

Stable Planet Alliance

Prospectus for an

Evolutionary Catalyst Launch

We have an evolutionary task that is bigger than all of us. It is to create a compassionate ecologically sustainable world. Stable Planet Alliance.

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Introduction

Humanity is in an existential crisis, but there is precious little conversation about it.

A gentle way to initiate a conversation is to show people this cartoon by Tom Parkins and ask, 'What do you make of it?'



The cartoon sums up humanity's current situation. On the one hand, we are headed towards a hothouse Earth (along with other disastrous ecological trends).

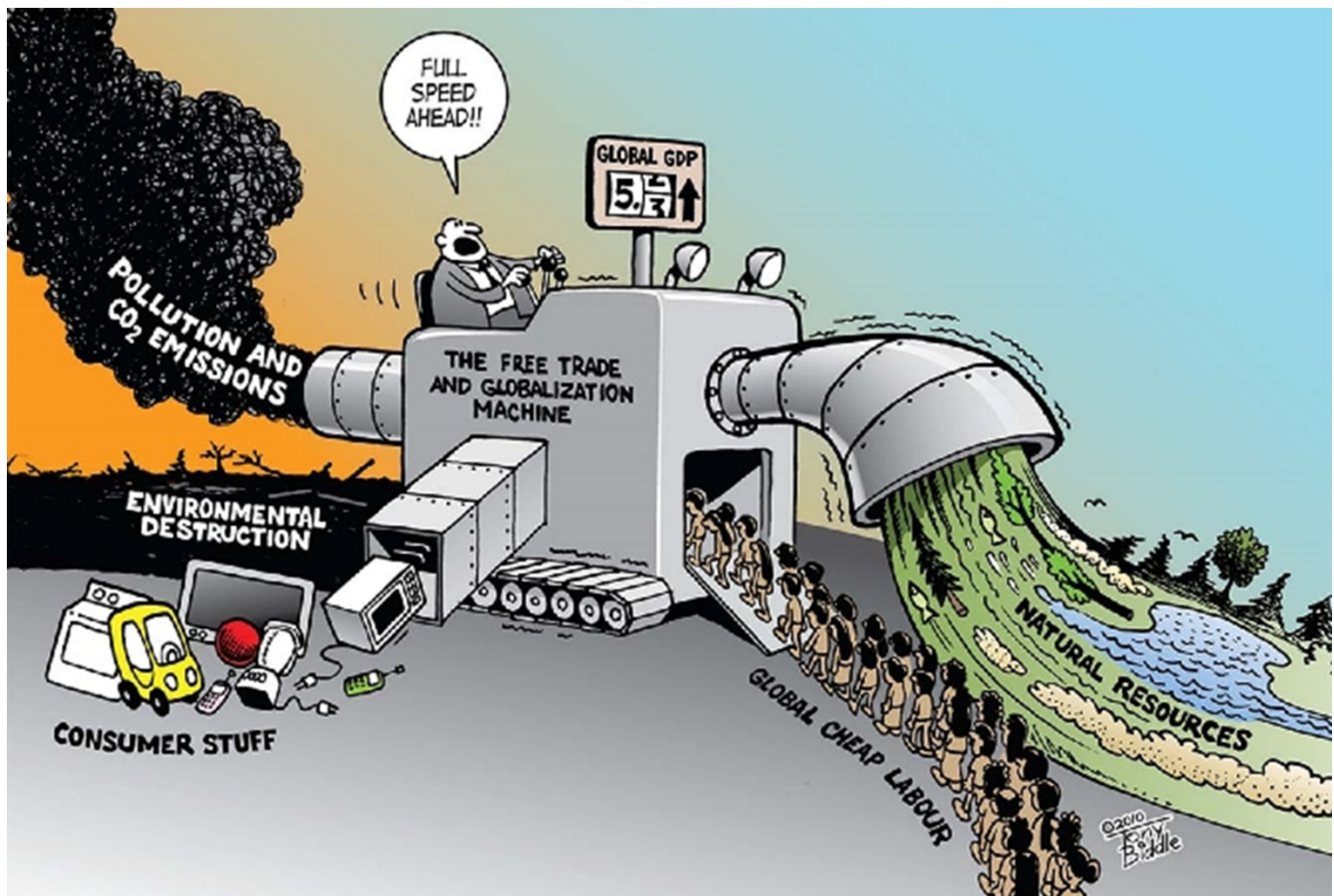
On the other hand, perhaps the most probable outcome of increasing military spending and competition will be nuclear war. Horrible! – to say the least.

