
GREEN

Shift

*From Denial
to Awareness
into Action*

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Introduction

GreenShift is a story of transformation. The transformation of one mother—a single mother and a psychologist-- from a casual recycler who was vaguely aware of global warming to a reluctant and unlikely environmentalist, to ultimately a new eco warrior who is deeply committed to using her professional expertise to tackle the climate crisis.

It is a story of personal transformation but it is also a story of social transformation, because the author knew at the moment of her “conversion” that she was joining a growing movement of professionals who were working to avert climate catastrophe.

It is also a love story, because the author’s impetus for becoming a new eco warrior is her fierce love of her two young boys.

Along the way the author shares what she has learned about the rewards and challenges of her transformation, as well as what she has learned about climate change and what we can do to prevent climate disaster.

The mission of the book is to enlist other unlikely environmentalists and new eco-warriors into the burgeoning movement by converting awareness into meaningful action.

Here you’ll find the first chapter of the book: [From Casual Recycler and Unlikely Environmentalist to New Eco Warrior: One Mother’s Conversion.](#) Please enjoy it with our compliments and share it with your family, friends and colleagues.

We invite you to learn more about the Spheres of Influence Salon on Climate Change which gives you the opportunity to get involved and use your spheres of influence through discussions, live events and email updates. Visit www.ourspheresofinfluence.com and sign up to be on our mailing list so that we can keep you updated on the latest on the book and Salon events.

Chapter One

From Casual Recycler to Unlikely Environmentalist and New Eco Warrior: One Mother's Conversion

Over coffee recently, an old friend asked me if I'd had a "defining moment" that led to changing my life to take on global warming. "Yes! As a matter of fact I did!" I answered. I told her how one morning in June 2006, I happened to tune into an interview on the radio with Dr. Paul Epstein, a physician at Harvard who's been studying the health effects of global warming. That day, I went from an ordinary, middle class single mother of a three and a five year old, working as a psychologist and career coach, to a reluctant global warming activist. First, I understood that global warming threatens my children's health, not just in the future, but now-- problems like new virulent diseases for which we have no treatments and West Nile virus. The problem was no longer remote and huge and abstract. It was a menace to my two young rascals whom I love—fiercely. I felt alarmed and agitated, yet overwhelmed and paralyzed. Thankfully, that was to change only moments later. The interviewer asked if he was pessimistic. He said, in fact, he was optimistic because so many smart people around the world were working on the problem. Now, not only could I relate to the problem, but I saw that there was collective momentum that I could join in. Having felt overwhelmed and at a loss only moments before, I now saw a vague path to action—and couldn't live with myself if I didn't take that path.

At that moment I was called to action—and I answered. From that moment I knew that I had to find a way to use my professional expertise in behavior change to make the greatest possible difference. I didn't know how, but I knew I had to find a way. Little did I know how amazingly my life would change, what wonderful and remarkable people I would encounter, and how much *I* would change by working to change the world for the sake of my children. I was about to become an unlikely and reluctant environmentalist, and I would ultimately become what I call a new eco warrior.

Some years before, when global warming was first starting to receive a bit of attention in the media, as a psychologist trained in the ways of social science, I thought skeptically, "Well, life is full of cyclical curves. We don't know yet about this warming curve we're on." Over time, I had come to accept the consensus of the international scientific community that we were not experiencing mere natural warming cycles but that our human consumption of electricity and petroleum products and trees--particularly in my lifetime--generates quantities of CO₂ that overtax the ability of the plants and oceans to absorb and recycle that CO₂, causing global climate change. By that day in June of 2006, I was no longer in denial about the problem, but I was in denial about the solution.

Why a Reluctant Eco Warrior?

As is often the case when one feels called—perhaps to paint, to write, or to minister—I did not feel I had a choice. As a working mother of two preschool aged boys in the midst of finalizing a divorce, free time was not something I had to fill. And, between motherhood and my work as a psychologist and professional coach, I already had a

strong sense of purpose in life. But realizing what the global climate crisis, unchecked, meant for my children's future left me no alternative.

But I have approached my activism reluctantly. Perhaps my greatest source of reluctance derives from the fact that I am a deeply private person. I've always lived a very private life. I've never been more politically active than voting. Even in my professional life, I don't go seeking clients, they seek me out because of some dilemma. And I render my professional opinions behind closed doors. Privacy suits me. But in order for me to be effective in using my expertise in behavior change on a problem of such scale and urgency, I'm forced to become a public person, operating on a wider stage.

I have the usual parental concerns. I recently had to go through the ordeal of buying health insurance, and now I'm concerned that I'll be dropped if I use it. I'm aware that social security is going to run out. I am a member of what I call the "sandwich generation"—sandwiched between aging parents and young kids. I'm mourning the loss of my size 4 figure. I want my kids to be confident, well-rounded people who get their best shot at a good life.

But my first obligation as a mother is to keep my children healthy and safe. This is why I'm working to try to increase enforcement of the stop sign across from the elementary school where drivers routinely blow through even when elderly people, dogs on leashes, and babies in strollers are in the middle of the cross walk. Likewise—or more so-- If global warming has the potential to harm my children—all our children-- I have to do everything in my power to protect them. And so, I tear myself away from them, and I ask them to tolerate moments when, as my youngest son says, I'm "busy at the 'puter." And certainly my resilience has been tested as I juggle my various responsibilities.

Despite the considerable tradeoffs and the complexities of being a self-employed, single parent running a household with two very rambunctious little boys, the more I've learned about the impact of my lifestyle on global warming, the more I've seen what global warming means for future generations, the more I've explored the moral and ethical implications of inaction, and the more I've experienced and witnessed the personal rewards of action, the more deeply convicted I've become in my belief that the most important thing I can do as a mother and a professional is devote my time and talents to trying to avert climate catastrophe for my children.

For me, global warming trumps everything else—because everything is at stake. At the same time, I understand why for other people there may see other equally or more pressing concerns. I was chatting with the door attendant at my office building one time about my book, and she said the thing that saddens and worries her is so many children getting killed. In her world, that trumps everything. And I understand.

But for those of us who are not worrying about such immediate life and death concerns, for those of us who are in a position to pick and choose our commitments—I think we need to act on the global climate crisis as the most pressing issue of our era.

Some months ago the mother of one my sons' friends said, "Thank you for your activism." I smiled and nodded, but I felt uncomfortable being called an activist. The

term didn't fit my sense of myself. Yet, the term is accurate now. When more recently my younger son asked me if I was a warrior, I hesitated, then replied, "Yes." Then he said, "So you're a lady warrior." Yes, that is where love has taken me. I'm not an activist by nature, I'm activist by necessity. I've become "Dr. Sarah-- lady eco warrior."

