

What does climate change mean to you?

Climate change. It's here, and it's our hottest topic. Exactly what does that mean to you and your life, and the lives of those around you? Prior to 2001 the concept of climate change didn't enter my thoughts, let alone deforestation, destruction of natural resources, synthetic compounds from plastic to agrochemicals, the impact of industrial processes, and a host of other related topics. All of that changed on June 14, 2001 when I learned about the Great Pacific garbage patch along with four other similar patches and many smaller ones devastating our oceans and marine life. As an avid diver and swimmer this hit home. I did not realize it then, but it was the turning point in my life from inward focus to outward. A turn that would become my life's vision. Climate change may mean something different to everyone. Here is my view and the solution I offer. I am interested to learn yours.

Without delving into the social or philosophical aspects, over these past eighteen years I came to understand who I am in relation to humanity and our home planet as a result of working to mitigate climate change. I learned how everything is deeply interconnected despite our tendencies to analyze, compartmentalize and attempt to control our natural world. This all began when I saw those first pictures of our oceans choked with garbage we created and threw there to be forgotten. Further out of sight and mind than the landfill garbage mountains dotting every city of our world,

Climate change may also be called environmental alteration. When we alter our clothes, we cut, we move things, we sew, we throw away pieces, and we end up with something quite different. Our changing environment is not just about temperatures going up, it is something very different from just a few decades ago. Rising temperature is a symptom. The cause is an

increase in free carbon in different forms, such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, and other so called greenhouse gases, named because like a greenhouse, the heat is trapped inside and builds up. In this case it is trapped in our atmosphere between our planet and outer space. Those gases come from many sources. Our Earth has been able to deal with them in the past. In recent times however, humankind has pulled a huge volume of natural resources from our planet, and with that came a massive amount of free carbon that was stored away. Sequestered, we say. Now we have a totally different environment.

Moreover, with the advent of modern technology, including synthetic polymers like plastics and many others, we have created non-renewable resources. Aka, garbage. Could they be renewed? Sure, however there is a reason we do not which will become evident below. Is this all due to human actions? Some say yes, others no.

The debate as to whether global warming and climate change are human induced or a part of the natural cycles of Earth rages. We hold global conferences to address it and other major world issues such as poverty and hunger. International commissions are established: Brundtland Commission, Copenhagen Climate Council, World Climate Conferences, and many more. Result? We are accelerating in the opposite direction. My experience is that it does not matter. Whether or not we caused it is unimportant. *What matters is that we have the ability to halt and reverse it.* How? There are perhaps infinite ways. Here is one.

EarthCorp Foundation was born of these experiences and has evolved to become my way of inviting the world to pause, consider our situation and our actions that lead to where we are. Nothing of magnitude in history has ever been done by one person or small group alone. From peaceful

revolutions to devastating wars, many brilliant and inspiring persons have achieved great and horrid things, though all were done with the support of others in some way. In the same manner, humankind has collectively contributed to the social and environmental standing of our planet. Each and every one of us. We create justifications for our actions, or inactions, we place blame on individuals or groups such as corporations and governments, yet, none of them act without the support of others. We claim indignation over what 'they' have done, yet we do not take authentic steps to alter our path. This begat a cornerstone of EarthCorp: living with integrity and authenticity while navigating the way of life we have created.

EarthCorp became a US 501c3 and nonprofit operating foundation in several countries with the directive of preserving and restoring our Earth. Initially I imagined everyone would jump on board and want to participate in saving our world and things would take off quickly. Well intentioned, yet quite naive. I missed the reality of the society we have created, primarily the human concept of economy. A concept our Earth and our Universe do not understand or operate by, which has no basis in reality beyond our minds, yet it controls every aspect of our lives. Just as nothing major can be done without the participation of others, nothing substantial can be accomplished in our society without money. I missed this for over ten years, despite it being my sticking point all that time. Once I grasped it, EarthCorp shifted. A plan came clear. Any major effort must be profitable. It must advance our entire global economy or it will neither withstand nor have any substantial impact.

Cleaning our oceans was the initial call to action. The magnitude was so great that I realized I was not going to accomplish it without a *lot* of help. I sought out waste to energy technology only to realize the cost was enormous. The idea of cleaning our oceans was appealing to most everyone, but it was not *economically* appealing. It would cost a fortune but

would not be profitable. Not going to happen anytime soon. Regenerating our overall environment is in the same position. It is not economically appealing. How do we change that?

The concept now offered through EarthCorp is to link our global retail spending cycle, our daily buying, to the regeneration of our environment. Similar ideas have been raised, though all I have seen are self limiting or open ended. The two models EarthCorp employs are circularities. They are closed loop. They do not require anyone to donate time or money. They create money for everyone involved. The small food producers (aka 'farmers') of our world, the manufacturers of the food products those small producers grew, the retail stores that sell the foods, and the consumers that buy and eat them. A 4x win, where large parts of that retail economy are infused back into regenerating our environment. Perpetual funding to save our planet that no one has to provide. It comes from our daily lives, lived within the construct of our sociological design. The same design that now drives us to degrade our planet. A holistic approach.

My invitation to the world is to pause and reflect on our true reality and the conceptual reality we live by, and consider how we can effectively join the two without a need to alter our sociological design. To embrace that link between the concept of economy that we allow to control us, and the physical world that economy and our very lives fully depend upon. *Without our planet in a healthy and thriving condition, no amount of money can save us; or our Earth.*

This is what climate change means to me, and how it has impacted my life. How about you? Share your story, I want to learn your thoughts, ideas, and

the impact environmental alteration has had on you. We are in this together. Let's work together to resolve it.

TY Cherry

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