Nuclear war could happen if one of the great powers – China, Russia, the US – thought they were losing an all-out war. A desperate leader might launch tactical nuclear missiles, the other side would retaliate, and it would escalate within three hours to global nuclear annihilation. All the systems are on hair-trigger alert. Or perhaps a madman would push the red button.

Independent of politics, aware or unaware, caring or self-serving, these twin threats, *hothouse Earth* and *nuclear annihilation*, are the current reality of everyone on Earth today. We are

moving hell-bent to disaster. The purpose of the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch is to kickstart mobilizing public will to change direction.

This Tony Biddle cartoon portrays the system that drives ecological destruction



At the heart of it is our growth oriented economic-industrial system.

If we are to avoid the worst of coming ecological disasters, globally we must dramatically reduce industrial production and consumption. Which is to say, collectively we must choose to slow the economy, abandon expectations of affluence, and choose to live materially frugal lifestyles. A tough sell, eh?

We think the two prerequisites for this to occur are first that people *recognize that we are in an existential emergency*, and secondly, that we develop *modest but adequate social safety nets*.

As for war, in the long run we think the only way to avoid nuclear annihilation is to internationally agree to dismantle all nuclear weapons, and invest in the conditions of peace.

Another major driver of our ecological conundrum is Earth's unsustainable population. David Attenborough, the famous nature advocate, noted "All our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder - and ultimately impossible - to solve with ever

more people." A slow reduction of population over about 100 years around the world through the education and empowerment of women and girls will address this.

Obviously, these changes require a profound shift in people's thinking.

The Evolutionary Catalyst Launch

At the moment, culturally we are paralyzed. The aim of the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch is to break through that paralysis. It will take many of us working together to accomplish this.

Many people assert that the only thing that will wake people up is an overwhelming catastrophe. Implicitly, the view here is that *people need to be shocked out of apathy*.

Perhaps so! The Launch – and subsequent conversations – will create a 'constructive shock'.

This shock will come, not through a disaster, but through a concerted communication blitz over a two-week period in 2028 (the date is not finalized).

During the Launch we will host a multitude of workshops, trainings, think tanks, business roundtables, posters, advertisements, grassroots social media posts, lectures and more.

Simultaneously, thought leaders and public intellectuals will publish articles and broadcast podcasts urging their audiences to become leaders and communicators in their own right.

This communication blitz will shift the Overton Window – the zone of what is acceptable to talk about. However, our long-term intention is much larger. It is to change the direction of society.

Introducing a new social activist role: Evolutionary Catalyst

We will train people in a new social change role: *Evolutionary Catalyst*.

Evolutionary Catalysts communicate at two levels.

At a personal level, Evolutionary Catalysts communicate with people they know about transforming our destructive system. Our vision is that the members of established groups – there are millions – talk with friends, neighbors and business colleagues.

At a more professional level, Evolutionary Catalysts reach out to leaders of groups and to influential thought leaders to enroll them in this vision. This requires more sophisticated communication skills. We provide communication tools to support both levels.

By inspiring mainstream commitment to create a viable society we can unleash enormous creativity in the right direction. Politicians putting forward responsible economic and environmental policies will have public support.

Aligning to affect public consciousness

No one voice – and no one organization on its own – can break through our cultural paralysis. The idea of the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch is for a multitude of thought leaders and groups to simultaneously host workshops, trainings, think tanks, business roundtables, posters, advertisements, social media posts, podcasts, lectures and more.

The aim, downstream, is to shift our collective aspiration from economic growth to...?

Well, there are various terms for it, all pointing in the same vibrant direction. They include a *well-being economy*, a *life-affirming culture*, an *Ecological Civilization*, creating a *compassionate ecologically sustainable world*, a *partnership-respect society*, *humanity thriving for millennia* and more.

Obstacles

You may have heard the wry phrase: *Don't bother me with the facts, my mind is made up!*

But here's the thing. Everybody's mind is already made up. Progressive or conservative, city or country, male or female... once folks reach adulthood they generally have well-established views about the world that make sense to them.

Our views are developed through our experiences growing up in a family, school and community. They are influenced by our temperament, our peer group, the media, social media, things we learn on our own, and our professional development. Spirituality or religion may also have an influence.

