

Little Sacrifices and Imperfect Offerings

I. Gaslit by Heroes

In 2015, the film *This Changes Everything* was premiering at the Hollywood Theatre in Portland, OR (where I live). The film, by Avi Lewis, is kind of a companion piece to the book of the same title by Naomi Klein, Lewis's wife. Both the book and the film are about climate change.

The night I went, Lewis and Klein were there in person to take questions when the movie ended. Most questions, including my own, were addressed to Ms. Klein. I alluded to an assertion from her brilliant book that we would have to, collectively, cut back to 1970s levels of consumption in order to set ourselves on a sustainable path and avoid the worst consequences of global warming. My question was – for practical purposes, what would that entail? With billions more people in the world now than 40 years ago, how would our lifestyles have to change in order to return to collective energy consumption levels of the '70s?

I was stunned by the response I received from Klein.

“Well, we’re not going to back bell bottoms and disco,” she chuckled.

Mr. Lewis chimed in similarly. In jovial tag team fashion, they ridiculed my question with smirking references to elements of 1970s American culture.

I was sure they had misunderstood me. But the more I tried to clarify – i.e. *what might cutting back our collectively energy consumption to sustainable levels actually LOOK LIKE in our day-to-day lives?* – the more they blew me off with snarky, sarcastic replies.

It was only much later that I realized they had not misunderstood me at all. They had simply chosen not to answer me seriously.

In the moment, the possibility that these two climate heroes were behaving disingenuously had never occurred to me.

I still don't entirely understand it.

After the event, I wrote a detailed letter to Naomi Klein, repeating my question in the clearest possible terms and assuring her I was not asking about music or clothing fashions. Sometime later, I received a terse response from her secretary stating that Ms. Klein was much too busy with her writing and speaking and traveling schedule to address my questions.

Wow.

In retrospect, I recall one or two other telling moments from that night.

Portland is a very creative city. One attendee to the event had devised an elaborate, semi-motorized bicycle-type vehicle with considerable storage space (almost as much as a car), and he had ridden to the show on that contraption – as a demonstration of the types of energy savings that are possible if we think out of the box. I recall that Mr. Lewis made a wryly amused and dismissive reference to this vehicle as if it were nothing more than emblematic of Portland’s famous “weirdness.”

I also recall that one or the other of them made a surprisingly condescending remark with respect to 350PDX, our local climate change activist group.

But most of all, I remember a conversation I had with another audience member at the end of the evening, to whom I expressed my frustration at how my question had been misinterpreted and rebuffed.

She told me, “I think they [Klein and Lewis] want to avoid focusing on personal choices in general, because that’s a mistake. Our personal lifestyle choices aren’t going to make anything remotely close to the needed difference. It’s about the big players, the fossil fuel industry. We need to train our focus on *them*, not on ourselves. Thinking *we personally* have the responsibility is actually just a distraction from the real issue.”

Hm. Really?

Of course I have no idea what Naomi Klein and her husband really believe about personal choices, but here’s what I think: ***If you’re alive, you have a part to play.***

We are not mere spectators of our unfolding world. We are participants in history.

Saying that personal choices don’t matter is like telling people not to vote. “Hey, come on. Let’s go fishing instead. You really think your ONE VOTE is going to matter?”

Yes. Collectively, our individual choices do matter – a lot. And in that sense, our consumption choices are a lot like voting.

For humanity to somehow avert the worst consequences of climate change (food shortages, clean water shortages, wars for resources, ocean acidification, catastrophic sea level rises, coral reef decimation ...) it will take some currently unimaginable combination of:

- Radical conservation
- “Green” technology and planning
- A profound shift in our collective consciousness and value structure

II. Hearing Greta

Greta Thunberg has been the world's most prominent climate activist since she was 15. (She is 19 now.) Over and over, from platforms grand and small, she has implored heads of state all over the world, "You don't have to listen to me. I'm just a child. But please listen to the scientists!"

Many of us liberals and environmentally "awake" people are Greta fans. We resonate with her frustration and desperation, and we wearily ask each other, "Why DON'T our world governments ACT? Don't they understand the magnitude of the crisis? Surely, they must! What the hell is wrong with the major nations' governments, including our own?"

But could it be that we're asking the wrong question?

I think so. Because I think the answer to that question is pretty obvious. Government cannot save us.

Consider President Joe Biden. I think he really gets it about climate change. He has repeatedly called it an existential threat to our survival. I think if he could act decisively and effectively to mitigate it, he would.