When I met Dr. Paul Epstein recently—as I knew I someday would-- at a luncheon hosted by The Climate Group—I thanked him for coming into my life and complicating it, for the better.

Starting Down the Path

The day of my awakening, I sent two emails: The first to one of my best friends from college, the other to my brother who has been working at the interface of business and the environment for nearly 25 years, telling him that this work on the health effects of global warming reminded me of our father's dinner table accounts of how events such as the construction of the Aswan dam created conditions for the development of new potent diseases. These were my first—tiny-- actions as a global warming activist. I didn't know then how much more was to follow.

That pivotal day, I connected global warming to potential harmful effects on my children. That was one part of the causal chain—the implications of global climate change. Since then, I've set about learning how my lifestyle contributes to global warming pollution-- thereby putting my children at risk. This was another part of the causal chain that I was seeing, not just how global warming affects my life, but how I affect global warming through my actions and inactions. As I've gradually learned more and more about my contribution to the problem—little parts in the causal chain--- I've been challenging myself to reduce my global warming pollution.

And, I began embarking on the awkward, sometimes painful process of figuring out how I could use what I call my "spheres of influence" to bring my expertise in behavior change to bear on this most vital problem. How could I use my years of experience as a psychological coach, a business consultant, and an addictions specialist to address what people from Tom Friedman, author of *Hot, Flat and Crowded*, to President Bush have called "our addiction to oil"?

After thrashing about for several months, mentally trying on different roles as an expert in behavior change for the age of global warming, I hit on the idea of writing this book—an inspirational and informative personal account about the personal rewards of combating climate change. And because the book is personal in nature, all of my activities, dilemmas, ventures, adventures and encounters become material for the book.

Interestingly, as I've become more involved in our environmental crisis, my career coaching practice has evolved. I had always done values-oriented career transition coaching, but an increasing focus of the coaching process became helping people "green" their careers. This is partly because of the self-selection of clients, I'm sure, and partly because the topic has been on more and more people's minds. Now, I'm offering teleseminars on how to green your career. It's certainly been an opportune way for me to

integrate my personal interest with my work. So I've "greened" my business and career by helping other people green their careers.

And working on the book led me to think further about how to enlist more unlikely environmentalists, which led me to found the Spheres of Influence Salon on Climate Change. The Salon, a national and local organization, brings "Inner Sphere" national thought leaders and experts around the country into relationship with each other to promote the work of combating climate change. But importantly, it brings "Outer Sphere" concerned citizens who are aware but not engaged into dialogue.

Along the way, I've met wonderful people whom I wouldn't have otherwise met, have deepened my relationship with my brother with whom I now talk to across 2000 miles sometimes more than once a day, and I've changed my sense of myself in the world by empowering myself to use my voice beyond the privacy of my office.

Transformation and Empowerment

In order to do this work, I've had to grow into a larger sense of myself. The process has been both painful and exciting. Painful because I've had to push myself, both personally and professionally to grow into a larger role than I ever inhabited. Although I've used my psychological training in a number of different ways—from research to teaching to expert witness to career coaching and addictions treatment—I've always felt, until now, clear about my professional identity. I can, of course, continue rendering services as before, and I have—but new, broader uses of my knowledge lie ahead. Painful because of the uncertainty in having no "job description," no road map for navigating this unprecedented juncture in my own life and in history. Painful because there are not enough hours in the day to be useful in this crisis in all the places where I see need and opportunity. Painful because of the uncertainty of being able to have a significant impact.

The process has been exciting because as I work to ensure a viable world for my children, I am changing myself. My brother commented to me recently that we had undergone a role reversal from our relationship as teenagers, when he careened around while I cautiously navigated the world. Now, I'm the one who's taking risks and making grand plans for launching a new career with lofty intentions. He has many more years of substantive knowledge about the environment, but I'm leading him out onto a wider stage.

Exciting because the challenges we face at this moment in history represent a tremendous opportunity for us to come together for the sake of humanity.

Now I know the research on the women in the 1970s who fought to clean up Love Canal, the country's most notorious toxic waste site in New York State. Those women were similarly transformed. I'm not alone in reaping the personal rewards of fighting to protect the natural world for the sake of my children.

Using My Spheres of Influence

Since my turning point, I've been discovering, expanding, and using my spheres of influence—as a consumer, a parent, and an investor, as a member of a school community, as a voter, a parishioner, a professional, and a neighbor. I've discovered that I have voice that I can use in every part of my life— not just in my office—, and everywhere I go I can model my own version of environmental stewardship.

I've not just been writing, speaking, and adjusting my lifestyle and business practices. I joined the Executive Committee of Cool Globes: Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet, a partnership between the City of Chicago and the Field Museum of Natural History that used public art – to the tune of 124 globes during the summer of 2007 on Chicago's beautiful and well-traveled lakefront—to increase public awareness of global warming “solutions.” The project started with the modest goal of finding 25 corporate globe sponsors to raise funds for environmental education in the Chicago Public Schools, and ended up with over 100 sponsors ranging from Toyota to Starbucks. Thousands of visitors went on guided tours of the globes. A free downloadable curriculum was developed, and now the Conservation Clubs in the Chicago schools have \$500,000 to work with instead of their previous annual budget of \$75,000. The public sculptures developed in this project have now traveled to San Francisco and Washington, DC as well as London. Among other things, this project was achieved largely by the hard work of many newly minted “unlikely environmentalists.”

Living the motto “I'm using my spheres of influence,” I try not only to live and work in a manner that is mindful of my environmental impact, but to catalyze action on global warming in all places in my life. I found a collaborator at my sons' school who is interested in greening the school's practices, and we got traction by forming a “Green Parent Action Committee,” and had an amazing response from the administration, teachers and parents. To our delight, it's been like taking a match to tinder—the program took off like wildfire and promises to unite the school in a community-wide effort to reduce our contribution to global warming—our “carbon footprint.” Everyone can voluntarily join in fun projects using a very user-friendly book by David Gershon called *The Low Carbon Diet* (2006). Every time a family takes a step that reduces their CO₂ emissions—like taking a waste-free lunch to school, or walking to school—they log the action, then put a stone in a community jar. In the spring for Earth Day, the students created a mosaic that celebrates our efforts to save the planet. People *love* the mosaic idea. Part of how I think our committee has succeeded is by offering to help teachers and administrators solve problems, rather than making demands. And, the community was ready to act—they just needed a friendly catalyst. Many people—teachers, parents, administrators, have expressed gratitude for our leadership. A friend of mine who works 60 hours a week and has three kids talks about how taking the time to make lunch for her kid—which reduces waste by itself-- makes her kids feel loved. My co-chair and I learn from each other in little ways—she got me thinking for the first time about the wastefulness of straws. She and I have had a number of conversations about how lifestyle change is a process, and is a matter of negotiation with spouses. Her husband sets the “green” bar high—she jokes that her husband might divorce her if she used paper towel-- even recycled-- instead of cloth rags. Even though she's committed, she hasn't always been ready to go as far as he has.