Neurologically, our views correlate with patterns of synaptic connections in the central nervous system, and with the operation of the endocrine system. They are rooted in our biology, and they have developed over years, generations even. In the things that really matter, we are emotionally attached to our views. Our views can change, but they do not change easily.

People often resist ideas that do not fit with or seem contradictory to their current worldviews. A humorist jokes: *If we raise a controversial idea in a social situation, it has been scientifically proven that the conversations will polarize in 3.2 seconds.*

Part of our challenge as communicators is to create conditions where people can reconsider views they have held for a long time. Perhaps the most direct way to do this is to arrange dedicated time for a thoughtful conversation – perhaps while having coffee.

Of course, resistance can come up in a thoughtful conversation as well. In fact, we can expect it, because that's just what people do.

A strategy for inducing people to be reflective is to pose this question:

How do you react when ideas you may have some investment in are challenged?

One colleague responded, “I used to push back immediately, but now I take time to reflect.”

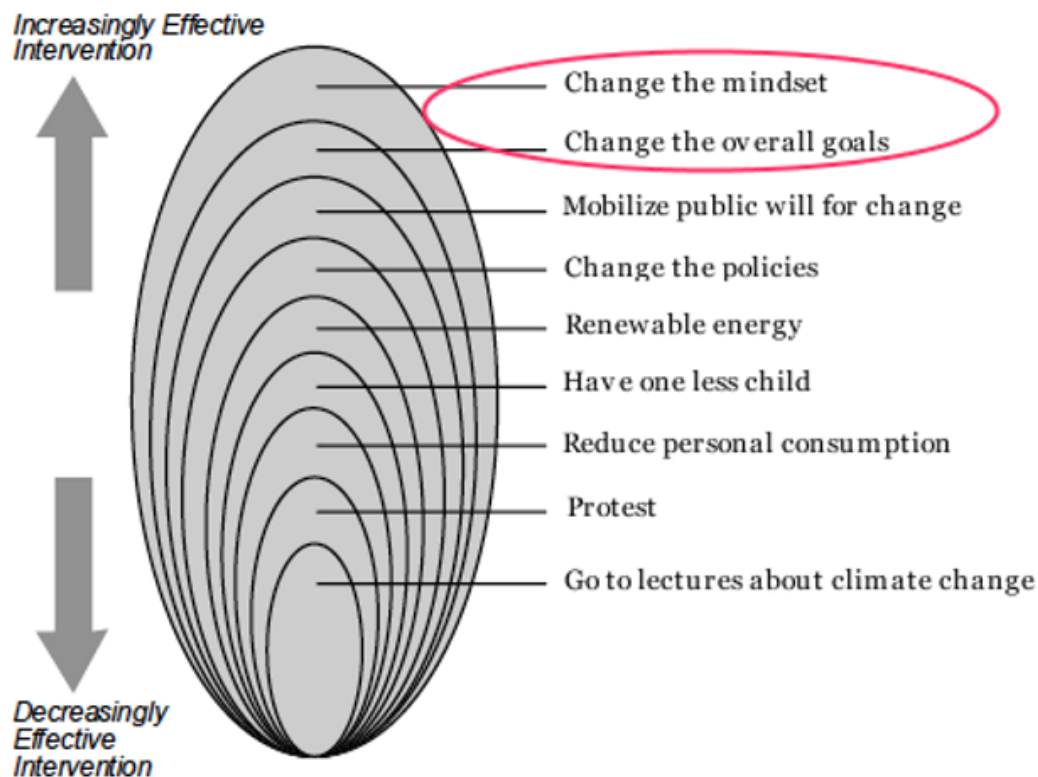
Intellectually mature minds are willing to consider what merit, if any, there might be in a challenge. A new idea may have a useful insight, or it could be wrongheaded.

We bring this up, because some of the ideas we present here may be different than yours. We would like to think that you are willing to consider them.

A theory of change

There is a saying: *To change the system, change the thinking*. In a famous essay, essay *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System* Donella Meadows highlighted affecting people’s paradigms as being the most influential leverage point.

This diagram is an adaptation of her insight:



Perhaps the most successful application of this insight was by the right-wing billionaire Koch brothers. I doubt that they ever read Meadows. But in the 1970s they had the insight that if

they wanted to shift America from supporting high taxes and Social Security to the regime of low taxes and minimum corporate regulation they had to affect American thinking.

