

# Stable Planet Alliance

## Becoming an Evolutionary Catalyst

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**Stable Planet Alliance**

Many of us care about the future of our civilization. We see clearly that current trends are disastrous, and we would like to contribute to turning things around.

Communication is key. But what kind of communication? Messages bounce off unprepared minds because of habitual thinking patterns. I would like to introduce a new social change role, *Evolutionary Catalyst*.

### Evolutionary Catalysts

Evolutionary Catalysts enable people to think more realistically, more comprehensively and with more nuance about the great issues of our time: climate change, ecological unraveling, the potential for nuclear annihilation, and power elites that are both self-serving and at times overtly cruel.

Stable Planet Alliance supports Evolutionary Catalysts.

Our intention is to mobilize thoughtful public will to change our destructive system. The process is transformational: our collective journey is to become the kind of people that can create and enjoy a compassionate ecologically sustainable world.

Our two basic communication tools are:

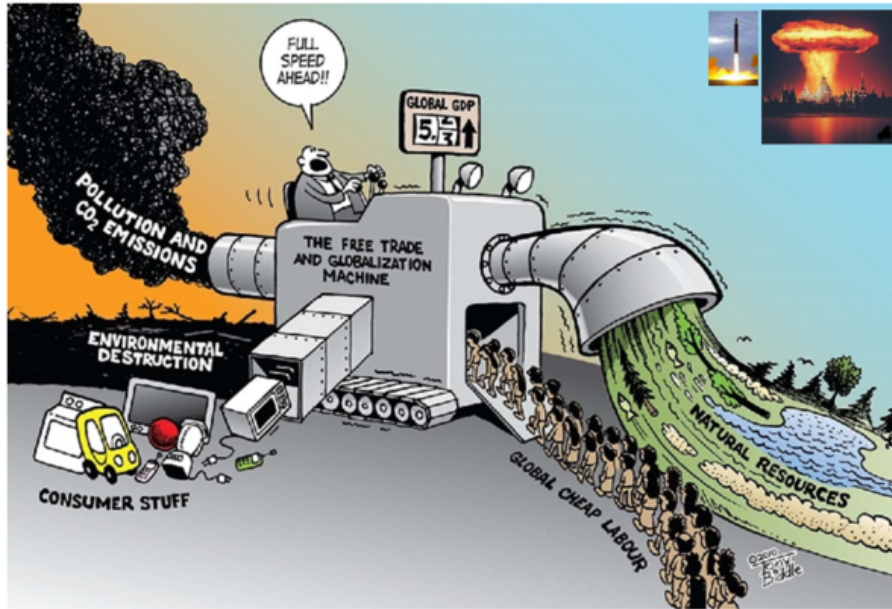
- [Escalating Disasters](#)
- [Kitchen Table Conversations](#)

We have others, but these two are core.

In what follows I introduce perspectives on our polycrisis which I believe can make us far more realistic and influential.

### Our destructive system

This cartoon illustrates our destructive system.



If we are to actually reduce fossil fuel emissions and other ecological damage, it is essential to dramatically reduce industrial production and consumption.

Virtually nobody wants that! Currently, most people want to become *more* affluent, and in any case folks are concerned about their jobs, their mortgages, and their retirement.

Of course, a hothouse Earth and massive starvation are worse alternatives – far worse.

There is much we could do to slow and ultimately reverse ecological destruction.

However, nothing will happen at the scale we need unless, somehow, those of us who care mobilize public will to make the changes.

## Coming to terms with our ecological emergency

It seems to me that there are two stages people go through in coming to terms with our ecological emergency: *raising the alarm* and *grasping the system* that drives our destruction.

1. **Raising the alarm** is about enabling people to viscerally feel that current global trends are so disastrous that our civilization is headed for collapse – which will mean no more food in the supermarkets. This is a reason to change.

Although many young people feel this acutely, for many people this stark reality is hard to accept.

*Escalating Disasters* is a communications tool to start the conversation.

2. **Grasping the system** is about enabling people to intellectually grasp how *economic growth*, *expectations of affluence*, *population* and, psychologically,

*unresolved trauma* are major drivers of ecological destruction. This clarifies *what* needs to change.

[Kitchen Table Conversations](#) is a communication tool for a thoughtful conversation that enables people to connect these dots. People move from silo thinking to seeing the overall system.

We use labels on beer coasters to help people keep track of the conversation.

Importantly, people consider the connection between economic growth and ecological self-destruction.

The layout looks like this:



These conversations prepare people mentally and emotionally to support leadership for the policy and institutional changes necessary for us to slow down to a steady state economy.

