school shooters before it’s too late.

Annett described how native children in the past would sit in a longhouse and listen to the elders. “They could remember who they are and ‘get a handle’ on troubling situations. Where are our values?” There would be drumming and circles and everybody was welcome. “People need a purpose. It’s not about weapons. We need to reframe the conversation.”

Read about the evidence of genocide in Canada at [www.murderbydecree.com](http://www.murderbydecree.com). Annett’s books include *Unrelenting*, *Murder by Decree: The Crime of Genocide in Canada*, *Truth Tellers’ Shield*, *White People in Canada*, *Common Law Manual*, *Fallen* and *Here We Stand*.

## Chapter Five: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples

<https://friendspeaceteams.org/trr/>

Paula Palmer, a Quaker peace worker, and Jerilyn DeCoteau, an Ojibwe attorney and educator, founded and direct the Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples program. They created and facilitate the Toward Right Relationship workshops, and they have trained more than 100 Native and non-Native people who also facilitate the workshops in various parts of the country.

What would right relationship among Native and non-Native peoples of North America look like? How can we begin to take steps in that direction in our communities, places of worship, schools, and other institutions?

The Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples program promotes education, reflection, dialogue, and action in response to these queries.

Our goal is to build relationships among Native and non-Native communities based on truth, respect, justice and our shared humanity.

Join us as we learn to challenge and support each other as we work toward right relationships that address more than 500 years of genocide, colonization, and forced assimilation of Native peoples.

### **The Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples program**

- offers educational workshops, slide presentations, sermons, and talks for adults and youth in faith communities, civic organizations, schools and universities;
- encourages and coaches communities as they begin to work toward right relationship among Native and non-Native peoples;
- raises awareness of the ongoing impacts of the Indian boarding schools and ways to support healing; and
- offers resources for education and responsible action.

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## **Chapter Six: Victory for Indigenous in Ecuador**



*The Siekopai people have been fighting for decades to get their land back.*

*Photo: Amazon Frontlines*

### **Ecuador Court Orders Stolen Land Returned to Siekopai People**

"This groundbreaking precedent paves the way for other Indigenous communities who dream of recovering their territories within protected areas," said one campaigner.

By Brett Wilkins

Common Dreams: November 29, 2023

Amazon defenders this week cheered what one group called "an invaluable precedent for all Indigenous peoples fighting to recover their lands" after an Ecuadorean appeals court ruled in favor of the Siekopai Nation's ownership claim over its ancestral homeland.

The November 24 decision by a three-judge panel of the Sucumbios Provincial Court of Justice gives Ecuador's Ministry of the Environment 45 days to hand over title to more than 104,000 acres of land along the country's border with Peru.

"Today is a great day for our nation," Siokepai Nation President Elias Piyahuaje said following the ruling. "Until the end of time, this land will be ours."

In 1941 the Siekopai – who call their homeland Pë'këya – were forcibly displaced from the region, one of the most biodiverse on the planet, during the first of three border wars between Peru and Ecuador. They were then prevented from returning home as the Ecuadorean government unilaterally claimed ownership of Pë'këya.

The ruling marks the first time that an Ecuadorean court has ordered the return of land stolen from Indigenous people. Amazon Frontlines – a San Francisco-based advocacy group that helped the Siekopai with their case – explained:

*With a population of barely 800 in Ecuador and 1,200 in Peru, the Siekopai are on the brink of cultural and physical extinction. On both sides of the border, the Siekopai are currently waging legal battles to recover more than a half-million acres of land that were stolen from their ancestors. The Siekopai's court victory recognizing Pë'këya marks a major stepping stone in this bi-national struggle for the reunification of their ancestral territory. After centuries of violence, racism, and conquest by colonizing missions, rubber corporations, and governments, the court's recognition of the Siekopai as the owners of Pë'këya is an indispensable step towards restoring justice and guaranteeing their collective survival and the continuity of their culture.*

"For over 80 years, we have been fighting to get our land back," Piyahuaje said. "Despite all the evidence regarding our land title claim – even historians testified that our ancestors dwelled in the area since the time of conquest – the Ecuadorian government failed to uphold our land rights time and time again."

"We are fighting for the preservation of our culture on this planet. Without this territory, we cannot exist as Siekopai people," he added.

Amazon Frontlines attorney Maria Espinosa said that, "This victory has been decades in the making, it has been a very long struggle against the government."

"Now, finally, the Siekopai's dream of recovering their ancestral territory has been achieved," Espinosa added. "This groundbreaking precedent paves the way for other Indigenous communities who dream of recovering their territories within protected areas."

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/siekopai>

**WE NEED MOVEMENTS ROOTED IN LOVE RIGHT NOW, MOVEMENTS POWERED NOT BY DIFFERENCE AND EXCLUSION AND PUNISHMENT, BUT BY COMMON GROUND, COMPASSION, HUMILITY, HEALTHY BOUNDARIES, PATIENCE, AND HEALING.**

~ Adrienne Maree Brown ~

## Part Four: Technology

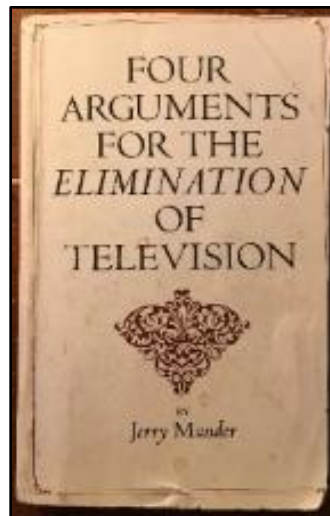
### Chapter One: Iona's TV History

I have always hated violence and television for bringing it into our homes and our psyches. TV is like "Violence School." See what happened? See how it's done? You can do it, too!

Even as a young girl, I didn't like commercials. We had a TV very early because Uncle John owned an appliance store and brought one to us with great enthusiasm when I was about five and my sister was four. Somewhere, there is a black-and-white photo of us with another little girl sitting less than three feet in front of the television, in a trance.

As I got older, I could not stomach the ads. By the time I was a young wife and mother, our television was nearly always on because my former husband liked watching it or maybe hearing noise. I came to see it as a form of "competition," especially when I wanted him to shut it off for half an hour so I could have quiet time reading with our two little boys. But he did not turn it off.

Eventually I left him and got my own place. To this day, 44 years later, I remember the bliss which settled over me as I spent my first 24 hours alone in SILENCE.



In 2001 I read Jerry Mander's *Four Arguments for the **Elimination** of Television*. From that day forward, I knew I was onto something big.

**Argument One:** The Mediation of Experience

**Argument Two:** The Colonization of Experience

**Argument Three:** Effects of Television on the Human Being

**Argument Four:** The Inherent Biases of Television

As I became more active in the environmental movement, it was clear that ads on TV were making people crave unnecessary and even harmful products, but it took a few more years for me to fully understand the global implications television was having.

In my job as an air pollution inspector in the 1980s, I saw what was going on in the factories I inspected and became aware of the deadly processes used for manufacturing everyday products. Then, when I worked at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Hazardous Waste Management Division, doing programs to educate people about ordinary consumer products like paint, tape, leather, and things made from metal, I understood and conveyed the whole cradle-to-grave situation. Often the "grave" cycle meant dumping toxic substances on the ground or in the water, creating hazardous waste sites to be cleaned up in the future at great expense. The "cradle" cycle meant getting natural resources from the Earth by logging, mining, or other destructive mechanisms. I audited a Toxicology class at Rutgers to learn more about poisonous chemicals being used in those factories and their connection to cancer, other diseases, and birth defects.

My boss had just created a slide show about hazardous waste and nobody in our Bureau wanted to take it on the road, so I volunteered. I loaded my car with huge posters of Superfund sites and as many non-toxic products as I could collect, PLUS my ragged copy of *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*. I wanted my audiences to be aware of what TV ads were doing to them.

Then, I discovered "Adbusters" magazine and loved it. They are a counterforce to marketing campaigns.

\* \* \*

### **Adbusters Creates "New, Improved" Ads**



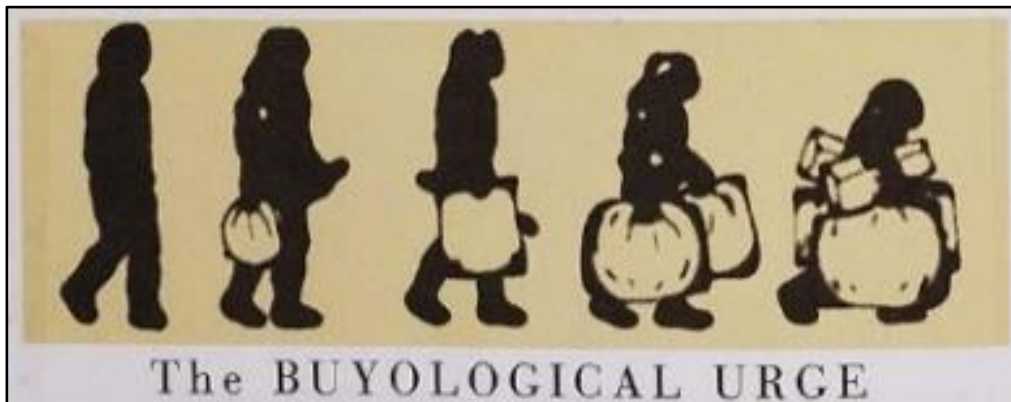
**Proud sponsor of COP 27.**

*Photo: Adbusters*



*“Adbusters’ is the people’s bi-monthly journal of the mental environment. But we’re so much more than a magazine. We’re a global collective of writers, artists, designers, musicians, poets, philosophers, and punks.*

*Since 1989 we’ve been smashing ads, fighting corruption, and speaking truth to power. We’re trying to forge a new way of living, create a whole new cultural vibe to escape the capitalist paradigm and halt humanity’s slide into a 10,000-year dark age.*



*From Buy Nothing Day to Occupy Wall Street we’ve been at the helm of our era’s defining tone-shifting moments. We’re the creators of the world’s most ethical shoes and a design manifesto that shocked many creative people to their core. <https://www.adbusters.org/about-us>*

After signing up for the Adbusters email list, I received this email:

**Dear Jammer,**

Welcome to The Third Force Collective!

You've just joined a 19,000+ strong network of activists, dedicated to winning the planetary endgame.

Most people are in denial about the crisis we’re in, so we’re due for a rough ride. But it can be done. The trick is to dig deep and fight for systemic change on multiple fronts.

These are the six big ideas that will pull us back from the brink:

- **A Mental Liberation Front** – where we regain the ability to think for ourselves, feel deeply, and shake off crippling fear and depression and shame.
- **A True-Cost Marketplace** – where the price of all goods and services tell the ecological truth.
- **The End of Secrecy** – fostering a climate in which we the people must know everything, because knowledge is power.
- **A Corporate Charter Revocation Movement** – to identify the most cancerous companies and wipe them off the face of the Earth.
- **New Brakes on Fast Money** – to kill off flash-bot trading and curb Wall Street’s predatory appetites.
- **Bionomics** – economics with diversity, locality, and contained growth as its pillars.

And crucially:

- **A Vibe Shift** – a revolution of everyday life.

If we fight like hell on these six fronts, then we can veer this experiment of ours on Planet Earth in a brave new direction.

Saturday we party, Sunday we rest, and now we turn every Friday into a day of global action.

Send us your art, writings, poetry, illustrations, cartoons, posters, photography and #fuckitall Friday action ideas: [editor@adbusters.org](mailto:editor@adbusters.org) [artdirector@adbusters.org](mailto:artdirector@adbusters.org)

Get the next issue of Adbusters for only \$5 (shipping included).

Preorder *Manifesto For World Revolution*, our soon-to-be-released mindbomb book.

For the wild,

***The Third Force***

\* \* \*

Before long, I realized that an enormous amount of environmental destruction was being caused by poor people around the world watching TV and wanting to buy what Americans buy, live like Americans live, do what Americans do. They were trapped into thinking that if they had all the “marvelous” things Americans had, they would be happy and viewed as successful.

Back then, I blamed television, but today I blame computers, social media, cell phones, and the Internet for delivering the same crap television delivered and still delivers to our homes and doing exactly what TV alone used to do, brain-deadening millions of people who used to be able to survive with less “stuff” and still be happy. I am NOT talking about truly poverty-stricken people who scramble just to exist like most people in Africa; I’m talking about people with a little extra money, which could be saved or used in more creative and Earth-friendly ways.

I was dismayed that Chinese people who lived for millennia without refrigeration, now have refrigerators. Ditto for bikes and I mean pedal bikes, not motorcycles. Now they have cars! I wish we in America could get back on bikes but our highway mania has made most roads treacherous.

How do we stop the insanity? As an American, I used to have visions of such massive boycotts that the worst multinational corporations would go out of business, but that’s not happening, at least not yet.

About 15 years ago, I latched onto the old New England motto: USE IT UP, WEAR IT OUT, MAKE IT DO, OR DO WITHOUT – a totally un-American philosophy, which I have promoted zealously. I came up with the idea of forming a “Go-Back Club” (GBC) and changed the name of my newspaper.





**What is The Go-Back Club all about?** We want to change people’s hearts. Our members live simply (or try to) so that our collective carbon footprint grows smaller and smaller every day. We are working toward a common goal of reducing our individual impacts on climate change to protect future generations and all life.

**Who are we trying to attract?** We hope to reach people who are concerned about global warming and realize that they are part of the problem but don’t know what to do. We invite them to join our Club. Please tell your family and friends about us.

**What are we trying to achieve?** Our members are part of the global movement of people who know that global warming is an immediate threat and who want to prevent further harm and even reverse the situation.

**We look to others for inspiration.** People are *“like a blind man walking randomly toward a cliff. The only thing that will save him is to go backwards.”* Michael Mann (former GBC board member, world-famous climate scientist, member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). *“Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify! Simplicity of life and elevation of purpose.”* Henry David Thoreau

But after dozens of African activists joined the Grassroots Coalition, I realized that they did not need to simplify; they were already struggling to have enough food and educate their children so I switched the name of my newspaper to *Groundswell News* and later to *Grassroots Coalition News*, followed by *TreeHuggers United = Invincible!* And now I’m writing this book.

I have not had a TV in 44 years. Here are two things I told people when I gave public talks:

1. “I would rather have lived before TV and before cars.”
2. “When you are watching TV, you are not really living.”

My current tactic is simply to talk with individuals face-to-face and hand them a business card with my contact information, so I made these:



## Chapter Two: Religion of Technology, Little Techno Savior Moments

<https://dgrnewsservice.org/civilization/alienation/religion-of-technology-little-techno-savior-moments/>



*Robot kid.*

*Photo: Andrea De Santis, santesson89, Unsplash*

By Mankh

Deep Green Resistance News Service: December 1, 2023 | Analysis, Alienation & Mental Health

- **89%** of Americans say they check their phones within the first 10 minutes of waking up.
- **75%** of Americans feel uneasy leaving their phone at home.
- **75%** use their phone on the toilet.
- **69%** have texted someone in the same room as them before.
- **60%** sleep with their phone at night
- **57%** consider themselves “addicted” to their phones
- **55%** say that they have never gone longer than 24 hours without their cell phone.
- **47%** of people say they feel a sense of panic or anxiety when their cell phone battery goes below 20%.
- **46%** use or look at their phone while on a date.
- **27%** use or look at their phone while driving.

[Statistics from “[2023 Cell Phone Usage Statistics: Mornings Are for Notifications](https://www.reviews.org/mobile/cell-phone-addiction/)”

<https://www.reviews.org/mobile/cell-phone-addiction/>]

After a Hewlett-Packard BIOS update fried my computer’s motherboard I had four-and-a-half days without a computer while the part was in transit to the neighborhood repair guy I found because of **guidance in a dream from a Carolina Wren reminding me to look local**; then Internet via cell phone helped find the repair guy.

The night before I had decided to go to Best Buy’s Geek Squad, and later on learned that they typically don’t replace motherboards.

I am not much adept with cell phone internet usage so without the habitual computer checking of email and news-hounding web-searching, **I wondered: What is that habit, that urge, that compulsion that has so many people hooked to their gadgets?**...hooked as if the gadget is the Oracle of Delphi and everyone doesn’t have a clue what’s going on or what the future will bring UNTIL they beseech the high priestess of technology.

Various online stats indicate that people check their phones anywhere from every three to 12 minutes! Without doing that, what else is there to check, to tune-in to?