The Koch brothers, rather than fighting specific political campaigns, hired articulate intellectuals to promote their vision of ‘liberty and small government’, and place articles in the journals influential people read. They also trained young lawyers who might one day become judges in their philosophy, and funded grassroots groups with people on the ground to champion it.

It took a long time, but they succeeded in amplifying the shift from the community values of the Roosevelt New Deal era to the competitive individualism we see today.

In contrast, up until now the environmental-progressive folks have largely protested and campaigned on individual issues. Some submit policy proposals to governments that are rarely listened to.

Some academics astutely analyze our current situation. But they offer no well-thought-out path to action, and they have no means of reaching the general public.

Many folks go online and simply comment, comment, comment. They give their opinions.

All of these are symptoms of our current cultural paralysis. With a few exceptions, collectively, we have no coherent systemic understanding of the drivers of ecological destruction and potentially nuclear war. And we have no coherent approach to going beyond our own thought bubbles and engaging the general public.

This is the nut that the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch aims to crack.

Social change through personal conversations

The question is: *How can we help people think more deeply and comprehensively?* How can we help people think realistically about the drivers of ecological destruction and potentially nuclear war? How can we mobilize public will to change the system?

So far as I can tell, the best means we have to enable people to expand their worldviews are personal conversations, workshops and trainings.

The Evolutionary Catalysts website (not set up yet) will have tools that are purpose built to increase the effectiveness of personal conversations. We may call people who conduct such conversations *Evolutionary Communicators*.

Let’s look at two core tools. They Are *Escalating Disasters* and *Kitchen Table Conversations*.

Escalating Disasters

[*Escalating Disasters*](#) is a set of images to bring home to people the reality of disastrous global trends. This creates internal motivation to accept otherwise unwelcome changes.

Trends that are highlighted include global warming, of course. As well we emphasize what nuclear war would actually mean and the devastating consequences of industrial pollution on ocean life.

We are not trying to highlight ‘all the troubles of the world’, but simply do enough to motivate people to change our destructive system.

The images are presented conversationally one at a time. People have time to consider them, feel them, talk about them, and assimilate their implication.

Kitchen Table Conversations

Kitchen Table Conversations use labels on beer coasters to help people keep track of a conversation that connects the dots between economic growth and other drivers of ecological destruction.



Whereas [Escalating Disasters](#) enables people to see *why* transformative change is critically necessary, [Kitchen Table Conversations](#) enable people to understand *what* drivers need to transform.

Cultivating emotional well-being

Cultivating emotional well-being is as important as the goal of ecological sustainability in achieving a viable society.

People with underlying hurts often hurt others. They may be hostile towards the environment. They may prefer war – or at least threat and intimidation – to diplomacy.

Evolutionary Communicators, if they have the skills, introduce people to techniques they can use to resolve their own emotional triggers, thus contributing to healthy cultural evolution.

Who will become Evolutionary Catalysts

As Paul Hawken pointed out in *Blessed Unrest* two decades ago, there are millions of groups that care about social and ecological well-being. There are also millions of savvy aware people who are not part of any group.

The members of established groups are an untapped resource. Typically they pay dues, sign petitions or protest. They could lift their game and become Evolutionary Catalysts.

If we can take this to scale by having millions of people talk with people they know, we have a means of going beyond our typical thought bubbles. Very likely we may have friends and business colleagues who have not sought out the same level of information we have.

However, folks need encouragement. Many people find the prospect uncomfortable of talking with friends about our existential issues and the system that drives them.

Understandably, they do not want to alienate their friends. They do not want to be seen as proselytizing. They do not want their jobs to be threatened. Some may be concerned that they don't know enough.

The conversations can be initiated tactfully and appropriately. And we are not proselytizing. We are initiating conversations that are necessary if democracy is to work for our common well-being. And we are creating an opportunity for people to think more deeply than usual.

True, we give prompts. We help people connect the dots in ways they might not have done otherwise. But this is not about persuading people. Folks will come to their own conclusions.

Once people are familiar with *Escalating Disasters* and *Kitchen Table Conversations* they can be quite naturally introduced into the flow of the conversation by simply saying, “May I show you something?”

Part of the idea behind the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch is to make such a big splash that talking about our polycrisis becomes a new social phenomenon in which multitudes of people are excited to participate.

And why not? The chaos Donald Trump has brought to America means that many people will be looking for a new way forward. Chaotic times such as ours typically end in wars. Our vision is that collectively we unify around resolving our ecological crisis, and making nuclear war impossible--cultivating emotional well-being.