With a mission of bringing aware citizens into action on climate change and facilitating cross-fertilization among the enlisted, I founded the Spheres of Influence Salon on Climate Change. The Salon is a local and national organization, the inner sphere of which consists of thought leaders and experts. The middle sphere consists of professionals who are committed to sustainability. The outer sphere consists of concerned citizens who want to learn how they can make a difference by engaging in dialogue with experts. It has been wonderful to see the catalytic process at work. When a new member emailed to say that after she and her teenage son attended a policy engagement event, her son understood how important his voice will be, I said “Yes!”

I also scatter email “seeds” to the wind when I find information that others might use—even occasionally in foreign countries, and field phone calls from friends who want to go green. At my church recently I asked the rector and his wife what stood in the way of starting to recycle. This led to their suggesting that they form a green committee to look at environmental issues as a facility. The committee has formed, and I’m not on it, thankfully—so I successfully served as a catalyst. That committee is now chaired by the incoming President of the Garden Club of America, one of the national organizations that is fully of unlikely environmentalists who are using their voices to combat climate change. I’ve instituted recycling at my office suite and gotten the light bulbs switched over to compact fluorescents even though there was some initial concern about the quality of the light-- which turned out not to be a problem. Because I see an opportunity for corporations to take an important leadership role in reducing global warming pollution, I helped Corporate Climate Response plan a two day conference in Chicago in the fall of 2007. For the first time in my life, I’ve called my US Senator’s office—that Senator now happens to be President of the United States.

Even small encounters can be significant—when I’m offered a paper or plastic bag in the store, I’ll usually smile and say, “I don’t need a bag, thanks. I’ve got my own. You know—save the planet!” Often the checkout clerk agrees, and sometimes they’ll remark that they’ve never seen reusable sacks like the ones I use, and they’ll ask where I got them. One day, I declined bags at the supermarket—not Whole Foods mind you-- and the checkout clerk said I was the third person that day who didn’t want bags. When the supermarket chains around started selling reusable shopping cloth bags for \$1 each, they sold out fast. Given that in the U.S. alone we throw away a hundred billion plastic shopping bags a year, I’d say this is progress!

Speaking up has also had the effect of enlisting people directly. I’ve had not just friends and acquaintances but strangers volunteer to help with my book in various ways—doing research, editing, connecting me to resources. People want to get involved in this issue. It makes them feel good.

It is indeed exciting to feel emboldened to engage the world in this unprecedented moment in history.

Faith and Hope

My work on the climate crisis is an act of faith, based in a belief that as human beings we have the capacity to use our intelligence to learn how to live in a way that will allow life to thrive on earth, and to do what's right and necessary to protect the children we love.

My faith derives in part from an earlier conversion—to Christianity. I had been raised in a secular family. My father subscribed to a rational-scientific world view. We had discussions about the nature of the universe, but spirituality never entered in. My mother is prone to taking in strays—both animals and people-- but rejects organizations of most sorts. Having been raised in the Congregational Church, somehow she found reason to rebel—against what, I'm not sure! After I finished graduate school-- and lost that community—I went looking for a new community, which I ambivalently sought in church. Some months later, on Easter Sunday, the priest preached about being invited to “the dance”, and said it was OK to stumble. I accepted the invitation—and have been stumbling around ever since.

Part of what I realized through that conversion experience was that I was longing for connection to people who had lived before me and to people who would come after me, to traditions and people that transcended my lifetime. I call on my faith now during this challenging time, and also on that sense of connection to those who will come after my lifetime.

Since my own conversion to the life of an eco warrior, numerous religious leaders have spoken out on the global climate crisis. The Pope has repeatedly talked about the importance of caring for Creation, saying, "We need a decisive `yes' to care for creation and a strong commitment to reverse those trends that risk making the situation of decay irreversible." Since his election, the Vatican has supported environmental sustainability through a reforestation project aimed at offsetting its CO2 emissions, and the Pope has also said they will install solar power in the Vatican City. For the first time at its 2007 annual convention, the Islamic Society of North America, one of the largest Muslim groups in the US, addressed the issue of conservation. In my own community, we have one church that has completely “greened” its sanctuary and offices, and a synagogue under construction that promises to become the first certified green synagogue in the country. Yet another nearby synagogue has a staff position dedicated to environmental stewardship. The Dalai Lama has been a vocal spokesperson for the environment. In 2006, seventy-six Evangelical leaders issued “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action.” The paper calls for federal legislation on carbon emissions, and asks Christians to vote their conscience on global warming. Among the signers was Rick Warren, author of the best seller *The Purpose-Driven Life*—certainly I've found my purpose. Since then evangelicals, climate scientists, and environmental groups such as the Sierra Club have collaborated on a number of occasions. The UN Secretary General spoke at a meeting of evangelicals at which he noted the fact that those in the developing world who have the least responsibility for climate change will be the hardest hit. He said, “We have an ethical obligation to right this injustice. We have a duty to protect the most vulnerable. Without a strong global effort against global warming, we will fail in achieving ...the implicit human right to economic justice and development....The good news is that people and institutions of faith all over the world agree. This gives me great hope.” In 2008, a group of 45 Southern Baptist leaders, one of whom was persuaded by his son, signed a statement supporting stewardship of the earth. Harvard biologist Edward O.

Wilson, who was raised Southern Baptist, wrote *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*, which makes the urgent case for caring for the environment in a series of letters to an imaginary pastor. E.O. Wilson also has spoken of the potential for us to destroy ourselves--and our capacity to save ourselves using our human ingenuity. There is a great deal of preventable human suffering at stake. Pastor Joel Hunter of Northland Church in Orlando told me that is the impetus for his involvement in fighting climate change. In my view doing everything in my power--and enlisting others to do the same—is the only option.