And I believe he is not the only world leader who is, essentially, pretty helpless.

So let us assume (at least for that moment) that – for whatever the reason -- our world governments cannot respond sufficiently to the overwhelming, horrific, phantasmagorical, imminent, VERY REAL threats presented by the hydra-headed monstrosity that currently goes by the mild name of "climate change."

If we accept that, then the question becomes ... *What – if anything -- are WE going to do about it?*

Whether she consciously realizes it or not, Greta isn't only speaking to the governments of the world. She is talking to all of us.

Our Shared Trance

I don't understand Trump voters. What can they possibly see in this vile man that would inspire loyalty, much less affection? Are they all in a trance, the 73 or 74 million people who voted for him?

I don't know. Maybe. But then ... maybe I'm in a trance too. Maybe all of us are.

And maybe Greta is trying to shake us awake.

Maybe these times call on each of us to act in some way that makes sense, and we are collectively sleepwalking through that call. Maybe we have to do more than just live our lives and hope that the "powers that be" come up with some sort of solution, technical or otherwise.

Recently I watched the movie DON'T LOOK UP on Netflix. Excellent stuff. In case you missed it, it's a brilliant allegory about climate change – a comet is on collision course with the Earth but nobody is capable of responding with appropriate urgency because, day by day, nothing apparently changes in their lives. Because the movie is so pointed and compelling – with delightful star turns by Jennifer Lawrence and Leonard DiCaprio among others – many viewers shared that it gave them “hope.”

But hope for what, I wonder?

Most of us know that our collective habits of consumption are a major contributing factor to climate change. And it's not only energy consumption, which is the obvious culprit. It's our continual voracious consumption of so much *stuff* that requires energy to produce in the first place.

I'm not saying we should all stop consuming things. That's impossible. I'm not even suggesting that we must pare our lives down to the bare essentials. I'm not sure that's feasible, and I know it's not desirable, and I'm pretty sure it's not going to happen so I wouldn't waste time advocating for that, even if I did think it was “the right thing to do,” which I'm not certain of at all.

However, it feels important to insert a small point here: When I watch cool movies, like DON'T LOOK UP, or read important books like REGENERATION: ENDING THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN ONE GENERATION by Paul Hawken or THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING by Naomi Klein, in and of itself, absent any other action, all this really amounts to is another form of consumption – in this case, consumption of books and movies for my troubled little brain.

It may help me feel more “tuned in” and afford me some semblance of “hope” but if that's the extent of it, then it's really just more consumption within a consumption-oriented lifestyle and culture. Those books and movies become assimilated into my (our?) all-encompassing trance.

Another Cool Movie

Perhaps you've seen or heard of the movie MERCHANTS OF DOUBT, which was released back in 2014. It's an outstanding (and highly entertaining; I recommend you consume it) documentary about how professional “spin doctors” cast doubt on established science in order to protect the interests of industry. In the '50s and '60s, that took the form of sowing confusion about the harmful effects of cigarettes and the addictive properties of nicotine. Ultimately, this misinformation campaign “failed” because now “everyone knows” that cigarettes are addictive and dangerous. Fewer people knew it in 1960 though, and as a result of these unscrupulous persuaders' lies, millions of people got hooked on smoking and died horrible deaths.

Now, the movie shows us, the same pattern has been repeated with climate change. The oil companies knew back in the '80s that global warming was a real thing, but they paid their PR people and salaried “researchers” to present “counterevidence” in order to create the impression that the science of climate change was unsettled and uncertain, which it never was.

The result of this highly coordinated, sustained deception with respect to cigarettes was sickness and death for a lot of people. The result with respect to climate change, the movie warns, may well be the demise of human civilization as we know it.

Again, *MERCHANTS OF DOUBT* is a great movie. Yet, I would question one of its implicit premises – namely, that we, the bulk of humanity, are hapless, unknowing, innocent victims of the cynical, manipulative, cold-blooded, shortsighted, ruthless, all-devouring greed of the fossil fuel industry. (And similarly, the millions of smokers who have died of lung cancer were victims of the cigarette companies' morally depraved corporate executives.)

Arguably, that all may be part of the equation. But ...

What, in a person, makes addiction possible – be it addiction to cigarettes or to profligate consumption?

What is the vulnerable point in the human soul that provides purchase for life-destroying addiction to take hold, individually and/or collectively?

From where or from what does the “sin” (so to speak) originate within us?