**How about: the natural world, meaningful symbols, mental exercises, deep listening, dreams, to name but a few.**

Perhaps people too-often feel something lacking or the need to feel complete by having interacted with someone, or a message, news article, video, or game. Normal urges yet when obsessively habitual, I venture to say that there is the searching for such a tech moment so as to save one’s self.

**But save one’s self from what? Boredom?**

Or to riff the old saying attributed to Socrates, the examined life which makes life worth living?

In that case, the gadget becomes a lazy savior, but not an individual savior, rather a conveyor of little techno savior moments which while temporarily satisfying, the feeling doesn’t last long so one must check the gadget again for another little savior moment, and again.

Some of the hooks of this religion of technology are: the promises put forth by the advertising merchants of veneer from their pixel pulpits; **keeping up with the corporate news**

**sports-style coverage of “perpetual war for perpetual peace,”** as historian Charles A. Beard phrased it; an incessant need to be in communication with human beings, at the neglect of the non-human beings.

Little techno savior moments also lean toward mechanical, robotic, and unemotional forms of communication, well, except for emojis and exclamation points!!!!

**(wow! he-she-they must really omg like me!!!!)**

Yet here I am scribbling with pen and paper looking forward to my computer’s born-again status so that I may type and share this missive with whomever may happen to read it.

Ay, there’s the rub, the ‘to-tech’ or ‘not-to-tech’ rub . . . or how much to tech.

I can’t begin to address the big picture of technology usage as it is the backbone of global and local business transactions, plus personal interfacing, whether you can touch the face or not. So, I simply address the consciousness of the usage as I see it playing out in society at large.

Little techno savior seekers move in lockstep with their electronic marching orders of selected, scripted, distorted, or outright lies news-feeds; **shop till you reach the top of social status clicks;** assuage deep-rooted personal insecurities by amassing more ‘likes.’

Yet in the AI world, even the concept of a savior has been depersonalized and reduced to a drive-thru, fast-food fleeting moment.

I propose that how we use the gadgets is one starting point for re-evaluation, the how being the consciousness with which we use them and a weighing of what we are not using enough: our feet, our hearts, our minds, dreams, intuitions, hunches, meditations, messages from our so-called neighbor the natural world and how those messages intertwine with the dreaming time that is **beyond time, beyond rational thought, beyond ‘click and ye shall find.’**

The good news is that all that good stuff is readily available inside you and outside your window if you’re willing to work for it, work **as hard as a child working in an underground mine in the Congo for cobalt** (*emphasis added*) so you can have the facility to send an emoji that a new day is dawning.

And by “work” I don’t mean job for money rather the discipline and receptivity to serving something bigger than your ego, something bigger than appeasing your momentary fancy of a feel-good hook.

Bob Dylan sings in “My Back Pages”:

*In a soldier’s stance, I aimed my hand  
At the mongrel dogs who teach  
Fearing not I’d become my enemy  
In the instant that I preach...  
Ah, but I was so much older then  
I’m younger than that now.*

And so, I must dismiss any notion that this scribbling will save anyone, though I would like to think that it may tilt the scale of consciousness so that more people will be able to save themselves.

After four-and-a-half days with minimal gadget use, I am reminded that it is a tool and the manner in which humanity produces and uses such tools will determine their functionality or lack thereof, with ever the questions: At what cost to habitats where massive mining occurs;

at what cost to the well-being of the workers, too-often slave laborers; **at what cost to one's self and the natural world for the lack of selfless service to that very world?**

In his book *The Religion of Technology*, David F. Noble cites technology as often spurred by a "masculine millenarian mentality," often exhibited with the military and science frame of mind, along with a sense of religious redemption. Yet this sense of redemption is deceptively foolhardy.

According to J. D. Bernal, quoted in the book: *The cardinal tendency of progress is the replacement of an indifferent chance environment by a deliberately created one. As time goes on, the acceptance, the appreciation, even the understanding of nature, will be less and less needed. In its place will come the need to determine the desirable form of the humanly controlled universe.*

What this boils down to is if we as a species go the route of playing materialistic God . . . or are willing to play along with and be played by the Earth and the spiritual energies above and within Her.

While perhaps too cute or quaint or unbelievable to some human beings, the likes of little Carolina Wrens can show the way. **But such guidance can not be bought rather is the fruit of relationship**, as for many years I have put and let stay up undecorated holiday wreaths on my patio, keep them up even when they have dried from scented fresh woods green to brown.

Why? Because the wrens often sleep and, while I can't scientifically prove it, dream in them.

*Mankh (Walter E. Harris III) is a verbiage experienter, in other words, he's into etymology, writes about his experiences and to encourage people to learn from direct experiences, not just head knowledge. He writes, small press publishes, and is the author of 17 books. Mankh travels a holistic mystic Kaballah-rooted pathway staying in touch with Turtle Island and the cycles of the Seasons. His works can be found at <https://www.allbook-books.com/index.html>.*

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### Chapter Three: Screen violence



Screen violence has been defined as “depictions of characters (or players) trying to physically harm other characters (or players).” It is as old as the origin of screen media itself, with very violent scenes included in the first multi-reel film “The Story of the Kelly Gang,” screened in Melbourne in 1906. Evidence suggests that watching violent TV programs and engaging with violent video games are associated with aggressive behaviour in children, teenagers, and young adults, both in the short and long term. Although the association between screen violence and aggressive behavior appears to be modest, this suggests that other factors also play a part in the development of aggression.

Screen violence is globally widespread and has become easily accessible and available on demand in the last decade, courtesy of technology (such as cable TV, tablets, smart phones, and social media platforms). Not even poverty, probably except for extreme poverty, seems to protect many people from being exposed to screen violence because even the simplest TV can be found in modest homes and can be the only source of entertainment in remote areas. Social media platforms – such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram – are extremely popular among adults and children. With an estimated 6.8 billion people worldwide owning a smartphone, nearly 87% of the world's population, immediate access to violent content has increased exponentially.

Exposure to violent content can decrease empathy and cause increased aggressive thoughts, anger, and aggressive behavior. A meta-analysis of 24 studies from Canada, the USA, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and Singapore concluded that engaging with violent video games was related to aggression. This study confirms earlier findings from another meta-analysis of 130 research reports, comprising 130,000 participants. Time spent watching screen violence has also been directly associated with increased bullying and cyberbullying in both boys and girls. In addition, aggressive behavior during childhood appears to be an important predictor of violent behavior in older adolescents and young adults.

In the 1970s, the TV industry in the USA put pressure on the U.S. Government to exclude prominent researchers in psychology and aggressive behavior from a committee – that was set to study the effects of TV violence on behavior and mental health. This resembles one of the strategies traditionally used by the tobacco companies to oppose unfriendly health policies: to distort science. Certainly, there is a large amount of money at stake. The global revenue value in TV & video segment, video games, and broadband internet services combined is expected to grow to about US\$1300 billion in 2023, by far more than the global tobacco market value.

Despite the negative impact of screen violence on behavior, little has been done to reduce screen violence, particularly for children and adolescents. Watersheds on TV content and ratings for TV programs and movies are some of the most common policies implemented to regulate screen media in many countries, including those in Latin America. Yet many PG-13-rated programs are full of violence. Moreover, these policies do little or nothing to address screen violence available on the internet, including social media platforms and video games. In some countries, policies and recommendations focus primarily on parental responsibility, which is of little help if no adult is present.

For example, according to the National Television Council in Chile, 52% of children aged 6–12 years watch audio-visual content without adult supervision. This suggests that parental



control might not be enough to tackle this highly complex problem that could require interventions at multiple levels. It is likely that screen violence will be more difficult to deal with than other trade issues, such as tobacco and alcohol, because screen content can reach continents within seconds, with virtually no barriers or time to filter content.

More research is needed to better understand the impact of screen violence on mental health. For instance, a topic that has been little explored is the possible effect of violence displayed in social media platforms on aggressive behavior. This information would be very valuable given the exponential growth of popularity of these internet platforms, which have little regulation. Further research is also required to investigate whether there is an association between chronic exposure to screen violence and addiction, crime, suicide, or mass shooting.

In the latest State of the Union, on February 7, 2023, Joseph Biden Jr. (president of the USA) addressed the need to do more for children's mental health and to regulate social media companies and their impact on children. "We must finally hold social media companies accountable for the experiment they are running on our children for profit," Biden said.

Policymakers and governments should put screen violence in their agenda to tackle this real threat to mental health, re-assess the growing scientific evidence, implement stricter policies, and educate children and adolescents so that they know how to discriminate and process the content of visual media.

As many things in life, screen media has wonderful positive aspects, but can also have serious consequences on health if not used and regulated properly. Ethical considerations should help set limits on what is reasonably permissive for screen content, particularly for children and adolescents. Further action is urgently needed to regulate violent content in screen media.



*Photo: Jim Champion/Flick*

Thanks to Dee for submitting the above article with this note: *I wondered if you had seen this article at all and thought of your writing when I saw it. We know that screens are not appropriate "babysitters," as they can be referred to over here, but the evidence that they really are appalling particularly for young children, is so concerning. I thought this might be food for thought in regards to your book...It frightens me how much time children spend on screens these days; the article made me reflect once more upon when I was a child, seeing others my age in front of the TV and how mesmerized they were and how strange it was to observe.*

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## **Chapter Four: One Woman's Story – No TV!**

By Dee Crowe

The last time I turned on a TV drama that had been much hyped and I was looking forward to watching, the amount of violence in the first five minutes made me feel ill and turned it off. I haven't bothered watching TV drama series since. I grew up without TV and was only exposed to TV from 18 onwards: I remember watching crime dramas back then and being horrified at people hitting each other on TV!

Not having TV in the house when I was a child, then watching it when I was a young adult made me realize how much violence my peer groups had been normalized to on the screen. Perhaps I'm just very sensitive to violence anyway, but my discomfort with violence as entertainment, in any format, is residual.

I didn't have a sheltered life though and thought myself pretty street wise when leaving home at 18. My first rental property included a TV, and I remember being shocked at violence routinely shown; I watched a cop series with a friend and was horrified when a man was beaten up (all very tame compared to the graphic violence screened these days). I couldn't believe violence of any sort would be shown on TV. I turned to my friend and expressed my surprise. They had grown up with TV and looked at me as if I had just walked off an alien spaceship. I realized how violence on the screen had become completely normalized to them. I am glad it wasn't for me.

Violence on TV has gotten much more graphic and bloody in the intervening years, and often much more sadistic. I presume the need to constantly push the boundaries of what is acceptable, what shocks and what will be talked about, drives this. It has also to be driving a social conditioning of acceptance of violence, and not only on the screen. I see no pleasure in watching it and will not do so anymore.



I love kids' films. When my two were little, I enjoyed taking them to watch a kid's movie as much as they did! "Up" and "Wall-E" were my style. I'll take the charm of watching films like that any day over films sensationalized with violence, gratuitous or not.

From the heart, I really appreciate what you are doing. We instinctively know that violence on TV will influence the viewers. The saying, "We are what we eat," I think transfers to everything we consume, visually and audibly as well as dietary-wise. If TV watching didn't influence us, adverts wouldn't be worth running because they wouldn't manage to persuade people to purchase!

That is so true about TV violence being like "violence school." In the past I've watched TV violence and wondered how anyone would think of such awful violence to commit. It is introducing the thoughts of violence, and of course it leaves us potentially fearful of other people in a way we would not be if we didn't think of the violence we see on the screen. Your book sounds amazing!

TV and screens have taken us out of the garden or the park and sat us on the couch.

\* \* \*

During a discussion in Derrick Jensen's writing class, two women responded to my anti-TV comment expressing their disgust with television. The first one said, *"I just refuse to watch most of it. The violence is insane. It's not only the violence, but the commercials that I can't take. Just this week we got a new TV for watching movies. It came with a streaming thing for watching TV. I saw that it was playing 'Shawshank Redemption,' so I started to watch it and there were commercials every six minutes! I couldn't take it. I had to turn it off. I can't believe how many people partake in them. So awful."*

The other woman agreed saying, *"Yeah, it's why I stopped watching it and threw my TV out in 2005. I also didn't want to be influenced as an artist but come up with my or try to at least perspectives."*

## **Chapter Five: A Teacher's Take on Video Games**

By Nicole

As a first-grade teacher (6- and 7-year-olds), I and every teacher I know my age or older or 10 years younger saw this with boys at school.

It was a drastic change. It comes from video games! When violent video games started flooding the market, we saw a change in little boys. A change in violence in our schools. I believe that 90% of why we have school shootings stem from violent video games (not bullying as the news media wants to promote)! And violence against women come from this too! You'd be shocked to Google the most violent video games and read what they are about. Girls also play these but by far they are played more by boys.

Our school resource officer told us probably 20 years ago or so, what video games were the most violent and what video games we should never allow our boys/children to play. And when I asked my little 1<sup>st</sup>-grade boys, at least half of them had played these...even though they

put a warning in them saying they are not for kids.... Parents are totally stupid and allow it... especially the men!!!! And several of these games were and are the most popular games that are played by boys and men. I saw probably one boy out of 10 in my classroom have violent tendencies when I first started teaching. That changed by the end of my career to...I'd say 7 out of 10! Maybe even 8! So, you have to ask yourself what has changed in society since then?!!!

The violence in video games has changed our whole society! I bet there isn't a man alive 45 and younger that doesn't play them and play some kind of violent ones, too! They make them so they are addictive!

There is a video game called "JFK reloaded." It simulates his murder in Dallas, and you can "play" it as if you are there and watch who gets splattered by his blood! Can you imagine!!! I looked up the topmost violent video games and there were 50!!!! And if you Google them, you will find out what they are about. If you even mentioned this to men or boys, they think you are ridiculous and being a "silly woman!" or "Old woman...out of touch with modern day!!!"

Grrrrrrr!

One more thing about violence and men. I always questioned and wanted to find out if all the men/boys that have done the school shootings.....what video games they played. Almost all of these killers...family said...we're quiet and kept to themselves. Seriously!!! What do 16-year-old boys do all day in their rooms???

Answer: PLAY VIDEO GAMES!!!

I'll never find an answer for sure because the video gaming business probably supports our rotten government! I'm going to research that!!!! I played a few with my nephew – great nephew – back when he was young, and his favorite was a car-racing one, but he also had one where he was racing away from police and crashing into buildings and people and cars.

People laugh and make light of the games whenever I would mention I thought they were being a bad influence on boys! Do a little research and you'll be shocked!! I haven't seen any in the years I've lived here so I bet they are even worse!!

LOL...now I'm an investigating reporter!

Here's what I did and my findings.

I looked up the top video gaming companies.

1. Sony...made 28.2 billion in 2022. Japanese division
2. Microsoft....owned by stockholders...Bill Gates largest stockholder...affiliated with Vanguard Group and Black Rock!

(these two companies literally own the world!!!!) trying to find out who are the stockholders of these companies is quite nicely hidden!!!!

3. Tencent...owned by Vanguard
4. Warner Bros.
5. Google...also known as Alphabet

The #1 most violent game is Mortal Combat...owned by Warner Bros. It's worth is over 12 billion. Can't find how much in sales because there are several games/series/new additions of it. I'll keep looking.

Microsoft owns Call of Duty...\$30 Billion in sales!!!!!!

\*Call of Duty is the video game our resource officer...male...told us to never let our children play. The most violent. Humans killing humans. It is rated for over 16-year-olds and up, but I had kids in my class...7-year-olds play it. Sometimes with a parent...male, older brother play it with them or let them play.

It was interesting to me to find out what all these corporations own in the world! And a little frightening!!!

I've been looking into politicians that have stock in Black Rock. Lots...both Dems and Rep. so nothing one sided...glad to see that.

Well, I just may have gotten an education which I really don't want!

Something new I learned today: Black Rock owns the world!

Apple was the first American company to sell go over a trillion dollars in 2018. Now over 2 trillion. Not much more on violent video games.

## **Chapter Six: Rage Against the Machine Owners – Brian Merchant on Luddite Lessons for 21st-Century Technology**

By Sara Goudarzi, *excerpt*

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists ([thebulletin.org](http://thebulletin.org)): October 16, 2023

A little more than two centuries ago in the English city of Nottingham, groups of cloth workers began destroying knitting frames and power looms. Manufacturers were using these machines to replace the skilled humans who had for generations made their living in the trade and were facing destitution. Soon, the breaking of machines spread to other parts of England, and the Luddite uprising became a cornerstone of the early Industrial Revolution, enraging the Crown and some of the elites.

