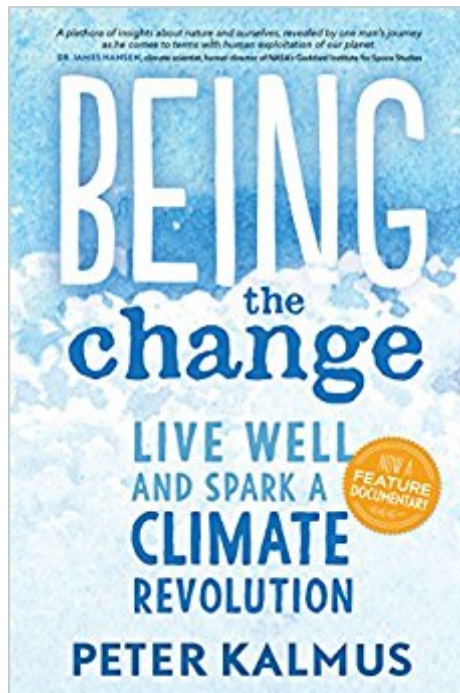




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Being The Change: Live Well And Spark A Climate Revolution



Synopsis

Life on 1/10th the fossil fuels turns out to be awesome. We all want to be happy. Yet as we consume ever more in a frantic bid for happiness, global warming worsens. Alarmed by drastic changes now occurring in the Earth's climate systems, the author, a climate scientist and suburban father of two, embarked on a journey to change his life and the world. He began by bicycling, growing food, meditating, and making other simple, fulfilling changes. Ultimately, he slashed his climate impact to under a tenth of the US average and became happier in the process. *Being the Change* explores the connections between our individual daily actions and our collective predicament. It merges science, spirituality, and practical action to develop a satisfying and appropriate response to global warming. Part one exposes our interconnected predicament: overpopulation, global warming, industrial agriculture, growth-addicted economics, a sold-out political system, and a mindset of separation from nature. It also includes a readable but authoritative overview of climate science. Part two offers a response at once obvious and unprecedented: mindfully opting out of this broken system and aligning our daily lives with the biosphere. The core message is deeply optimistic: living without fossil fuels is not only possible, it can be better. Peter Kalmus is an atmospheric scientist at Caltech / Jet Propulsion Laboratory with a Ph.D. in physics from Columbia University. He lives in suburban Altadena, California with his wife and two children on 1/10th the fossil fuels of the average American.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Being the Change is a book I desperately needed to read. The tone of authenticity kept me reading

eagerly till the end. It is refreshing and empowering to read about real-life solutions, rather than the guilt-ridden, doom-and-gloom tales that dominate much of the environmental movement. Kalmus is positive, by contrast, bursting with practical strategies. He writes with joy, infectious curiosity, and a hopeful enthusiasm that's hard to resist. -- Treehugger, Katherine Martinko, June 2017

Kalmus, an atmospheric scientist at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, is strongly convinced that living without fossil fuels is not only possible but better for both the planet and the individual. The author draws on science, practical action, and spiritual examination to make the case that by reducing our carbon footprint, people can slow global warming and the ensuing civil unrest. Suggestions include biking, growing our own food, using a clothesline and solar-heated water, and turning off the lights when they're not in use. Kalmus encourages meditation to provide satisfaction in the moment rather than the need for more, presenting valuable tips for opting out of what he deems a destructive system. VERDICT Kalmus' straightforward and necessary steps toward ameliorating the challenges of global warming will be welcomed by a wide readership. Highly recommended. -- Library Journal Starred Review, August 2017

Addressing both climate change helplessness and the meaning of everyday life, this book posits a personal, positive approach to environmental mindfulness. Being the Change approaches climate change from a fundamentally different perspective. It repudiates the idea that individuals can do nothing about climate change and encourages mindful transition to a low-energy lifestyle -- not as a sacrifice to stop a threat, but as a means of embracing a richer life. This emphasis on the bright side of climate change mitigation has a good chance of resonating with ambivalent audiences...The book offers an unusually comprehensive and scientifically satisfying explanation of how climate change happens. ...That it is able to do so in a straightforward way is a significant feat. ... Likely to be popular, Being the Change is a worthy contender for display space in public libraries. --Foreword Reviews, 5 stars, Anna Call, September/October 2017

A plethora of insights about nature and ourselves, revealed by one man's journey as he comes to terms with human exploitation of our planet. --Dr. James Hansen, climate scientist and former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies

A powerful reminder that it is possible and joyful to move away from fossil fuels, even in a society still in the throes of addiction. --Bill McKibben, author, *Earth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

Too often, books by scientists err toward the ultra-cerebral. Full of facts, figures and charts but not enough heart. That's what makes Being the Change so refreshing. Kalmus is a respected atmospheric scientist and weighs in with authority when it comes to the topic

of climate change. But he speaks to us as a person, sharing his experiences, concerns, and aspirations as a fellow human being combating the existential threat of human-caused climate change. And he shares with us a vital message about how we can indeed be the change we need to see in the world if we are to avert a climate catastrophe.