Thinking out-of-the-box

The purpose of the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch is to engage the general public and decision-makers in as many ways as possible. Our familiar ways of communicating, which include webinars, lectures, panels and social media posts, will continue.

We can do more. In the Appendix are a number of ‘out-of-the-box’ communication tactics. One, for example, is to talk to upmarket seafood restaurants about ocean acidification, and how their business is at stake. Our suggestion is that they post a discreet sign along the lines of:

This restaurant is concerned about the health of our oceans. To learn more about preserving the oceans, go to this [LINK](#)/QR code.

More out-of-the-box communication tactics are in the Appendix: [Out-of-the-box](#).

Organizing the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch

The Evolutionary Catalyst Launch, organized by Stable Planet Alliance, is about equipping people to be Evolutionary Communicators. Evolutionary Communicators give people the opportunity to think more competently and comprehensively about the realities of our time. People may also function better emotionally.

Organizing the Launch is a big project. It will take several years. Just when to do it is yet to be decided. We imagine two weeks in October, 2027 – perhaps later.

The organizing will occur in overlapping phases. They include:

- Engaging colleagues in the vision.
- Enrolling funders into the potential
- Training workshop leaders and trainers
- Developing social media and marketing materials
- Engaging organizations
- Organizing a multitude of events during the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch itself.

Social change through improving brain functioning

The idea of improving brain functioning is novel in the world of social change. We are used to lectures and messages. Or, as one person posted on a social change thread, “I see no alternative now to taking some form of Direct Action.” You can read more about this in Appendix:

[Improving brain functioning](#).

Summary

Millennia of wars, population growth and environmental destruction have brought humanity to the verge of self-destruction.

Many of us care. Others don’t care, or don’t know. For those who do care, it may be difficult to even conceive of transforming the system – including people’s aspirations and ways of thinking – that drives our destruction.

Yet that is our task.

So far as we can tell, many of the ideas we have presented here are novel within the environmental-progressive movement. It can take some thinking to integrate them and add them to your skill set. Having a practice run with the Stable Planet Alliance [Outreach slide deck](#) and with [Kitchen Table Conversations](#) would be very useful. These articles can help.

[Aligning to Co-Create a New Kind of Social Change Movement](#)

[Becoming an Evolutionary Catalyst](#)

[Improving Brain Functioning and Social Change](#)

[DesignShop thinking and Social Change](#)

That noted, since our intent is to catalyze a new kind of social change movement, there is ample room for your own initiative and creativity!

If you care about the future, and you think there may be merit in our vision, we urge you to consider working with us. No individual or group can have sufficient influence on their own; it will take an alignment of millions of us.

Let’s make it happen!

Pam Pence, Stable Planet Alliance, Executive Director

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APPENDIX: Social change through improving brain functioning

The idea of improving brain functioning is novel in the world of social change. We are used to lectures and messages. Or, as one person posted on a social change thread, “I see no alternative now to taking some form of Direct Action.”

I noted earlier Donella Meadow’s insight that the most influential leverage point for systems change is in people’s paradigms – our mode of thinking and the world view that sets up the system. Helping people think broadly and deeply is far more influential in the long run than broadcasting messages.

Typically neither academics nor activists work at this level. Few activists or academics are trained in the approach to improving brain functioning. Some of our insights are informed by Moshe Feldenkrais.

In addition to emotional drivers, there are three fundamental aspects of any skilled behavior, whether it is as simple as driving a car or as sophisticated as negotiating a peace treaty.

The three aspects are people’s mental maps, or how they understand the situation; people’s intentions or goals; and people’s *modus operandi* – how they go about accomplishing their intentions. (In the world of martial arts, for example, consider the contrast between the hard strikes of karate and the graceful throws of judo or aikido.)

This insight opens up innovative new approaches to fostering healthy cultural evolution.

For example, we can expand people’s mental maps. This is the purpose of *Escalating Disasters* and *Kitchen Table Conversations*.

People’s behavior is based on their emotions and thinking, and here we are enabling people to think more realistically and comprehensively about the actual state of our world.