Surely, not every smoker was so easily fooled by the tobacco industry's propaganda of the '50s and '60s. There must have been some part of their psyche that suspected, or even knew, the truth.

And could the vast majority of the “first world” population really have been so ignorant as to be simply bamboozled by the fossil fuel companies?

Here is a thought: *If greed is what is killing the planet, maybe it's my own greed too. And yours.*

I say this without judgment. Honestly. And I'll have a lot more to say about garden variety greed – especially my own – in a moment or two.

But for now, please believe me when I say I have no judgment. The human “operating system” is riddled with problematic features. Greed is just one of them.

In fact, for now, I'll also say this: Many people believe that our window of opportunity to act on climate change is already gone, that if we had somehow rallied to the task in, say, 1995, we could have gotten a handle on emissions, but now it is too late.

Here is my response to that: We couldn't take action on climate in the 1990s because we did not understand the problem correctly. We failed to understand the problem because we did not understand ourselves.

Our very human nature was, and is, a key part of the problem.

So there is no use regretting what we “should” have done. We did the best we could. And here we are now. Here we are, here we are.

My Favorite Greta Quote

A few years ago, Greta organized a school strike – children skipping school to demand action on climate change. In 2019, this became a global event spanning 150 countries and involving millions of kids, but it began in 2018 on a much smaller, local scale in Greta’s native country of Sweden. And it got plenty of attention.

At the time, Greta said this:

“A lot of people say that Sweden is a small country, that it doesn’t matter what we do. But I think that if a few girls can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school for a few weeks, imagine what we could do together if we wanted to.”

So – inspired by Greta’s words -- if we were to take an action, and multiply it by a million or two (which could happen!), what difference might it make?

That depends on what action we take, of course. We’ve seen that protesting and demonstrating and “demanding action” hasn’t gotten us very far just yet. So what should we do instead?

I have a little idea. Just a germ of an idea really.

III. In Praise of Imperfect Offerings

Everyday Greed

I mentioned that if greed is what’s killing the planet, maybe it’s my own greed too, and perhaps yours as well. And I also stated that I do not judge that.

For me, greed is an ever-present force. It’s like a default setting in my brain software. Of course, it could be that you and I have a slightly different definition of greed, but I think, even if so, it boils down to nuance, rather than a stark distinction between your meaning and mine.

For example: Recently I discovered a brand of vegan cheese I like a lot, and I started buying it regularly. I really liked their provolone variety. But then I tasted the smoked gouda! Woah! I like that one best! Now I won’t settle for provolone anymore. In fact, if I go to the store and the gouda is sold out, and I have to settle for provolone, I feel a little put out. Therefore, when gouda is in stock, I usually buy more than I need. If there are only a few on the shelf, I might take them all. That’s greed, right?

Or, how about this? The weather in Portland recently turned from gray and drizzly to bright and brisk, which is very pleasant. I'd been enjoying this nicer weather, until my godson showed me pictures he'd taken recently of a beach he visited in Hawaii last month. I was immediately seized with the agonizing sense that I was missing out – I suddenly NEEDED to go to Hawaii!

And what is fear of missing out, aka FOMO, other than greed? Like I say, I was already enjoying the weather right here in Portland.

Or here's a more typical example, I think. A lot of people can probably relate to this. I'm in a restaurant, studying the menu. I can't decide between two items. It feels very important to me to choose the meal that will afford me the most pleasure. I even stress about it a little. To paraphrase something I read once in an essay by Garrison Keillor, it's like the menu is a racing form and only one horse can win.

My point is that, like most of us (and yes, I'm taking the liberty of ascribing this quality to "most of us"), I devote an awful lot of mental and emotional energy to trying to arrange life in such a way that it will yield gratifying experiences *for me*. It's a curious pursuit when you step back and look at it, and don't just take for granted that of course that's what people do – chase pleasure and avoid pain. It's not that simple. Pleasure and pain are phenomena we experience *in the moment*, but dedication to manifesting enjoyable experiences – that's a mind activity. That's a mental thing.

I'm not saying it's all I ever think about, or all you ever think about. But how often do our internal machinations, in some way, involve the anticipation or creation of our own comfort and happiness and pleasure? I'm not going to slap a percentage on it, but I will confess that in my case, the answer would be "probably at least half of the time."

I call that greed. A kind of natural greed maybe. Maybe just a "mistake" born of over-identification with our individual selves, I don't know. (And I do call it a *mistake* because, at least in my experience, the quest for personal gratification does not in and of itself give rise to feelings of contentment or happiness or peace.)

