



Inspiring
CHANGE

organized by Lynn Fang

*For anyone who has questioned
the status quo*

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Do's & Don'ts	6
Stories:	
Mike Lieberman: <i>Urban Organic Gardener</i>	7
Lori Alper: <i>Groovy Green Livin</i>	8
Evita Ochel: <i>Evolving Wellness</i>	9
Leo Babauta: <i>Zen Habits</i>	11
Jeanie Witcraft: <i>Making Love & Money</i>	12
Julia McGarey: <i>Simplicity in Stages</i>	13
Karen Lee: <i>EcoKaren</i>	14
Andrew Odom: <i>Tiny r(E)volution</i>	16
Andrea C: <i>Healthy People, Healthy Planet</i>	17
Raam Dev: <i>RaamDev.com</i>	18
Ricky Ferdon: <i>Happiness is the Natural State</i>	19
SherryGreens: <i>One Earth to Live</i>	21
Tammy McLeod: <i>AgriGirl</i>	22
Sam Spurlin: <i>SamSpurlin.com</i>	24
Chris Guillebeau: <i>The Art of Non-Conformity</i>	25
Shannon Whitehead: <i>All of Us Revolution</i>	27
Michael Nolan: <i>The Garden Rockstar</i>	28
Meg Wolfe: <i>Minimalist Woman</i>	29
Colleen Madsen: <i>365 Less Things</i>	30
Ali Dark: <i>Whirled Peas</i>	31
Todra Payne: <i>Healthy Beauty Social</i>	32
Courtney Carver: <i>Be More With Less</i>	34
Jenny McCutcheon: <i>ExConsumer</i>	35
Monica Schrock: <i>Low Impact Betty</i>	36
Kristin Glenn: <i>All of Us Revolution</i>	37
Small Footprints: <i>Reduce Footprints</i>	39
David Quilty: <i>The Good Human</i>	40
Contributors	41
Credits	42



Introduction

You want to make a difference in this world by helping others live more consciously.

But how can you make a difference on your own?

Your attempts to share your knowledge with others receives an attitude of defense, rather than acceptance.

How will you ever make a positive impact on the world?

This was the question I asked over and over again, as I began to green my life and grow more conscious of my decisions. I had no idea how to talk about the issues in a way that wouldn't get me grimaces and scowls. So I asked for help.

Over 25 bloggers and readers helped answer this question through sharing their stories of what worked and what didn't in trying to have a more positive influence.

The resounding response was to be the change yourself, walk the talk, and lead by example. It can be hard to see this when you're just beginning the journey of conscious living, so that is why I've published their responses in this ebook.

Included in this ebook is a short and sweet little guide of Do's and Don't's for the everyday changemaker to have real impact, without turning friends into enemies.

Following that, we'll hear the stories of 25 talented and caring bloggers. Support and learn more about each of these wonderful people by visiting their website. You can click on their links in the list of Contributors on page 39.



Do

Express yourself authentically, with no strings attached

Be a mentor and guide

Help others think and fend for themselves

Learn from others

Explain your beliefs in a positive manner

Be the change you wish to see

Lead by example

Walk the talk

Focus on positive benefits

Express passion: Passion kindles passion

Don't

Expect others to change

Preach

Be impatient

Focus on the negative impacts

MIKE LIEBERMAN

Urban Organic Gardener

I've found that the most unsuccessful methods for influencing people is to tell them why what they are doing is so bad. This causes people to get on the defensive and to combat whatever it is that you are saying.

The best experience that I've had in influencing another person is to just lead my life and do my thing.

When people see how effortless it is for me to grow my own food or prepare my own meals they become inquisitive and begin asking questions.

This opens up the discussions and dialogue.

LORI ALPER

Groovy Green Livin'

About 12 years ago, when I began my own “green” journey, I was excited to share all of my newfound knowledge. I didn’t start off doing it in a very accepting and non-judgmental way. I was actually a bit judgmental. I would question choices that my friends and family were making when it came to things they were putting in and on their bodies: food, cleaning products, personal care products etc. It was definitely a big turnoff and I’m sure it made people run the other way. Over time I realized that it’s a mistake to try and change others; real change can only come from within.

