

Sea Green

Jackie Hildering

To “be green”, is to embrace the sea and your dependence and impacts upon it. It is to understand that there is no divide between land and ocean; that no matter how far away you travel from ocean shores, you never leave it. The ocean is on mountains as glaciers; it flows through streams; it builds trees and it comes out of our taps. All life on Earth is connected by the ocean.

Earth is “The Ocean Planet”. In the words of Jean-Michel Cousteau, “From space, it is imperceptible where salt water ends and fresh water diverge, ever replenishing the living architecture of Earth.” Stream is sea. Sea is stream.

Life on land could not survive without the ocean. More than 70% of the oxygen in our atmosphere comes from it. The ocean feeds us and regulates our climate by buffering the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide and absorbing 85% of the Earth’s heat.

Without the ocean, there is nothing left to save.

Life in the ocean will testify to magnitude of environmental problems first. Yes, it’s true: manmade chemicals have biomagnified into our killer whales; human activities are contributing to climate change; there is an area of plastics 44 times bigger than Vancouver Island drifting around in the North Pacific Gyre . . . I could go on and on but, why would I?

There is nothing to be gained from focusing on the problems. Rather than denial and disempowerment, recognize the common denominators and therefore the huge capacity for positive change. All environmental problems are the product of human overconsumption; excessive chemical use; lack of precaution; irresponsibility for our wastes; disconnection from nature and overvaluation of short-term economic gain.

We live in a very exciting time where we are witnessing that the “old way” just isn’t sustainable – economically, socially or environmentally. It is a time of new opportunities and every reason for hope. A large enough ground swell of awareness and action could cause a complete culture shift. However, this does require an understanding that those with current economic and political power are likely to resist such change for they profit from the old way. They may attempt to create an ocean-of-doubt even when they themselves may be drowning in the evidence of un-sustainability.

Ground swells are of ocean origin and as Islanders with the ocean at our doorstep, we have such great capacity for positive change. Live knowing your impact and reliance on the ocean. And, don’t see red when you learn about environmental problems, instead . . . Sea Green.

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