Although the term “Luddite” has erroneously become a derogatory one to indicate a person against technology, those textile craftspeople were merely fighting for workers’ rights and livelihoods. It was an uprising not against progress but “against the first tech titans,” writes the *Los Angeles Times*’ technology columnist Brian Merchant in his new book *Blood in the Machine: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech*. . . .

**Goudarzi:** Who was the Ned Ludd that the Luddite movement was named after? Can you talk about how the different groups used the name to sign notices, make calls to action – and control the narrative?

**Merchant:** Ned Ludd was basically an avatar, like an early meme. He was apocryphal – a legend about a boy who smashed his boss’s machine after his boss had him whipped for being unproductive. The Luddites adopted this as their organizing figure. They would send a letter to a factory owner who they knew was using automated machineries, and it’d say: “Take down your machines; they’ve stolen this many jobs; and if you don’t, you’re going to get a visit from Ned Ludd’s army.”

This sort of distributed force allowed the Luddites to seem more populous, threatening, and powerful. And it allowed groups with different grievances, usually all within the cloth manufacturing industry, to follow suit and say, “We can be Ned Ludd, too.” Without having a central organizing committee of Luddites, they could have all these actions taking place, and that’s exactly what happened. It allowed for this distributed structure, like Occupy Wall Street or Black Lives Matter, where the important thing was the overarching animating mission – which was recognizing that technology is being used to exploit people, to drive down wages, cause immiseration, and pave the way for unpleasant factories where workers would have to stand at the command of somebody else. . . .

Read the entire article at [thebulletin.org](http://thebulletin.org). Reprinted with permission.

### **Chapter Seven: Concluding this section with comments from friends.**

Here’s something to think about from my friend in Australia, Robert Burrowes in the Flame Tree Project, *“When, for example, is the last time you read a newspaper article, watched a television report, or heard a radio broadcast that seriously tried to analyze why it is that human beings are so violent and destructive that life on Earth is now under threat? On the other hand, you have probably read, watched, or listened to a phenomenal variety of trivia dressed up as ‘news.’ There are many reasons why mainstream media functions the way it does and critiques of it are readily available in the scholarly literature on the subject.”*

Another friend here in Brick, New Jersey says, *“Because of technology, people have less association with people. Face-to-face is best. The more technology and information we have, the less communication, the less interpersonal communication; there is plenty of communication because all of it is a hyper-prism of information, quickly used, forgotten, and thrown away. So much knowledge but no inter-communication preserves the status quo. People are so numb, so frivolous.”*

## Part Five: Nonviolence

PEACE IS NOT MERELY A DISTANT GOAL THAT WE SEEK, BUT A MEANS BY WHICH WE  
ARRIVE AT THAT GOAL.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr. ~

### Chapter One: Iona's Intro

I got this far with my awareness and better understanding of violence, but I'm not sure where or how to introduce this final section, which I had hoped would be longer than the first part of my book since it's the antidote and I tend toward the positive rather than the negative.

Robert Burrowes with his partner Anita McKone, and Darcia Narvaez, are three people who know how to raise beautiful, loving, wonderful, safe children. They are exemplary in their thinking, which I will share soon.

BUT what about the urgency of the world situation TODAY? Hopefully there's enough material in this book to give you a jump start, especially when you get to the chapter in this section about The Flametree Project; it's full of great ideas to help turn things around.

I have read that women are key to reversing the damage and violence we're all suffering from. This means grown women or teenage girls – not babies, not young kids who need to be outside playing and exploring the natural world, making friends, being creative, having fun – being kids. But many of us women are suffering from Patriarchy Stress Disorder so we're at a disadvantage (as usual).

I've read dozens of self-help books during my life, literally dozens, but for me this one beats them all – *PATRIARCHY STRESS DISORDER: The Invisible Inner Barrier to Women's Happiness and Fulfillment* by Dr. Valerie Rein. Her words reassure me that I've been all right all along; I was coping with uncomfortable feelings I harbored as a woman in a male-dominated world full of violence and destruction. Here are some excerpts from her book.

*"...[T]here was a palpable sense of stress packed into her body. She carried some extra weight, and she hunched her shoulders like she was trying to take up less space in the room. She was visibly uncomfortable."* (page 123)

### The Primary Wound of Patriarchy

*The primary wound of Patriarchy Stress Disorder (PSD) for a woman is that of being worth less than a man. This is a core trauma that we all have inherited. A woman's body, a woman's ideas, a woman's life, her contributions in the world, her wants, needs, and desires – they're worth less. This wound is imprinted very deeply in our psyche.*

*It is such a dark place of despair that if we allow ourselves to go there and feel the full impact of this wound, it would be overwhelming. It requires us to feel not only the impact on our individual lives, but the impact of thousands of years of this wounding on billions of women. The prison was built to keep us from touching this wound. It was built on top of a deep dark slippery pit that is that wound.*

*This wound makes itself known in how much we sacrifice, how little we give voice to our desires, and how we struggle to get in touch with our needs.*

*The pain of not being able to have our desires met has separated us from them. The prison guards keep our desires locked up. Not being in touch with our true desires shields us from the pain of not having them met. . . .*

*A beautiful, sparkly, talented woman was sharing with me that she desired to create a partnership with a significant other. When I asked her, what she desired in her partner and relationship, she said, "I want him to be available. I want him to have a job." Knowing her, I would have imagined she desired to be adored in every way, ravished in bed, supported in all her creative endeavors by a partner who shared her thirst for adventure, who knew what it took to build and run a successful business, a man who shared her values, who was her equal in emotional intelligence, who deeply desired to commit to creating a lasting partnership with her – all of this or something even better. . . . (pages 131-132)*

\* \* \*

*Rein continues: I recently took part in a women's empowerment program in New York City run by Regena Thomashauer, aka Mama Gena, a feminist icon, founder and CEO of the School of Womanly Arts. In a room of 500 women from all over the world, Regena asked anyone who had experienced verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse to please stand up.*

*The entire room rose to their feet.*

*Mind you, this was not a program for abuse survivors. It was a women's empowerment course that had brought together inspiring accomplished women from across the globe: entrepreneurs, creators, leaders.*

*As I stood surrounded by my sisters, the silence in the room was deafening. In this moment, every woman saw – likely for the first time in her life – that her very private traumas that she had hidden, dismissed as "not a big deal," "gotten over," "worked through" in therapy or "succeeded despite of" were shared by every woman on the planet. There we stood, struck by this truth, each one of us a part of the ocean of women's suffering. We stood in this rare and precious moment – an opportunity to witness each other and be witnessed. We stood in solidarity with each other, in support of each other – and of ourselves. For the first time, our wounds were unwrapped from the bondage of shame and secrecy. And they did not diminish us. They brought us closer to ourselves, through embracing the truth of our experiences, and to one another – the sisters we didn't know we had. (page 147)*

Above excerpts printed with author's permission.

Naturally, there is no way for me to know who you are, what gender you are, or what problems you are having (if any), but this book is helping me heal a lifelong set of problems I've tried my best to deal with and failed.

If we understand the fragility of our planet's future, and we want to do our best to protect it, we need to be as strong as possible in every way. That takes work.

I'm working on me; are you working on you?

**AS I WALKED OUT THE DOOR TOWARD THE GATE THAT WOULD LEAD TO MY FREEDOM, I  
KNEW IF I DIDN'T LEAVE MY BITTERNESS AND HATRED BEHIND, I'D STILL BE IN PRISON.**

~ Nelson Mandela ~

## Chapter Two: The Roots of Violence

**Note from Iona:** Robert Burrowes and his partner Anita McKone have been my friends for several years. Robert was on the Advisory Council for the Grassroots Coalition and was a great supporter of our work. As I read Robert's 'Spectrum of Invisible Violence,' I see that many things apply to adults as well as to children. I copied one page but there are seven-and-a-half more pages of equally disturbing habits we can fall into. The document is 28 pages long, single spaced, and full of wisdom from a lifetime of thinking, acting, and writing about nonviolence.

### WHY VIOLENCE?

By Robert J. Burrowes, *excerpt*

To The memory of my uncles: Robert Burrowes and Thomas Burrowes  
Whose courage and ultimate sacrifice in World War II utterly shaped my destiny

My parents: Beryl and James Burrowes  
Truly, the greatest parents of all

My nephews and niece: Stephen, Megan, Michael, Quinn and Stevie  
Who will one day live in the nonviolent world that should have been their birthright

All those whose heart has ached, like mine, for the world that should be It will be soon

and to

The memory of a baby girl who died in Africa on 9 September 1985 Because her starving  
mother, fleeing a war zone, had no breast milk to feed her.

.....

The human condition is one of true horror: violence, war, poverty, ecological devastation...  
But 'everyone' keeps telling me: 'I don't want to know.'  
Why?

\*\*\*

If you want to change human behavior, you must first understand what is causing it.

\*\*\*

It is fear that makes human beings inflict violence  
It is fear that makes human beings submit to violence  
Obviously, therefore, violence is not the problem.



\* \* \*

My fear tells me that ending human violence is impossible  
My conscience tells me that ending human violence is what I live for  
So what do I do?  
I feel my fear until the way to end human violence lies clear before me.

\* \* \*

Fear destroys the integrity of the human mind. That is, fear disintegrates the mind into a set of largely unrelated functions that are then individually 'captured' for use by others. The disintegration of the mind is extraordinarily destructive and causes the individual to experience phenomenal levels of fear, pain, anger and sadness. However, the individual is terrorized into suppressing their awareness of these feelings and the destruction that caused them. The symptoms of this destruction manifest in a phenomenal variety of ways including the addiction to resources beyond need (whether it be attention, approval, food, money, objects and/or control), other chronic patterns of behavioral dysfunction (leading to ill-health, for example) and violence in a staggering variety of forms.

#### THE TRIPLE SPECTRA OF VIOLENCE

Violence is social interference in the genetically programmed feelings, thoughts, sensing and/or behavior of another organism. For example, the human organism, like all organisms on Earth, is genetically programmed to take what they need for themselves (after emerging from complete dependence as a baby) and humans who are hunter-gatherers still behave this way. This is imperative, in evolutionary terms, if the individual and hence their species is to survive. It takes enormous and protracted violence to terrorize the individual into accepting paid work in a modern economy so that they can buy (rather than take) the resources that they need to live. But the social interference of humans in the genetic programming of their offspring extends far beyond control over the method of resource acquisition and this is why the power of a hunter-gatherer is no greater than that of an industrial human.

Terror is the most damaging form of violence.

#### THE SPECTRUM OF VISIBLE VIOLENCE (DIRECT, INSTITUTIONAL, AND STRUCTURAL)

- \* Violence in the family home
- \* Violent crime
- \* Institutional (socially endorsed) violence: police, legal and prison systems
- \* Poverty, homelessness
- \* Economic exploitation of Africa, Asia, and Central/South America
- \* Ecological destruction
- \* Military violence, war

**The violence inflicted by human adults on themselves, each other and the Earth is an outcome of the visible, invisible and utterly invisible violence inflicted on them as children.**

## THE SPECTRUM OF INVISIBLE VIOLENCE

Each item below identifies a parental or adult behavior that is violent but 'invisible' because people would not ordinarily perceive the behavior as damaging. The bracketed section identifies one or more likely responses of the child although the precise response(s) will obviously vary from one child to the next. The responses might be feelings and/or behaviors; they might be copies or reactions.

- \* Treat child as a tabula rasa – 'blank slate' (child will come to believe that they have no innate, genetically programmed capacity for functional behavior)
- \* Pretend, despite negative feedback from the child, that interfering with the genetic programming of the child is both loving and necessary (child will learn to identify abuse as love)
- \* Do not listen to child's thoughts and feelings (child will learn to not listen to themSelf thus destroying their internal communication system)
- \* Do not listen to and accept child's explanations of their behaviors (child will develop dysfunctional behaviors such as lying and/or wriggling out of acceptance of responsibility)
- \* Pretend to listen to child, perhaps in a 'knowing' way, while waiting for the earliest opportunity to interrupt them to get attention for yourself (child will feel enormous fear, pain and anger, of which they will need to suppress their awareness, as they are denied the opportunity to talk about something important to themSelf and are required to give their attention to you at the same time)
- \* Dogmatically refuse to listen to child (child will develop authoritarian – intense fear of being out of control – or fundamentalist – intense fear of being wrong – 'personality')
- \* Do not allow child to listen to (that is, pay attention to) themSelf by chronically interfering with their natural inclination and capacity to do so, for example, by comforting or distracting a child that is crying, reassuring a child that is scared, frightening a child out of being angry (child's natural capacity to become Self-aware will be destroyed)
- \* Interfere with child's natural (e.g. exploratory) behaviors (child will become fearful of acting out their natural Self-will)
- \* Chronically interfere with child's genetically programmed exploratory behaviors (child will develop anatomical, physiological, emotional, intellectual and/or behavioral dysfunctions possibly including mental illnesses such as anorexia nervosa, obsessive-compulsive disorder, paranoia and/or phobias)
- \* Do not communicate (truthfully) with child (child will not have accurate information as one of the bases for their actions and will become increasingly dysfunctionalized)
- \* Do not let child communicate with you, especially about your violent and damaging behaviors (child will have no avenue for meaningfully resolving conflict and will become increasingly dysfunctionalized)

- \* Terrorize child out of telling the truth about, and resisting, parental violence (child will suppress their awareness of the truth and be powerless to respond to this violence and the violence of others)
- \* Do not respond to child's requests or their feedback about your dysfunctional behaviors (child will be reduced to powerlessly whining and complaining)
- \* Interfere with child's communication (child will develop communication dysfunctionalities, such as compulsive talking, stuttering, lying, hinting and/or signaling, which will obscure their actual needs)
- \* Routinely interrupt child (child will become fearful of both expressing themSelf and of listening, and will learn to interrupt others)
- \* Persistently thwart child's initiatives to do things for themSelf (child will eventually learn to quit easily and might even develop a chronic unconscious tendency to thwart and punish themSelf as a manifestation of their self-hatred for failing to get what they wanted)
- \* Keep interfering with child (by frightening them in any number of ways), despite all of their defenses, until they submit to parental will and then deny child the time and space to feel their fear, pain, anger and sadness about this interference and their consequent submission (child will be terrorized into surrendering their own Self-will) . . . .

#### THE SPECTRUM OF UTTERLY INVISIBLE VIOLENCE

The fundamental outcome of being bombarded throughout their childhood by this 'invisible' violence is that the child is utterly overwhelmed by feelings of fear, pain, anger, and sadness (among many others). However, parents and other adults also actively interfere with the expression of these feelings and the behavioral responses that are naturally generated by them and it is this violence that explains why the dysfunctional behavioral outcomes, indicated by the bracketed sections in the Spectrum of Invisible Violence above, actually occur. For example,

- \* By ignoring a child when they express their feelings,
- \* By comforting, reassuring or distracting a child when they express their feelings,
- \* By laughing at or ridiculing their feelings,
- \* By terrorizing a child into not expressing their feelings (e.g. by screaming at them when they cry or get angry), and/or
- \* By violently controlling (e.g. by hitting, restraining or locking them into a room) a behavior that is generated by their feelings.

The child has no choice but to unconsciously suppress their awareness of these feelings. However, once a child has been terrorized into suppressing their awareness of their feelings (rather than being allowed to have their feelings and, preferably, having them listened to) the

child has also unconsciously suppressed their awareness of the reality that caused these feelings. This has many outcomes that are disastrous for the individual, for society and for nature because the individual will now easily suppress their awareness of the feelings that would tell them how to act most functionally in any given circumstance and they will progressively acquire a phenomenal variety of dysfunctional behaviors.

For the individual themselves, these will include physiological illnesses (ranging from mild – perhaps the occasional cold – to severe – such as chronic bronchitis, chronic muscle tension, insomnia and cancer), mental illnesses in mild or extreme form (such as anorexia nervosa, obsessive-compulsive disorder, paranoia and phobias), anatomical ailments (such as poor posture and movement patterns which might lead to physical injury) and/or behavioral disorders (ranging from simply consuming unhealthy food and liquids to engaging in unhealthy or even dangerous activities such as industrial work).

But, as indicated, the damage is not confined to the individual: there are social and environmental consequences too. For example, the individual will probably become addicted to over-consumption and the accumulation of money (detrimental to social equity) and will engage in environmentally destructive activities such as driving a car and flying in aircraft (detrimental to the Earth). These outcomes occur largely because the feelings which would give the individual feedback about these activities have been suppressed, so behavioral change in the direction of functionality cannot occur. Tragically, however, the damage still does not end there.