I was at a cookout a few weeks ago when a woman I knew approached me, and began talking about going “green”. She had recently decided to live a greener lifestyle by removing as many toxins as possible from her life. We talked about hand soap, detergent, household cleaners and organic food (exciting, I know!). I think we could have spent the entire night talking-she was clearly passionate about learning and taking steps to create a non-toxic lifestyle. She knew that I was equally passionate about the topic.

She left the cookout with several ideas for home-made cleaners that I had shared. I also gave her a list of which fruits and vegetables to try to buy organic.

I left the cookout with a feeling of fulfillment. It was wonderful to talk with a person with such a clear passion and desire to make changes in her life. She was truly enthusiastic and dedicated to her green journey. I was there to guide her, but her desire for change was coming from within.

I had no doubt at that moment that the best way to inspire others is to lead by example.

EVITA OCHEL

Evolving Wellness

When I first started writing and teaching on and offline, I thought that I could help people instantly have better, happier and more peace-filled lives simply by being inspired through the content I and others like me shared. After all, didn't everyone want to change and lead more awake, aware and meaningful lives?

Didn't everyone want to avoid common life pitfalls, learn from the experiences of others and find an easier way to live? As it turned out, they actually didn't.

A lot of people talk about wanting help, but when help arrives they turn away from it, negate it, or find every excuse for why it will not work. What I have thus realized today is that everyone's personal evolution is a very sensitive area.

While helpful or inspirational words and tips can help, they are normally not enough. There are too many factors involved. We should never think we know what is best for another person or how their life should be.

The things some call "bad", "hard" or "tragic" are normally gifts in disguise to rise to our next level of evolution. Each person has their own unique path and life journey, and what makes most sense to one, does not necessarily to another.

At the end of the day, there is divine timing for everyone as to when and if they should implement a life change, which normally takes on a multidimensional approach.

Walking the talk and being a living example has been my best experience in influencing other people. I have come to learn that there is something so different in telling someone something and actually showing someone something.

Instead of giving another being any kind of lecture, advice or tips, it is best simply to show or describe how we ourselves live.

If this should happen to resonate with another person, I found they implement change in their life most easily, naturally and feel like it is done on their own terms, instead of having someone telling them what to do.

We can influence others in the most powerful way by being the change we wish to see, and not holding any expectations as to what the other will choose. We need to simply live our lives according to our own advice, virtues and truths and allow others to find the same for themselves, if and when they choose to do so.

LEO BABAUTA

Zen Habits

The two things that I've found that truly don't work are pushing people to change, and wishing they would.

People will change when they want to change, and all the pushing in the world only makes them more resistant.

When I've tried to change my family, they get stubborn and feel like they're being lectured and forced. I've also found that wishing everyone else would change is useless -- it doesn't happen, and you end up frustrated all the time.

What has worked for me is a Gandhian approach: be the change, and share it with the world. When I show others how I've simplified my life and found contentment, they see that it's possible. They become inspired, they consider changing themselves, and they ask me for concrete steps. Not everyone will make the changes, but those who are ready, those who crave it, will use my change as a mover of their own.

JEANIE WITCRAFT

Making Love @ Money

My biggest failure to influence is a matter of my own impatience. I want the people I love to take action NOW. For example: I quit smoking, became vegetarian, then vegan, and extricated myself from a romantic relationship that was no longer serving me well. My mother watched all of these changes, first with trepidation and then a growing admiration for the results of my changes. She tells me that she hopes to follow in my footsteps "one day," but unfortunately, she hasn't taken the plunge yet. The day she does will be my greatest joy. The worst method of influencing change was to harangue her with the risks of smoking and extol the numerous benefits of quitting. She knows this already. Her eyes glazed over and she reached for her cigarettes each time I began talking about it.

My biggest success story in influencing someone is my father. During my childhood, he tried and failed to quit smoking many times. Once I made it to the 1 year mark, and could be around smokers while drinking during the holidays, (all triggers) he started to think,

"Hey, I'm proud of my girl for quitting. If she can do it...maybe I can too."

He tells me that he and his wife quit smoking July 5th, and have stayed quit so far. I'm proud of my dad for changing a lifetime of habit, no matter who influenced him.

JULIA MCGAREY

Simplicity In Stages

Back in high school I used to preach to my friends about being vegetarian. I chose a vegetarian diet because I felt that it was the best thing I could do for the environment, and I wanted to get other people on board. Eventually, I realized that all I wasn't convincing anyone, just annoying them, so I stopped preaching.