• Michael E. Mann, Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science, Penn State University, and co-author, *The Madhouse Effect: How Climate Change Denial is Threatening the Planet, Destroying our Politics, and Driving Us Crazy*

A low-carbon world will not look like Star Trek, it will look mostly like it looks today, it's just that we will inhabit it differently. Peter Kalmus's brilliant book is about his deciding to start living that way today. He finds that (a) it's not that hard, and that (b) life improves. He becomes more skilled, connected, fulfilled, nourished. As will we all. Allow him to ease you over the threshold.

• Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement

Imagine you had your very own climate scientist living next door. What would he or she tell you to do? Peter is that neighbor. He walks the walk for his kids, for the land, for our future—and he can help you do it too.

• Kelly Coyne and Erik Knutzen, authors, *The Urban Homestead and Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World* rootsimple.com

So often, we feel that nothing we do will make a difference. Peter doesn't just dispel that myth, he buries it: under his feral bee hives, his urban chicken run, and his compost heap (just don't ask what's in it). These gut-wrenchingly honest yet obstinately hopeful reflections provide a roadmap to building our own personal bulwark against the storm we face today.

• Katharine Hayhoe, climate scientist, Professor at Texas Tech University, author, *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-based Decisions*

What does an astrophysicist do if he learns that civilization is on path toward oblivion? If he's Peter Kalmus, he meditates, examines his life, and makes significant changes to reduce his personal carbon output. Then he writes a book. The result is a humane and intelligent exploration of what anyone can do to reduce climate impact—and live a better life in the process.

• Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow, Post Carbon Institute

This book makes it clear that all of us have a responsibility to cherish the miracles that compose the natural world. We need to think deeply about how we live and then, as Peter Kalmus advises, radically reduce our use of fossil fuels. Everything is sacred. Learning how to get along, to be happy and to live within the limits of the biosphere are sacred tasks. Please read this book. It will be good for your soul.

• James Hoggan, author, *I'm Right and You're an Idiot*

Too many people say that personal action isn't enough to deal with the mess we've made of the global climate, and think that this means personal action isn't necessary. In this timely and provocative book, Peter Kalmus points out that changing the world has to start with changing our own lives. It's a crucial message that needs to be

heard. — John Michael Greer, author of *After Progress* and *The Retro Future* — A low-emission lifestyle is empowering, happier, and strengthens our connection with community and our environment (plus yes, it saves us thousands of dollars). This is an important and valuable book, and recommended reading for anyone interested in a richer life or a safer climate (doubly so for those interested in both). — John Cook, research assistant professor at George Mason University and founder of *SkepticalScience* When Science and the mind are aligned with the heart, they become True Science and it manifests in books like *Being the Change* — a sort of courageous manifesto for citizens of the World in the 21st century. Peter Kalmus is the kind of dad, husband, friend, serious meditator, scientist, heartivist and brother any of us concerned for future generations and more harmonious communities would like to have in our (Solar) neighborhood. — Pancho Ramos-Stierle, Satyagrahi and full-time ServiceSpace volunteer Peter's work makes me smile. The mission of Citizens Climate Lobby is to create the political will for a livable planet by encouraging others to make breakthroughs in their personal and political power. Peter demonstrates practical steps, for individuals and organizations all the way up to the global scale, to advance these goals. His manner of living exemplifies the connection between power, reason, creativity and joy. — James Waterhouse, co-founder, Citizens Climate Lobby, Pasadena Foothills Chapter; co-founder, SoCal 350 Action Network — We all must take huge risks in order to create a truly just and life-sustaining society. *Being the Change* maps the first important leaps on this journey, describing real-life examples of the good life that awaits us beyond capitalism, species-extinction, economic injustice, and fossil-fuel addiction. It is a roadmap out of our destructive and oppressive culture that touches upon the essential need for wealth redistribution and racial justice in the climate revolution. Please follow Peter's inspiring example: we must act! — Ethan Hughes, co-founder of the Possibility Alliance