Once the child has been terrorized into suppressing awareness of their feelings, they also unconsciously copy this fear of feelings and then project this fear onto anyone else having and expressing their feelings. Even more disastrously, although awareness of their feelings has been suppressed, the feelings themselves have not been eliminated. Consequently, the individual will now unconsciously project their feelings onto current events (particularly the behavior of others) which, for one reason or another unique to each individual, trigger the unconscious but now inappropriate expression of these feelings.

Moreover, the individual will also behave, inappropriately, in accordance with these projected feelings. This is graphically illustrated by the behavior of individuals suffering from mental illnesses such as anorexia nervosa, obsessive-compulsive disorder, paranoia and phobias, but is clearly evident in all human beings and particularly in the behavior of parents towards their children.

Under this brutal, terrifying and unrelenting onslaught of ‘invisible’ violence at the hands of their parents, teachers and other adults who are supposed to love and care for them, coupled with the equally brutal, terrifying and unrelenting onslaught of ‘utterly invisible’ violence (denial of the safe time and space necessary to feel the phenomenal fear, pain, anger, sadness and other feelings that this reign of terror and violence is causing), the child is increasingly difunctionalized in the direction of ‘socially desirable behavior’ (that is, in industrialized societies, obedient and hardworking student, reliable and pliant employee, and submissive law-abiding citizen).

Moreover, as their dysfunctions deepen and their fear of resisting this violence is consolidated more deeply in their unconscious (where it is no longer readily accessible and thus felt), the child increasingly learns to ‘like’ their dysfunctions given the parental and social approval these routinely attract. Even worse, the child takes over responsibility for maintaining

their own dysfunctionalities. Unable to get away from the pain, the child stops listening to the pain (that is, the child increasingly suppresses their awareness of the pain) as an indicator that something is wrong and that they should do something different. The warning signs are increasingly ignored because parents, teachers and other adults teach the child that there is no way out. The child eventually stops looking and trying. At some early point in their development (and certainly long before the age of ten) the destruction of the child's natural Self and the creation of their socially acceptable 'no-self' is completed.

No adult is even aware that they have lost something, let alone what it is: their natural Self. In summary, 'invisible' and 'utterly invisible' violence destroys the natural Self and the potential to realize their True Self of each and every human individual.

**So, what, exactly, does it mean when I say 'destroy the Self?' It means that invisible and utterly invisible violence destroys the components of Selfhood of the child, including their Self-awareness, Self-will, Self-power, Self-memory, Self-approval, Self-worth, Self-respect, Self-judgment, Self-authority, Self-governance, Self-defense, Self-reliance, Self-belief, Self-trust, Self-faith, Self-consciousness and, most importantly, Self-love, thus thwarting the realization of their True Self. The individual that is left, having been stripped of their Self, is now (unconsciously) terrified, self-hating, powerless and violent (particularly towards themselves but also towards others and the Earth) and is readily manipulated into becoming a passively obedient student, worker/soldier and consumer.**

Moreover, the brutal, terrifying and unrelenting nature of this invisible and utterly invisible violence inflicted on a human being throughout their childhood leaves them so desensitized that their capacity to perceive the violence they have learned to inflict on themselves, on others and on the Earth is either grotesquely diminished and distorted or, in many cases, totally destroyed.

Let me simply illustrate and summarize this point in another way. If you want a child who is truthful, compassionate, considerate, patient, thoughtful, respectful, generous, loving of themselves and others, trustworthy, honest, dignified, determined, courageous and powerful, then the child must be treated with and experience truth, compassion, consideration, patience, thoughtfulness, respect, generosity, love, trust, honesty, dignity, determination, courage and power. What sort of child will you get if you treat them otherwise? Do you really think that you can smash them into the precise shape that you want, for example, mindlessly obedient, without also getting the corresponding range of emotional, intellectual, physical and behavioral dysfunctionalities that go with mindless obedience?

If you do not think that you can treat a child truthfully, compassionately and so on, or if you think that this treatment is inappropriate, there is an excellent reason for this. If you have not had the feelings about the violence (visible, invisible and utterly invisible) inflicted on you by your parents and other adults when you were a child, then there will be occasions (more or less frequent depending on your childhood) when you will unconsciously project that your child (or another child or adult or even circumstance) is causing the feelings that you are experiencing now and this will unconsciously generate your attitude and behavior in the circumstance. Moreover, you will not have the self-awareness to note your attitude and behavior (and the unconscious feelings driving them) let alone to alter these.

To reiterate very bluntly: Why do adults terrorize the child into suppressing expression of their feelings, and into behaving in accordance with a very narrow range of 'acceptable'

behaviors? Adults do this because they are unconsciously terrified of their own feelings being 'triggered' by the feelings or behaviors of the child. In brief, denied the opportunity to naturally express their feelings, the child suppresses their awareness of their feelings (because the feelings themselves cannot be eliminated through suppression). The child grows into an adult and the cycle is repeated.

Do you want a child who is enslaved or who is free?  
Do you want a child who acts out your will or lives their own?  
If you do not want your child to defend themselves against your violence,  
then when you terrorize them out of being able to defend themselves against you,  
you also terrorize them out of being able to defend themselves against anybody.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND FORGIVENESS

One of the vital problems confronting those who seek to end violence is the fact that individuals who are violent almost invariably seek to evade responsibility for, and the consequences of, their violence. Why do individuals who are violent seek to evade responsibility? Most usually, it is an outcome of childhood experience when the child was blamed and punished for their dysfunctions and mistakes. Blaming someone or, even worse, punishing them, however, inclines the individual to try to evade responsibility (primarily because responsibility, in this context, means suffering blame and/or punishment which is both frightening and painful).

In contrast, providing opportunities for someone to accept responsibility when they had previously avoided it is, pre-eminently, an act of love. And, of course, how this is done is vitally important. For the practitioner of nonviolence, it means challenge and support of the perpetrator of violence, with any violent punishment being taken on fearlessly by the practitioner of nonviolence. This is because only in a context in which their fear, and the fear of punishment particularly, is minimized, can the violent individual be expected to 'soul' search the truth of the practitioner's challenge. Of course, one vital element that often sustains the perpetrator of violence is that they have the (active and passive) support of collaborators. But to support someone to avoid responsibility for their violence is no act of love but is an act of fear. And this must be withstood and challenged as well.

In some traditions and religions, there is an emphasis on forgiveness but it is a powerless forgiveness in which the dysfunctional/violent individual is 'forgiven' without any effort on their part to take responsibility. This approach avoids the harsh reality of conflict and the need to challenge individuals who are dysfunctional, rather than to simply forgive them. This fear of engaging in conflict might be typical of some traditions and religions (and even characteristic of them) but it is not functional. Nonviolent activists, among others, recognize the reality of conflict and engage in it but, of course, this requires courage. It also requires that conflict be engaged with compassion and without blame or punishment. . . .

Source: <https://dkeenan.com/RJB-WhyViolence.pdf>

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## Chapter Three: Feelings First



*scared, young, white boy*

### **Feelings First: Putting emotional expression at the center of our lives.**

By Robert Burrowes and Anita McKone: October 2, 2017

**Human emotional expression has been given a ‘bad rap’, and violently discouraged, in most human cultures.**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a world where other people **listened** to how you felt, and trusted that these **feelings were valuable**?

Would you like to help create this world by **spending time listening** to your own feelings?

Would you like to help create this world by knowing how to listen to the feelings of others, **including your children**?

Are you afraid that **if you love and value yourself**, you will be betraying someone else who does not feel loved?

Are you afraid that **if you let yourself get angry** you are going to hurt or even kill someone?

Are you afraid that **if you feel your fear** you are really going to die?

Are you afraid that **if you cry** you will be humiliated?

Would you like to know **how to feel all your feelings safely**?

This website sets out to explain why emotional expression is at the core of our humanity and our life, **if we are to live our life fully.**

It also links you to articles that provide **information and practical advice** on how to connect deeply with your living, powerful, emotional self, and help others do the same.

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**Feelings can be hard to feel**, but they exist because you live in the real, physical world. Some feelings are responses to conflict (when you don't get what you want or need) and some are responses to getting what you need, and feeling supported by the life around and within you. Your feelings help you heal from conflict, violence and injury, and evolve towards being a more centered, powerful person.

So, **there is no such thing as a 'negative' emotion** that should not be consciously felt by you. In fact, trying to permanently suppress feelings like fear and anger that have a genuine cause leads them to burst out inappropriately, 'insanely' and destructively.

**This can make feelings confusing.** If someone is angry at you for no reason, you may understandably fear and hate their anger. But it is not the anger that is the problem – it is the way it is being misdirected and unsafely expressed.

**Your feelings tell you the truth** about what is going on now, and what has happened in the past. Feelings that you have delayed feeling do not go away. They are desperate for your attention, and you will keep unconsciously recreating situations of conflict until you gain the courage to let yourself feel what happened in the past.

**Feeling states inevitably change** if you allow them to exist, and they teach you things about yourself that you need to know on the road to becoming a more powerful, self-loving person.

**Suppressing our feelings is the deepest cause of the violence in our world.** This is because emotional suppression disables our innate capacity to respond intelligently and powerfully to events in our life and to behave functionally. When we can't feel, we can't act sensibly to protect and nurture ourselves, others, and the Earth.



*crying, black man*



\*\*\*

In 1996 Robert J. Burrowes and Anita McKone decided to put their feelings first, as an absolute priority.

This turned into a research project and process of personal transformation that lasted 14 years and uncovered much new insight into human nature and psychology.

The process we undertook is described in [‘Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice’](#).

Further core learnings we discovered are described in [‘Why Violence?’](#)

[‘Putting Feelings First’](#) describes how to put feelings first in your own life.



*emotions-girl-white-joyous/Photo: Yuliya Evstratenko, shutterstock*

[‘Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening’](#) describes how to listen to someone while they have their feelings.

[‘My Promise to Children’](#) describes how you can nurture children so that they are encouraged to put feelings first throughout their life.

[‘Punishment is Violent and Counterproductive’](#) explains why punishment is extraordinarily dysfunctional.

[‘The Importance of Being Angry’](#) explains why listening to and expressing our anger is important if we are to become our truly powerful self.

[‘Do We Want School or Education?’](#) explains why school is utterly destructive.

[‘Expressing Feelings Safely’](#) describes how to feel and express your feelings without causing any harm to yourself or others.

[‘Let’s Sing A Feelings Song \(for kids\)’](#) (audio)

Source: <https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/>

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## **Chapter Four: Nisteling, The Art of Deep Listening**

By Robert J. Burrowes

The word ‘listening’ has many meanings and the context in which it is done will often determine the level of concentration that is required for one to be considered to be listening.

Many people work while listening to music playing in the background. People often talk in small groups where there is little real listening by anyone as people compete for the opportunity to talk. A compulsive talker will ‘listen’ only as long as it takes for their fear to trigger the urge to talk themselves, ostensibly in response to what has just been said. And an audience might listen to a lecture, play, concert or film with considerable attention, partly because they know there is no opportunity for them to talk and because, to a greater or lesser extent, they are being entertained.

These are all forms of listening but I want to talk about listening as an art – what I call ‘nisteling’ [same letters, different order] – and why and when this should be used.

When someone speaks, apart from uttering words, they also convey feelings (which might be very subtle and even hidden in their body language). Therefore, any communication consists of intellectual and emotional content and both of these elements need to be heard if you wish to fully understand what a speaker is trying to convey. Given that human beings are taught to focus on the intellectual content of any communication and, consequently, learn to fear its emotional content, it is not surprising that few people are naturally good listeners and that few people have benefited from the effort made in recent decades to teach people more about how to listen through, for example, workshops that teach ‘reflective listening’.

In fact, most of us learn to unconsciously screen out the emotional content of the communications of other people. Why? Because listening to the feelings of another person is likely to ‘trigger’ feelings in the listener, and that can be frightening. For example, if someone is angry with you, do you find it easy to calmly listen to their anger and then reflect, for example, ‘You sound very angry that I did not listen to you’ and, if necessary, to then listen more while they tell you just how angry they are with you? Most people ‘listening’ in this, and many other circumstances are immediately frightened into a defensive reaction which exacerbates the speaker’s sense of being unheard and their anger in response to this. And the ‘listener’ is now scared and needs listening about their own fear as well. So, the competition to ‘get the

listening’, usually manifesting in what is popularly called an ‘argument’, quickly spirals down into ‘no-one is listening’.

So, what is ‘nisteling’? Nisteling requires me, as the listener, to pay deliberate, focused attention to the person who is speaking so that I can hear what is spoken and also identify and interpret what is ‘underneath’ the spoken words. This will often be a feeling that I can detect accompanying the words, but it might also be some body language, such as an eye movement or subtle gesture, that I notice. If I am paying attention that is careful enough, I will be able to comprehend the emotional meaning of the hidden message: it might be sadness, fear, anger, pain, happiness or any number of other feelings and it is this or these feelings, more than the words, that the person actually needs to be heard, even if they do not know this themselves.

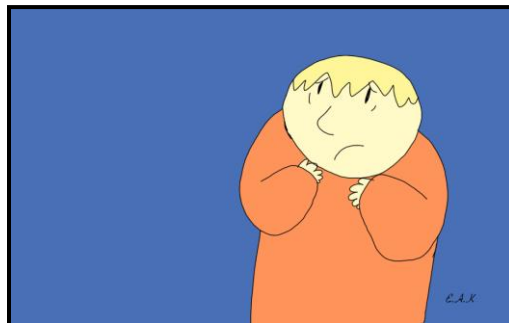
To reiterate: If you cannot nistel to someone’s feelings – explicitly expressed or as a subtle underlay to their words – then you cannot understand all of what they are trying to communicate. And, in order to nistel well, it is necessary to be unafraid of any of your own feelings that might be raised by their communication.

If you are nisteling, you will also have no trouble using the context to identify the appropriate response. If a child (or adult) is crying, the powerful response is to let them cry (while feeling your own feelings, if any, triggered by their crying) and to reflect ‘You sound sad’ which, hopefully, will get them crying more deeply. Ignoring, comforting, reassuring, distracting, laughing at, ridiculing, screaming at, hitting, restraining or punishing a crying child is a fearful response that interrupts evolution’s healing mechanism – emotional expression – which, in this case, is designed to allow full recovery from some trauma (small or large).



*‘You sound sad’. Image: Efua Ayim-Korankye*

Similarly, nisteling means letting someone be scared or happy or angry or anxious or frustrated or however they feel.



*‘You look scared’. Image: Efua Ayim-Korankye*

Importantly, nisteling also requires us to let them act in accordance with these feelings (which doesn't mean that you cannot defend yourself if their behavior adversely impacts on you although, it is worth emphasizing, nisteling is your most powerful first option in self-defense). Evolution intended our feelings to be centrally involved in determining our behavior and it is violent to prevent someone acting in accordance with their own Self-will. Moreover, chronically interfering with a child's Self-willed behavior will guarantee that the child becomes increasingly dysfunctional: Evolution did not intend a human being to be obedient (although adults who have been terrorized into surrendering their own Self-will often seek unconscious 'compensatory' control of others).

I am well aware that what I am suggesting here runs counter to most of what you have ever experienced and that it raises any number of complications. There are, obviously, many mundane reasons for not nisteling to a child. How many parents are able to nistel to a child say that it doesn't want to go to school? Nisteling to this might be quite inconvenient for the parent. And frightening if it becomes the norm. For most parents, it is easier to ignore the child and to fall back on violence: force the child to attend school.

**So why am I suggesting that we nistel, which includes letting children act in accord with their own Self-will? Because I believe that this is the essential foundation step in any strategy to end human violence (in all of its manifestations, bold added by Iona).** For a thorough explanation and elaboration of this point, see '[Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice](https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/articles-2/fearless-and-fearful-psychology/)' by Anita McKone at <https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/articles-2/fearless-and-fearful-psychology/>

As you have probably realized by now, nisteling requires a powerful individual: someone capable of taking responsibility for feeling their own feelings and trusting others (including children) to feel and act on theirs as well. I know that we cannot all do it yet. But each person who makes the commitment to work in this direction functionally undermines the violence in our world by helping to create powerfully Self-aware individuals who are able to act in accord with their own Self-will and let others do the same. And this is the only basis for creating a truly nonviolent society because powerful individuals have no trouble negotiating ways to cooperate.