My best experience influencing someone came a few years later. I was at a week long swing dancing camp near Seattle with a group of friends. By the end of the week, one of my friends told me that he didn't think he could eat meat anymore after spending a week with me and seeing how I ate. It was awesome.

I really believe that the people you can reach will get there faster if they come to it on their own.

And they will come to it on their own.

KAREN LEE

EcoKaren

Practicing what I preach. Walking the talk.....and asking someone to just 'try' something they never did before and see for themselves. Be educated and decide based on the known facts.

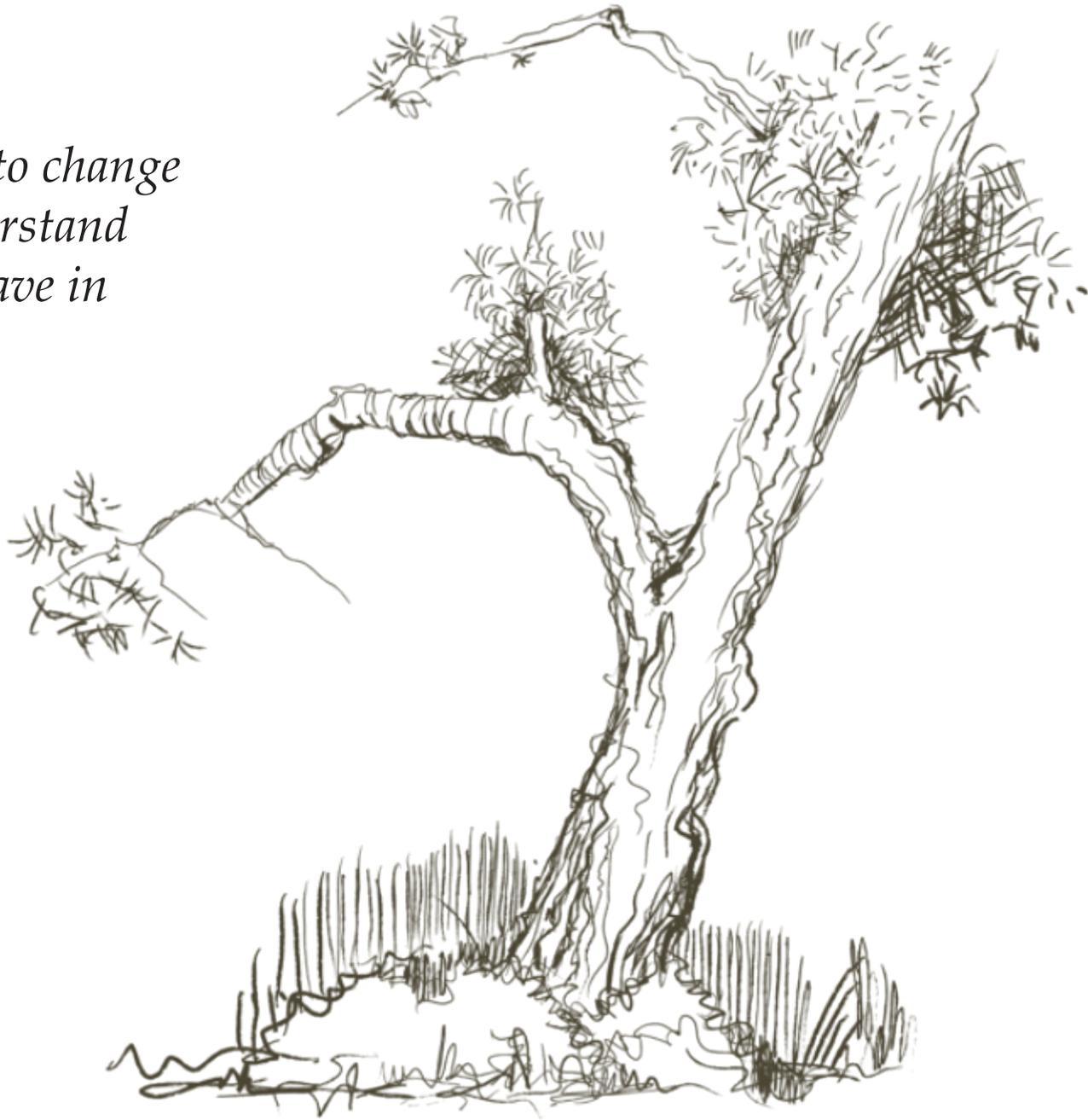
I have many climate skeptics around me. They used to laugh whenever we talked about my way of life - being green, buying local, eating organic, etc...Then, I asked one my "non-believer" friends to write a review on a water filtration system for my blog and how water filtration system should replace bottled water delivery. As a tropical fish

aficionado, he knows about water filtration system. So he wrote an honest opinion after he researched, independently, on this particular company's system. I still get hits on his review, three years later.