Organized religion aside, since my environmental awakening, my relationship with nature has deepened. Previously my environmental actions were primarily limited to recycling—and pretty much on autopilot. I was busy starting a family and working, and didn't connect my actions to their environmental consequences. Now I've come to live more mindfully. "Mindfulness" has come somewhat into vogue lately, with myriad authors such as Andrew Weil, MD recommending programs of spiritual renewal and health through mindfulness. I believe that mindfulness can help not just our souls and our relationships and bodies but help us make decisions that take into account our effect on the environment – and on our children. As I walk my kids to school, I appreciate the subtle changes in the weather more. As my older son has taken an interest in learning about birds, I've learned to see and hear birds more—which is lovely. Asking ourselves questions as we make purchases—How much energy did it take to make this? How far was it transported to get here? How long it will be of use? Can it be recycled or reused? Do we really need it to begin with? How big a house do we really need? How do we routinely use our car and how big does it *really* need to be to accomplish that anyway?—that's a form of mindfulness.

And faith in humanity helps fuel my reserves of resilience to do the work that needs to be done.

And for me, being active in addressing the problem gives me hope. My own actions make me feel that I am doing everything I can for my children, and I encounter countless others who are doing their part in big and small ways. This brings me hope.

The Legacy of Lady Warriors

Many feisty mamas have come before—motivated by love-- and made the world a healthier, safer place for our children.

Feistiness is about mother dogs scrappily protecting their young. They will do whatever they have to do to keep their young safe.

Protecting our children means that we dig down deep to find resilience and courage. We don't put up with priests who molest children, or contaminants in the food we feed our children, or lead in their lunch boxes, or coaches who bully our kids. It's about passionately saying "No" to threats to our children, and "Yes" to our children thriving.

Candy Lightner, the mother who founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) -- and sparked a movement that made our roads much safer—was scrappy. After her 13-

year-old daughter, Cari, was killed by a drunken hit-and-run driver on a suburban street in California, Candy stood up and fought to make sure that other sons and daughters were not killed by drunk drivers. She later wrote, "I promised myself on the day of Cari's death that I would fight to make this needless homicide count for something positive in the years ahead." That's feisty.

Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, built her environmentally conscious business from one little shop to 2000 worldwide. A vibrant and humorous mother who recently died of hepatitis C, she wanted to make sure that her customers put natural and healthy products on their skin—and therefore in their bodies. She strove to minimize the environmental impact of her business, and to ensure that her suppliers in developing countries were fairly compensated. She was a model of corporate responsibility who believed in giving back to the community and holding other corporations accountable.

Ida B. Wells, a self-described "hot head," helped launch the NAACP. In the 1890's, among other things, she fought against lynchings of African Americans as well as whites. When she learned of one particular lynching, she decided not to pursue it until her 13 year-old son said, "If you don't go, nobody else will."

Alice Trillin was a classy, feisty mama. The daughter of two heavy smokers, when she was diagnosed with lung cancer, she became an outspoken opponent of second-hand smoke. She was not afraid to speak her mind and challenge whomever she believed needed to be challenged. And, among other things, she was beautiful, charming, wore fabulous clothes, and proudly refused to wear sensible shoes. Given my love of shoes, I can relate. She recently died of lung cancer, and is beautifully remembered by her husband, Calvin Trillin, in *About Alice* (2007).

Soft spoken mother of two, Maya Lin, best known for designing the Viet Nam wall as a very young woman, has been working for two decades to raise awareness of the environmental crisis through her powerful art installations.

When Wangari Maathai, winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize risked her life to prevent deforestation in Kenya, this charming, gracious mother showed sass to the corrupt authorities who beat her for her courage. When the Nobel Committee honored her "for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace," they recognized that global peace depends upon respect for nature.

We all remember Julia Roberts' portrayal of Erin Brockovich. Well, years later, Erin Brockovich-Ellis continues her environmental advocacy by going after still more corporate polluters as the director of research at a law firm. She believes that mothers' love is a strong motivator to protect the natural world—and she embodies that belief.

Social venture pioneer Lisa Nigro founded the famous Inspiration Café in Chicago while she had twin toddlers in tow. Recently she said in a radio interview, "I'm just an ordinary girl with an extra-ordinary spirit." I know Lisa—she does have extra-ordinary spirit.

Perhaps less well known, Margaret Hetherman is single, self-employed mother in New York. She spent her own money to mount billboards on the I-94 in Detroit where she's

from originally, saying “Take back the winter” with her daughter’s image in the background. She decided to launch the campaign in response to questions from her 5 year old daughter. She wants her daughter to know snow in winter as she did as a child herself. It’s amazing what one person can do.

Most important, it’s about loving our children fiercely.

Chapter Two

The Rewards of Green, The Power to Change

Addiction and Denial

As a psychologist I have a specialization in addictions. I see those issues as applicable to the problem of the global climate crisis. Even President Bush, who came slowly and reluctantly to acknowledge the reality of global warming, referred to “our addiction to oil.”

So are we addicted to oil? The term addiction is often, in my view, used too loosely. I don't believe that it's technically possible to be addicted to food or sex or relationships or the Internet, or frankly anything that does not create physiological dependence. However, I do think that lots of people engage in behavior that may appear “addictive.” As an addictions psychologist, I would call all such behavior compulsive. And acting compulsively means we're not acting mindfully. We're not paying attention to why we're doing what we're doing, and we're not paying attention to the consequences.

Whatever we call it, certainly many of us eat more than we need to, spend more time on the computer than is healthy, and buy more than we need. In my case, I buy more cute shoes than I really need. One way that our collective tendency toward compulsion relates to global warming is that our level of consumption—and our corresponding global warming pollution output—reflects a belief that more and bigger is better. We drive cars and trucks that are way bigger, in general, than we need. Most SUVs—perhaps the least safe cars on the road-- never go off-road. Most cars and trucks don't even haul much stuff or many people most of the time. We build homes that fill up almost the entire lot, which we then fill with stuff, and need to be heated and cooled—all of which take energy and produce global warming pollution. And we go into debt to buy all the stuff to fill the house.

And of course, much of this behavior isn't just random habit, but is fueled by psychological needs—such as to prove ourselves, or to quell unspoken anxieties.

But there's another way that the addiction model is applicable, even though of course we can't be physiologically addicted to oil, or coal, or SUVs, or fun shoes, for that matter. One of the hallmark features of addiction is denial. Denial is about failing to connect our behavior to its consequences and effects—in spite of the evidence. We all know—and may have even experienced directly-- the stories of alcoholics who aren't performing at work who blame their problems at work on a bad boss or unfair expectations. Likewise, we are familiar with alcoholics who are unable to see how their drinking affects those they love—including, tragically, their children.

We as a modern society had been living without awareness of the effect of our lifestyles on the environment. In the past, that was not denial; that was ignorance. For quite a

while, we in the public didn't have a lot of information about how we were impacting the environment and putting our children at risk by living our consumer-oriented lifestyles.

