



Message to the Youth

Elisabet Sahtouris

I expect your generation to feel an intense and just rage at the terribly destructive ways of those who came before you.

In the angriest time of my own life, when my nation waged a terrible unjust war in Vietnam—the first televised war for all to see—I beat my head against the wall in anger and anguish over napalmed children and other unspeakable atrocities. Then a Bengali poet wrote me a poem with the line:

...Somewhere the tears and the agony are stored into the chest of thunder

I knew immediately he was telling me that energy is energy; that I could transmute my anger into useful positive action. That one line has served me well all my life since.

From my vantage point as an evolution biologist and futurist, the transmutation of energy from anger and hate to love, from war to peace, from fierce competition to caring collaboration is a matter of the maturation I described, of our growing up as a human species. From my youth to yours—a single lifetime—we humans leapt from tripling our global population to having the brakes put on our reckless expansion; from reaching the heights of competitive adolescent species craziness to waking up to see we can and must shift quickly into cooperative maturity.

As I watch the ice collapsing at our poles with hair-raisingly increasing speed, not to mention the raging fires and storms, you are still a baby, rightly sheltered from disasters in your family's arms. But at sixteen, nothing can be hidden from you any longer. You see the oceans swallowing huge coastal cities in gulps, untold hordes of desperate people in flight, water wars, famine and the spread of disease.

Yet Earth is still a gorgeous, intelligent living planet. Fighting for its own life, it is still more suited to human life than any other in our solar system, even if we must adapt to her overall hotter climate. The catastrophes we brought upon ourselves teach us that love and respect for Earth, restoring her pure waters, rich soils and clean air, protecting her remaining wild forests, prairies and living creatures as we love and care for each other is the only possible way forward. The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), the UN's Millennial Development Goals (MDGs) and great music and art festivals such as Burning Man and BOOM, plus countless other real initiatives sprang up even before you were born, testifying to our will and creative abilities to live more harmoniously.

I thrill to what your generation will build on such foundational efforts. You have the power to carry survivors through to the light beyond this Great Storm. I see you bringing yourselves and your children to safe shores where you reweave the broken strands of life to build what my generation could only envision.

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