
THE STORY OF CHANGE

Annotated and Referenced Script



BY ANNIE LEONARD

Ever since I learned where our stuff really comes from - and how this system is trashing people and the planetⁱ - I've been trying to figure out how we can change it.

I've read a lot of these: *100 Ways to Save the Planet Without Leaving Your House*, *50 Simple Things You Can do to Save the Earth*, *The Little Green Book of Shopping*.ⁱⁱ

I thought they might have the answers, but their tips all start here - with buying better stuffⁱⁱⁱ - and they all end here - with recycling^{iv} all that stuff when I'm done with it.

But when it comes to making change, this story of "going green" - even though we see it everywhere - has some serious shortcomings.^v

It says that if I become a smarter shopper, and tell my friends to do the same, I've done my part. And if I don't buy all this green stuff, then it's my fault that the planet's being destroyed.

Wait a minute. My fault? I didn't choose to put toxic products^{vi} on the shelves or to allow slave labor in factories around the world.^{vii} I didn't choose to fill stores with electronics that can't be repaired and have to be thrown away^{viii}. I didn't choose a world in which some people can afford to live green, leaving the rest of us to be irresponsible planet wreckers!

Of course when we do shop we should buy the least toxic and most fair products we can^{ix}, but it's not bad shoppers - here - who are the source of the problem, it's bad policies^x and bad business practices^{xi} - here. And that's why the solutions we really need are not for sale at the supermarket.

If we actually want to change the world, we can't talk only about consumers voting with our dollars^{xii}. Real change happens when citizens^{xiii} come together to demand rules that work.

Look, it is important to try to live green. As Gandhi said, "be the change."^{xiv} Living our values in small ways shows ourselves and others we care. So it is a great place to start.

But it's a terrible place to stop. After all, would we even know who Gandhi was if he just sewed his own clothes and then sat back waiting for the British to leave India?^{xv}

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So how do we make big change?

To answer that question, I went back and looked at Gandhi^{xvi}, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa^{xvii}, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement^{xviii}, and the environmental victories here in the 1970s^{xix}. They didn't just nag people to perfect their day-to-day choices. They changed the rules of the game.

It turns out, there are three things you find whenever people get together and actually change the world.

First, they share a big idea^{xx} for how things could be better. Not just a little better for a few people, a whole lot better for everyone. And they don't just tinker around the edges; they go right to the heart of the problem, even when it means changing systems that don't want to be changed. And that can be scary!

Hey, millions of us already share a big idea for how things can be better. Instead of this dinosaur economy that focuses only on corporate profits - we want a new economy^{xxi} that puts safe products^{xxii}, happy people^{xxiii}, and a healthy planet^{xxiv} first. Duh, isn't that what an economy should be for?

Trying to live eco-perfectly in today's system is like trying to swim upstream, when the current is pushing us all the other way. But by changing what our economy prioritizes^{xxv}, we can change the current so that the right thing becomes the easiest thing to do.

Second, the millions of ordinary people who made these extraordinary changes didn't try to do it alone. They didn't just say, "I will be more responsible." They said, "We will work together until the problem is solved."^{xxvi}

Today it's easier than ever to work together. Can you imagine how hard it was to get a message across India in 1930? We can do it now in less than a second.

And finally, these movements succeeded in creating change because they took their big idea, and their commitment to work together, and then they took action!

Did you know that when Martin Luther King junior organized his march on Washington, less than a quarter of Americans supported him?^{xxvii} But that was enough to make change - because those supporters took action - they did stuff. Today 74% of Americans support tougher laws on toxic chemicals^{xxviii}. 83% want clean energy laws.^{xxix} 85% think corporations should have less influence in government.^{xxx}

We've got the big idea and the commitment. We just haven't turned it all into massive action yet. And this is our only missing piece. So let's do it.^{xxxi}

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Making real change takes all kinds of citizens - not just protestors. When you realize what you're good at and what you like to do, plugging in doesn't seem so hard. Whatever you have to offer, a better future needs it.

So ask yourself, "What kind of change maker am I?" We need investigators, communicators, builders, resisters, nurturers, and networkers.

At StoryofStuff.org, you can explore these types of change makers and find your first, or your next, step to take action.