The most important form of attention that any human individual requires is nisteling. And nisteling is the most important gift we can give another individual to assist their personal journey to Self-awareness. If we nistel to a child, they will learn to nistel to themselves.

This article 'Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening' was originally published in various progressive news outlets in August 2014.

**Source:** <https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/nisteling/>

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\* \* \*

If you are interested in helping to create this society, you are also welcome to consider signing online '[The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World](https://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/)' \*at <https://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/>

*\*The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World* was launched simultaneously on 11 November 2011 at several locations around the world. **As of 3 December 2022: 2,537 individuals from 105 countries have signed the Nonviolence Charter pledge, and 119 organizations from 39 countries have endorsed the Nonviolence Charter.**

\* \* \*

**Songs of Nonviolence:** In 2011: <https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/> I (Anita) wrote a number of songs about nonviolence, and I have recorded simple versions of these songs with lyrics and chords. There is no copyright on these songs – they are free to anyone who wishes to play or perform them. (Please note that, due to its popularity, 'Let's Sing a Feelings Song (for Kids)' is no longer available as a free download from Soundcloud, but if you email me, I can send a free copy to your email address as an attachment.)

If you would like help, in any way, with the information presented here, you are welcome to contact Robert and Anita at [flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net).

If you would like to know something about Anita, you can read it here:

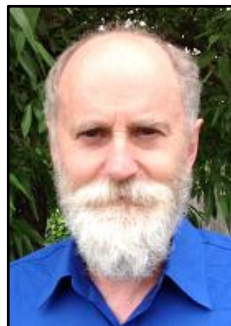
<https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/>



*Anita*

If you would like to know something about Robert, you can read it here:

<https://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com/>



*Robert*

## Chapter Five: Nestedness, a Path to Wholeness

I was fortunate to discover Darcia Narvaez's Evolved Nest philosophy and her sponsoring organization, Kindred World, an alternative media and nonprofit educational initiative. Kindred has provided a gathering place for thought leaders, scientists, professionals, and adults who care for children since 2002. This organization brings to life many of Robert's and Anita's beliefs with the addition of free webinars. Darcia Narvaez, Ph.D., is a Professor Emerita in the Department of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. In 2020, she was identified as one of the top 2 percent of scientists worldwide in a recent analysis of 8 million scientists around the world.

I just finished a book Darcia co-authored with Wahinkpe Topa (Four Arrows) titled *Restoring the Kinship Worldview: Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth*. I have known for years that indigenous peoples can show us the way out of the mess we're in; they can teach us how to live with love and respect for all life without destroying our Earth home. This book contains a lot of wisdom.

Here are a few excerpts from Darcia's website.

*Kindred World began as a grassroots, consciousness-raising, family-wellness movement in 1996 as an organic, intuitive response to the sharp breakdown in the United States' institutional, governmental, and social safety nets for families and children. By 2018, the United States was ranked the most dangerous developed country to be born in by a 50-year time-trend analysis, which also found:*

- *A child born in the U.S. is 76 percent more likely to die before their first birthday than infants born in other wealthy countries.*
- *Children who survive infancy have a 57 percent greater risk of death before reaching adulthood.*

*The Evolved Nest is a breakthrough concept that integrates findings across fields that bear on child development, child raising, and adult behavior. The Evolved Nest promotes optimal health and well-being, cooperation, and receptive and socio-moral intelligences. Societal moves away from providing the Evolved Nest have contributed to the ill-being and dysregulation we see in one another and society. Learn how to nest your children and re-nest yourself.*

*The [Evolved Nest](#), Returning to Nature's Way of Raising Connected, Nurtured Children was presented at the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative meeting in Washington, DC, on November 2, 2023, by Darcia Narvaez, PhD, Kindred World's president and founder of the Evolved Nest Initiative. In this presentation, Darcia describes how our evolved wellness-informed pathway follows the cycle of connected cooperative companionship. This pathway shifted over time to the trauma-inducing pathway that dominates the planet and pressed us into a cycle of destructive competitive detachment. She shows how we can return to wellness by following our species' evolved nest. She integrates a description of humanity's species-typical evolved nest with Indigenous wisdom.*

*Darcia recommends that you take a moment to watch *Breaking the Cycle*, a six-minute film at [breakingthecyclefilm.org](http://breakingthecyclefilm.org). You can watch it in English and Spanish, and there are 14 language subtitles in the YouTube version. *Breaking the Cycle* illustrates our capacity for*

breaking our current **Cycle of Competitive Detachment** and returning to the pattern of 95% of our human history: a healthy, peaceful **Cycle of Cooperative Companionship**. Breaking the Cycle is based on the multi-award-winning book, [Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture and Wisdom](#), by Darcia Narvaez, PhD.

*Breaking the Cycle* contrasts the two basic ways societies can function: the optimal approach, which most human societies through time have followed, is the **Cycle of Cooperative Companionship** where children's basic needs are met; they grow into well-functioning, cooperative community members (from neurobiology and on up); and as healthy adults, they maintain the cooperative system. Currently in the USA, the opposite pattern is in place: children's basic needs are not met, ill-being and dysregulation ensue, creating adults who are detached and distracted and keep this **Cycle of Competitive Detachment** going.

Learn more about the Evolved Nest and its nine components at the Evolved Nest Virtual Learning Center at [evolvednest.org](http://evolvednest.org).

\* \* \*

- **The United Nations ranked the United States at 41 out of 41 developed nations for family-friendly policies in 2016.**
- The study concluded that from 1961 to 2010, while the world's wealthy, democratic nations made consistent improvements in survival rates for children of all ages, **American children were less likely to survive and transition into adulthood.** "Persistently high poverty rates, poor educational outcomes, and a relatively weak social safety net have made the U.S. the most dangerous of wealthy nations for a child to be born into," states the study's conclusion.

**YOU MUST CHERISH ONE ANOTHER. YOU MUST WORK — WE ALL MUST WORK — TO MAKE THIS WORLD WORTHY OF ITS CHILDREN.**

~ Pablo Casals ~



FIGURE 1: League Table – Indicators of national family-friendly policies, 2016

Rank	Country	Paid leave available to mothers (weeks, full-rate equivalent)		Paid leave reserved for fathers (weeks, full-rate equivalent)		Childcare enrolment, under 3 (%)		Childcare enrolment, between age 3 and school age (%)		Average rank
		Weeks	(Rank)	Weeks	(Rank)	%	(Rank)	%	(Rank)	
1	Sweden	35	(17)	10.9	(4)	51	(5)	97	(3)	7.25
2	Norway	45	(11)	9.8	(6)	52	(4)	90	(14)	8.75
3	Iceland	16	(30)	7.8	(7)	65	(2)	99	(1)	10.00
4	Estonia	85	(1)	2.0	(18)	30	(16)	93	(8)	10.75
5	Portugal	20	(25)	12.5	(3)	50	(7)	92	(11)	11.50
6	Germany	43	(12)	5.7	(10)	33	(13)	92	(12)	11.75
6	Denmark	27	(20)	1.1	(22)	70	(1)	96	(4)	11.75
8	Slovenia	48	(9)	2.6	(16)	40	(10)	90	(13)	12.00
9	Luxembourg	26	(21)	10.4	(5)	51	(6)	87	(17)	12.25
10	France	19	(26)	5.6	(11)	49	(8)	94	(6)	12.75
11	Austria	51	(8)	6.9	(8)	21	(22)	89	(15)	13.25
12	Finland	41	(14)	5.7	(9)	33	(13)	84	(19)	13.75
13	Belgium	13	(33)	5.0	(12)	44	(9)	99	(2)	14.00
14	Spain	16	(27)	2.1	(17)	39	(11)	95	(5)	15.00
15	Netherlands	16	(27)	0.4	(29)	53	(3)	94	(7)	16.50
16	Lithuania	62	(4)	4.0	(14)	15	(26)	78	(23)	16.75
16	Hungary	72	(2)	1.0	(23)	16	(24)	87	(18)	16.75
16	Latvia	53	(6)	1.1	(21)	28	(20)	82	(20)	16.75
19	Italy	25	(22)	0.4	(29)	34	(12)	93	(10)	18.25
20	Bulgaria	65	(3)	1.7	(20)	13	(27)	75	(25)	18.75
20	Romania	48	(10)	4.7	(13)	17	(23)	61	(29)	18.75
22	Croatia	39	(15)	2.9	(15)	16	(24)	51	(31)	21.25
23	Poland	42	(13)	2.0	(18)	8	(29)	61	(28)	22.00
24	Czech Republic	53	(7)	0.0	(33)	5	(30)	81	(21)	22.75
25	Malta	16	(29)	0.2	(32)	31	(15)	88	(16)	23.00
26	Slovakia	54	(5)	0.0	(33)	1	(31)	77	(24)	23.25
27	Ireland	9	(37)	0.0	(33)	29	(18)	93	(8)	24.00
28	United Kingdom	12	(34)	0.4	(28)	29	(19)	73	(26)	26.75
29	Cyprus	14	(32)	0.0	(33)	25	(21)	79	(22)	27.00
30	Greece	23	(24)	0.4	(29)	9	(28)	56	(30)	27.75
31	Switzerland	8	(38)	0.0	(33)	30	(17)	66	(27)	28.75
	Japan	36	(16)	30.4	(1)					
	Republic of Korea	25	(23)	17.2	(2)					
	Chile	30	(18)	1.0	(23)					
	Canada	27	(19)	0.0	(33)					
	Mexico	12	(35)	1.0	(23)					
	Turkey	11	(36)	1.0	(23)					
	Israel	14	(31)	0.0	(33)					
	Australia	8	(40)	0.8	(27)					
	New Zealand	8	(39)	0.0	(33)					
	United States	0	(41)	0.0	(33)					

*The United Nations ranked the United States at 41 out of 41 developed nations for family-friendly policies in 2016. UNICEF Chart.*

The information above and the UNICEF chart were found at <https://kindredmedia.org>.



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Founder, EvolvedNest.Org (podcasts, info, and monthly newsletter); President, Kindred World, KindredMedia.org

**Email:** [dnarvaez@nd.edu](mailto:dnarvaez@nd.edu),

**6-minute film:** Breaking the Cycle at <https://breakingthecyclefilm.org/> (in Spanish and Subtitled in 16 languages at YouTube)

**8-minute film:** The Evolved Nest: Nature's Way of Raising Children at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zo54PdNnNPg>

**12-minute film:** Reimagining Humanity at <https://reimagininghumanity.com/> (in Spanish and Subtitled in 16 languages); **Watch 2-minute trailer** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd8fM7P2LV8>

**Website:** [DarciaNarvaez.com](http://DarciaNarvaez.com)

**Twitter:** @MoralLandscapes, @EvolvedNest

**Facebook:** Moral Landscapes, EvolvedNest

**Youtube:** Evolved Nest Initiative, DarciaNarvaez

**SoundCloud (podcasts):** Evolved Nest

**BOOKS:**

*The Evolved Nest: Nature's Way of Raising Children and Creating Connected Communities*  
*Restoring the Kinship Worldview: Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth*

*Indigenous Sustainable Wisdom: First Nation Know-How for Global Flourishing*  
*Basic Needs, Wellbeing and Morality: Fulfilling Human Potential*

*Embodied Morality: Protectionism, Engagement and Imagination*

*Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture and Wisdom* (winner of the 2017 Expanded Reason Award and the 2015 APA William James Book Award)

*Evolution, Early Experience and Human Development*

*Ancestral Landscapes in Human Evolution*

*Young Child Flourishing: Evolution, Family & Society*

**From Darcia:** *I acknowledge my presence at the University of Notre Dame on the traditional homeland of the Pokégnek Bodéwadmik/Pokagon Potawatomi, who have been using this land for education for thousands of years and continue to do so.*

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# Part Six: Let's Hear It For LOVE

**IF WE MERGE MERCY WITH MIGHT, AND MIGHT WITH RIGHT, THEN LOVE BECOMES OUR  
LEGACY AND CHANGE, OUR CHILDREN'S BIRTHRIGHT.**

~ Amanda Gorman ~

## Chapter One: Let's Get to Work

### THE FLAME TREE PROJECT

To Save Life on Earth

Robert J. Burrowes & Anita McKone

**A planetwide 15-year strategy for ordinary people to reduce consumption, increase self-reliance and achieve personal health and ecological security.**

The Flame Tree Project was launched on 1 July 2008 with great love for, and faith in, humankind. True power comes from conscientious personal action in the face of impossible odds.

Launched: 1 July 2008. Updated: 1 July 2009, 1 January 2011, 1 July 2012.

To

The memory of Mohandas K. Gandhi  
For his visionary leadership and fearless love

Fear of the Truth has led humankind to the brink of extinction.  
Only the Truth, lived fearlessly, can save us now.

### INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth. The ecological evidence now indicates that human extinction may occur sometime during the period between 2025 and 2050. Or, if extinction does not occur, some scattered remnant human populations will eke out a miserable existence on a devastated Earth. Moreover, we have a very narrow timeframe to achieve dramatic changes in the way that we live if we are to avoid the

tipping points that will make this catastrophe inevitable.

The ecological evidence that points to this future is not presented here in detail because it is readily available in a wide variety of books and journal articles, from concerned scientists and elsewhere. In the box titled 'World on the Brink' on pages 3-4, however, we have given a summary of this multifaceted global crisis. In essence, humankind has travelled 99% of the way down a dead end and it is now time for us to turn around and to make our way carefully and intelligently out of this impending catastrophe.

The Flame Tree Project is a comprehensive and integrated 15-year worldwide strategy to prevent human extinction and to nurture life on Earth. If you are one of the people who already comprehends that catastrophe is imminent, then you are invited to participate in The Flame Tree Project by considering the principles and guidelines outlined below and then working out how to apply them in your own unique situation. If, after reading this document and considering any of the evidence that you wish to consult, you decide that The Flame Tree Project is not for you, then your decision not to participate is deeply respected.

**The core of The Flame Tree Project is the action taken by individuals, households and communities in the industrialized countries** (emphasis added). Complementary action by farmers, businesspeople, scientists/technologists, governments and community groups in these countries will greatly enhance these initiatives and this project also offers suggestions for individuals involved in these sectors to consider.

The Flame Tree Project is not about lobbying the government to fix things nor is it a 'ten easy ways to change your light globes' approach to saving the world. It is designed to help you think, feel, plan and act for yourself. In a world that is still largely pretending that life will go on as usual, we need to respond to the danger and switch our mentality to 'state of emergency' mode in which, without panic, we consider all of our activities and contributions in light of the immediate priority of planetary, and therefore personal, survival.

The Flame Tree Project's suggestions for action are largely very simple, but the number of issues to consider may look daunting at first. If so, check out the 'Getting Started' pages at the end of this document for help. Sitting down with your family, household, or some friends to work out your plan may give you the opportunity to talk things through and create a sense of shared aims. Take as many sessions as you want to work out what you want to do. Give yourself time to get used to thinking and feeling differently about things you are planning to change.

The main text of this document focuses on 'what to do.' The explanations given in the boxes throughout the text are offered for those interested in some of the reasoning behind our principles and suggestions. If these are not your style, feel free to skip over them! And if we suggest something with which you do not agree, we ask you to consider leaving this or these things aside and participating on the basis of what does appeal. . . .

The 28-page document is available at <https://dkeenan.com/Flametree.pdf>.

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## The Flame Tree Project Getting Started: Reduction

**What level of resources are you using now?**

**Date:**

Under the following headings, **list all the ways you use each resource** in your home and private life including an *approximate* quantity used per week or year (e.g. tissues, 4 boxes per year; showers, 280 litres per week). Use this as a guide for a journal or notebook with lots of room to make calculations.

**Water** (drinking, cooking, bathing, laundry, garden, others?):

**Household Energy** (gas, electricity, wood, liquid fuels, candles, fuel for garden equipment, others?)

**Vehicle Fuel** (list places you drive/fly and how often, as well as an estimate of how much petrol/gasoline, diesel, LPG, biofuels and/or electricity you use for driving overall):

**Paper** (toilet paper, tissues, serviettes, packaging, newspapers, books, magazines, printer and photography paper, notepads, others?):

**Plastic** (food packaging, drink packaging, other packaging, plastic bags, cling wrap, hard plastic items, others?)

**Metals** (food tins, drink cans, spray cans, whitegoods, electrical and garden equipment, others?)

**Meat** (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

**What resources will you cut and/or find alternatives for?**

In each category, **underline the items** that feel the least vital to you.