Evolutionary Catalysts conduct these conversations with people they know. And sometimes with influential people.

Messages bounce off unprepared minds. However, people can take in new ideas, and perhaps even revise their thinking, through informal friendly conversations. The conversations need to be structured and purposeful if they are to cohere in ways that shift people's mindsets. Our tools provide that structure.

The simplest way to initiate an *evolutionary conversation*, as we might call it, is to invite a friend to spend dedicated time with you, perhaps while having coffee. Or casually say, "Can I show you something?"

## **Taking it to scale**

If our aim is to affect public mindsets, of course we need to take these conversations to scale. We need millions of us conducting evolutionary conversations. Who might do this?

The good news is that there are millions of groups that care about social and ecological well-being. Millions. Their members primarily pay dues and sign petitions. Occasionally they protest.

Given useful tools, support and encouragement, they could go beyond the limits of ordinary social convention and gently engage people in conversations where learning occurs.

Our idea is to align as many groups as possible to the common cause of *inspiring thoughtful public engagement in creating a compassionate ecologically sustainable world*. The first step, of course, is to reach out to leaders of groups.

## **Outreach**

Evolutionary Catalysts initiate conversations with leaders of groups and thought leaders to enroll them in this vision of a new kind of social change movement.

Stable Planet Alliance is a hub that many groups can align with to inspire public commitment to creating a compassionate ecologically sustainable world. Groups can champion this overarching goal – and encourage their members to be Evolutionary Catalysts – while passionately pursuing their primary missions.

Our Outreach conversations use a series of images to tell the story of moving from concern about global warming to seeing larger ecological trends, and from there to grasping the system that drives destruction across the board.

### [Outreach Deck](#)

We introduce the positive goal of *creating a compassionate ecologically sustainable world*, and then introduce the environmental-progressive movement's greatest

conundrum: *How to go beyond our own thought bubbles?* How might we engage people who do not come to our lectures or seek out our books and videos? How do we reach the general public?

The answer, we suggest, is to inspire the members of established groups – and the many savvy people who do not happen to be members of groups – to become communicators and leaders in their own right... e.g. Evolutionary Catalysts.

Here is our tool for Outreach conversations.

Stable Planet Alliance [Outreach conversation](#)

## Improving emotional functioning

People who have an inner sense of well-being have no need for excessive wealth, and they are not cruel.

Regretfully, because of abusive or neglectful child rearing, many people are traumatized. There are traumatized people in every socioeconomic class, including the wealthy elites. Perhaps especially in the wealthy elites.

Some traumatized people, though not all, play out their anger by bullying, hurting people, or through policies that hurt the environment and create the conditions for war.

The good news is that childrearing has been improving (Robin Grille's *Parenting for a Peaceful World*).

Many of today's parents raise their children with far more compassion and encouragement that was the case in earlier generations. Providing new parents with support to bring out more of their nurturing side than their punitive side is a key leverage point for healthy cultural evolution. There are many programs that do this. Public health officials would be wise to invest in this.

Nevertheless, many people are traumatized. Again, we have good news. There are powerful experiential techniques for healing trauma. The master work on this is research psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*.

There are perennial discussions about *What is human nature?* We can surely show up as vicious and cruel. Although some people seem to be genetically predisposed to be psychopathic, the primary driver of our cruelty is *unresolved trauma*.

Richard Schwartz and other Internal Family Therapists have discovered that when trauma is resolved, what emerges is what might be called our 'core of goodness'. At root we are caring, compassionate, courageous and more.

The implication of this is thrilling! In this liminal time, despite the rise of authoritarianism, we have techniques to resolve trauma and greatly improve emotional well-being and maturity. This is the inner work of evolving a compassionate ecologically sustainable world.

My own *Inner Work: Resolving Emotional Triggers* is a manual of techniques people can use to resolve their own emotional triggers.

The techniques were chosen because people can apply them without great training. One, EFT, is a well-known technique of tapping on acupressure points. The other is a visualization process for communicating with traumatized parts of ourselves. Both are highly effective.

