

Why I Joined Transition Whatcom, by Chris Wolf

Many of us are becoming more and more aware on some level that our collective behavior as humans has created some overwhelming crises that are coming back to bite us—and the rest of life on Earth-- pretty hard. Climate change, including the melting of ice caps and glaciers, is happening at a rate even faster than scientists' predictions. Oil, which we depend on for just about EVERYTHING in our culture, is reaching its peak production before it goes into terminal decline-- after which everything we make with it and ship with it will get increasingly more rare and more expensive. And our global economy, which is so dependent on oil and on unprecedented levels of personal and national debt-- is about as unsustainable of a system as I can conceive of.

But surprisingly, all this horrible stuff is not what got ME involved. I knew about all of that before a year and a half ago. I was recycling my cans and waiting for a charismatic leader like Martin Luther King Jr. to emerge and motivate us all to create a new society! I was waiting for the government officials I had voted for (or not) to come together at Kyoto or Copenhagen and join together and stick to an international plan of action. Or for “consumer demand to alter the marketplace...” or something.

That is when the Transition movement entered my consciousness and changed everything for me. The message was: “If we wait for government it will be too little too late... if we act as individuals it will be too little... but if we come together as local communities and really unleash our collective genius, we might just get ourselves out of this mess, and have a whole lot of fun doing it!” That was the moment when I went: “OH... crap. That Dr. King I've been waiting to rise up and lead us to a brighter future-- I think that's ME.” But it's also her, and him, and him, and her, and the thousands of extraordinary ordinary people all over the world who are taking on this task. WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! And I'm done waiting!

I would like to encourage us all to open up three very important parts of ourselves: our heads, our hearts, and our hands. Open our minds to the stark realities that are facing us. Open our minds to new ideas and new skills. And let's also open our hearts-- to the myriad of emotions that we all experience when we are facing crisis and opportunity: grief, anger, excitement, anxiety, confusion, hope. Let all of these exist in you.

And finally, let's open our hands. Let's manifest all this energy into real, positive work in the world. Join up with others who are passionate about envisioning the kind of future we want to create-- and then create it! You don't have to have the answers, just show up-- many hands can make light work, or they can make phenomenally powerful, beautiful, and impactful work in the world! That's what can be done here with Transition Whatcom.

I know for myself, I have had more fun, felt more empowered and hopeful about the future, and made more incredible friends in the past year and a half than ever before in my life. And I want you all to have that. And I want to see what incredible things we can do together if we put our energy toward it-- aren't you so curious to find out?? So, are you ready, Whatcom County? LET'S UNLEASH TRANSITION WHATCOM!!!!!!

Transition Whatcom's **VISION** is resilient and more self-reliant communities throughout Whatcom County with a local food supply, sustainable energy sources, a healthy local economy, and a growing sense of vitality and community well-being. The **MISSION** of Transition Whatcom is:

- 1) To explore and then follow pathways of practical actions that will reduce our carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.
- 2) To rebuild our community's resilience, that is, its ability to withstand shocks from the outside, through being more self-reliant in areas such as food, energy, health care, jobs and economics.
- 3) To inspire and support the communities and neighborhoods of Whatcom County as they establish Transition Initiatives at these local levels; and
- 4) To coordinate a county-wide, citizen led Energy Descent Action Pathway by creating a collective 20 year vision of Whatcom County. From there we will devise the paths on which we may achieve our objectives.

Join over 660 members at <http://transitionwhatcom.ning.com>