**What would you like to do differently** in the next year to achieve your overall 10% resource cut? (If you can't cut the activity that uses the resource, can you identify alternative resources that will be more efficient or longer lasting? e.g. use cloth hankies not paper tissues) **List these changes** next to the headings below:

**Water:**

**Household Energy:**

**Vehicle Fuel:**

**Paper:**

**Plastic:**

**Metals:**

**Meat:**

## The Flame Tree Project Getting Started: Self-Reliance

Date:

In the following list **mark those areas that interest you most** or seem easiest to change. Refer to The Flame Tree Project document to see the kinds of things involved in becoming more self-reliant in these areas.

1. **health: physical, emotional and spiritual**
2. **food**
3. **revegetation**
4. **water**
5. **soil creation**
6. **clothing and footwear production**
7. **technology and toolmaking**
8. **housing**
9. **education**
10. **recreation, holidays and travel**
11. **communication**
12. **population and reproduction**
13. **children**
14. **economics and finance**
15. **building community**
16. **self, community and planetary defense**

**Mark the areas that you would like to focus on this year.** Next to each of these headings, **write what you would like to do this year** to increase your self-reliance in this area. You may decide to do a lot in one area (e.g. plant out your whole back and front yard with organic fruit and veg; switch to a 100% organic vegetarian wholefood diet; get rid of your car; stop using all major chain stores and shop locally) or some smaller things in a number of areas (eg. grow some herbs, buy secondhand clothing, learn to cook some vegetarian wholefood recipes, read some books and magazines or check out internet sources on the state of the world or on self-sufficiency, try out an alternative health option, and go to bed earlier) to reach your estimated 10% self-reliance increase.

### **Important point!**

Your lists are there to remind you of things to do differently. If you forget, or occasionally find it all too hard to 'bother', this is fine. No-one is telling you what to do – letting yourself be yourself will lead to genuine heartfelt progress in the quickest time that your mind can adjust itself to change.

**Reduction and Self-Reliance Review Dates: .....(6 months) .....(1 year)**

Have you done what you hoped to do?

If not, what got in the way?

Do you need help of any kind? If so, how can you get this help?

Is there a different way forward that will help the process of change work better for you?

## Chapter Two: Stories from Africa

I've been working with African activists for four years and love them. We in America need to pare down our deadly consumer lifestyles and learn more from my African friends; to that end, I have published many of their stories. The people I know have a gentle, all-inclusive view of their organizations and excel at "boots on the ground" work. They not only focus on global warming but in many cases their reach extends to everyone in their communities, including the aged and the very young, the able-bodied and differently-abled people, orphans and widows. They grow food for everyone. They reach out to others to teach them new skills so they can get out of poverty. Although they are struggling, they are positive and determined to succeed. In many cases these folks are young enough to be my daughters and sons or even my grandchildren. They are special.

The following two chapters are examples of their work.

## Chapter Three: Resilience in the Climate Crisis



"My name is Modupe Florence. It was over a month, my shop got burned, and I lost everything in that shop, including my three-grain grinding machines. I am happy that RUWAI came to my rescue and helped me start my business again. Thank you, RUWAI"

-Modupe-RUWAI Seed to Wealth program 2022 beneficiary

[ruralwatchafrica.org](http://ruralwatchafrica.org)

RUWAI  
RURAL WATCH AFRICA  
INITIATIVE

*Florence Modupe is a middle-aged woman living in a rural Wada village in Northcentral Nigeria, where she manages a small agro-processing business to meet her family's basic needs.*

*Photos courtesy RUWAI*

By Uche Isieke, Founder, Executive Director, RUWAI Nigeria

At Rural Watch Africa Initiative (RUWAI), our mission has always been to address critical social and environmental issues and make a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and communities. We firmly believe that collective action and compassion have the power to create an equitable and sustainable world. Through the unwavering dedication of our team, volunteers, and supporters, we have achieved remarkable milestones and brought about transformative change.

We want to highlight the story of Florence Modupe. Florence is a middle-aged woman living in a rural Wada village in Northcentral Nigeria, where she manages a small agro-processing business to meet her family's basic needs. She is the breadwinner of her family with six children. In June 2022, her petite enterprise was burned down by a fire outbreak in the neighborhood. The fire had begun at about 2:00 am when she had retired home and had no one around to stop the ravaging fire. Before Florence started her business, she relied on cutting down trees and drying them to make sales for her livelihood.

Our intervention and support have been pivotal in her life, empowering her to overcome adversity and thrive in seemingly impossible ways.



Through our Seed to Wealth program, RUWAI provided Florence with business management training, donated two new machines for grinding grains, and met her family's and community's nutritional needs. Helping Florence (who previously relied on cutting down trees for a living) to resume her business significantly reduces deforestation and overdependence on natural resources by rural inhabitants due to weak technical and financial capacity.



Through our Seed to Wealth program, we empower rural people, especially women and youth, with the needed knowledge in sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, seedlings, alternative income skills development, and small businesses.



*RUWAI Livelihood Program, Uche Isieke with Florence Modupe*

The impact has been nothing short of extraordinary. The program has recorded successes such as enhancing skills for rural people, food security and better land management, reducing deforestation, and increasing the number of trees planted. More jobs and incomes are being created for the rural populace, addressing poverty and climate change.

Florence's business serves over 500 households in her community, and many local small agribusinesses rely on her services to process their commodity to make sales. Witnessing the community transformation and Florence's commitment has been a source of inspiration for all those involved.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported us along this journey. We can continue making a difference and touching the lives of those in need through your generosity, whether it be time, skills, or financial contributions.

However, our work is far from done. There are countless individuals and communities still in need of assistance and support. We invite you to join us in our mission to create lasting change. Here are a few ways you can get involved:

1. Donating your financial contribution, regardless of size, can help us expand our programs and reach more needy individuals.
2. Volunteer and share your time and expertise with us. Volunteering can directly impact lives and be part of the change.

3. Spread the word by helping us raise awareness about the critical issues we address and the impact we are making. Use the power of your voice to inspire others to get involved.

4. Collaborate if you represent an organization or business aligned with our mission, let's explore partnership opportunities. Together, we can achieve an even more significant impact.

We firmly believe that each one of us has the power to make a difference. Let's continue to create a world where everyone has access to education, healthcare, equal opportunities, and a chance to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to embarking on this journey of change with you.

To support our work, contact us at [africa.ruwai@gmail.com](mailto:africa.ruwai@gmail.com).

**Website:** <https://ruralwatchafrica.org/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/RuralWatchAfricaInitiative/>

## **Chapter Four: Working With Young People and Schools**

In all my years devoted to environmental work in one form or another, I concluded long ago that organic farming is the most noble career of all. The video presented in the following story shows one way to end violence and bring love, peace, harmony, and happiness to the world while ending poverty and racism, too. The people at SCOPE are building the future.

### **Promoting Practical Agroecology Education in Schools to reconnect children with nature, healthy lifestyles & environmental stewardship.**



*Kids and food. Photos Courtesy SCOPE*

By John Macharia, National Coordinator, SCOPE KENYA

Schools and Colleges Permaculture Programme (SCOPE) is a Kenyan network organization that comprises of civil society groups/non-governmental organizations that were formed in 2014 by 14 pioneer organizations. It was started to strengthen and connect the ongoing initiatives of working with schools on sustainable land use and production of nutritious food. All the members of SCOPE Kenya share a common vision of making schools across Kenya good learning examples of teacher-parent-student collaboration towards sustainable land use which would lead to significant improvements in the environment, food security, and livelihoods in the surrounding communities.

OUR MISSION is to transform schools into dynamic learning centers of sustainable land use in support of holistic community development.

SCOPE Kenya is a capacity building and networking organization that was established in 2014. SCOPE Kenya works with school communities to empower young people and transform degraded school lands into food forests through agro-ecology/permaculture practices.



*Girls preparing land.*

Entire school grounds are designed by the stakeholders as well as the implementation of permaculture/sustainable ecological agricultural activities. This addresses social, economic, and environmental community needs. This has proved to be a very powerful and effective development tool that enhances inclusiveness, participation, ownership, and sustainability of the initiated projects in schools and at the community level.





*Learning with Exchange Visits*

SCOPE also takes part in capacity building activities with the school communities which enable them to transform their degraded school land into productive landscapes that have supported a diverse variety of food crops. Capacity building occurs during workshops where the stakeholders or representatives of the school communities are thoroughly trained on the Integrated Land Use Design (ILUD) approach that is used to enhance the participation of communities in sustainable land use, in turn supporting community development.





We have started the year well, to ensure we amplify the knowledge and skill on land restoration and biodiversity conservation, by empowering young people in and out of schools and their communities.

I am writing to share a short video, about some of the work we did last year. Kindly open the link to watch our 10-minute, 37-second video (SCOPE - SCHOOLS AGROECOLOGY KNOWLEDGE VIDEO) at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r9AcYnCUZM1Nhe0YnIFghUYgS0gwZqBR/view>

I hope you will find it useful and informative.

Through this email, I grant you the permission to share the video with as many people as possible. I believe in information sharing, as a way of creating awareness and inspiring others. You also have the permission to put the video link in your book so that many more can read and watch. We all have a collective responsibility of regenerating the world, reversing the effects of climate change, and conserving biodiversity for the benefit of human survival.

Wishing you a very successful and productive year.

With Kind Regards,

John Macharia, National Coordinator, SCOPE KENYA

**Telephone/WhatsApp:** +254 724 628 386

**Website:** [www.scopekenya.net](http://www.scopekenya.net)

**Face Book:** <https://www.facebook.com/scopekenya2/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/scopekenya1>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/scopekenya/?hl=en>

**LinkedIn:** <https://ke.linkedin.com/in/scope-kenya-3a86651b3>



## Follow-up Email from John at SCOPE

Dear Iona,

At SCOPE Kenya, we are well and still taking our work on land regeneration, food security, and biodiversity conservation forward.

To scale up the good work, SCOPE Kenya is planning to strengthen our Volunteer programme. In this program, people from across the globe, who value our work on land regeneration, food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, and nature conservation, shall be given the opportunity to volunteer their time to carry out some tasks which will contribute to alleviation of human suffering and make the world a better place of living.

Interested people can volunteer when at their mother country, or even travel to Kenya, where SCOPE Kenya will host them. This can be individuals or groups of people. During their visit, they will be exposed to **Community Tourism**, so that they get an opportunity to interact with local communities, learn different cultures, and above all visit some of the tourist attraction sites.

Contact me to get a Volunteer work sheet if you are interested. I am sure we have people across the world who would want to contribute towards this initiative but don't know how. This can be young people who have finished their tertiary school education before joining university, those in work category, or even the senior citizens. Those willing to also make financial contributions to support such work shall also be appreciated. Those willing to support by donating materials like conservation books or computers which they don't use will also be appreciated.



*Local communities make their contribution to land regeneration, food production, and nature conservation while working with SCOPE.*

What do you think about this initiative?  
Wishing you well and looking forward to hearing from you.



*John Macharia admiring the avocado trees planted in 2020 at Thika Children Rescue Centre. The trees have started bearing fruit, which will be eaten by current and future generations. This is the kind of work we would want to give people to contribute to during their volunteering period.*

## Chapter Five: Young U.S. Couple Dedicated to Organic Farming



*Farmers Hannah Conner and Joe Soto. Cream Ridge, New Jersey. No longer rambling. Cultivating community and good food. Certified Organic/Real Organic produce.*

## Our Story ... Know Your First-Generation Farmers

By Hannah Conner and Joe Soto

The love of the natural world and good food drove us to ramble through our post-college 20's to work on various farm- and plant-related jobs. We didn't really know where or what the future would hold for us. For many years Hannah dreamt of owning her own business. Eventually she started a small farm in her home state of Pennsylvania on a piece of rented land. Soon after starting the farm, she met Joe, another farm worker looking for more in life. Unforeseen circumstances eventually left Hannah landless. Our story together began with a move to yet another farm which just happened to be in Cream Ridge, New Jersey.

When we came to Cream Ridge in the fall of 2019, we thought it was just another page of that rambling story. We named our new farm Ramblin' Sol as we wanted to take the name with us wherever we ended up next. The universe, however, had other plans.

That January, we were married on the beach while visiting family in Puerto Rico. The following December, baby Emmylou arrived to join our crew! As the farm and family grew, we found ourselves putting down roots and creating a network of kindred spirits.



*Hannah and Joe with their daughter, Emmylou*



The farmers' rambling officially ended in late summer of 2021 when a CSA member offered to sell us her beautiful property. Her gift to our family and the community honored her late husband's deep love the land and things that grow. Ramblin' Sol Farm is now permanently situated on eight cozy acres in Cream Ridge. We look forward to continuing our story by cultivating great food and a loving community of friends for years to come.

We believe that as modern farmers we have a responsibility to address the social and environmental injustices that we all face today. Our current mainstream food system of highly processed food perpetuates the destruction of our environment, relies on unacceptable work conditions, and creates a web of human health issues.

By stewarding land responsibly through regenerative agriculture, we can localize our food system, protect our community's resources, and reduce the need to rely on fossil fuels and shipping logistics to access food. United by our need to eat, the community that is cultivated around this farm contributes to a local food system and will have the tools it needs to strengthen the health of our families and be empowered to better navigate the increasingly uncertain world impacted by climate change disasters.



We hope that you will choose to know your farmers and don't buy food from strangers!

Source: <https://ramblinsolfarm.com/>

Reprinted with permission.

## Chapter Six: Deep Transformation Network

I recently found my “tribe” online, Deep Transformation Network (DTN). What I mean is that there is a group of people sharing good ideas daily. We all want to see the world become a better, safer place with natural resources and ecosystems being treasured and not destroyed. What I found online there delights me.

The way DTN is set up is similar to Facebook but it’s nothing like it. We can chat and get a daily reminder to check our messages, but I don’t feel pressure to answer quickly as I did with Facebook and I do now with texts. Maybe it’s just me slowing down or getting more aware of what stresses me; DTN doesn’t. Either I reply to conversations, or I don’t. Sometimes I like being a hermit and don’t check in for a few days, but when I do, I enjoy these people. It’s not a huge network but it’s a good one for me.

The following messages are from a few of my recent DTN conversations.

**Landon Tomlinson**, after reading a brief description of my book:

*I was attracted to your post. I think psychologically the issue of violence is one of fear and desperation (control), a lack of personal integration (ignorance). In some way or another love is always the solution. Hurt people hurt people and desolation breeds desperation. We live in an age of information where another book is just a drop in the bucket. But a mentor for young people trying to find meaning is a rarity. In my opinion intergenerational relationships are not commonplace – mentorships are institutionalized and fractionalized.*

*This would be a message to anyone in this group – be open to relationships with young people, seeds planted and fostered may grow trees for a sustainable civilization to inhabit. Your time, attention, and love is your biggest asset.*

**About Landon:** *I accept and care for who people are, while empowering and supporting who they could be. Through relationship, art, and activities. Canadian, 26, I have been working with youth through various non-profit organizations for the past decade. Aspiring to be fully grown in body, mind, and spirit. Seeking an appreciating existence in harmony with others.*

**te’a (sic) replied:** *What would interest me is to hear how you yourself are mentoring, being 'open' and so on. It seems to me that the generations you are messaging may well have experienced lack of village, lack of mentoring themselves. I see many folk who might be 'willing' to be open as you suggest but (as you suggest) may be hurt people themselves.*

*So hearing how others 'do' what they are talking about, and by what means that 'hurt people' that may mean the generations have become alienated and each 'generation' becomes commodified in various ways, differing from each other in 'how' they became consumed into 'consumerland' where e.g. role models are film 'stars' (sic) and the cult of the personality overrides the messy, unglorious chaos of relating...(etc.)*



Tahrir Square in Cairo as urban commons. Photo: Jonathan Rashad – Flickr, CC BY 2.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16620148>

### **On Commoning (*DTN continued*)**

By James R. Martin, originally published by The R-word October 24, 2022

The perverse and impoverished map of social space provided by the longing for hegemony (rather than loving, kind, and generous relationship) is, henceforth, not our vocabulary. We transform the very meaning of public and private by daring to proclaim the communal sphere as existing, real, and growing, evolving, and necessary. All social spaces, henceforth, always will include the naming and honoring of the communal sphere.

We intend to come home to one another, with one another.

Love is the revolution. The revolution is love.