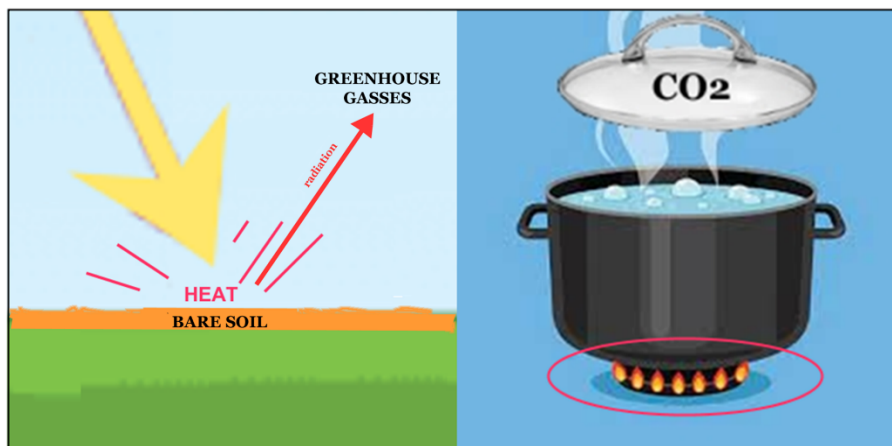
Evolutionary Catalysts do well to learn and teach these techniques as another aspect of contributing to healthy cultural evolution.

## The solution to cooling the Earth

A majority of people are now concerned about climate change. But there is one question that even climate activists rarely ask: *Where does the heat come from that greenhouse gases trap?*

Bare ground heats up far more than vegetated soil. Doubtless you know the difference between being on concrete and being on grass or under trees on a hot day.

Over millennia, through poor agricultural practices, humans have turned once fertile land into deserts. Like a hotplate on the stove, these deserts radiate much of the heat that greenhouse gases trap.



The amount of desertification is enormous.



Massive regeneration is possible. Here is a before and after photo view of regeneration done on the Loess Plateau in northern China.



Reforestation is also being done in the Sahel to stop the southern expansion of the Sahara desert, and there are other projects around the world.

Reforestation not only directly reduces the heat going into the atmosphere. By increasing transpiration it reestablishes the Earth's natural cooling system. This short video tells the story:

### [How plants cool the Earth](#)

André Leu's masterful *The Regenerative Agriculture Solution* describes a variety of techniques farmers are using to build soil fertility and increase the productivity of small farms. He offers rough calculations to show that we can draw down more carbon than we emit. But beyond that, taken to scale, enabling millions of small landholders in Africa and Central America will directly contribute to cooling the Earth.

I regard this as perhaps the most important book of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Two key elements are to capture water on site and keep the land green year-round. Ordinary plowing exposes bare soil to the sun. This increases evaporation and kills life in the soil. That's how the deserts have been created over millennia.

By investing in reforestation and by supporting millions of small landholders in the Global South to upgrade to regenerative farming we could begin to turn down planetary hotplate in about 20 years, and initiate the process of cooling the Earth even though fossil fuel emissions remain high.

I'll say it again: *We can cool the Earth!*

Our challenge is to bring this into the public conversation so convincingly that the affluent nations invest massively in supporting Third World farmers in regenerative agriculture and reforestation.

Perhaps the money might come from military budgets?

## **Nuclear annihilation?**

These hopeful prospects will be completely obliterated if there is a nuclear war.

Think about it. If nations of the world continue to invest heavily in hypersonic maneuverable nuclear missiles with a hostile attitude of geopolitical competition, *can we imagine any scenario where this will not lead to a nuclear exchange?*

Nuclear missile systems are now on hair-trigger alert. US Aegis missiles in Poland are only 15 minutes flight time from Moscow. Submarines with nuclear missiles can launch within a few minutes. A nuclear exchange could be triggered accidentally through a misinterpreted glitch on a radar screen, or by a desperate or demented leader ordering a nuclear strike. It would be all over for our globalized civilization within two hours.

Just as the only path to actual ecological sustainability is to dramatically reduce industrial production globally, likewise the only path to a secure peace is to dramatically reduce military budgets and dismantle all nuclear weapons.

Obviously these require dramatic shifts in public attitudes and understanding.

## **Work with us!**

Stable Planet Alliance provides a simple but robust platform to support a new kind of social change movement. Social change movements in the past, sparked by injustice and exploitation, have been about *resistance*. The positive side of many religious movements has been to inspire people to live more compassionately. Now, in the context of overshoot and planetary peril, our task is to improve both people's thinking and people's emotional functioning.

My request is that you consider becoming an Evolutionary Catalyst.

## **People love practical action**

I am aware that people love practical actions. Faced with a challenging problem, many people want to immediately jump to solutions.

Skilled strategic thinkers take a different approach. They step back and consider the big picture before deciding on a course of action. When you look at the big picture you may identify leverage points that are far more effective than if you only looked at supposedly obvious solutions.