Being an engaged citizen starts with voting.^{xxxii} That's one of those basic things that everyone's just gotta do. But it gets way more exciting - and fun^{xxxiii} - when we put our unique skills and interests to work alongside thousands of others.

I know that changing a whole economic system is a huge challenge. It's not easy to see a clear path from where we are today to where we need to go. And there's no ten simple things we can do without leaving our couches!

But the path didn't start out clear to all these guys either. Doctor King said, "Faith is taking the first step even though you don't see the whole staircase."

So, they worked hard to get organized, practiced the small acts that built their citizen muscles and kept their focus on their big idea - and when the time was right, they were ready.

It's time for us to get ready too - ready to make change and write the next chapter in the story of stuff.

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ⁱ I summarized what I learned about where our stuff comes from, and how current systems of production and consumption are trashing people and the planet, in *The Story of Stuff* movie (<http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-stuff/>) and book (*The Story of Stuff*, published by Free Press, 2010.)

ⁱⁱ The books we mention are just a couple in a long list of advice books on living green. The ones on my shelf right now are: *The Little Green Book of Shopping* (Diane Millis, 2008); *Living Green – a Practical Guide to Simple Sustainability* (Greg Horn, 2006); *The Lazy Environmentalist – Your Guide to Easy, Stylish, Green Living* (Josh Dorfman, 2007); *The Better World Shopping Guide* (Ellis Jones, 2006); *It's Easy Being Green* (Jennifer Pratt 2003); *Just Green It – Simple Swaps to Save the Planet and Your Health* (Ron and Lisa Beres, 2010); *Save the World and Still be Home for Dinner* (Will Marre, 2009); *The Green Year-365 Small things you can do to make a big difference* (Jodi Helmer, 2008); *It's Easy Being Green* (Crissy Trask, 2006); and *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth* (Earth Works Group, 1989).

These books have some very good tips – from avoiding disposable goods to buying energy efficient appliances and much much more. If you're looking for simple steps to get started, these books offer lots of ideas from the obvious to the innovative. However, we agree with John Javna, author of "*50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth*" and later "*50 More Things You Can Do to Save the Earth*" when he captured the spirit of *The Story of Change* in this essay:

"As I explain in the book [50 More things...], I believe the answer is that we need a "new environmentalism" which focuses on issues rather than tips--one that goes further than simple individual effort, to harness the power of cooperation and community; one that not only works to change individual personal habits, but also to change society--laws, business practices, and even values; one that inspires a sustained, committed effort to solve specific problems, rather than simply encouraging random environmental action.

The simplest, most practical way to accomplish this is for each of us to find a single environmental issue that's right for our lives--one that we really care about--and make that issue the focus of our efforts. It might be saving coral reefs, or supporting solar energy, or bringing a modern railroad system to America. Whatever it is, if we really believe in it, we'll find it a pleasure to stay involved. We'll be able to build a satisfying relationship with others who care about the issue--particularly the community of environmental groups that are already working on it--and in the long run, we'll be part of the change we want to create. It doesn't matter which issue you pick--big or small--because they're all connected. If you work to cut carbon emissions from power plants, for example, you're also helping to clean up waterways. If you clean waterways, you're improving wildlife habitat. By improving wildlife habitat, you protect trees. And when we have more trees, we clean the air...which means less climate change. " (Full piece at: www.huffingtonpost.com/john-javna-sophie-javna-and/the-new-environmentalism_b_97825.html))

ⁱⁱⁱ Just to be clear, I am *all for* bringing our values to the marketplace! When we do shop, it's good to choose products without toxic chemicals and unnecessary packaging, made by companies which treat suppliers, workers and host communities well. Where we buy matters too; buying from local businesses keeps more money in the local community, creating jobs and supporting your local economy. Michael Shuman (www.small-mart.com) explains that "every dollar spent at a locally owned business generates two to four times more economic benefit—measured in income, wealth, jobs, and tax revenue—than a dollar spent at a globally owned business." Buying used stuff may also help, by potentially reducing the resource use and pollution associated with making new stuff. Choosing products aligned with our values supports companies that are working to be part of the solution. Conversely, avoiding (boycotting) products that are unhealthy for workers, communities and the planet sends a message to companies that are still stuck in the dinosaur economy. Sometimes not buying at all, but making do with what we have or sharing with a friend, is the best option of all. *These are all good things to do.*