I don't feel too terrible about the way I was living before I knew the implications. And certainly, like many of us, I've been busy raising a family and working, and had plenty on my mind. I just wasn't thinking about how my choices affected the environment, now and in the future. But now, I'm informed. We can hardly open a newspaper or magazine or listen to the news without being reminded of the global climate crisis, and how we can "live green" to correct the problem. The animated movie *Arctic Tale*, released in the summer of 2007, reminds us that how we live here affects the animals in the Arctic. If I fail to act now, that's denial about the solution.

The parallel to the denial of the addictive process here is that we now have lots of indication about how our lifestyles – the CO2 we generate by living the way we do—is putting our children at risk, just as an alcoholic's drinking does. As long as we continue to consume vast quantities of oil, gas, plastics, aluminum, paper products, electricity, and stuff that's hauled half way around the world to get to us in huge amounts of packaging—not unlike alcoholics consuming too much alcohol—we engage in denial about the impact of our behavior on our children and their children.

Another cardinal feature of addiction is rationalization. Alcoholics often say to themselves things such as, "I deserve this drink because I had a hard day," or, "It's OK for me to drink today because I'm celebrating." The variations go on: "My husband drinks more than I do, so why should I quit?" Or the classic, "I'll quit tomorrow." If I say to myself, "Why should I inconvenience myself by recycling when my next door neighbor doesn't," or if I say "Why should I trade my Jeep Cherokee for a hybrid when China is continuing to increase its global warming pollution?," I am rationalizing my behavior. Besides, because we have basically outsourced a lot our CO2 output to China by having them run factories 24/7 to produce stuff for us—it's not really fair to point the finger at them. I'm justifying not changing. And the problem persists, and worsens.

It's as if we've been on a collective binge since about 1960—only instead of drinking, we've been consuming lots of stuff. And instead of getting DUIs and lab results telling us that our liver is shot, we're getting global warming and a host of complications that take the problem to a crisis level. Our actions have caught up with us.

The good news is that as an addiction specialist, I can say that there is hope. I've helped many drug addicts and alcoholics change their habits. And they have to go through physical withdrawal, which thankfully we don't when we use cloth rags instead of paper towel, or when we walk the kids to school instead of driving.

We can learn new habits and disciplines, and we can live consciously. And as the growing list of books on spirituality and self help remind us, from *The Purpose Driven Life* to Wayne Dyer — we are capable of finding meaning and purpose—in fact, we yearn for meaning and purpose. We can confront our resistance to change—I can challenge myself on my reluctance to turn off my computer and my "need" to continue

buying sassy shoes. And we can share with recovering alcoholics and addicts the rewards of a new way of life—including getting closer to family and feeling we’re doing right by our children.

Change is hard—and necessary, and possible. And the personal rewards are immeasurable.

The Joys of Nature

All of our environmental leaders fell in love with nature as children. We know from studies that all of our environmental leaders came to appreciate the natural world through formative experiences as children in nature.

Yet sadly, we now have reached the point where children spend only 30 minutes a week in unstructured play in nature. As Richard Louv so eloquently observes in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* (2005), in the span of a generation, we have become so oriented towards TVs and computers that we have lost our connection to nature. In urban areas, we have few natural spaces, and those that exist may not be safe for kids. In suburban areas, going outside consists of structured activities like sports. The price of this disconnection is high for our children in an immediate sense—among other things, we see high rates of obesity and diabetes. He believes that there is also a spiritual price. This dramatic shift in habits also correlates with diminishing enrollment in major, longstanding mainstream environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club. I’ll let him speak for himself.

Children need nature for the healthy development of their senses, and therefore, for learning and creativity. This need is revealed in two ways: by an examination of what happens to the senses of the young when they lose connection with nature; and by witnessing the sensory magic that occurs when young people... are exposed to even the smallest direct experience of a natural setting. (p. 55)

Just as we can’t love strangers in a real and mutual way, we can’t appreciate nature if we don’t know it. Nature has become an abstraction. Yet Paul Hawken, co-founder of Smith and Hawken, reminds us in *Blessed Unrest* (2007), “We *are* nature.”

Richard Louv also brings to our attention an unintended negative consequence of some of our approaches to environmental education. When we focus educational efforts primarily on the damage that we are doing to the natural world, it can create fear and anxiety at the expense of “joy and wonder.”

In my own childhood, I recall playing in the woods out back, and having my mother show us rare plants such as Lady Slippers. I don’t ever recall a time when I didn’t know the difference between an oak and a maple leaf. We would go for drives in the country, and go on day hikes. Both my mother and my paternal grandmother loved to garden. Some of my fondest and most powerful childhood memories include eating vegetables from my grandmother’s garden which were so flavorful, and the aroma of her canning

room which I can still conjure up in my memory. My brother went to a Youth Conservation Corps program in high school; he attributes primarily that experience to his decision to write as a journalist about the environment. My sister went to a wilderness camp that she loved so much that she still goes at the end of the season every year. It's impossible to imagine that her child won't go to that camp and love it.

I've decided that my kids and I are going to get out there and get to know nature and enjoy it. The TV in the family room does not get reception, and I've decided to leave it that way. No cable, to minimize the irresistible draw of TV—all we can do is watch DVDs.

I look for little outings to woods and zoos and nature centers. One really cool time, while on a cicada hunt, we saw a beaver. And until that year with the seventeen year cicadas, I never knew that they sounded like drummers. Once on a trip to the woods, my son and his friend decided to give every one "nature names." His friend took the name "Nature," which turned into the nickname "Natch." My son became "Leaf," and I was designated "Mother Nature." The boys climbed around on fallen trees, which were sometimes battleships and sometimes hideouts. They learned about how the current on the river carries things away, such as the sticks they threw in. We came home with pink cheeks.

My son has a favorite tree across the street that he likes to climb in. He calls it his tree. At the base of another tree, on a busy corner, he creates various themes. Sometime he likes to drive sticks in the ground and create "an ant amusement park." At other times, he calls it his "thoughtful spot." I love that the place can transform in his imagination. And I particularly love it when it calls it his thoughtful spot. He's a rambunctious boy, yet he knows he needs a place to think. Nature provides him that.

When we walk to school, we stop and listen to the birds, and talk about the trees we see along the way. We've seen baby robins sticking their necks up waiting for food. My children will run to me to report the sighting of a dragonfly. When we recently saw a chipmunk, I asked my oldest if he had ever seen one before and he said, "Only in pictures."

We all get fresh air, and I see and appreciate more the sights and sounds that I never used to quite notice. So in a funny circular way, my decision to ensure that my children connect with nature has brought me into more contact with nature. It's good for my soul.

I bought a tent so that I can take the kids camping, even though I really, really don't love sleeping on the ground. I want my kids to join the Scouts—I've even asked if mothers can participate. I want them to go the wilderness camp in Canada where their Uncle Bob went—assuming they'll agree when they get to that age! I want them to fall in love with nature.