Stable Planet's aim, with others (it will take a multitude of us aligning together!) is to transform the system that drives our destruction. We are in the business of changing mindsets, and tools such as Kitchen Table Conversations can help with this.

The idea of affecting mindsets can seem very abstract, even amorphous. But in fact, it is very practical. People's behavior is based on their ways of thinking.

The big picture drivers of ecological destruction, including expectations of affluence and devotion to economic growth, cannot be changed by purely individual actions, or even by improved technology. These may make local improvements but can not make a dent on their own in a world with a swelling population seeking ever-increasing affluence.

For example, even though renewable energy is a growth industry, fossil fuel emissions are projected to remain high well after 2050. China is building more coal-fired power plants, and Southeast Asia and African countries are industrializing as rapidly as they can. Russian exports of oil to India are increasing. You get the idea.

This is why I suggested earlier that intentionally slowing the industrial-economic machine globally is essential for avoiding the worst of coming ecological disasters.

As impossible as it may seem, inspiring public engagement in creating a compassionate, ecologically sustainable world is crucial.

We are not without resources. A majority of people are concerned about climate change and more. There are millions of groups that care.

## **Reservations about acting as an Evolutionary Catalyst**

There can be many reasons why a person would choose to *not* work with us. Here are some possibilities. I hope you will consider if you identify with any of these and that you will not be stopped by them.

*Not invented here.*

*I only do things that make me money.*

*Nobody tells me what to do.*

*People are stupid and don't care.*

*I'm committed to doing my own thing.*

*I don't know who I could talk to.*

*I'm too shy.*

*I don't want to offend people.*

*I don't want to be ostracized.*

*It's too late – I'm not willing to do anything.*

*I'm an academic – I just analyze.*

*This is all too intellectual.*

*I just do practical stuff.*

*I don't know enough.*

As you well know, we are in a planetary emergency. It does not serve us to play small. Nor does it work to just do our own thing, however goodhearted. This is an opportunity to go beyond what might hold you back. This is a time for everybody to step up. We need you!

Our times call for a tsunami of transformational change, not just ripples. Only aligned action can generate the tsunami. We are inviting you to be an Evolutionary Catalyst and work together to shift consciousness at scale.

During World War II millions of men and women risked and lost their lives fighting the oppression of Nazi Germany. Here we are not asking folks to risk their lives, but to be willing to get a bit uncomfortable and talk with people.

As to the question of whether you know enough, I can assure you with confidence that you do. This is because you already know a great deal, and our communication tools cover the main points of the conversation. You do not have to be an expert.

Perhaps someone will query you on some point that you don't know. That's all right. You can simply acknowledge that you don't know, and that you will look into it. In the meantime, you will have had the larger conversation with them. Our aim is to develop enough background understanding in the general population that future constructive, responsible leaders will have lots of support.

In these conversations, while we hope to influence people's thinking, we are not trying to persuade folks. We are creating an opportunity for folks to think about reality in a new way; what they do with that is up to them.

Your potential capacity is not limited to your current level of skill. Very likely the first time you conduct a Kitchen Table Conversation using our beer coasters (if you do), you will find it awkward. That's why I suggest doing a practice run with a friend, with no agenda other than simply getting familiar with using the tool.

But with a couple of goes you will become more comfortable with asking friends to sit down and have a conversation, and more flexible in the way you conduct the conversation. Perhaps, like I do, you will find the conversations engaging.

Likewise, if you choose to act as an Evolutionary Catalyst and introduce leaders to this vision of a new kind of social change you will become more adroit with experience.

Of course, people should follow their passions. But unless we also mobilize public will to shift the big picture drivers of climate change and the rest... well, you know the consequences.

It is a matter of both-and. We can and should pursue the local things we care about. And, I suggest, we do well to also commit ourselves to a project that is bigger than all of us: evolving a viable culture for the sake of coming generations.

*The challenge of our time is to mobilize thoughtful public engagement in creating a compassionate ecologically sustainable world.*

Let's do it together!

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### **Relational Acknowledgment**

Some of the images used in this piece are still in the process of being traced back to their original creators. At Stable Planet, we understand that every image carries a lineage—and often, invisible labor.

As a currently unfunded, volunteer-led collective, we may not be able to compensate financially, but we are committed to honoring creators through attribution, visibility, and relational care.

If you recognize the origin of any image and can help us reconnect it with its source, please reach out: [info@StablePlanetAlliance.org](mailto:info@StablePlanetAlliance.org)

We welcome this form of co-stewardship as part of our broader mission to shift from extractive habits to reciprocal, compassionate presence.