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^{iv} Of course, I am *all* for recycling too! Recycling keeps stuff out of landfills and incinerators, reduces pressure to harvest and mine more resources, creates jobs, conserves energy and helps combat climate change. As explained in “*More Jobs, Less Pollution: Growing the Recycling Economy in the U.S.*,” increasing the recycling rate to 75% in the U.S. would result in 1.5 million new jobs, reduced greenhouse gases and less pollution overall. (www.recyclingworkscampaign.org/2011/11/more-jobs-less-pollution/#more-160). To learn more about the many benefits of recycling, check out the U.S.-based Recycling Works Campaign at www.recyclingworkscampaign.org. For information on recycling and other Zero Waste strategies internationally, please visit GAIA, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives at www.no-burn.org.

^v While I am all for living green in small everyday ways, it’s also important to realize that striving to live green within our fundamentally not-green economy has some serious shortcomings. First, it isn’t enough to make change at the level needed. The sum of all these changes in daily habits is just not enough to change our current trajectory – which is heading towards an ecological cliff. If everyone carried a reusable bag to the store, and recycled, and swore off bottled water, that would be good. But it still wouldn’t be enough. Second, focusing on perfecting our day to day choices risks distracting us from the bigger bolder goals that really could turn things around. For more on this perspective, read *Shopping our Way to Safety: How we Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*, by Andre Szasz, 2009. Third, trying to live eco-perfectly is exhausting and often prohibitively expensive. Our entire economy is set up to reward making waste and externalizing costs and to facilitate throwing stuff away rather than repairing it. Going against that grain is often really hard. At The Story of Stuff Project, we believe that it’s important to make responsible choices, but it’s even more important to change the broader economic and social context so that the most green, healthy and fair option becomes the easiest, cheapest, and most available option and we don’t have to work so hard on a daily basis, going against the grain, to do the right thing. And finally, focusing on making change as individual consumers misses our source of even greater power – as citizens working together, in our communities and in our democracy, to achieve way bigger change than is captured in any “ten simple things” list. An inspiring call to work together, for bigger bolder change is in this Washington Post Op-Ed by our friend Professor Michael Maniates: “Going Green? Easy doesn’t do it.” (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/21/AR2007112101856.html).

And if you want to read even more about the shortcomings of focusing on the individual simple green acts, rather than the broader systemic change so badly needed, check out this essay: *Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?* also by Michael Maniates. (<http://merlin.allegheeny.edu/employee/m/mmaniate/savetheworld.pdf>).

Now, all this does not mean we should stop doing green acts on a day to day basis– of course not! I’m out there composting and using my clothesline every day! But it does mean we should see these daily acts as an onramp to greater engagement, as a place to start, not a place to stop. Yes, avoid toxic shampoo! And then get involved in a campaign to get toxics out of *all* personal care products. Yes, recycle! And then demand good design decisions and new rules about making products more recyclable in the first place. Yes, compost! And then support a ban on landfilling organics nationwide! We need to solve the problems at their source, not perfect our ability to navigate a fundamentally unsustainable, unhealthy and unjust materials economy.

^{vi} Everyday products contain a variety of toxic chemicals. For more info, see: <http://www.healthystuff.org/chemicals.introduction.php>

^{vii} We’ve all seen the reports about horrible working conditions in the factories that make our stuff, from iPads (www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/business/ieconomy-apples-ipad-and-the-human-costs-for-workers-in-china.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all) to running shoes (www.teamsweat.org). To learn more about worker

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rights issues in factories and fields around the world, check out the Institute for Global Labor and Human Rights (formerly the National Labor Committee) at www.globallabourrights.org.

^{viii} See www.storyofelectronics.org and the Electronics Take Back Coalition (www.electronicstakeback.com) for more information on planned obsolescence in the electronics industry.

^{ix} And we're lucky to have some excellent online resources to make it easier to find those better products these days. Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database (www.ewg.org/skindeep/) provides information on toxic chemicals in over 65,000 personal care products. And GoodGuide.com provides health, safety and environmental ratings for a broad range of everyday products, from sunscreen to snack foods to clothing to cars and even has an iPhone app for scanning product bar codes and getting instant info right in the supermarket aisles.