He bought the system after he reviewed it and discontinued bottled water delivery. That was a huge victory for me.

Consider how hard it is to change yourself and you'll understand what little chance you have in trying to change others.

~ Benjamin Franklin



ANDREW ODOM

Tiny r(E)volution

There is a beautiful quote by Hamilton Wright Mabie that says, "The question for each man to settle is not what he would do if he had means, time, influence and educational advantages, but what he will do with the things he has."

I have never considered to be myself someone that walked a path of influence. I have never set out to change the minds of anyone. But what I have learned is that example is a far better teacher than sermon and I really found that to be true right in my own home.

My wife and I were fortunate enough to live in community with my folks and some extended family members for two years. During that time we shared ideas, principles, and practices. They raised me with a huge ignorance regarding waste. We threw everything away without regard for landfills or piles of junk. My wife and I took our recycling passion into their home though and never once said "you have to recycle." We made suggestion.

We showed by example. And we talked numbers.

In fact, for a month we sort of tracked how many garbage bags were saved by recycling. If nothing more than the money saved changed their minds, they were soon recycling by choice. Perhaps though my influence sunk in when my father came home - after 61 years of throwing everything away - with three trash cans he proudly announced would be used to separate our recycling items; cardboard, glass, and plastic.

ANDREA C

Healthy People, Healthy Planet

One of my best experiences in influencing someone was unconsciously convincing my partner to eat locally grown food. Before meeting me, he never gave a second thought to where his food came from. We live in southern Ontario, so a lot of our food comes from California, Chile, and China before our growing season gets into high gear.

I started pointing out the country-of-origin stickers on fruits and veggies when we would go grocery shopping together. I would explain why I was choosing menu option A instead of menu option B in restaurants because the former contained seasonal ingredients while the latter did not. I would even say no to one of my favourite fruits, mango, because “it won’t taste as good as it did when I had one fresh off the tree in China”.

I wasn’t preaching; I just wanted my partner to know the reasons behind my actions.

Slowly but surely, his attitude changed to reflect a greater interest in local food. He began to question whether imported food actually tastes as good as it looks, and whether buying blueberries from Chile in the dead of winter would be as satisfying as picking his own over the summer here. Slowly but surely, he’s incorporating more local food in his diet because he notices how conscious I am of what I put in my mouth and how happy I am biting into fresh, local, picked-when-ripe produce. All I had to do was be myself!

RAAM DEV

RaamDev.com

A few weeks ago I met a friend for coffee. We knew each other online but we had never met in person. I knew she was all about sustainability, all about reusing things to avoid unnecessary waste. Her writing and the things she shared online encouraged me to live more consciously and helped me feel more aware of the environment and the world around me.

When we arrived at the cafe, I ordered a cup of tea and received it in a paper cup. She ordered an ice coffee. But before the cashier had time to repeat her order, she handed him a glass mason jar and asked him to use that instead of a disposable cup. I smiled inside because I could feel the power of that moment. That seemingly insignificant interaction imprinted itself on me and has remained with me to this day. It has grown into a memory that acts as a tiny seed of her passion stirring within me, reminding me not to waste even a single paper cup.

The friend I met that day was Lynn Fang and I've started using mason jars.

Passion kindles passion. If you live your life passionately and fearlessly make conscious choices about how you live, others will be inspired to do the same. Passion is contagious. It spreads like an invisible wildfire through the hearts and minds of those around you, visible only through the subtle ways in which they desire to change themselves.

When you live consciously and allow your passion to shine through, others will be inspired to change with you.

RICKY FERDON

Happiness Is The Natural State

In this case, I knew the boy's brother: he worked for me at the business I was managing. I went to a small concert that the employed brother was playing in. I was outside the building with the younger boy's mother and another mother. The boy was walking around by himself hitting things with a stick and just not able to settle down - obviously disturbed. A bit after that, he got into some trouble at school.