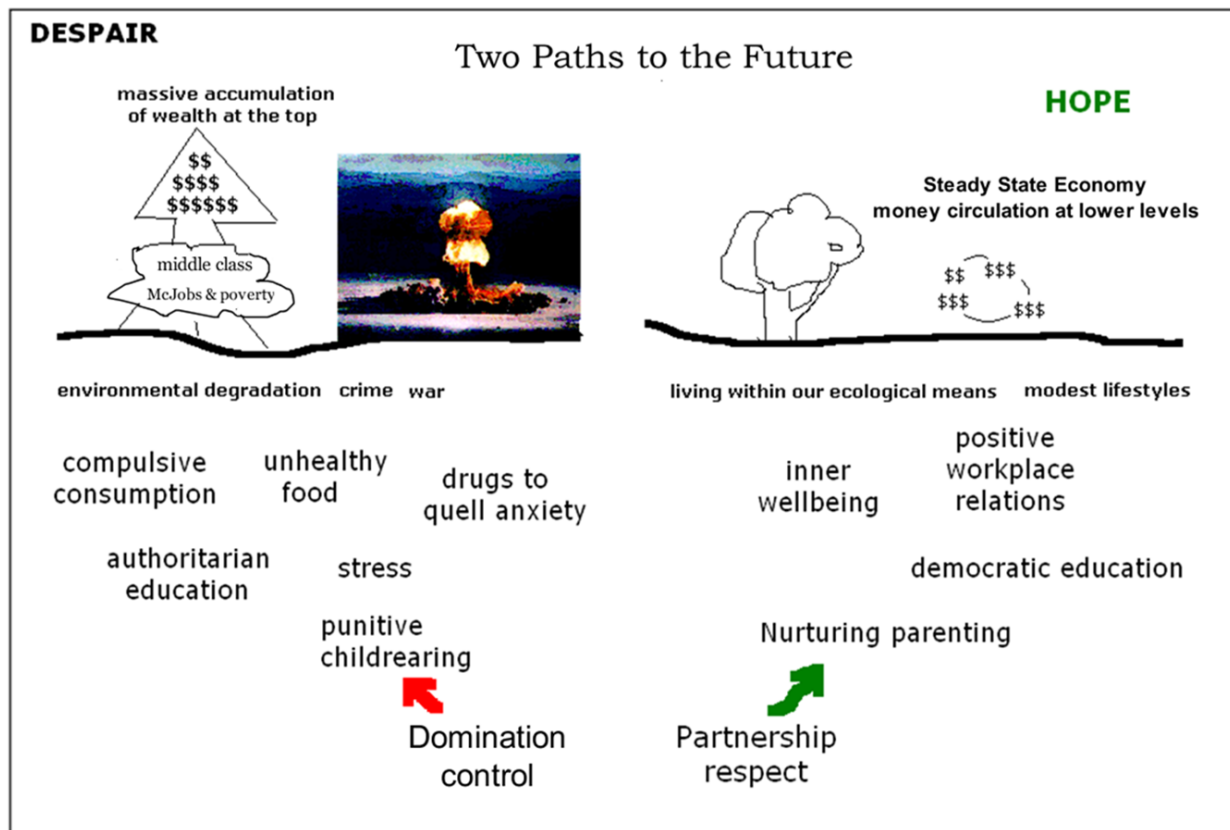
The predominant goal of our society, as you know, is *economic growth*. Presumably if people expand their mental maps and grasp that this goal is taking us to catastrophic ecological collapse, they will become open to consider an alternative goal, such as *creating a compassionate ecologically sustainable world*.

The third component, *modus operandi*, is profoundly important. It is about the way people go about accomplishing their intentions.

Systems thinker Riane Eisler observed that there are two fundamentally different modes of relating. One of them, *domination-control*, has shaped Western history for millennia. Think of wars and empires... workplace bullying, domestic violence and child abuse.

Riane Eisler calls the contrasting style *partnership-respect* relating. Partnership-respect relating is about using our power, authority and care to promote the well-being of our family, our community, and now our globalized civilization and the rest of life on Earth.

Domination-control has been the basis of foreign policy for a long time. As a new era of international arms competition ramps up, given the reality of unstoppable nuclear weapons, I think – horrifyingly! – that most likely outcome of our current trajectory is global nuclear annihilation. If so, then embodying partnership-respect relating at every level from international relations down to improved parenting styles is not an idealistic wish, but a necessity for our future survival. Improving child rearing is one way to act on this.



APPENDIX: Out-of-the-box communication tactics

Here are a number of ‘out-of-the-box’ communication tactics to use during and after the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch.

Seafood restaurants

For example, upmarket seafood restaurants could carry discrete signage about the impending loss of the oceanic food chain, and refer them to the Evolutionary Catalyst website for more information. The website, of course, will connect the dots between the destruction of the ocean and our economic industrial system.