It is marvelously refreshing and encouraging to hear a physics PhD talk so naturally, authentically, and beautifully about love, connection, community, meditation, dancing, and death. Dr. Kalmus, as a specialist in physics--and I, as a generalist in engineering and sociology and as a lifelong student of social, technological, and cultural trends--acknowledge the same predicament and offer very similar strategies for addressing the challenges of climate change and mindless consumerism and for maintaining good health and well-being on an increasingly warming, crowded, and ecologically stressed planet. The words of fictional, world-wise, Yoda-like Lua in my book — *Lua's Song: Islandy Wisdom for Mainlanders* — uncannily resemble the advice of non-fictional Dr. Kalmus in *Being the Change*: — “What was she like?” — my friend craved to

know This islander ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Æœ Lua, ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ â,,ç who I couldn't let go ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “What was so special, about what she said? ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “And why do her words, need to be read? ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å • ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ â,,çs so hard to see, in the world of today How one such as Lua, can live such a way Her living quite simple, her happiness clear Singing her songs, these words you might hear Master your breath; eat the right food Walk to feel better; ride for good mood Listen to others; learn things each day Connect with your world; give some things away Learn to be still and quiet your mind Choose to live simply and joy you will find My friend from the Mainland, liked what he heard ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “But to live like an Islander? Surely absurd! ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “Is it? ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å • I asked, ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “In this world now so small. ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “On this full planet, aren't we Islanders All? ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å •

A beautiful book. A disclaimer; I know Peter and am very fond of he and his wife. Since I can't know him and refuse to relinquish the fondness I have for the family I thought it fair that you, the reader, should be informed. Peter is an extremely intelligent and well educated author. Those qualities along with his sincerity, goodwill and humor are apparent in his writing. I found ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å “Being the Change ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ Å • a very enjoyable read. The first part is dense with science. From his studies and research at Harvard, Columbia and California Tech and his work at NASA he has amassed an abundance of knowledge that he shares good naturedly in a straightforward way with his readers. This is information we should all be introduced to because it will and is already having important impact on our lives. Pete ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ â,,çs book offers it up in as painless a way as possible. Like a child ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ â,,çs cough medicine. Easy to swallow but still doing the trick. The second part of the book was pure enjoyment. It is a glimpse into the life of a conscientious human being doing his best to do the right thing. Pete tells his story and the changes he put himself and his family through with honesty and humor. I doubt sincerely that many of us will venture out as far on the limb of daily living as Pete has but I also doubt that anyone reading this book will be unmoved by his journey. Perhaps moved enough to do what they consider their part in the struggle that we face in trying to protect our planet for ourselves and for the future generations. And that is, after all, Pete ÆfÂçÃ â Ñ â,,çs motivation for writing it. For instance, I as a New Yorker, do not see myself raising chickens or keeping bees in my apartment. Not to mention setting up a humanure toilet. (That must violate some New York City housing law?) But he did get me seriously considering my carbon footprint and asking myself some serious questions as to my own obligations. Especially, since I recently had the good fortune of becoming a grandfather. That

little fellow will be needing a good healthy world to live and raise a family in. I bought my daughter and son-in-law a copy so they might be better informed on how to do their parts too. Peter has a gift as a writer and the courage to hold himself up to scrutiny in order to make his points. I applaud the effort and highly recommend this book to all who will listen. Abe de la Houssaye

If you're finding yourself on the alarmed/paralyzed edge of the scale when you think about climate change, this should be your next read. Kalmus does a terrific job outlining the scale of the problem and recommending big steps individuals can take to be a part of the solution. Solutions are the focus of the book. Some you'll already have done. Some you've known about but haven't tried yet. And some you may not be ready for yet. Kalmus sets a great example though. It's inspiring to see someone living the change they want to see in others.

Written out of joy and love, this book takes a holistic approach to climate change and how we as individuals can be the change. Books about climate change and other environmental topics can often come from the view of doom and gloom, throwing depressing statistics about the direction our planet is taken which only causes us to feel depressed and guilty. This book provides the clear facts and science behind climate change while balancing this with the joy and wonder the author has discovered in making changes to his life to lower his use of fossil-fuels. He provides some practical tips that come from his own experience and the hope that as each person makes changes we might be part of the tide of change. This author definitely walks his own talk and is a testament to a new way of life that can actually bring more joy as well as be beneficial to our surroundings, both to the planet and the community around us. If you are interested in the least bit about climate change or even just bringing more joy into your life YOU MUST READ THIS BOOK!

This book elegantly navigates both spiritual and material ("earthy") concerns. What's more, it succeeds in connecting the two. The book's narrative engine is a description of the author's journey from unconscious petro-consumer to clear-eyed, wonder-filled citizen of our biosphere.

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