What about Sacrifice?

"Sacrifice" is a painful sounding word. To sacrifice means to relinquish something of value, so by its nature, sacrifice generally stings at least a little.

Sacrifice is not currently popular in our culture. Hell, *inconvenience* is highly unpopular! Look what happens when our government tries to impose mask mandates. A lot of people are screaming that their liberties are being trampled if they're required to wear a mask in the supermarket. A lot of people – on the right *and* left – call mask mandates a form of top-down social control, ala 1984. (A very progressive writer whom I admire deems the mandates "humiliating" and "an indignity.")

So, gosh, what if our government tried to impose energy conservation mandates on every household? How well would that go over? I'm old enough to recall how President Jimmy Carter went down in flames

after he showed up on TV in a sweater and asked Americans to turn down their thermostats. (So un-presidential! So out of touch!)

This is one reason why I don't feel the answers to the climate crisis lie with government, or at least don't start there.

But looking soberly ahead, I think we're either going to have to choose to give up certain conveniences, or else sacrifices will be forced upon us by Mother Nature.

Right now, it still doesn't feel that way. Despite escalating incidents of extreme weather, wildfires, melting ice caps, disappearing coral reefs, islands of plastic in our oceans, and all the rest of it, most of us basically live pretty much as we always have. Climate change doesn't impinge on (or feel connected to) our lifestyles, or our preoccupations as we go about our daily business.

That said, I do NOT want to "sell" sacrifice, or even "conservation" (which could be a milder term for a type of sacrifice). I DEFINITELY do not want to browbeat or scare anyone into anything – primarily because that won't work.

Instead I'd like to offer an invitation. And maybe start a little train.

Forget Your Perfect Offering

[The song "Anthem" by Leonard Cohen](#) has a refrain that goes:

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in*

Cohen's melody is somber, but it's been recast by "the people." I don't know who first started singing it differently, but in various song circles, [I've heard people share it like this](#), with a much jauntier tune:

*Forget your perfect offering
Just sing the song that you can sing
There is a crack in everything
That's how
The light
That's how the light gets in!*

It means, basically: Do what you can, don't worry that's it not perfect, don't hold yourself to an ideal standard. Just do what you can do and trust that the light will find its way into your sweet, flawed, cracked-open little soul.

And that's how I feel about "sacrifices" right now. They should be joyous, and relatively easy.

I cannot dictate specifically what anybody else should do -- although, of course, I have plenty of ideas. (And I'll share my own "first sacrifice" in a moment, which might make you laugh.) But first, my rationale:

None of this is going to make much difference if we each do it by ourselves. Heck, I could go off the electric grid entirely, and it would neither make a perceivable dent in our collective carbon footprint, nor would many people notice. BUT ... what if you and me ... and, say, a million or two other people turned off all electric power in our homes for just *two hours a week*, simply as a statement that **we care**.

If a million people did that, it could, I imagine, be something that would be "felt" on the macro scale to an extent, though I don't for one moment imagine it would solve global warming. I read an essay recently by Jonathan Franzen in which he wrote: "[I]f I calculate average annual carbon quota required to limit global warming to two degrees this century, I find that simply maintaining a single-family American home exceeds it in two weeks." So that's pretty discouraging.

THEN AGAIN ... Paul Hawken makes a detailed, comprehensive, scientific case that we can reverse the global warming trend **in one generation** through regenerative farming practices that reclaim carbon from the atmosphere. (You can YouTube him or read one of his books, *DRAWDOWN* or *REGENERATION*. *REGENERATION*, in particular, has many suggestions for individual action.)

In the meantime, emissions matter. That's certainly part of the equation. And I believe that making a collective statement together by reducing our consumption – and therefore our emissions – might be more powerful than "demanding" action from government. (To be clear, many of Hawken's suggestions also involve proactive individual and collective actions that go beyond forms of protest.)

Could this ultimately place significantly less demand on the energy grid?
Shift the zeitgeist, making it easier for governments to act?

I dunno.