Understandably, restaurant owners may be concerned about offending their patrons. On the other hand, they may care enough to quietly raise the issue. Our times call for leadership. In the meantime, they continue to serve great food!

Personal development companies

There are several large companies that offer personal development courses. One of them, the Shift network, has more than 3 million participants and 3000 presenters, each of whom has their own following.

This is a vast network of potential Evolutionary Communicators.

Workshops on the fly

Workshops on the fly are short modules that Evolutionary Communicators can use to introduce people to useful thinking and perceptual skills.

An example is raising the question *How do you respond when your ideas are challenged?* You can introduce people to the idea of *considering what merit, if any, might be in the challenge* as a simple workshop on the fly. It can be introduced within three minutes in an informal conversation.

Kitchen Table Conversations are another workshop on the fly.

Workshops on the fly are consistent with [The Inner Development Goals](#). Many can be developed. We will have an open-source library.

We envision a new renaissance of learning. Unlike the Renaissance in the 1400s, rather than focus on the humanities, philosophy and art, the new renaissance will focus on skills to become the kind of people that can create and enjoy a life-affirming culture that works for all.

Supermarkets aligning to raise the alarm and champion evolving a life-affirming culture

In Australia, Coles and Woolworths are the two largest supermarket chains. If they – perhaps in conjunction with the smaller outlets – simultaneously speak about the realities of our ecological emergency, they will not lose customers.

However, their CEOs could be fired. Evolutionary Catalysts try to help leaders navigate the tension between making money and being humane.

Planetary Health videos in medical waiting rooms

Medical Centers can show educational videos in their waiting rooms, connecting ecological challenges with growing systemic health challenges.

Flyers in auto repair shops and small businesses.

A majority of people are now concerned about climate change. Many small businesses could display flyers suggesting, “If you are concerned about climate change, go to the Evolutionary Catalysts website for ideas about how you can contribute to making a difference.”

Posters and cartoons on public bulletin boards

Clever graphics can jog people’s minds, and refer people to the Evolutionary Catalysts website. They can be inexpensively produced and easily posted.

Three-day intensive think tanks

These think tanks enable leaders to think through in depth the connections between climate change, industrial production, climate ocean acidification, renewable energy, and unresolved trauma – the whole nexus.

Teaching systems thinking through the body

Moshe Feldenkrais devised a large series of Awareness Through Movement lessons. In pace, they are a bit like yoga. But their purpose is slightly different; it is to enable people to sense their body more accurately. This improves body coordination.

By doing a short series of Awareness Through Movement lessons people discover that everything in the body is connected. In other words, they are learning systems thinking in relationship to the body.

Feldenkrais practitioners and yoga teachers could build on this by offering classes where they combine Awareness Through Movement lessons with ecological awareness and Kitchen Table Conversations.

Psychotherapists offering free or low-cost training in DIY techniques for resolving emotional issues

Equipping people to resolve their own emotional issues would be a direct contribution to the compassion side of evolving a compassionate ecologically sustainable world. My book [*Inner Work is*](#) a manual. Organizations such as Psychotherapy Networker could promote the idea. And there are thousands of practitioners of [*Emotional Freedom Technique*](#) (EFT) and similar modalities.

The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) and other peak bodies championing adequate social safety nets

Ideally, a prosperous country such as America or Australia would have modest but adequate social safety nets anyway. But now, since slowing the economy is essential for avoiding catastrophic ecological collapse, adequate social safety nets are essential.

The organizations in ACOSS could start this conversation among their members.

A massive social media network

Groups have members. Each member has their own social media network, some large, some small. During the Evolutionary Catalyst Launch members of groups will be asked to simultaneously post about Launch events, inviting people to equip themselves to be Evolutionary Communicators.

Drip-feed educational snippets

People are time poor. But they have a little bit of time. People could sign up to receive very short posts perhaps twice a week. These posts will be designed to enable the recipients to gradually build up a rich understanding of our polycrisis and what to do about it.

This technique will be part of a larger program to inspire thoughtful public will to transform our destructive system, and indeed evolve a compassionate ecologically sustainable world.

The possibilities are endless

We are showing possibilities of what could happen during the launch. Very likely you can think of additional ways. Suggestions welcome! Send them to:

info@StablePlanetAlliance.org.

We are creating a compassionate, just, ecologically sustainable world.