Learning and Changing

I started learning how my actions and inactions contribute to global warming, learning what I could do-- even as a busy, divorced working mother of two rambunctious preschoolers -- to reduce my global warming pollution.

Change is a process, as we all know. In *Changing for Good* (1994), psychologist James Prochaska and his colleagues synthesized the research on behavior change and identified five stages that are common to behavior change.

Pre-contemplation—At this point it's, "Change? What change? Who me?"

Contemplation—Now it's "So maybe there's something on my radar about me changing. But how?"

Preparation—Now "I'm getting into gear. There's a problem and I'm getting ready to tackle it. "

Action—"I'm off and running."

Maintenance—"I'm figuring out how to stay the course."

Termination—This one does not apply to living green. We're talking about a new way of living. Dr. Sarah says, "Don't even think about it."

Like most of us who are not lifelong, diehard environmentalists, I certainly started out in the pre-contemplation stage. But once I learned what global warming meant for my kids, I feel like I blew through the next stage of contemplation and kicked into preparation mode and then quickly into action - on most fronts, but not all.

A year and half ago, when my mom was giving me a hard time about not recycling more, I said, "Mom, I'm busy. I can't recycle all the flotsam and jetsam." Well, when I learned that the methane gas from landfills—where everything we don't recycle goes-- is over 20 times worse than car emissions as a form of global warming pollution, guess what? I started recycling everything—from Splenda packets to plastic water bottles that can be turned into things like fleece or carpet. I also started to realize that the problem isn't just what comes *out* of landfills, but what goes *in*—like paper products from trees that absorb CO₂, and plastic bottles that don't biodegrade and are made from petroleum which increases our dependence on oil. It takes 95% less energy to make an aluminum can from recycled aluminum than to make a new one—and the energy saved from making one can from recycled aluminum could run a TV for 3 hours. And Alcoa *wants* our recycled aluminum.

The paper industry is the fourth largest contributor of CO₂ emissions of all US manufacturing industries, and curbing deforestation is absolutely key to solving the climate crisis. If the entire North American magazine industry used just 30 percent post-consumer-waste recycled paper, it would equal taking roughly 150,000 cars off the road. And deforestation and burning is responsible for a full fifth of the CO₂ that is released

into the atmosphere worldwide. So with deforestation the trees release CO₂ into the atmosphere when they're cut down. Now my paper products at home and at work are from recycled paper, and I've cut down to about one recycled roll of paper towel a month—by using rags made from my kids' old T shirts. I've been trying to reduce my use of all kinds of things, including paper, aluminum and plastic. The wastebaskets in the bedrooms and bathrooms remain almost empty now.

Now both my three and five year olds know what's trash and what's recyclable, and my oldest enjoys playing "recycling cop"—saying to the sitter, "Hey, don't you know that piece of paper can be recycled!" He also says, "Recycling makes mother nature happy!" I guess I'm not alone. Uma Thurman says, "I'm very fortunate in that I have 5 and 9 year olds who are getting a much better education [in environmental issues] than any of the rest of us. So I'm constantly instructed on a daily basis what to do."

Kids have an endless interest in more stuff—and producing and packing and shipping stuff generates global warming pollution. The requests come up at least with every trip to store, if not more often. We all know the situation all too well. What I say now to them when they ask for yet another toy is, "You know what, I think you have enough toys. Let's wait til your birthday. And we'll give away some of the toys we already have to some kids who don't have any toys." This does not prevent the next request, but in the moment I hope that it communicates a sense of what my mother's friend Judy calls "enoughness." I'd say my kids are in the pre-contemplation stage on this one!

As anyone who knows me can attest, I have a close personal relationship with caffeine. I consume a steady, slow caffeine drip to keep me going as I juggle all the parts of my complicated life. Although I own a too-small, beautiful thermos, I'm not great about using it—because it's too small. So, I finally found a plastic-free 20-ouncer. If I end up not having it with me, I reuse or recycle all the plastic cups (and even haul them home to recycle if need be). I hand back the cardboard sleeve they put on hot drinks, and if it's double cupped, I reuse the outer cup. At one Starbucks, a staff person told me that a very committed employee personally hauls the recycling from the store to a recycling center. That's a personal commitment. And—I'm sending a message to Starbucks that even though they've made a substantial commitment to reduce their emissions by 20%, they need to work on that waste stream!

My favorite bottled water is Evian, which is hauled all the way from Europe. That's a lot of global warming pollution. It's not just the transportation half way around the world. It takes so much energy to produce plastic bottles that if I use three fewer plastic bottles a day it saves about as much CO₂ as my car emits in a year. And in the U.S. we use *2.5 million plastic bottles an hour*. That adds up to 22 billion bottles a year. So, I've decided to switch to filtered tap water—which of course is nearly free. I have an under the sink filter at home (which even I can replace), and use a Britta filter pitcher at the office. I'm still buying seltzer water in plastic bottles (which I recycle) but I'm planning to get a seltzer maker. And since plastic is made from petroleum, I'm doing my part to reduce our dependence on oil at the same time!

Since it wastes less gas turn off the engine if we're sitting for more than 30 seconds, I now turn off the engine not just when I'm waiting for my kids but when I'm at long traffic lights. A hybrid would do that for me, but since I don't have a hybrid, I do it myself.

Turns out we lose 60% of our heating and cooling through leaks in our homes that add up to an average of 4 square feet per home. So to reduce heat loss I decided to replace some old rattley windows, with Energy Star (energystar.com) rated windows, and get this—insulated the surrounding walls with recycled blue jeans. Not only did that insulation immediately noticeably warm up that cold and drafty spot, but my contractor said it didn't irritate his eyes, throat and skin the way fiberglass does—and, of course, it kept a bunch of denim scraps out of the landfill.

In *The Tipping Point* (2000), Malcolm Gladwell talks about how even small things add up. One of the key things I've learned is that even little steps can have a big impact. When I learned that if we all changed just *three* light bulbs to compact fluorescents (CFLs) it would equal taking 3.5 million cars off the road, I started turning off lights and unplugging everything that was not in use that had a little red or green light—down to the toaster. And I changed all my light bulbs to CFLs—why wait to replace bulbs as they burn out? I paid a little more up front, but I immediately cut my electric bills by 25%. My electric bill does not go up during the summer because I use ceiling fans instead of air conditioning unless it's oppressively hot and humid. With the exception of turning off my computer— which I'm still struggling to do because it loses half the energy it draws before it even reaches the computer-- it was really easy, especially when I think about what my actions mean for my children.