But here is what I suspect:

1. Tangible, concrete actions that show we're serious and that we CARE – and that we are willing to inconvenience ourselves because we care – will have a deeper, longer-lasting resonance than forms of demonstration which demand action from OTHERS (whether those others be governments, corporations, or our fellow citizens).
2. If this really catches on, it will charge the atmosphere and alter the national conversation about climate change. It will at least stir things up, in a good way, I believe.
3. Taking collective action in a non-blaming, joyful-hearted, inclusive way could also be a counterforce to the deep-set toxic political polarization in our country. (I'll say more about what I mean by "non-blaming" in a moment.)
4. This can build community in beautiful ways. It could be exhilarating. If our neighbors are also doing something like this (like, say, two hours a week without electricity, as well as other stuff),

we will smile more often into each other's eyes. If we have our electric off at differing hours, maybe we'll wind up doing things like borrowing space in each other's freezers briefly so our frozen foods won't melt. Or in the winter, maybe we'll have to spend a little "community time" in one another's homes to share heat. (I know that's counter to COVID protocol right now but that could change.)

5. The more people who do this, the easier it will get. And the more fun it will be. Right now I'm not turning off my electricity. But if a lot of people were doing it, it would not feel useless, and I'd be happy to join in.

Renouncing Righteousness

Now you may say, "Why should I sacrifice any of my own small luxuries or conveniences when there's a guy in a mansion on the hill burning electric lights in dozens of rooms and flying around in jet planes all the time? And Elon Musk is building a rocket ship! Shouldn't the people who have money to burn be the first ones to give up something?"

I guess that's logical. Then again, maybe your indignation could be the first thing to sacrifice if you really want a livable world for your kids, and their kids. Right or wrong, maybe that's just what we're looking at.

The way I see it, if some rich person cannot compromise their massively consumptive lifestyle, which looks like profligate decadence to me, maybe I just don't understand that person's experience (including, perhaps, their internal sense of lack, or their peculiarly conditioned sense of need). How could I know what other people feel about what I might be asking them to give up? Who am I to judge? (Years ago, feeling otherwise, I wrote [an essay entitled "Live Like Me!"](#) and while I still subscribe to much of what I wrote in it, my attitude has evolved.)

But I'm not even arguing that it would be "wrong" to judge. I just accept the obvious, which is that judging gets us exactly nowhere. Again, it only locates the problem outside ourselves.

After all, an observer could look at someone like me too – with my comfortable, middle-class American lifestyle – and say, "Hey, it's easy for YOU to talk about giving up things. You have always had so much! I never had anything to begin with."

And I'd have to answer: Okay. You're right! There is so much I take for granted. Recently I walked into the grocery store and I was annoyed that there were no bananas, in January. Had they been in stock, they would have come from Mexico, I guess. How much oil must be burned to get those organic, fair trade bananas to New Seasons Market in Portland?

At the very least, I should bend at the knees with humility, and acknowledge that I'm a hypocrite many times over when I talk about conservation.

So I renounce self-righteousness. It's the least I can do.

If I sacrifice anything, it will be from love. I want other people to act from love too, so I don't want to shame or pressure or "guilt" anyone. In any case, it seems to me that most people are already wrestling silently with their own guilt, even if they stuff it down or cover it well.

But guilt doesn't produce love.

I might say to another (hypothetical) person: What you sacrifice or don't sacrifice is between you and your own soul. It's not for me to judge. My only task, where you're concerned, is to love you.

My First Imperfect Offering

I turned off my hot tub. I pulled out the fuse that powers it.

I miss it sometimes, but it's a small sacrifice. Keeping the hot tub warm is not worth the energy it requires.

Laughable, huh? Even the fact that I have a hot tub emblemizes my privilege. So go ahead and laugh if you want to.

But here is how I see it. There are people in my life whom I love. Some I love very much, because I know them well. Other people are more peripheral, but I know them well enough to feel like I love them. I was thinking recently about a couple I know peripherally, and their children whom I hardly know at all, and realizing that I love them, and that my pulling out my hot tub fuse was, among other things, a kind of prayer for their little family.

Every sacrifice is a prayer.

This whole notion of collective sacrifice is a colossal mass prayer.

And by the way, it will be easier for me to do tougher things than just turn off my hot tub if you'll do some of them with me.

Getting the Ball Rolling

I will create a website, **MyLittleSacrifice.com**, as well as a [Facebook page with that theme](#) (which is up now), where we can all share our imperfect offerings and humble prayers. Maybe they'll catch on.

It's just a beginning.

This idea is just one imperfect offering.

Do you have a better idea? Please let me know. We need lots of better ideas. I'm hoping the Facebook page and website will be something to build on in ways I can't foresee. And I'm hoping that this notion snowballs over time.