As has happened numerous times, I "knew" that it was time to establish a relationship with this child (his parents were going through a divorce which was a contributing factor - I think the boy was 12). I phoned his mother and told her that I was a mentor and would she be interested in my seeing if I could establish a relationship with the boy: that I would pick him up on such-and-such a day and we would go to the movie.

Taking a kid to the movies presents good opportunity to communicate with the child as it's about a 45 minute drive to the movies and the same back. The first trip was successful - he liked me and trusted me and so we proceeded to try and meet up once a week (usually a weekend day due to school during the week). We would go to a bookstore, an Aquarium, etc.

As our relationship grew deeper he would open up and talk to me about the things going on in his life and his feelings and such. Having an outlet, I feel, helped him to become much calmer and better able to concentrate on school and make better grades (his last year of high school he was on the honor roll). He loved hugs too, and I freely gave them. We would always hug when we saw each other and when I dropped him off at home. We still hug to this day. I think this was a big plus too,

as he was receiving physical confirmation of love from an adult male (remember his dad was not around).

As he hit puberty we talked about those sorts of things, girls, etc., and he knew and knows that he could always ask me any question at all about any subject at all. He knew he would never be judged, thought weird, or treated any differently by me because of any subject that might come up.

As time progressed, we kept in touch and when time was opportune over the years I would offer advice regarding life, the meaning of life, and such - never in a this-is-the-way-it-is manner, but more of an perhaps-so-and-so. He got over any fears and indoctrinations in his life and in the past year has really blossomed in thinking on his own. And he's doing well - figuring things out for

himself. Some things he has really broken through with. There are some things in the present that he'll eventually drop and go to the next level with - and I told him so.

He graduated from High School last month, and is doing rugged outdoor construction work this summer and making good money. He is peaceful, happy and living in the Now.

SHERRYGREENS

One Earth to Live

It is hard to know the people I may have turned off, or people who dismissed me and my ideas right away. I will never know, really. What I do observe are the people in my life who know me, know how I live my life now, know why I am doing things the way I am doing, yet still do things differently themselves. Obviously I have not inspired them to change. These people are everywhere.

At work, I make a point of walking around with my reusable travel mug, I arrive with it, I take it to meetings, I leave at the end of the day with it. People know that I am trying to reduce garbage. Yet those same people have not opted for a reusable mug. They still get a paper one from the cupboard at work, each and every time they have coffee. Maybe now they don't get one every time, they may reuse the paper cup all day. Maybe this is some small improvement that I may have had a hand in inspiring.

Another example is people in my life who see me actively give up shopping, who see me give gently used toys for birthdays, or a treasure made by a local artisan, yet still love to shop and purchase stuff all the time.

*I can't change them, I just can't.
Something has to change within
them first.*

Maybe I can be a part of the puzzle to facilitate that change. Maybe something I do or say does not cause them to change right now, but adds to the body of knowledge that person holds on the subject, which will one day grow enough so that they do change.

TAMMY MCLEOD

AgriGirl

Telling doesn't work for me. I love research and I love data and I've learned the hard way that many people aren't wired similarly.

I've always expected that when talking about a healthy more sustainable lifestyle that I could just present the facts and that it would compel them to make changes. It doesn't work that way for everyone.

In particular, it's been really hard for me to convince my husband and oldest son that we should eat differently. They've heard the facts but those facts aren't resonating with them as a personal reason for change.

One of my best examples of change occurred at work. I'd been promoted to lead a large group of employees at our operating center. I had a nice office and a reserved parking place in front of the building. That was a treat since I'd been transferred from a downtown tower where we had to pay for parking in a nearby garage.

I was surprised at all of the complaints from employees who parked in the secure, free lot across the street. They bemoaned the distance from their cars to their desks. My first response was data-driven. "Imagine how it is downtown where you walk and pay." This got a reaction but really didn't seem to change their attitudes about what they had to endure in their parking experience. Then, I decided to model the behavior. I awarded my reserved spot to a very pregnant woman in my

office and I started parking in the absolute furthest spot from the door. When people asked why, I told them that I needed to add some extra steps to my day. It also gave me the opportunity to walk in with them and hear what was on their minds and how work was going for them. Complaints disappeared. I got more fit and became a better leader. Walking the talk was what worked for me.