Source: <https://rword.substack.com/p/on-commoning>

James later wrote: *What is needed is not technical fixes but transforming the underlying “operating system” of the entire structure.*

*But I don't think this can happen without the general public undergoing a metanoia, a transformational experience in heart and mind. If the people undergo such a metanoia, the power structure will inevitably shift.*

*And I don't think this collective metanoia can occur without a shift at the very root of thought, experience, perception, and thinking (etc.) in an integrated way, in all of these dimensions – but with a particular shift at the heart of it, which is to say from a substantive to a relational ontology. Not just intellectually but also and equally experientially. I say this because I believe it is the dominant culture's ontology which is the root driver of the metacrisis. It's the root cause, the level below all of the symptoms of this cause.*

\* \* \*

**DON'T ASK WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS. ASK WHAT MAKES YOU COME ALIVE AND GO DO IT.  
BECAUSE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS IS PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME ALIVE.**

~ Howard Thurman ~

## **Chapter Seven: Looking at Population**



*Photo by Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition on Unsplash*

**Birth control can fight climate change.  
But mostly only if you are in a rich country.**

By Matt Orsagh (also a DTN acquaintance)  
Substack: February 12, 2024

On my Friday Substack, I posted a picture of birth control pills, and in my two-sentence post I said:

“Nearly half of all pregnancies worldwide are unintended.”

“These pills could solve climate change and the environmental devastation awaiting us.”

I always try to tee up what I'm talking about on Monday with a little preview of that on Friday. I want to plant the seed of that topic for people to think about over the weekend before I explore it in more detail on Monday. That's how it was in my head anyway when I thought up that structure.

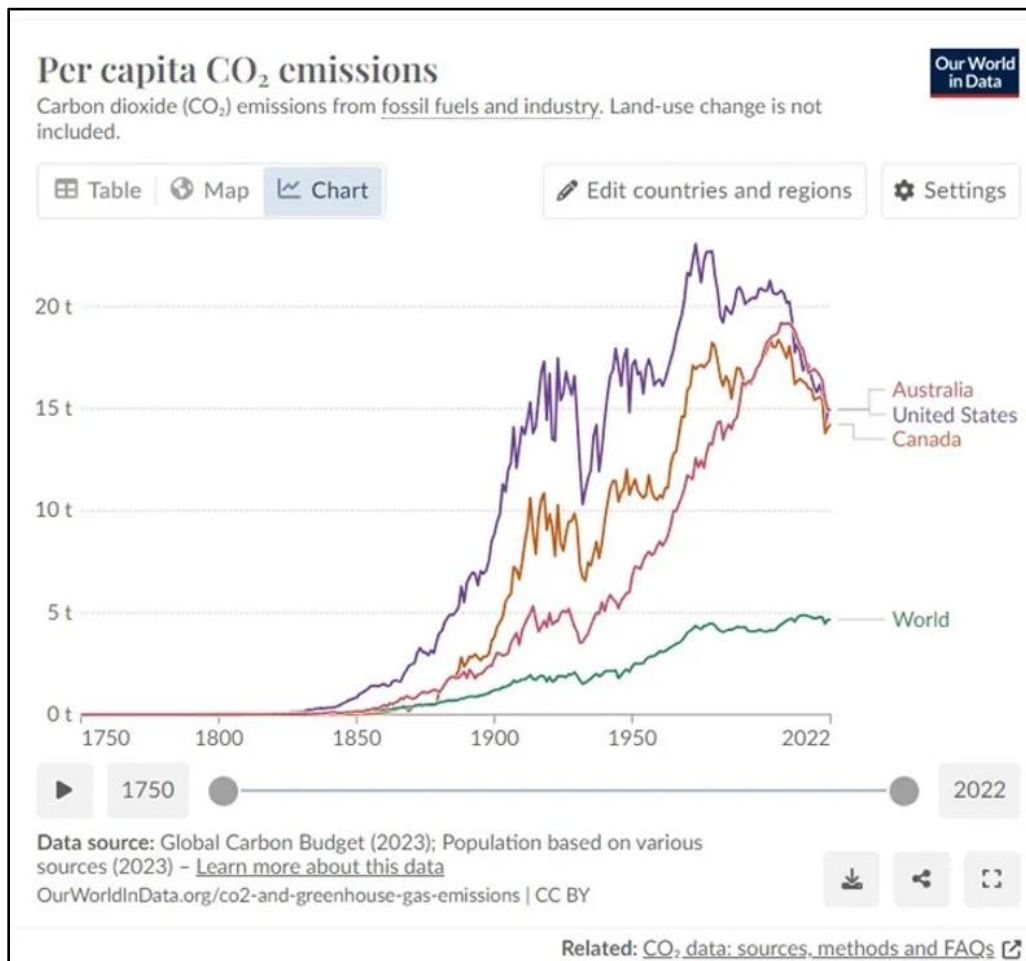
### Oops

But on Friday someone reached out to me after that short post, expressing their disappointment that I was suggesting that birth control could be used to combat climate change. They never said so directly, but I believe they thought I meant that women in poor countries should stop having children – because this is something that some people in wealthy countries like to present as a solution.

It is not, and that's not what I was saying.

Birth control can help with climate change and the other environmental challenges we face because we humans are causing the problem. Birth control is not the only solution, of course, it's just one of many that we should be talking about, thinking about, and acting upon. Birth control should also not solely be the job of women. Men are just as responsible for bringing children into the world and should share responsibility and birth control choices.

### Look at the per capita data.





The average CO2 emissions for a person in India, the world's most populous country, is about 1.9 tons per year. In the United States, that number is about 14.4 tons per year. Start your talks about birth control in the United States if you're talking about climate. And as you can see from the chart above, you can also talk about Australia in Canada. The European Union and the UK have similar profiles of high CO2 emissions.

Rates of birth control use can vary widely between developed markets. Over 80% of women in Australia ages 16 to 49 use some form of contraception. Around 65% of women in the United States 15 to 49 use birth control, according to a survey conducted from 2017 to 2019 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only about 39% of women in the 15 to 19 age group used contraception, but this rate steadily increases as women in the United States get older. This 15% gap in birth control between Australia and the United States is magnified even further when you realize that the population of Australia is only about 8% that of the United States.

While birth control it's freely available to most women and men in Western nations, in some places, there are several forces hindering the use of birth control. These can be things such as a lack of access, healthcare costs (we don't have National Health care in the U.S.), cultural and religious reasons. If someone is ever talking about birth control as a solution to climate change, they should probably start talking about the United States.

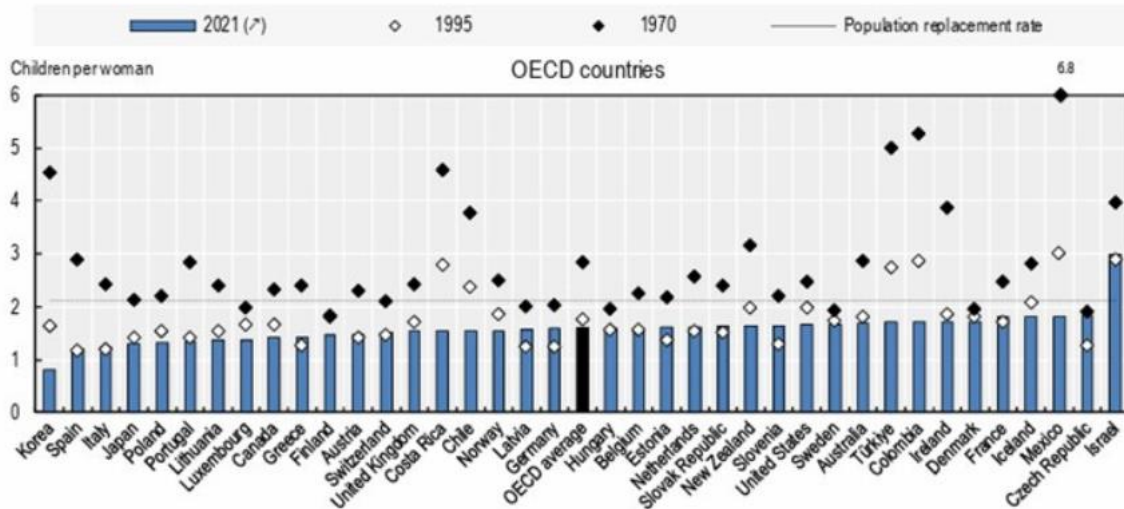
China and India have more people than the United States, but their per capita CO2 emissions are much less. It's a similar story with other countries with large populations such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil, numbers 4 through 7 in the world population tables. But their per capita numbers for CO2 emissions are much less than what we have here in the United States.

### **The developed world can lean into population loss.**

The chart below comes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It shows the fertility rate of OECD countries in the past and present day. OECD countries are mostly the most developed countries in the world. These countries have both the highest historical contribution of CO2 and other greenhouse gases as well as the highest per capita numbers. The trend of lower fertility rates in these countries isn't a bad thing.

Chart SF2.1.A. Total fertility rate, 1970, 1995 and 2021

Average number of children born per woman over a lifetime given current age-specific fertility rates and assuming no female mortality during reproductive years



Lower birth rates are birth control. People deciding to have less children in these countries for economic or personal reasons, is birth control. We just don't think of it that way. The pill, or condoms, or some other material birth control device is often seen as birth control, but the decision to use these methods are of course conscious ones. Birth control has intent behind it.

In our current economic thinking, this consistent line of blue bars for rich counties all below the replacement rate of 2.1 children is seen as a tragedy. How were we going to grow if we don't make more consumers?

The answer is, we won't grow. And that's a good thing. That is what we need. Stepping away from economic growth as the organizing principle for economic and personal lives is healthy. That means less throughput in the economy, less use of our resources, less environmental degradation, and less CO2 and other greenhouse gases. This also means more time spent on the things in life that we all say matter, such as belonging to something larger than ourselves and connections with other people. If these are the things we say we want, lean into having them.

The graying of these OECD countries does present problems. We have to care for the aging populations of these countries. We can do that. We can take care of those people.

Spending less energy trying to grow, and more energy on care, education, and the human outcomes we all claim to value over our economic lives, is the path we can take if we want to.

And for the sake of humanity in the long term, that may just have to require fewer children in rich countries around the world. Data shows that with more education for young girls around the world and access to birth control for both men and women in developing markets, birth rates in those countries would also fall. But they shouldn't be made to fall just so all of us in the rich world don't have to cut back on our overconsumption and overpopulation.

I have been a researcher, analyst, writer, podcaster, and worker bee in the financial industry for over 20 years. I want to help push the degrowth conversation forward so that we as a civilization can get where we need to be. Degrowth is the Answer is a reader-supported publication. To receive new posts and support my work, consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.

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**Source:** <https://degrowthistheanswer.substack.com/p/birth-control-can-fight-climate-change>

## Chapter Seven: Looking at Population

### World Population Clock

If you think this isn't serious, take a quick look at <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>. You will be shocked at how rapidly humans are multiplying! The screenshot on the next page was taken at 4:34 pm March 11, 2024. I had taken another screenshot about a week previously and in that short time, more than 6 million babies were born!





## Chapter Eight: Condoms and Endangered Species Center for Biological Diversity

<https://www.endangeredspeciescondoms.com/condoms.html>

### WHAT DO CONDOMS HAVE TO DO WITH ENDANGERED SPECIES? THE EARTH'S POPULATION NOW TOPS 8 BILLION PEOPLE.

Every day we add 227,000 people to the planet. And every day, dozens of wildlife species are lost forever. Human population growth – along with our reckless overconsumption – is driving the sixth mass extinction crisis. But we can still save wildlife, by choosing to stop hogging the planet.

The rapid growth of our human population is pushing other species off the planet in what most scientists are calling the sixth mass extinction crisis. Yet this population explosion is too often ignored by the public, the media, and even the environmental movement, while it continues to drive all the major environmental problems that plague our planet – including climate change, habitat loss, ocean acidification, and resource depletion.

That's why the Center for Biological Diversity launched our Endangered Species Condoms project in 2009, and since then has distributed hundreds of thousands of free condoms across the United States. Wrapped in colorful, wildlife-themed packages (with artwork by Shawn DiCriscio), Endangered Species Condoms offer a fun, unique way to get people talking about the link between human population growth and the species extinction crisis.



Images credit: Center for Biological Diversity, art by Shawn DiCriscio at <https://www.endangeredspeciescondoms.com/condoms.html#sustain>

The Endangered Species Condoms project has distributed over 1 million condoms across the United States around certain holidays and big events like Earth Day and World Population Day. Volunteer to become a distributor today at <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/action/forms/volunteer/application?type=condom>.

*Endangered Species Condoms are not for sale.*

Reprinted with permission.

## Chapter Nine: Abortion Rights Guaranteed in France

I was so excited when I saw this great news! Many years ago, I got pregnant twice trying new forms of birth control that didn't work for me. I already had two children and that was all we wanted. Planned Parenthood helped me find safe places to have abortions.

This story relates to the theme of my book in several ways:

- Some pregnancies are caused by rape and sexual abuse.
- Women can die from botched abortions.
- Approximately half of all pregnancies are unplanned.
- Children who are not wanted might well end up as violent people.
- It is a form of "invisible violence" when strangers, especially men, dictate what a woman can or cannot do with her body.



*The Eiffel Tower was emblazoned with the words, "My body, my choice" as supporters rallied in Paris to mark the historic vote. Photo: Amnesty International France*

## As U.S. Backslides, French Celebrate Historic Abortion Protections **"France saw what happened in the U.S. and decided to do the RIGHT thing – enshrine abortion in its Constitution," said one advocacy group.**

By Julia Conley

Common Dreams: March 05, 2024

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As U.S. President Joe Biden garnered fresh condemnation from rights advocates for his latest comments on abortion care on Monday, the Place du Trocadero in Paris was crowded with people celebrating an overwhelming vote by French lawmakers in favor of enshrining abortion rights in their country's constitution.

The French Parliament voted 780-72 to add an amendment to the constitution stating that there is a "guaranteed freedom" to obtain abortion care in France. "The law determines the conditions by which is exercised the freedom of women to have recourse to an abortion, which is guaranteed," the amendment reads.

Demonstrating that the fight to protect abortion rights "has no borders," several legislators wore green scarves to the vote, symbolizing solidarity with the "Green Wave" that has seen advocates successfully push for reproductive freedom in Latin American countries.

The vote made France the first country to affirm a constitutional right to abortion care since 1974, when the former Yugoslavia amended its constitution.

The move was applauded by the United Nations high commissioner on human rights.

Abortion was first made legal in France – albeit without a constitutional right – in 1975, and the right is supported by more than 80% of the public.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said the two houses of Parliament sent "a message to all women: your body belongs to you."

French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti suggested the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning in 2022 of *Roe v. Wade*, which for nearly five decades had affirmed that people in the U.S. had the right to abortion care, made it clear that amending the French constitution was necessary to reflect the values of the vast majority of people in France.

"We now have irrefutable proof that no democracy, not even the largest of them all, is immune" to attacks on reproductive rights, he said.

The Eiffel Tower was emblazoned with the words, "My body, my choice" as supporters rallied in Paris to mark the historic vote – but across the Atlantic Ocean, an interview with Biden in *The New Yorker* included a comment in which the president, who has repeatedly said he has personal objections to abortion care but believes *Roe* should have been upheld, denigrated the idea embraced by the French lawmakers. "I've never been supportive of, you know, 'It's my body, I can do what I want with it,'" Biden told the magazine, sparking renewed anger among reproductive justice advocates.

Biden's comments came weeks after the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that a frozen embryo created via in vitro fertilization had the same rights as a living child, prompting some

Republicans to attempt to distance themselves from the decision even as supporters of forced pregnancy and "fetal personhood" laws openly embraced it.

Nearly half of U.S. states now ban abortion care or restrict it earlier in pregnancy than the standard set by *Roe v. Wade*. At least 15 states ban the procedure in "almost all circumstances," according to *The New York Times*. Republicans have advocated for a nationwide 15-week abortion ban, and former President Donald Trump — now the presumptive GOP presidential nominee — reportedly supports a 16-week ban.

Amnesty International Secretary-General Agnes Callamard said the vote in France on Monday was "of huge significance given the rollback of this essential right around the world."

"The United States has shown how devastatingly dangerous and retrogressive it is to undermine abortion as a right," said Callamard. "In Europe, there are still countries such as Poland and Andorra, where access to abortion is highly restricted and where those fighting for this right face prosecution. Today's vote in France should pave the way for stronger protection of access to abortion elsewhere."