A little more money for the college fund—or my collection of fun shoes! Home Depot and Wal-Mart (which has gone green, and for the right reasons, whatever other complaints people may have about their business practices) have big selections of CFLs, and not just the curly ones, but normal looking ones as well as floodlights. Even grocery stores are starting to carry them. What's more, because they last from five to nine years, I'll hardly ever have to change a bulb again. I even bought LED Christmas lights, which were on sale at the grocery store—they use only 10% as much electricity, and the bulbs never have to be replaced. My older son even understands the electricity connection- and he didn't really learn it from me. One day he said, “We create global warming by staying up and using our lights.” I hadn't quite thought of it that way....

I've been cancelling subscriptions to newspapers and magazines that I don't read-- some of which I've been getting without ever having subscribed to begin with. I've substituted on line news subscriptions instead. And with my mail box bulging with unwanted catalogues I've gone to www.catalogchoice.org to reduce the number of CO2-hungry trees that are being felled in my name. In the first month of service, 100,000 people signed on to get rid of 800,000 catalogs. One of the moms at my sons' school said that she had just done the same after she got 34 catalogues in the course of three days. Another said she found it “liberating” to cancel catalogues with her daughter. It takes 53 million trees to make the 19 billion catalogues that are sent a year. The energy it takes to

produce all those catalogues results in 5.2 million tons of CO₂ entering the atmosphere each year—the equivalent of 2 million cars. So I believe it's extremely important to eliminate as much wasted paper as possible. For over 15 years the children's toy catalogue company HeartSong has been trying to correct their contribution to deforestation and global warming by planting two trees for every one tree used to create their catalogues. Next I've got to deal with junk mail—for that one I'll be going to Mail Preference Service (www.dmachoice.org/mps). So here I'm in preparation mode.

When I learned that every gallon of gas I use releases 28 pounds of CO₂ into the air — picture a big bag of dog food filled with soot—I started to plan my driving more, and do things like walk my kids to school—which is nice exercise and visiting time. I would take public transportation more often if our system were not unreliable and vastly underfunded—a reminder that we need to vote to fund mass transit if we want to offer alternatives to cars. My oldest son now totally gets it about driving. We'll be driving along and he'll say, "You know, we're making global warming right now."

And I balance out the auto emissions that I can't eliminate, as well as my air travel, by buying "offsets" through Bonneville Environmental Foundation (b-e-f.org) that replace polluting power with clean power sources from wind and solar.

Because our water resources are being depleted by various factors, including evaporation due to warming conditions, and moving and treating water takes electricity, I've been working on not wasting water. I've joined Cate Blanchett in turning off the shower while I'm washing my hair, then turn it on again to rinse like they do in Europe. And I've taught my kids to turn off the water while brushing their teeth. My three year-old recently came out of the bathroom while his brother was brushing his teeth, saying to me, "Hey, he's wasting water!" What have I wrought?

When I discovered that agriculture is one of the main sources of global warming pollution—to the tune of 18%—and that it takes 2500 gallons of water to produce a pound of beef, I started cutting back on meat—which of course is better for my family's arteries as well.

I've learned to see waste all over the place where I used to not notice it all. We need to use a certain amount of energy, and therefore generate global warming pollution, to live. But so much of the energy we consume is wasted. I see wasted global warming pollution in lights left on in unoccupied rooms and office buildings and stores, in inflatable holiday yard decorations, in cars and trucks and buses with engines idling, in kids birthday parties with excessive and unnecessary plastic party favors that were hauled all the way from China and end up in the trash, in "to go" cups, in food that's grown, transported, cooked, then thrown out. And wasted energy is wasted money.

I've found that as I've become more aware of the effects of my actions on global warming, I've become more environmentally aware in general. Just exactly what is lead doing in lipstick produced by major US-made brands such as L'Oreal and Cover Girl? And how come, as I learned in *Parade* magazine, 90% of the 10,000 chemicals used in

cosmetics have not been evaluated for safety? This is why I use Aveda products that are made from natural ingredients, and sold minimal, recycled packaging. Aveda isn't just a company that sells nice botanical skin and hair care products—they have made a significant commitment to reducing their environmental impact including their CO2 emissions, so I choose to support them over other cosmetic companies that may sell fine products but don't have the strong environmental commitment. (aveda.com). Speaking of packaging-- why are toys packaged as if they were fine crystal? I've started buying green cleaning products, which don't have any great bearing on global warming but are a good idea for other environmental reasons—including reducing our risk of cancer and asthma. And some alternative products, like old-fashioned alternatives such as vinegar and water for cleaning windows, are way cheaper. As I've been using up the last of my conventional laundry detergent, I think about the fact that it ends up traveling to the “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico where the water is uninhabitable because of products like that—that dead zone is one of 30 around the world, and one of three in or near the U.S. I think about sea turtles eating plastic bags because they mistake them for jelly fish. I'm stunned that our use of plastic in the US has been doubling every decade since the 1950's, and is predicted to get to about a pound a day per person—most of it ending up in landfills or littering the ocean floor. I've switched to deodorant from antiperspirants—which contain aluminum—not just because mining aluminum generates a lot of global warming pollution but because aluminum is linked to cancer. And I'm learning more about the incredible amount of plastic that we ingest, and pass on to our babies *in utero* to the point that no babies born without plastic constituents—I find this appalling. And then we inadvertently “feed” our children plastics in the form of things like teething rings and baby bottles.

We've gotten to the point where a lot of us think eating organic foods and giving our kids organic milk makes sense. Wal-Mart and most grocery chains now carry organic food products. But that's stuff that goes *in* our bodies. So what does the clothing we put on our bodies have to do with global warming? A lot, it turns out. From what I've learned, the two key factors related to the environmental impact of clothing have to do with how with whether the cotton or wool is organic, and the overall manufacturing and distribution processes. Clothes that are made from materials that were grown organically produce between a third and half as much CO2 during the growing process. That's substantial. And clothing manufacturers that use recycled and/or recyclable materials are greatly reducing the amount of energy it takes to produce clothing. Beyond the materials themselves, there is the production process, which can be more or less environmentally responsible in terms of both energy efficiency and issues like use of toxic chemicals to treat, dye or glue materials. Since what we put on our bodies does matter for global warming and our natural world, I'm starting to spend my dollars on clothes from stores that produce ecofriendly clothes.

