

Can One Person Create A Big Change

Transcript of Charles Eisenstein's Talk

<https://charleseisenstein.org/video/can-one-person-create-a-big-change/>

(emphasis the transcriber's)

We need to find another reason to live in a beautiful way and follow our heart besides "it might create big change." If you condition everything on some notion of bigness defined by whatever metrics - the number of people influenced, or number of hectares of land converted, or something like that - then you're going to skip over all the small things that people need to be doing as a mass, as a collective, that none of them on their own actually make sense.

There is a part of me when I go to recycle my bottles or compost my waste [that says], "What good does it do? I'm just subtracting one plastic bottle from the enormous trash heap that gets shipped to India and is making new mountains in India and China of waste.

"What does it matter, one bottle different? What does it matter if I return my organic matter to the soil instead of flushing it into the ocean essentially? Eutrophication is still going to happen; algae blooms, pollution, whether or not I contribute to it. What difference does it make?"

And in the Story of Separation there's no good answer for that. You can say, "Well, if everybody did it, then it would make a difference, so you have to do your part."

But part of you will say, "Well I'm not everybody. And if everybody does it, then it doesn't matter if I do it."

So you have to have another reason besides some conception of bigness. To me, it comes down to relationship and ritual. I like to save my compost, and I like to pee outside and use composting toilets, for example. Not because I've done some calculation that this is going to save the world, but because it's a different kind of relationship with the beings around me.

It's almost like, yeah this apple core, "What do you want, apple core? Oh, do you want to get put in the landfill? No, you want to get buried in my garden!

"What do you want, Pea?"

What feels good to me when I'm in the recognition of my relationship to all beings? What feels good?

It's not that I'm unaware of systemic considerations and the need for any sustainable society to use its manure. I'm aware of that, but I don't do it because of that. That information feeds into my understanding, feeds into who I am, but **I don't choose from that calculating mindset**. So really, you could almost say,

"Trust what feels loving in the moment, not ignoring your intellectual knowledge, but not acting from that. Trust what feels loving. Trust what feels good. Trust what feels aligned with who you really are."

If you live by that, and spread that vibe, and other people start living by that, then the whole planet is going to change. This is not a substitute for political action. It's not a substitute for working on the systems level. Action on that level can also feel like the expression of love

But we shouldn't devalue the small, personal things. Otherwise you get into the mindset of sacrificing family and relationship for "The Cause." And you become a Crusader who doesn't go visit his grandmother when she's on her deathbed; who doesn't have the time to take care of children; who doesn't have patience; who doesn't have kindness; who sacrifices the interests of the workers in the NGO and the

contractors in the NGO because “we’re doing something so important so we can’t worry about this stuff right now because we have this All-Important Mission to achieve.”

And we end up doing the exact same things that are generating a world of ecocide and injustice.