SAM SPURLIN

SamSpurlin.com

I've driven away at least one, maybe two girlfriends in my zeal for a simpler and more meaningful life. When I get extremely excited by something I'm afraid I also become very annoying. When I was first discovering the joys of asking myself what I truly needed vs. what I wanted (what some people call minimalism) I thought everyone should do the same thing. RIGHT NOW. I'm sure I was insufferable but my heart was in the right place.

Now, I redirect that excitement and passion inward. I'm still more than happy to talk to someone about what I've learned or help them if they ask for advice, but I'm no evangelist anymore.

Instead, I let my actions speak for themselves. Ironically, this is about 94.2% more effective than telling people how to change their lives for the better. If they see me living in an interesting way that seems to be making me happy and fulfilled, they want to know what I'm doing.

That's my opportunity to help create change in their life. Until that point, I just focus on my own habits, actions, and beliefs.

I've had the pleasure of talking to friends about starting to run, deleting Facebook, starting blogs, and eating more healthily as a direct result of the things I've written and the way I live. That's the best part about doing what I do as a writer and coach.

CHRIS GUILLEBEAU

The Art of Non-Conformity

*I think it's important to remember that
inspiration isn't always one-way.*

I derive a lot of my own inspiration from my community, whose members have their own stories of non-conformity, adventure, and change.

But I also learned that it's not a bad thing to inspire others, as long as you're helping them think for themselves. I noticed about a year into my writing project that some people saw it as a model for their own lives. At first I was uncomfortable with that, until I realized that I had modeled parts of my life on other people as well. In the long-run, hopefully it's a continuous circle of inspiration -- my helping people while being helped by other people at the same time.



*Life can either be accepted or changed.
If it is not accepted, it must be
changed. If it cannot be changed, it
must be accepted.*

~ Winston Churchill



SHANNON WHITEHEAD

All of Us Revolution

Without a doubt, my best method in influencing others is to lead by example. In my senior year of college I was one of the captains of the club lacrosse team. I was enthusiastic, to say the least. My passion and love for the sport came out very vocally when I was put in a position of power -- for better and for worse. Looking back, part of me feels like taking charge as the quiet leader or unsung hero would have been more effective. Leading by example is equally as powerful in its own silent way.

Having learned from that experience, I do my best not to force my opinions on others unless I feel it absolutely necessary.

The little things -- like not leaving water running or going back to turn off all the lights or not drinking bottled water -- are small things that people pick up on.

By now, my friends know how much I hate waste. So now when we make dinner together or go out to eat, everyone is conscious not to make or order more than we need. It's not often that food gets thrown out, and I know it's from my efforts to make everyone conscious of our consumption.

MICHAEL NOLAN

The Garden Rockstar

The least effective method for influencing anyone is to try to force or mandate change.

For change to be real and long lasting it has to be an organic process.

Years of preaching and telling people what they needed to do yielded really bad results.

During my years working in suicide prevention I was successfully able to talk quite a few people through suicidal episodes. The best experience was months after I had helped a suicidal pregnant teen. I received a call from the hospital and rushed over. When I arrived I was greeted by the same teen who introduced me to her newborn son who she named Michael.

MEG WOLFE

Minimalist Woman

I don't think there is any direct way to influence others if they are not ready to be influenced, much along the lines of being able to lead a horse to water, but not make him drink it. Talking something up is seen as a sales job or as preaching, and never, ever works.

When people are ready, however, just being happy as a clam with the way you live your own life is enough.

For instance, we downsized to a much smaller house and clearly made it work for us, even for working at home. It served as a first-hand example when my son and daughter-in-law were ready to buy a house of their own, and they ended up with one even smaller than ours. Their good friends, in turn, have just purchased a small house as well. All our houses are in older neighborhoods close to downtown. The financial, ecological, and time saving advantages are seen as more desirable than owning something newer, larger, and flashier.

COLLEEN MADSEN

365 Less Things

I don't think any attempt to convert someone to a more sustainable way of thinking and acting could be considered a failure. To make no attempt at all however would be. It is unlikely that preaching at people will be effective.

But to gently plant the seed of thought and nurture it when you can is more likely to be a more successful approach.

I am no saint when it comes to doing all the right things so I don't expect miracles from others either.