"Enshrining abortion in the constitution is a high-water mark for women's rights and a testament to years of tireless campaigning by so many," she added. "It sends a message of hope and solidarity to women's groups and to all defenders of abortion and other sexual and reproductive rights."

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/france-abortion-rights>

\* \* \*

**Note from Iona about abortion:** I recently picked up a used copy of a book by Abby Johnson called *unPLANNED: The dramatic true story of a former Planned Parenthood leader's eye-opening journey across the life line*. It's a great book and gave me a deeper appreciation for the Right to Life people. I love what Planned Parenthood has done for me and for other women (and continues to do), but it was interesting to read about the incident which made Abby decide to switch sides in this ongoing battle. Don't get me wrong, I still support women's rights to abortion, but my mind was opened to a better understanding of those on the other side of this controversial issue.

## Chapter Ten: 'Mindset' Change Community Can Help Fix Climate Problems

By Herbert Bagyenji Kajoki, Uganda, member Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice, Special to *Grassroots Coalition News*, first published April 2022

### What is Mindset?

In simple terms, Mindset Change is someone's mental attitude or inclination or on the other hand, it's a fixed state of someone's mind. Being happy and successful is something we all aspire to. It's very likely that when asked, "What's your aim in life?" most of us would answer — to be happy. But on some days, this "small and modest" goal just seems light years away.

The good and bad news is this – it's all in our head. Even when it seems impossible to look on the bright side of things, it's actually 100% in our power to transform the way we see life or think.

**One Village Uganda** is a grassroots, community-based organization operating in Kyanamira subcounty, Kabale District, Uganda working to support communities in environmental/climate change through agriculture, education, health outreaches, and sustainable tourism for future generation's use.

The only way to achieve this is through positive Mindset Change programs.

In developing countries, many grants, donations, and support have been given out through funding programs but the more the funding or support, the more need. Especially when you look at education funding, donors have put in a lot of money in sponsoring children, building schools, orphanages, among others, but still many children continue to be born recklessly, population increases, and lack of responsibility, among others; however, this has greatly affected our environment as well as the effects of climate change.

The case in point is, as long as our communities in developing countries or third-world countries do not change their Mindset in the areas of responsibility in children production, environmental use, and modern methods of agriculture, then we still suffer the consequences.

When you look at the idea of Orphanages, especially in Africa, many of the children they take care of are not orphans, but vulnerable children born due to unwanted pregnancies, irresponsible parents who produce many children that they cannot afford to take care of, hardened heart/mind to change things from a traditional way of doing things, and lack of awareness of the future generation.

Donations/support/funding are not sustainable, so this means that where there is no funding, the community or previously funded project is stark.

For example, if you are educating a child from elementary class and before this student is or has finished the university and the sponsorship is lost, this student has no future whatsoever. But if his or her family/parents are aware that if I produce a child, it's me/my responsibility to take care of the child and the government gets into that. Then we shall have a reasonable number of children produced by the couple/family and whom they can take care of and hence sustainable and the future will be looked at as amazing and with joy.

One of the most causes of environmental threats and climate changes in the whole world is overpopulation, which has endangered and encroached our natural environment for both agriculture with its associated challenges that cause climate change patterns. Therefore, to address these mindset programs like health outreach for family planning education and initiation should be emphasized with great need and support for Community engagements on development areas and livelihood support through agriculture.

### **What does Mindset Change require of us?**

For so many years, we have been used to always wanting more and striving to be better. However, sometimes we just need to appreciate what we already have, and suddenly a different world will open up right in front of us.

Changing our Mindset to being grateful is really one of the most powerful eye-openers in developing countries, especially in Africa. It is too hard to be that effective, but we have to practice it in everything we do and plan.

Instead of striving to make people/children happy through building orphanages or schools, you should fund sustainable fulfillment like family planning outreaches and initiation in rural areas, livelihood agriculture/farming, education that benefits children in their existing schools, rather than constructing new ones and other home development programs like revolving financing loans (microloans that can help in development). Increasingly more psychologists and thinkers are stressing that happiness is not a product of getting what you want, but rather the byproduct of the different challenges you've overcome and milestones you've reached to get there.

In other words, donations or support or funding alone isn't enough without pursuing things, competing and struggling for sustainability. Remember – happiness is not the destination – it's a side effect to living your life to the fullest.

Receiving donations/support is not a bad thing essentially. But it can become harmful if you overdo it or rely on it, especially when stopped at a time you are not aware of. If you are too demanding towards yourself, you can experience depression and project burnout. If you are expecting too much of other people, they can get tired or scared of you or even avoid you.

When your expectations towards funding from others are too high, and you feel like they owe you something, here's the harsh truth. Nobody owes you anything.

So, I have established that funding/support/donations are not an end-product or a finish line that I cross and stay content for the rest of my life. On the contrary, these are the by-products that you experience while you're leading a fulfilled and varied life.

Donations and support/funding success are not within arms' reach or sustainable.

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## **Chapter Eleven: Revolution**

### **Imagine the World YOU Want to Live In<sup>©</sup>**

By Surnai Ó Maoildhia, Ireland

There came a time when the square concrete slabs sitting heavy along the suburban streets were pried up with crowbars and the squashed soil beneath sucked in the fresh air and people kneeled down along the stretches of dark earth and said sorry.

There came a time when all of the lightbulbs in each of the streetlights in each of the streets were unscrewed. And in the night the stars shone down unblinded.

The bricks of derelict houses were pulled from tired walls by many sets of hands and were stacked, like the building blocks of children, in wheelbarrows, to be wheeled away and used again. Then the foundations of the lonely houses crumbled and were swept away and soil flew in on the breeze carrying dandelion seeds with it, and those many hands with soil in the

curves of their fingerprints placed tiny seeds in tiny pressed hollows that grew to be oak and sycamore and birch and ash.

The black smoke that once wheezed from car exhausts and chimneys and seeped up into the sky, staining the white clouds dark, was now only in the burning of fallen branches on beaches from bonfires, and the smoke was grey, not black, and the red sparks wove within it a fiery embroidery that sparkled beneath the unveiled stars.

The trees that lived in their circles in the pavement in the cities now stretched their roots out, stretched the length of them, stretched long and lovely and intoxicatingly as all that concrete was changed to loose earth and so the roots could uncoil and the trees could stand steady.

And in this time, this time that came, on Sunday mornings, people went to the sea and kneeled and saw the waves swell against the cliffs or lap against the stones or soak into the sand. They went to the forest and kneeled and looked at the trees shiver, shake, and lose themselves in the wind. They went to the mountains and kneeled and watched, straining their eyes to see the breaths in the earth of the mountains, the mountains that breathe so slowly in their millennial meditation that one cannot see the rise and fall.

And above this breathing, above this spiraling of roots and trickling of water in the hollows in the soil, and alongside the curling of the waves and amidst the frolicking of the dandelion seeds, is the turning, turning, turning of bicycle wheels as people make their way through their day, to the sea or to work or play or school...

To school where children have risen from beds to kneel against rows of different beds and gently pluck out weeds and water the seedlings and the growing bulbs, and place potatoes in their patterns and name each one before they bury them...

To school where children solve puzzles with simultaneous equations and build contraptions with blueprints and nimble fingers and then discover the workings of plants, animals, atoms, space, and the rhythms of a story as they read and read and read...

To school where children fill the halls with music and the foot stomping of dancing and the pounding of running feet and the careful breathing of yoga and meditation as they learn to stretch their limbs and minds and where to stretch them so as to get the most light...

The light that fruit and vegetables have used to swell and ripen, to be gathered then in baskets on bicycles or pooled in cloth bags, and the soil is brushed off with fingers and the slugs are placed outside and the vegetables, each one a different shape, are chopped and cooked.

And the flowers are nourished by that same light, the flowers that were planted in the ground and in boxes and baskets and on rooftops and in the old bulbs of streetlights hanging upside down from loops of twine. The same light that's sprinkled like sugar onto the fields and fields of daisies, fields bursting with daisies, trimmed with pink and centered by their own little suns, and if you look quickly, especially at dusk, it is only pink you see; oh, but how can you only glance?

Of all the standards of beauty, there is nothing more lovely than a field full of daisies...





*Photo: Sharon Mollerus, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0*

And in a house where all the windows are open a bumble bee has found himself trapped and a young girl sees him and gasps and she runs for a glass. And following him on tiptoe through the different rooms of the home, she finally moves the glass over him and places a book on the end and shifts the buzzing bee, buzzing, buzzing, buzzing, into the garden where he swoops up into the air, pauses, buzzes, and swoops again and disappears.

And though the girl can't see – but can imagine – the bee moseys over miles of green grass, dotted with pockets of gardens and houses and trees, and the bee criss-crosses with swallows who have tuned the sounds of spring to summer with the forks of their tails. And the bee pauses on a sunflower planted in a stretch of space that was once a graveyard, and is still, but the rectangles of gravel and the squares of headstones have been swapped with shrubs and flowers and so bluebells grow from the bodies and the memories of lost ones, who are not truly lost, simply shifted, and their names are painted on pebbles that have been moved from the shore.

And all of that rubbish that dropped from all of those cluttered lives, the rubbish that could not decompose, that could not die – immortal – heaped on top of nature, smothering; and then on top of itself, piling, over and over, minute after minute, until it leaked into the cracks in the planet, filling the gaps and then overflowing until it spilled and spilled into all of the bellies of all of the whales, cleared. It was cleared.

And there came a time when the ocean released that breath it had been holding and eased down a few inches. And the wounds in the sky were allowed to heal and knit back together and dolphins could sew their threads through the clean, blue waters again.

And there came a time when the treetops were patched up and noisy again and orangutans collected their armfuls of fruit again and all that crumbling, wilting, dying turned to growth and the world was fresh and clean, as after a spring rain.

And the poles became solid once more.

And the famine ended.

And people learned to love this nature. Loved it wholly and completely and unconditionally. And they learned that they are not excluded, that they are nature too. And the

indomitable nature within them loved the uncontrollableness, the insuppressibleness, the irrepressibleness... loved the wildness of it all, the mess and the chaos; they learned to love the life in it, the life in them, in us, the organic, circular movement of everything.

And we learned to say sorry.

“Revolution” was published in the Spring 2020 edition of Parabola under the pseudonym “Surnai Molloy.” <https://windthread.typepad.com/windthread/2020/02/my-entry-26.html>

*Surnai Ó Maoildhia was raised on Inis Mór, a small island off the west coast of Ireland, She was homeschooled there along with her siblings. Homeschooling is certainly a way to encourage creativity. Her parents ran an organic garden and housed volunteers. She is currently living in Scotland and about to begin her second semester of a Masters degree in Modern and Contemporary Literature, in St Andrews University. It's an old university in a very beautiful seaside town. [email received 1.14.23] “Thank you so much for choosing to include my story again in your wonderful newspaper – I'm honoured and very grateful.”*

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**IN A TIME OF DESTRUCTION, CREATE SOMETHING. A POEM. A PARADE. A COMMUNITY.  
A SCHOOL. A VOW. A MORAL PRINCIPLE. ONE PEACEFUL MOMENT.**

~ Maxine Hong Kingston ~

## Conclusion

Miscellaneous ideas for bringing more peace and less destruction to our world.

- By regulations and enforcement, and
- Armistices enforced by each nation.

Global Peace Index map: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>

\* \* \*

**“THERE MAY BE A TIME IN THE FUTURE, ASSUMING EXTINCTION CAN BE PREVENTED IN THE SHORT TERM, WHEN CHILDREN WILL NOT BE TERRORIZED AND TORTURED IN THE FIRST PLACE AND; THEREFORE, NO HEALING WILL BE NECESSARY. IMAGINE THEN A PLANET POPULATED BY POWERFUL, SELF-AWARE INDIVIDUALS WHO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH THEMSELVES, WITH OTHERS AND WITH NATURE.”**

~ Robert Burrowes ~

\* \* \*

## SHORT STORY ABOUT A NAME CHANGE

### Chapter 1:

Susan Wynne Norris Hnatt Topf Conner  
WAS my name.  
3 birth names + 3 husbands' names = 6 names  
But you can call me Iona.  
No last name.  
Susan. Sue. Lawsuits.  
wynne. Family name.  
Norris. Parents' name.

Hnatt. First husband's name. I'm 19, Suzan Hnatt now.  
"How do you spell that?"  
"Hnatt."  
"Nhatt?"  
"No, Hnatt."  
"Nhatt?"  
(I give up.)  
For 15 years this conversation continues.

## Chapter 2:

Topf. Second husband. I'm 37.

Striving to maintain my identity, I hyphenate both names.

Now it's Susan Hnatt-Topf.

YIKES!

Nobody can spell this one.

I have a community relations job in a state agency.

I spell my name dozens of times every day.

My cube-mates are going crazy!

An idea emerges from this mess.

I will name myself.

By my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, I promise that I'll have just one name  
which any moron can spell.

I draft a list, adding names as they burst through my brain:

Sunflower

Sunshine

wildflower

Violet

Evergreen

(I'm an Earthy woman.)

Serendipity.

(No good. It will have to be spelled.)

...a name I'll never have to spell...

what shall it be?

who shall I be?

## Chapter 3:

I discover a group of women working to increase their knowledge of, passion for, and ability to communicate about Earth. Each month I vanish for a weekend with them. We work. We study. We laugh. We cook. We do dishes. We share lives. We climb a mountain to watch the sun rise. We welcome each new day with song.

One weekend a young couple brings their infant for a naming ceremony. Our focus is now names. Twenty-five of us gather in a comfortable, old room Friday night relaxing, chatting, leaving our world for another. Our coordinator suggests that we each talk a bit about our name.

Most people have pleasant memories of a grandmother or an aunt or at least a family story associated with their names. I express my misery about the two husbands' names that I am SO TIRED of spelling.

The discussion about names ends.

#### Chapter 4:

Our guide silently lights a candle in the middle of a low, round table. The flame shimmers alongside a space photo of Living Earth. The lights are off. Miriam sits on the floor and slowly reads a mystical story about an island off the coast of Scotland – a place of soul and imagination, of the sacred and the feminine. Iona.

My heart stops.

My breath ceases.

My eyes expand.

I sit motionless.

I know instantly and without doubt.

I am Iona!

#### Chapter 5:

I'm 45, five years ahead of my target date. Great happiness! My search is over. Do I tell anyone that weekend? No. I remain quiet. It's the baby's weekend.

Do I tell my husband the moment I walk in the door when the weekend is over? Yes.

What's his reaction? Dumb idea.

What do my teenage sons think? Mom's nuts.

How does my boss take it? She's horrified.

What do my parents say? They hate this whole idea.

## Chapter 6:

Next month, back with my Earth friends, I tell them. They LOVE my new name and start calling me "Iona" immediately. It feels good. So good. But I use it only in their company.

## Chapter 7:

A year later, I fall in love again and marry John Conner. I move to Maryland and fearlessly tell all the new people I meet that my name is Iona. It's that simple.

John and I are working on environmental issues in hundreds of churches. Most people are rather traditional. They expect me to be Iona Conner. OK, OK. I'll use "Conner" whenever I need to, just to make life easier for us. Conner seems like an easy name.

WRONG!

"Is that -er or -or?"

**-S-C-R-E-A-M-**

## Chapter 8:

I am 51 today. I adore my husband of six years but can think of no good reason to use his name.

I have one of my own.

It's Iona.

Period.

\* \* \*

*Take me to a place*

*As uncorrupted as thou knowest*

*And I will teach thee a love song.*

~ Iona ~

## **A Poem by Iona (1993)**

I am a diamond  
With many, many facets  
Each glimmering and sparkling  
Facing outward to the world  
Catching and reflecting  
Light and energy.

But my core is solid –  
Only my outer edges  
Have been chipped and shaped  
And cut and smoothed

BY LIFE!

Here I am  
From the depths of  
The Earth  
A diamond  
Unique

Nobody else shines  
Like I do.  
Nobody else knows  
About my chips and cuts

But the eyes of others  
Can now see the  
Diamond that is me today.

I sparkle with life.

I am still a diamond in the rough  
I am still evolving new facets  
My relationships with others  
And my silent reflections  
Continue to chip and shape  
And cut and smooth.



I am also water . . . . .

Surface water

River

Ocean

Cloud

Rain droplet

Snowflake

Groundwater

bathing the rocks – the  
future diamonds.

Now that you have read my book, I hope you care more about the world than you did before.  
YOU are the only one able to join me in this effort to create a better world.

You can reach me at [ionaconner@pa.net](mailto:ionaconner@pa.net). Thank you.