The Power of a Voice

My learning has not been limited to all these easy green lifestyle choices. I've also started learning about policy so that I can vote wisely so as to have legislative protections and opportunities for the world that my children will inherit. I assure that I am not naturally

inclined to think about policy. But now because I understand what our policies mean for my children, I'm gathering bits of policy-related information from all kinds of sources—books, the Internet, magazines, lectures, even exhibits. I went to an art exhibit called “Massive Change” by visionary designer Bruce Mau where I learned about the importance of planning dense cities with great public transportation so that people don't need to drive—this is why New York City produces less CO₂ than any other major US city. So now I understand that I need to vote to fund mass transit. From various sources I've been learning that although the coal lobby would like us to think that we can burn clean coal fire power plants, we're nowhere near there yet—so we need to vote against the construction of any more coal plants. And although the nuclear industry – which does not emit CO₂-- is salivating at the opportunity to finally build more plants after years in the dog house, I've learned that there are not just the obvious problems with nuclear waste. Turns out that unlike renewable energy sources, nuclear starts out expensive and stays expensive. So I've come to see that we need to block nuclear and fund renewables—solar, wind, and hydropower if we're in areas where we have big bodies of water. And for the first time in my life I'm thinking about farm subsidies that keep afloat environmentally damaging crops. So we have massive subsidies for water-intensive cotton. We have huge subsidies for polluting corn crops that are not being grown for food but for ethanol that is so energy inefficient to produce that it results in only a 2% CO₂ reduction overall over gasoline. Who are they kidding? We can do better than that—and we have to, for our children's sake.

I've learned that Federal legislation that would limit CO₂ emissions, generally called cap-and-trade, is absolutely essential. Such legislation is based on successful legislation that a few years back resulted in the lowering of the amount of sulfur dioxide in our air and water. In absence of federal policy, states are stepping up passing legislation but this creates a patchwork of inconsistent laws that make it tough for businesses that operate in different states. Because of the severity and urgency of the climate crisis, we need the steepest possible cuts in the shortest possible time frame because time is of the essence.

Here's how Tom Friedman makes the case. “People often ask: I want to get greener, what should I do? New light bulbs? A hybrid? A solar roof? Well, all of those things are helpful. But actually, the greenest thing you can do is this: Choose the right leaders... Why? Because leaders write the rules, set the standards and offer the tax incentives that drive market behavior across a whole city, state or country. Whatever any of us does individually matters a tiny bit. But when leaders change the rules, you get scale change across the whole marketplace.”

Why haven't our elected officials vocally put this crisis front and center prior to the current Congress and administration? Because we have allowed them to ignore it. And they have been afraid to take a strong stand because they fear they won't get elected or re-elected. Even though we have made headway on that front since the beginning of 2009, we need to tell them that it's the opposite—we won't vote for them unless they come out strong on the climate crisis. So we need to speak out on things like new coal plants. Our children are counting us. Tomorrow's children are counting us.

I had never reached out to my elected officials until my turning point. And I don't have much time to write letters or meet with my legislators – but I've done it a few times now because I felt compelled to hold my elected official to account on global warming. But I'm committed to doing it even though I don't have time. And it's been so rewarding to get a call in response to a letter to my US Senator, and to establish an ongoing relationship with my Senator's office. Likewise it's been gratifying to have my Congresswoman sit and take notes about my concerns. I hadn't realized that elected officials were so interested in what I had to say. And now I know that all it takes is five voters raising an issue to get an elected official's attention.

Now I'm in the maintenance phase with a lot of lifestyle changes, and challenging myself to enter the action phase with new behaviors—like turning off my computer.

So I'm learning, I'm changing, I'm forging new friendships. I'm using my voice. The rewards help build up the reservoir of resilience that I draw on to keep myself forging ahead. It's been an amazing and wonderful ride, and I'm going to keep on riding because I love my children and want them to thrive.

Upcoming Book

Preview Chapters

Look out for all of the preview chapters that will be available in coming months.

Chapter One - From Casual Recycler to Unlikely Environmentalist to New Eco Warrior: One Mother's Conversion

Chapter Two - The Rewards of Green, The Power to Change

Chapter Three - Awareness: Learning to "See" Signs of a Warming Planet

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About the Author

SARAH B. WARREN, PH.D.



As a professional psychologist, leadership coach and addictions expert, Dr. Sarah Warren understands our addiction to oil and the path way into “recovery.” She appreciates what it takes to move from denial to awareness into action. She knows what’s needed to create individual and collective transformation. And she understands the personal rewards of joining the growing movement of unlikely environmentalists.

She helps answer the question, “What can I do to make a real difference?” She also understands that in order to cope with climate change, we will need to cultivate psychological resilience.

Dr. Warren serves as an ambassador for green and a catalyst – focused particularly on helping us all mobilize to combat global warming. Dr. Warren believes that lifestyle changes are necessary but far from sufficient. She knows that we need technology advances. She also believes that massive policy changes are essential, and empowers people to engage the political system to bring about the policy changes we so desperately need. And she knows that using our voices is tremendously empowering.

The daughter of an MIT researcher who was in on the ground floor of artificial intelligence, Dr. Warren focuses on analyzing the big picture and delivering highly effective messages about our climate crisis. With a brother who has been writing about business and the environment for 25 years and is one of the foremost experts on ocean acidification—global warming’s “evil twin—” and a sister who is a district manager at Patagonia, a pioneer among environmentally responsible companies, Dr. Warren comes naturally by her commitment to inspiring informed eco-action.

A psychologist and a single mother of two, Dr. Warren went from an unlikely environmentalist to an impassioned eco-warrior. She launched Spheres of Influence to help us all save this planet for our children— for tomorrow’s children. Motivated by fierce love, she is on a mission to motivate people to green their lifestyles, businesses and careers, and to overhaul our policies. She believes that we all need to do all that we can to help our planet in crisis— and use our spheres of influence.

In this book Dr. Warren’s story, educates readers about what climate change looks like and means for them, offers signs of hope and progress, and identifies high impact actions to combat climate change. Another forthcoming book, *Fierce Love: How Cool Parents Can Combat Global Warming—and Thrive* is a book of inspirational stories about parents’ turning points on climate change.

Her writing, coaching and the Spheres of Influence Salon help people find fulfillment by living and working in alignment with their values, and believes that people can derive enormous peace of mind when embracing “enoughness” and joining others who share a similar commitment.

In addition to her online presence and writing, she offers one-on-one and group telecoaching services, in-person private consultation, as well as public speaking.

A nationally renowned addictions expert, she has published in professional journals, been featured in the *Chicago Tribune* on career transition coaching, and appeared on the daytime talk show *Leeza* on the topic of addictions as well as on *The Mike Nowak Show* (WCPT820) on the topic of our addiction to oil.

She earned her doctorate in psychology at Northwestern University, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at University of Chicago. She launched and oversaw the Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program at University of Chicago— and brings to bear her wisdom about addiction, behavior change and resilience.