

# The Power of Taking a Stand (A group Exercise)

The key ingredient in making something—anything—happen in the world starts with making a commitment, *taking a stand*. It all begins right there.

As poet Drew Dellinger wrote:

*It's 3:23 in the morning, and I'm awake because my great-great grandchildren won't let me sleep.  
My great-great grandchildren ask me in dreams,  
What did you do while the planet was plundered?  
What did you do when the Earth was unraveling?  
Surely you did something when the seasons started failing,  
As the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?  
Did you fill the streets with protest when democracy was stolen?  
What did you do once you knew?"*

We know that our current worldview, and the industrial system it gave rise to, have run up against the limits of a finite planet. We know that the vitality of the Earth is declining every day. That the chasm between the few of us who have more than we need and the many of us who have not nearly enough, gets wider every day. And we know that it is hurting all of us inside.

At the same time, we know that we are part of a worldwide awakening—a grassroots movement for change that is unprecedented in human history. So now that we know, the question arises: What part do we play in this great unfolding story? Where do we go from here? Where do *you* go from here?

George Bernard Shaw wrote:

*This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can....  
...I rejoice in life for its own sake.  
Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.*

Taking a stand for what you believe in is a powerful, life-affirming act. Actually bringing forth a just, sustainable, fulfilling world will involve joining in a deep and authentic way with others who share this vision and stand.

A stand is *for* something. It's a creative act. It's a declaration of a vision or outcome in the future that a person is a commitment to. It comes from the heart, from the soul, from vision, and is *life-affirming*. When you're living from a stand, you experience that your life has meaning and can—and does—make a difference. A kind of elation and sense of spiritual fulfillment often occurs when we let ourselves be “used” by our commitment in this way.

When we take a stand, we are taking responsibility for our future. When we *embody* that responsibility, it inspires and generates participation.

Van Jones put it this way: *I don't think an authentic stand comes from your head. I think an authentic stand comes from your heart. If your child is sick, right...something happens in you to make a miracle, to make a miracle. And if you start thinking about it, you'll sit down. But if you feel it, you'll stand up!*

*That's the amazing thing about this thing is that it's when you stand up you license other people to stand up. Now you stand up by yourself don't make a dad gum bit of difference—in the rational world. You're just one fool standing up. But have you ever seen a standing ovation? It starts with one fool standing up. And then pretty soon the whole stadium is standing up, and it's a different moment.*

### Opportunity to Declare What We Stand For

The fact is we all stand for *something* already. *What* we are standing for shows up in what we give our lives to, and the choices we make every day. As the American writer Annie Dillard said, “The way we spend our days is, of course, the way we spend our lives.”

So what are you *standing for*?

This is an opportunity to commit (or recommit) to including standing for *this* in your life's purpose

### Declaration Card

We're passing out a declaration card—or you could call it a commitment card—for you to sign and keep, if you wish.

If you wish, use this moment to silently declare yourself, and then sign the card, and keep it as a reminder of your personal commitment to that goal. (You might put it up some place that you will see it every day, like on top of a dresser, or on your desk or refrigerator.)

Declaration Card Text Graphic

I am committed to bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet as the guiding principle of our times by fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth and promoting active care of all creation in the following ways:

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Signature

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Date

*(Pause, allow time for people who wish to fill out card.)*

Thank you and congratulations. You are not alone. Like you, thousands and thousands of people all around the world have taken this stand, and are experiencing the momentum, the meaning—and the challenge— that results from taking a stand for creating a future that reflects our shared vision for all of humanity and for our planet.