

# Sustainability Sunday: The law of relativity.

I wasn't sure I was even going to lecture today, with the tilling and planting and moving and working and going and talking and appointments and every other damn thing, but in the end what is it for if not to put your back into the push and make it happen. I had a conversation this week about the oil spill on the gulf, about how horrible and atrocious it is, about how nothing it seems will be done except the promotion and dialogue of endless TV and radio shows, political debates about how or when the government will respond instead of just doing something.....I know this well- I have referenced it often, how easy it is to stare a forest fire in the face and cry out "do something" while your feet are wet from the lake you have retreated to, always waiting for Duk duk diya to do what it can. We are all guilty of it and eventually through experience and screwing up get to a point where we just get it and THAT is a beautiful thing. I notice that when disasters like this happen we often feel if our humanity has deserted us, as if religious or not that these are the end times, always waiting for the next epic fail to be the one from which there is no return, but there always is. Somehow we always pull through and slip back into our lives, even those that lived through Katrina or 9-11 will inevitably live on often in direct contradiction to the way they should have learned to taking the most precious and often simplest of life's joys for granted yet again, but there are those that won't that will live each day with appreciation and love, will do for themselves, family and community because they have gotten it.

It is also times like these that we talk about industrialization killing the planet but that isn't what it's doing it's making the planet uninhabitable for sentient life, or more specifically for us, we're not talking about the end of the world but of humanity. The earth has seen meteor impacts, massive volcanic eruptions, devastating earthquakes and tectonic shifts and it will again- It's very nature is that of flux just as is the nature of living life. We will eventually fade from this planet be it in exodus or destruction and the earth will do what it does best- reclaim it's own. Even if we are driven to nuclear holocaust I swear to you blue skies and pure waters sustaining life will be seen again. Remember time is at best a human concept used to make sense of our reality the earth has no quotas or deadlines just as morality existed before people so did the universe from which to give it context. Then what we are really talking about is human life and in direct correlation life in general then should we not be talking about relativity?

I have a friend who worked in a women's shelter and he was asked once why he didn't go to Africa because that's where they really needed help and he responded by saying because he wasn't in Africa he was here and this was how he could help because these were the people that needed it HERE and NOW. Is it a tragedy that thousand of species of ocean life are being killed because of how we are living- of course, will it affect eco system upon eco system and create problems down the road- of course, but I would ask you just as I asked those that wanted to go volunteer in Haiti or stop poverty in any of ten billion countries if you had looked to your right and to your left- have you walked down the block, have you been to all of your city- do you know it's issues and needs? And if so why not start there? Horrible things happen all around us every day, they strike close to home and far away, I spoke last week of accepting our fallibility and using it as a strength, of finding the reasons why we help others and coming to terms with the selfish nature of generosity and this week I hope to push even further the need to understand that

the way you help situations like that is to make a choice, to do what you can or to do nothing. It is in how you fill your day, who you talk with and the nature of the language you use, how you spend your money or even how you make it and where you store it. If you want to help the gulf then don't buy BP related products, yet even these things affect the livelihood of other people whom you don't know and will probably never meet those workers didn't want that to happen anymore than we did they were just working folk doing the best they could to provide for their own- we are all in the end connected and the world as big as it seems isn't really. Look around the room, we come here and share this meal talk for a while and then make our way home until you either make the choice to come back or spend your time another way- what do you know about the people next to you what can be done here and now with them? If you take nothing else from tonight take the concept of relativity- the things you do DO affect the world and you CAN change it with smiles, money, or actions. Start small, reach out, do something have a dream and then pursue it til it's done.

I thought about that conversation as I spent my mornings, afternoons, and evenings in the field, pulling out the rubble and waste of excess and putting tools to the earth to make of it something better, I worked along side good people, was brought food and drink by others, made connections with yet others and in the end found myself exhausted and sun burnt yet unable to argue the purity and joy that resounded in me nor wipe the real and genuine smile from my face. This is how we do it, by putting our time and sweat and blood into the earth- and is it overshadowed by giant oil spill- I say not a chance in hell. You get 60 odd years on this earth I dare you after it's done to look at your hands and know they have done good and honest things, each violence, negative action, atrocity will inevitably be met with peace, positive action, and progress- make yours part of the greater whole. As always thank you for your time and support, Dane.