



Kids say, 'Stop talking, start planting'

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan | Dec 10, 2009 | 2 Comments

After **Lynne Cherry** and **Gary Braasch** co-wrote ***How We Know What We Know About Climate Change: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming*** a couple years ago, Cherry was flying around the country speaking about the environment and leaving what she called “a huge carbon footprint.” So she decided to make a film—***Young Voices on Climate Change***—to help spread her message without so much jetting around. (There are exceptions of course—this week she’s in Copenhagen for the climate conference, screening her film eight times.)



The film is about kids who are making a difference in their communities—including **Alec Loorz** in California, who started a group called **Kids vs. Global Warming**, and **Felix Finkbeiner** in Germany, who has planted 500,000 trees as part of his **Plant for the Planet** group.

Click [here](#) to watch the film. Read below to find out from Cherry how kids ‘get’ global warming in a way that adults don’t.

You’ve called your book and film “non-scary.” What does that mean?

They’re not about the horrors of climate change—there’s enough of that out there already. They’re about solutions. It doesn’t take an international climate treaty to implement state and local incentives for people to insulate their houses and lower their energy bills. Kids are getting their schools to lower their energy bills by two-thirds. They get school buses to stop idling—which improves the air quality, reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the air, uses less gasoline and reduces health care costs because kids aren’t dying from asthma and needing treatment for other respiratory health problems. These are things anyone can do. It’s so obvious, and kids know it. It’s really stupid *not* to do these things.

What do kids ‘get’ about global warming that grown-ups have a hard time understanding?

Kids get that they’re going to be toast. All the kids I interviewed say the same thing: “You adults won’t be around in 20 years. We will be here 80 years, and we’re the ones who will bear the cost for your behavior.” It amazes me that these parents—who say they love their kids—are in such denial. That they’re threatening their kids’ health and welfare. Adults really need to get out of denial and do something to ensure that there’s a future for their children. The die’s already cast; there will be parts of the world where there will be terrific hardship already, but we can minimize it if we do something now. That’s what Felix is saying—stop talking, start planting.

The kids in the film seem pretty committed.

The kids get frustrated, because they know they're fighting for their lives. They don't let go, and that's why their voices are so powerful. If you're doing something stupid, they're not going to let you get away with it.

How important are kids' voices in changing family habits?

If kids say, "We've got to start recycling," parents set up recycling. If they tell their parents to take fewer trips to the supermarket, or eat more locally grown food or eat less meat, parents listen. These days, kids have tremendous power over their parents. They can teach their parents.

Click [here](#) to read about another filmmaker in Copenhagen this week, who explores ocean acidification.

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Vince Thompson

Vince Thompson is a digital revenue consultant, author, speaker and host of the popular BNET show Dog and Pony.

With his firm, Middleshift LLC, Vince and his partners, help Internet companies build revenue by creating advertising solutions and scaling sales efforts. Vince's firm has worked with many leading Internet Media companies including Facebook, Napster, TVGuide.com, Michael Eisner's Vuguru and StreetFire.net. At StreetFire, Vince also served as interim CEO.

Prior to his consultancy Vince spent seven years at AOL where he was the Regional Vice President of Sales. Prior to joining AOL in 1998 Vince was a television executive.

He is the author of the bestselling business book, "Ignited: Managers, Light up Your Company and Career for More Power, More Purpose and More Success" available on FT Press and regularly speaks at and moderates events for ad execs, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists.

Vince lives in Los Angeles and holds an undergraduate degree in Communications from The University of Southern California's Annenberg School and a Masters in Business Administration from Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business.

Vince Thompson

Vince Thompson is the managing partner of Middleshift LLC, a digital revenue consultancy specializing in helping media companies sell online advertising.

Within the scope of his consultancy Vince works with a number of startups as well as major media companies and in many cases holds stock in those companies as well.

Vince is also the founder of Media2Watch LLC, parent company of Girl2Watch.com, a

consumer content company that profiles up and coming actors and the shows they are going to be in and then connects them with audiences.

If at the time he writes an article or post he has a business relationship or investment related to the company or person featured, Vince will disclose his involvement.

Melanie D.G. Kaplan

Melanie D.G. Kaplan is a veteran journalist, traveler and swimmer. She writes regularly for The Washington Post and is a contributing editor at Washington Flyer. She has also written for The New York Times, National Geographic Traveler, People and USA Weekend. Melanie is a graduate of Syracuse University and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. She lives in Washington, D.C. with her beagle Darwin.

Melanie D.G. Kaplan

In addition to working as a journalist, Melanie keeps the dog food fund flush with occasional consulting jobs. In the unusual event that her writing mentions a company or organization for which she has provided editorial services, she will disclose that fact. She will do the same should she cover any companies in which she holds investments.

Pure Genius examines the best moves in the management and strategy trenches and deciphers what we can learn from them. Interviews, videos, guest posts and lessons from not-so-bright management moves will also be included.

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