One small battle and personal success of mine to stem the tide of consumerism was to convince my family and friends not to buy gifts for me any more. This also led to the adoption of a new tradition of doing Secret Santa when we get together at Christmas rather than everybody buying everybody else gifts. I thought I would receive more resistance to this but it was embraced wholeheartedly. One more victory in the fight for a healthier environment.

ALI DARK

Whirled Peas

Being a sensitive type person, I don't react well going head to head, or ego to ego as it is, against people. While some seem to pull it off, I become easily discouraged by people's words and actions. Sign holding, shouting slogans.. they may be effective in some way, but not in that they make me shy from the cause.

I've been told that a lot of people have adopted sustainable food habits through my work at a vegan restaurant. People who I never talked to about it (after a while I made a point of not asking customers about their diet), but who mentioned it to others after I had left (eg: 'where's the guy who made me veg?').

I think sidestepping the mine-field of people's intellectual barriers and cultural opinions is essential. Presenting myself as evidence, people will reform their own opinions in time.

I just have to be the best me I can.

TODRA PAYNE

Healthy Beauty Social

Because I was working as a makeup artist with celebrities and my work was appearing in fashion and lifestyle magazines, women were always asking me what beauty brands I liked best. Once I made the switch to using natural and non-toxic products, I wanted everyone to throw out their mainstream cosmetics cold turkey.

I stressed the health benefits of natural cosmetics, but most women didn't seem to care very much.

I didn't consider how easily I can adapt to any textures and makeup techniques I need to in order to get the look I'm going for. Women in their

everyday lives want quick and easy. They want to look beautiful. And they aren't always masters at applying what they're already using. If I expected them to give up MAC, I had to show them natural products that would make them look just as good and would be easy to apply. Then they'd listen to the health message.

I was scheduled to do a workshop at a natural lifestyle store chain in Maryland. The manager of the store wanted me to talk to her customers about the benefits of using natural beauty brands. She had some brands in store that I didn't consider the best choices, but they were "bridge" brands - brands women find when they first want to go natural and don't realize there are options better than "big names" they find at their local health food store. A few days later, I got a call from

the store manager saying the reps from the big companies refused to allow her to bring in an outside beauty expert to talk about their brands. But they were unwilling to give workshops to help her with customer knowledge. I told the manager she should switch to smaller companies that make fresher, healthier products and if she did, I'd help her educate her customers. She loved the idea. Her store has already negotiated contracts with two brands I recommended and she'll be changing out almost all of her old companies for new ones. In this case, I influenced one person who will influence the purchasing decisions of thousands of women.

COURTNEY CARVER

Be More With Less

When I finally realized that using a cell phone while driving was distracting and dangerous, I couldn't help but share my message with great enthusiasm to my friends and family. While everyone respected my no tolerance policy for phones while I was in the car with them, they went about their usual drive and dial habits. I kept sharing my message hoping it would sink in, and then I remembered that the best way to effect change is to walk the walk, make others aware and then let them close the gap between awareness and action.

There were no exceptions for me, and my friends and family witnessed the fact that I did not use my phone in the car. A few months passed and my husband and I were going out. He was driving and his phone alerted him that he had a text message. He didn't look at it, but waited until we had arrived at our destination to check it and respond.

I made him aware, but the habit change had to be his alone.

Now, neither of use our phones while driving and we hope to set the stage for our teenage daughter who is learning to drive. Hopefully using a cell phone in the car will never be a habit she needs to break.

JENNY MCCUTCHEON

ExConsumer

There was a time when I would preach to my family about why they should eat healthy food. Instead of taking my (not so gentle) advice, they did the opposite of what I said they should. I've found that in most cases, people don't appreciate unsolicited advice.

When I changed my method of influence from telling those around me what to do to showing them how and why I do things a certain way, the impact was much greater. Once I realized this, I began leading by example. By actually doing the exact things I wanted to see changed in the world (paying off debt, living a more sustainable lifestyle, minimizing, etc.), the people closest to me could see -- and many times -- chose to adopt many of the same changes.

Even if the people around me don't change immediately, I know the seed of change has been planted in their minds.

After all, it was the many seeds of influence that were planted in my mind that created the change I live each day.

