

You say you want a Revolution. Well, we'd love to show you the plan.

Matt Bear, National Endowment for the Animals with NonviolenceRevolution.org

When I was a kid I used to lie on the blue shag carpet of my sister's room and listen to her records on a hand-me-down hi-fi. She had a few Beatles 45s and I'd let the turntable magically jerk the needle back to the beginning after each play to listen to them over and over watching the green apple on the label go 'round and 'round. The b-sides were always my favorites.

The b-side of "Hey Jude" was "Revolution." Something in that song etched into me like the scores of pops scratched into the round of vinyl, "You say you want a revolution. Well, ya know, we all want to change the world... You say you got a real solution. Well, ya know, we'd all love to see the plan."

I'm encouraged by well-meaning friends to lay off the nonfiction, revolutionary, three-inch thick volumes I pack home from the library and instead crack open some easy distraction of fiction. But no, thanks, I really like reading the heavy stuff. I love the way it feels when even one sentence of one of those books weaves into the fabric of a tapestry begun with the popping b-side of a 45 some thirty years ago.

I've read dozens of books about revolutionary change or, more accurately, why we need revolutionary change. They go into great detail about the problems and prognoses, but I'm left with my mind's needle stuck on the groove, "Well... we'd all love to see the plan."

I'm getting very close to my answer to what Lennon and McCartney asked of the sofa-bound pseudo-revolutionaries. Ok, I'll admit my "plan" doesn't have a well-polished beginning nor a predictable end. But I feel as if either I'm running out of time or the planet is, so I want to do my best to articulate "a" plan if not "the" plan.

First of all, I'm not advocating revolution for revolution's sake. I'm acknowledging the seriousness of our situation and the fragility of our existence. There isn't time for philosophical ruminations or elitist throwing of crumbs. People are starving right now. Animals are suffering right now. The planet is struggling to breathe right now. So, it's time for revolutionary change... right now.

I'm answering what my grandfather would call my obligation to leave the planet a better place than I found it. At this point, I feel as if I'm failing to meet that obligation. But I'm trying and I see millions of others trying too. I'm

asking for your help. And, unlike what's been painfully left out many of the books I've been reading, I'm going to tell you how it can be done.



I won't be able to lay out the entire plan in one short article, but let's start the conversation. Here's a short list of some of the necessary components for a successful revolution. Later, in future articles, we'll explore the details.

1. Define the common enemy. The enemy is violence. Violence takes many forms: poverty, dominance, racism, speciesism, militarism, consumerism and gluttony are among them. Buddhist monk and visionary Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that man is not the enemy. The enemy is hatred and violence. You'll find agreement from Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Support and recognize your allies. Those of us fighting for social justice are all on the same side. Support each other with your time and resources, but also in what you choose or don't choose to consume. Explore why the great leader of the farm workers' movement, Cesar Chavez, was a vegetarian and promoted nonviolent dissent through corporate boycotts. Discover the reasons why social justice icons like Coretta Scott King are becoming vegan; why animal rights advocates and gay rights activists are becoming fighters for civil rights, workers' rights, women's rights, fair trade and organic farming; why being an environmentalist entails one to be against factory farming and an advocate for fair trade. We must come down from the mountaintops of our movements to explore our common ground: nonviolence.

3. Consume consciously. Every dollar you spend or don't spend is a vote. If you feel demoralized by a placebo vote every four years having to choose between a white, millionaire, corporate puppet and a white, millionaire, corporate puppet, you are not alone. Every dollar you spend or don't spend holds power -- the power to decide who stands for us and what issues they find important. Make a conscious effort to support the programs and products that advance fairness to workers, respect for the planet, and kindness to animals while refusing to support those industries that support violence, destruction, domination and the other offenses you abhor.

4. Simplify. Live simply so others may simply live. Become conscious of the impact your consumption has on others with whom you share the planet. Imagine the world if ten billion people (where the population will soon be) lived exactly as you do. Would it be truly sustainable? Sustainability is usually directly in line with nonviolence, simplicity and fairness.

5. Think critically. A healthy democracy depends wholly on its informed citizenry. An unethical corporate monster feeds on the unquestioning. Your purchasing power builds or dismantles that monster. Live in alignment with your values. Reject the constant demand to consume at the expense of people, the planet and the animals.

We desperately need a system that is rewarded for doing good instead of harm -- a system in which corporations are for people over profit; where leaders lead from the heart; where the people throw off the chains of presumed helplessness and fulfill their obligation to leave the planet better than they found it.

Join me at www.NonviolenceRevolution.org where many of us are joining together to build a brave new world. We know you want a revolution. And, ya know, we'd love to show you the plan.

www.NEAforever.org
www.NonviolenceRevolution.org