^x In the U.S., like in most countries, there's a wide range of policies that encourage our unsustainable dinosaur economy. In *The Story of Citizens United v FEC* (www.storyofcitizensunited.org), we discussed rules that make it easier for corporations to influence election outcomes, creating obstacles for candidates who want to serve the public good instead of corporate interests. In *The Story of Broke* (www.storyofbroke.org), we explored the role that government subsidies play in supporting dirty energy, toxic polluters, mining on public lands and the throw away economy. In *The Story of Cosmetics* (www.storyofcosmetics.org), we discussed the lack of regulations to prevent companies from putting potentially dangerous chemicals in products we smear on our bodies. Other policies (or lack of policy) allow companies to externalize environmental costs, pollute local communities, use untested chemicals, produce products designed to be unrepairable and unrecyclable and much more bad stuff that we really should be moving beyond as a country. As author and activist Bill McKibben put it: "The laws of Congress and the laws of physics have grown increasingly divergent, and the laws of physics are not likely to yield." So let's make some better laws.

^{xi} For too long, business-as-usual has meant striving for economic success at the cost of the environment and human health. Toward this end, some companies make and sell products that are unsafe, unhealthy and designed to break. Many companies use and release toxic chemicals. Some relocate factories to countries with weak labor and environmental protections. And a disgustingly large number of companies actively undermine good laws, from container deposit laws (bottle bills) to climate solutions. Business-as-usual has turned out to be unhealthy, unsustainable and often downright ugly. Fortunately, some companies realize that this isn't a good idea in the long run; there's no business on a dead planet. Some are leading the way with renewable energy, clean production, design for durability and even lending their voice to the call for sustainable policies and practices. For more on companies working for a better future, see the American Sustainable Business Council (asbcouncil.org).

^{xii} "Voting with our dollars" has become a popular phrase these days. I appreciate the intent –let's use our purchases to make a statement about our values and, hopefully, help shift the market towards better options. But, as the good folks at Treehugger.org point out, shopping is not voting (<http://www.treehugger.com/economics/5-reasons-why-voting-and-shopping-are-not-same-thing.html>). For one thing, if we want to make change with our dollars, just remember that Exxon and Walmart have a lot more dollars than we have, so right away, we're at a disadvantage. What we do have more of is people with voices and real votes, hope for a better world and love for each other. Those are the arenas in which real people – not corporations – can win.

Another difference between shopping and voting is that everyone shops and fewer than half of the voters in my country bother to vote! No wonder we end up with such losers in office! So sure, bring your values to the marketplace, but don't stop there. Get yourself – and your family members, coworkers, neighbors - to the polls! And let's work before the elections to ensure we have candidates worthy of our support, and after to keep them working for a better future for us all.

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^{xiii} When we talk about citizens, we're not talking about national status or documentation papers. We're talking about how one shows up in the world. Citizens recognize, as Eric Liu says, that we're all better off when we're all better off. Citizens work together to make our communities, our schools, our countries better for everyone. In *The Gardens of Democracy*, Eric Liu and Nick Hanauer describe citizenship as "living in a pro-social way at every scale in life...showing up for each other...the recognition that we are interdependent." Citizenship is about pitching in to make the world better – in whatever way fits each of us best. Again, from *The Gardens of Democracy*: "Central to our conception of citizenship is an ethic of sacrifice – and a belief that sacrifice should be *progressive*. That is to say, being a citizen is not just about serving others and contributing when it's convenient but also when it's inconvenient. And the scale of the contribution should grow in proportion to the ability of the person to contribute. Just as progressive taxation asks those who can pull the most weight to do so, progressive civic contribution asks those who have the most civic capacity and who have benefited most from our civic culture to take the most responsibility." At the Story of Stuff Project, we believe that bringing our values to the supermarket is a fine place to start, but if we want to make really big change – which we do – then we've got to build the kind of power that only comes from working together as engaged citizens.

^{xiv} We know, we know, this is one overused quote, but it is a good one! Many versions of this quote are given: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." "Be the change you seek." No one knows the exact words Gandhi said since this quote was paraphrased by his grandson, Arun Gandhi, years after Gandhi died. But we get the point. Walk the talk. Do the right thing. Live your values.