MONICA SCHROCK

Low Impact Betty

In my experience, talking about the extreme in either direction generally doesn't help change happen. When I talk or write about disapproving when people being avid meat eaters or the adventures of the extreme (no oil) vegans, ears and minds tend to close. Those few doing a lot make a statement for sure, but its unrealistic to expect that out of the majority and it doesn't seem to speak to them in a way that inspires. So I tend to focus on the middle ground and the positive ways that everyday changes and moderation can make difference to them and the world. Then, if they want to know more, and they usually do, I can share it ALL with them! :)

My best experience influencing someone, was when I didn't even know I was doing it. I grew up in Texas, so I have a lot of friends that are committed to their steak and BBQ. I generally pay them no mind and let them do their thing, I just eat the way I eat and explain why when people inquire. Then one day, my friend told me she had a blog post that she wanted to post on my blog. I asked her what it was, and she told me how she had been cutting meat out of her diet, but more importantly, how that omission had been helping her chronic migraines. I was so excited for her I wanted to burst and then she told me, "Hey! And I'm doing something for the planet too." And then it hit me...

Personal health and happiness is the way to heal people and planet.

KRISTIN GLENN

All of Us Revolution

I've always been a proponent of "doing what you love." But for me, that meant being an entrepreneur. I thought that everyone should quit their day jobs and strike out on their own. And I harped on that message a lot - to the offense of my friends who are teachers, doctors, and lawyers with traditional professions. I wanted to inspire, but I wasn't reaching out to the right group of people. It took awhile to find that niche of people who are in a receptive place and are ready to listen. Soap boxes never worked in truly creating change.

In the early days of our blog, right after our launch, I felt like we struck a chord with a number of people - twentysomethings who had similar feelings about the purpose of life and work, who were questioning the meaning of passion versus paycheck. We wrote about how we planned to change our lives - not how everyone else should change theirs, too.

Sharing stories of being an underdog is far more relatable (and therefore influential) than any "how to." Ultimately, influence is about connection on a deep level, and I think that requires a level of intimacy and honesty with your audience that they don't get every day.

SMALL FOOTPRINTS

Reduce Footprints

In my enthusiasm for living “green”, I usually take every opportunity to talk about Eco-friendly activities ... with very limited success.

The truth is that people don't really want to hear about it until they are ready.

So I talked, people politely listened, and then continued to cling to their environmentally unfriendly ways. While I felt that I was planting a seed (and perhaps was), it was frustrating and felt like I wasn't getting anywhere.

Then, one day, I was in a grocery store with my reusable bags. It was at a time when reusable bags were still a novelty and not, like today, common place. It was also in a store that wasn't particularly “green”. I asked the cashier not to bag anything and told her I'd bag it myself in my own bags ... and that I was trying not to use plastic. She looked at me weird, repeated what I said (to be sure she heard it correctly), shook her head but complied with my wishes. A man in line was watching my interaction with the cashier. I heard him ask the person behind him to hold his place and I noticed that he went out to his car, rummaged around and returned with reusable bags. WhooHoo! I learned an important lesson that day ... actions speak much louder than words ever can.

DAVID QUILTY

The Good Human

I used to be a little more harsh in my assessment of what others could/should be doing to be better stewards of the environment. I believed people who didn't recycle were just lazy and that anyone who can't buy eco-friendly laundry detergent is doing it out of spite; but all the guilt and judgement in the world isn't going to make anyone change, including me!

My last attempt at guilting someone into action was chiding a neighbor for not recycling and I almost got punched in the face. Obviously my methods were not working in my favor.

I discovered that others appreciate if you take the time to explain your mission, its purpose, and how you make it happen for yourself and why that can be a better choice for them, their family and the entire planet.

People truly respond to that, when you invest your energy in talking with them in a positive manner. The fact that I have gotten my own extended family to start making changes for the better of all is a big deal; positive encouragement and education is the key to having success influencing others. That and being honest with people about my own eco-shortcomings as I mentioned in my post [Please Forgive Me For I Am An Eco-Sinner](#) goes a long way towards helping others make positive change in their lives.

GIFT THIS

Know someone with a passionate heart that could use a little tactical guidance? Let them know about this wonderful free ebook and be sure to visit all the great people who contributed.

If you found this ebook helpful, I would love to hear from you. Feel free to [drop me a line](#) anytime. If you particularly enjoyed any one person's story, be sure to let them know.

Support this work by sharing it with your friends through e-mail and social media.

Give the gift of social transformation, one person at a time.

Thanks for reading!

I hope you learned as much as I did.



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Tree art: free tree brush set
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