Some actions can be coordinated, like a designated day or evening each week when we all turn off our home energy. But individual actions count too, especially if they're part of a "chorus" of little sacrifices, offered by thousands or millions of people.

If you're a meat eater, you could eat a little less meat. That will save energy and water. (For me, not eating meat isn't a sacrifice since I already don't eat meat.) Or disable your air conditioner, or use it less. Refrigerants are notoriously potent greenhouse gases. (Ironically, as our summers get hotter, this is going to feel harder to do.)

Not to be too prescriptive. Perhaps I shouldn't even make specific suggestions (though I'll let stand the two above).

But please look into your heart and ask yourself what you'd be willing to sacrifice, without too much pain, for the sake of bequeathing your children (or your future children, or other people's kids, or animals if you prefer ... or yourself) a livable world.

As I stated a couple of newsletters ago, I think there are three essential dimensions to tackling climate change:

- A profound shift in our collective consciousness and value structure
- Radical conservation
- "Green" technology and planning

A "small personal sacrifices" movement could bring an enlivening momentum to all three dimensions, directly to the first two and indirectly to the third.

The Invitation and the Prayer

I hope this idea will never become infected with strains of superiority or resentment or browbeating or guilt-induction. This is an invitation, not a call to arms.

Or think of it as a party – a feast of imperfect offerings from imperfect human beings.

Counterintuitive as it may seem, in proclaiming our small sacrifices, we're not trying to make anyone else do anything. We are expressing our spirit and our gratitude for all our blessings and for each other.

If, in advancing this project, I personally have to be some paragon of virtue and purity, I will fail that standard by a million miles. I'm just a schlep, just a guy who cares and is imperfectly advancing this odd idea. If it resonates with you, please make it your idea too. Mutate it. Improve on it.

Start with something easy though. Anything. But make a real sacrifice. Even a very tiny one.

Further on, I can easily imagine, say, doing without electricity from 8 to 10 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. At first it may feel like a bigger pain in the ass than I anticipated. But over time, maybe it might move me to a deeper contemplation of the incredible superpower miracle of having electric power in the first place. Maybe I can light candles during those hours. Make a ritual of it. Pray, meditate, sing ... alone or with friends.

Again, it would feel so much richer if millions of other people were doing it too.

I'm still an energy addict. I'm not ready to become an ascetic. Are you? But what if we all just do what we can graciously do now and trust that it might matter?

All our selfless actions, our sacrifices, are prayers. They're not about arranging life to gratify ourselves. They proceed from a different type of motivation. Let's see how it feels, to pray with our lives.

I know this is a big reach, and at the moment it feels like a pipedream. Like you (probably), I have been living in a gilded world of superpower-type conveniences my entire life, and I've been around longer than most people have, so I am VERY accustomed to my enormous, far-reaching privileges.

In fact, here's a confession: A craven, selfish part of me sometimes simply hopes that all this luxury will somehow last at least until I'm gone. Let my godkids' generation deal with the droughts and tidal waves.

When I catch myself thinking like this, I don't feel guilty, but I do feel a certain hollowness within.

On the other hand, when I perceive myself as being "on the human team" or, say, "a member of the human family" – or even, say, a tiny human fish swimming for a while in our shared evolutionary stream -- I feel inspired by the big questions staring us in the face. As a friend recently put it, *How can we get human beings to cooperate with one another? How can we get everyone in the world – including philosophers, scientists, anthropologists – to work in tandem on this gigantic, overarching problem that threatens our survival?*

How can we, with our eyes open, meet reality bravely and authentically?

How can we live from our hearts, knowing what we know?

Greta Thunberg, in her quest to wake up politicians, has helped ME to wake up – and I thought I was already pretty aware. If politicians and world leaders are sleepwalking, if they are more reactive than proactive as I suspect they generally are, then let's count our blessings that we are not as constrained as they. Let's behave in a way that helps them to hear us, and lets them know we are serious. Let's add our voices to Greta's, to help them align with us.

My prayer is that, with infinite creativity, other good people will add to my idea and color it their own way, and there will be a great giving, and "sacrifice" will feel less like a pain than an exuberant, even ecstatic outpouring of love and joy.

For the moment, I scarcely know how to get this thing started. I'm not technical; I can't even build the website on my own. I'm not an organizer either – if it's up to me alone to promote this movement, I'm not sure how fast or widely it can spread.

I only know that climate change isn't specifically anyone else's fault, so some of the work has to start with me. (Thank you again, Greta.)