^{xv} Gandhi did sew his own clothes and even spun his own fabric. He joined many other independence leaders in encouraging Indians to do the same, rather than purchase imported British goods, to support *Swadeshi*, or self-sufficiency. The goal of *Swadeshi* was to withhold economic support for British manufacturers, while instead investing in Indian-owned production. (Many local economy advocates encourage buying locally for the same reasons today.) Gandhi saw *Swadeshi* as critical to achieving *Swaraj* (self rule). While there's inconclusive evidence that *Swadeshi* was successful at economically harming the British, the image of Gandhi sitting at his spinning wheel became a powerful call to action and continues to inspire people around the world today. However, he didn't just sit there and spin and sew. He also marched, organized, did outreach and education, recruited people to join, challenged discriminatory social hierarchies, and advocated for new rules.

^{xvi} Some good reads on the Indian independence movement are: *Freedom at Midnight* by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins (2009); *India's Struggle for Independence*, by Bipan Chandra et al. (1988); *India's Freedom Struggle 1857 – 1947*, by Peter Heehs (1988).

^{xvii} Two good resources to learn about the anti-apartheid struggles are *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela, the film series *Have you Heard from Johannesburg: Seven Stories of the Global Anti-Apartheid Movement*, by Connie Fields. (<http://www.clarityfilms.org/haveyouheardfromjohannesburg/>)

^{xviii} We highly recommend Taylor Branch's trilogy on America in the King Years, from 1954 through 1968: *Parting the Waters*, *Pillar of Fire*, and *At Canaan's Edge*. Check them out at a local bookstore or library.

^{xix} To learn more about the U.S. environmental movement, we recommend Philip Shabecoff's *A Fierce Green Fire (2003): The American Environmental Movement*; Angela Mertig and Riley Dunlap's edited book *American Environmentalism (1992)*; and Robert Gottlieb's *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, (2005). Also, check out the new documentary, *A Fierce Green Fire* (<http://www.afiercegreenfire.com/>).

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^{xx} The fact is that many of us already share a Big Idea for a better world. Instead of a wasteful, growth-at-all-costs economy that fails both people and the planet, hundreds of millions of us want a new economy that puts safe products, a healthy environment, and happy people first.

Now sure, we may not know exactly what a better future will look like – in many ways, we haven't invented it yet. But every day we're making remarkable advances in renewable energy and safer chemicals; more and more businesses are figuring out how to do well for themselves and their workers; and more and more citizens are standing up for themselves, and their neighbors, in their local communities and at the state and national level. For more of our thoughts on where we need to be headed (and to chime in the conversation), please check out the Story of Stuff blog here:

<http://www.storyofstuff.org/2012/06/21/where-we%E2%80%99re-headed/>

^{xxi} The New Economy Network (of which The Story of Stuff Project is a member) has developed a list of principles for a new economy which sustains people and the planet. We think this is an excellent foundation from which to start building a new economy. Please read it and let us know what you think: http://www.neweconomynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Principles-2012_Letterhead_final2.pdf.

Also, those in the U.S., please check out Gus Speth's new book, *America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy*.

^{xxii} Learn more and get involved in the campaign for safe healthy products at www.healthystuff.org

^{xxiii} To learn more about promoting happiness in your community, access the free tools at The Happiness Initiative: www.happycounts.org.

^{xxiv} There are many things we've got to do to have a healthy planet, including reduce toxic chemicals, stop pumping climate altering carbon in to the atmosphere, restrain our resource use to that which the planet can replenish and move beyond a growth-based economic model which requires ever greater resource use. "One Planet Living" is the term used to describe living within the means of our one planet. According to the Global Footprint Network (www.footprintnetwork.org), globally we are now using 1.5 planets' worth of resources and waste assimilation capacity each year. That's a problem, given that we only have one planet. And that resource use isn't spread equally; some communities and countries are using way more than others. If everyone consumed like the average person in the U.S., we would need five planets! A healthy planet starts with recognizing and living within the limits of our one wonderful planet – and that includes way better sharing than we're pulling off currently.

^{xxv} Our economy is currently set up to prioritize economic growth – measured through GDP- above all else, prompting a growing number of people to ask "What's the economy for anyway? (Also the title of a new book by SOS friends John DeGraaf and Dave Batker – check it out to learn more.) A number of alternative metrics – such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (www.uvm.edu/giee/?Page=genuine/index.html) and the Happy Planet Index (www.happyplanetindex.org) have been developed to measure other metrics beyond economic activity. While none is perfect, they all promote the same idea; We value what we measure and right now we're measuring the wrong things. We need to measure, value and prioritize those things that really matter: public well being, environmental health and social equity.

^{xxvi} OK, here's overused quote number 2, but it's another good one: Margaret Mead summed up the importance of working together when she said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

^{xxvii} "In August 1963, Gallup found considerable public opposition to the now-famous civil rights march on Washington in which King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. The poll was conducted about two

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weeks before the march, at which time 71% were familiar with "the proposed mass civil rights rally to be held in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 28." Of those who were familiar, only 23% said they had a favorable view of "the rally"; 42% had an unfavorable view of it (including 7% who predicted violence would occur) and 18% said it wouldn't accomplish anything." And "In May 1964, Gallup asked, "Do you think mass demonstrations by Negroes are more likely to help or more likely to hurt the Negro's cause for racial equality?" In response, only 16% of Americans -- including just 10% of whites but 55% of nonwhites -- said such mass demonstrations would help the cause." From Gallup (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/103828/civil-rights-progress-seen-more.aspx>), dated January 21, 2008, accessed May 1, 2012. If you want to learn more about the challenges King and the Civil Rights Movement faced, we recommend Taylor Branch's excellent series on *America in the King Years*.

^{xxviii} A survey of 825 voters in 75 swing congressional districts conducted between July 29 to August 1, 2010 by The Mellman Group on behalf of Safer Chemical, Healthy Families.

^{xxix} February 2, 2011 Gallup Poll ("In U.S., Alternative Energy Bill Does Best Among Eight Proposals," www.gallup.com/poll/145880/Alternative-Energy-Bill-Best-Among-Eight-Proposals.aspx) discussed in GOOD (www.good.is/post/83-percent-of-americans-want-clean-energy-legislation/, dated February 8, 2011.)

^{xxx} "Protecting Democracy from Unlimited Corporate Spending," a national survey conducted by Hart Research Associates for People for the American Way, June 6 – 7, 2010. (Survey report available at: www.pfaw.org/sites/default/files/CitUPoll-PFAW.pdf and more information at: www.pfaw.org/press-releases/2010/06/new-pfaw-poll-shows-americans-want-action-to-correct-citizens-united). Results of the survey found:

- 85% of voters say that corporations have too much influence over the political system today while 93% say that average citizens have too little influence.
- 95% agree that "Corporations spend money on politics mainly to buy influence in government and elect people who are favorable to their financial interests." (74% strongly agree)
- 85% disagree that "Corporations should be able to spend as much as they want to influence the outcome of elections because the Constitution protects freedom of speech." (63% strongly disagree)
- 93% agree that "There should be clear limits on how much money corporations can spend to influence the outcome of an election." (74% strongly agree)
- 77% think Congress should support an amendment to limit the amount U.S. corporations can spend to influence elections.
- 74% say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who pledged to support a Constitutional Amendment limiting corporate spending in elections.

^{xxxi} Go to www.storyofchange.org and take our Changemaker Personality Quiz to find out which of your changemaking muscles are the strongest! Then, let's get started putting those citizen muscles to work to build a better future.

^{xxxii} If you're not registered to vote, get going! In the U.S., our friends at RocktheVote have set up an easy process to get registered here: (www.rockthevote.com/rtv_voter_registration.html?source=rtv.com-homegraphic) Please register and then get all your friends to do so too. If you live in another country, I don't know how you register to vote. It would be great if you would find out and then post it on your facebook, blog, tweet it – however you can get the word out. I know voting won't solve everything, but it is an essential step in the process.

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^{xxxiii} It honestly is fun. Working for a better future adds meaning and purpose and joy to life. I am not saying every minute is fun (some city council meetings are boring!) but overall, it is a joyful way to live. Research done by The Story of Stuff Project reveals that a majority of experienced activists credit the increased meaning and fun added to life by working for a better world as among the top factors that inspired them to move beyond the simple green steps to deeper engagement. And Professors Malte Klar and Tim Kasser have documented a link between activism and social well being. ("Some Benefits of Being an Activist: Measuring Activism and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being" in *Political Psychology*, Vol 30, No 5. 2009).

As Paul Hawken said, working for a better world is not a way to *get* rich, it is a way to *be* rich.