

# GLOBAL CHORUS

365 VOICES ON THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET

*Featuring words by* JANE GOODALL, NELSON MANDELA,  
DAVID SUZUKI, ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU, STEPHEN HAWKING,  
MAYA ANGELOU, THE DALAI LAMA *and hundreds more*

EDITED BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

Humans today are confronting the greatest challenge ever faced in the four-billion-year history of this planet: in the face of environmental destruction the world over, devastating prevalence and severity of poverty, continually distressing situations of socio-political turmoil, intensifying effects of climate change, and a general earthly equilibrium that we have gravely disrupted, the challenge we come up against today is how to ensure not only the healthy survival of the human race, but also the preservation of the rest of life on Earth as we seek to achieve the planetary balance that is so necessary to sustainably move forward.

Little by little, we have broadened our understanding of humanity's role in determining the fate of the planet and its species. But this awareness hasn't clearly translated into a collective action. We have yet to bring together into one boundary-crossing book the visionaries of our times, our brightest minds and our most influential leaders. And now more than ever we need to hear their counsel on the future of the planet.

*Global Chorus: 365 Voices on the Future of the Planet* gives us this chance.

You are holding in your hands a groundbreaking collection of over 365 perspectives on our environmental future. A global roundtable for our times, in the format of a daily reader. This book is a trove of insight, guidance, passion and wisdom that has

poured in from all over the Earth. Its message is enormously inspiring, and ominous in its warnings. And yet, united in a thread of hope, its contents are capable of helping even the most faithless global citizen to believe that we have the capacity to bring about lasting positive change in our world. Places at this roundtable are occupied by writers, environmentalists, spiritual leaders, politicians, professors, doctors, athletes, businesspeople, farmers, chefs, yogis, painters, actors, architects, musicians, TV personalities, humanitarians, adventurers, concerned youth, senior citizens, civil servants, carpenters, bus drivers, activists, CEOs, scientists and essentially those who have something thoughtful and visionary to say about humanity's place on Earth. Compiled for your reading as a set of 365 pieces, *Global Chorus* presents to you a different person's point of view for each day of your year.

Contributors to *Global Chorus* have provided one-page responses to the following line of questioning:

*Do you think that humanity can find a way past the current global environmental and social crises? Will we be able to create the conditions necessary for our own survival, as well as that of other species on the planet? What would these conditions look like? In summary, then, and in the plainest of terms, do we have hope, and can we do it?*

In the case of some contributors to *Global Chorus*, applicable material has been sourced from other writings, speeches, interviews, articles etc., in order to include their highly valued perspectives in this anthology. This route has been taken to feature the pages by Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Mikhail Gorbachev, Lester Brown, Stephen Lewis, Trudie Styler, David Buckland, Barb Stegemann, Farley Mowat, Thomas Berry (posthumously), Pema Chödrön, Sy Safransky, Jamie Oliver and Stephen Hawking, and through their participation in the conversation, the collection's overall base of insight is further enhanced.

It should be noted here as well that all contributors to this fundraising book have generously and graciously donated their time and efforts, as proceeds from the sales of *Global Chorus* will be distributed to a select group of organizations helping to recover, protect and sustain life on Earth. Please see the info at the end of the book for more on these organizations and their work.

What is abundantly clear in our times is that, if anything, *we need to talk* about the ways in which we are living, what kind of impact we're having on our surroundings, how we can live more sustainably and how we can create a better future for our children

and countless generations to come – human and non-human alike. *We all* need to talk about it, *regularly*: through the *conversation* comes the *alteration*. Thus, the aim of *Global Chorus* is to help keep this conversation going and help it to be on our minds daily, to be inspired by those who do think about this regularly, and to carry out the wisdom gained from this conversation into our own daily lives. To *live* it as we work together toward being a more sustainable and harmonious planet in the 21st century.

The right words said at the right time can have the force of a mighty river. Moreover, the right words said at the right time *by the visionaries of our time* can wash away mountains of injustice, leaving only the seeds for a better world planted in their path. And through the many, many *right words* spoken herein, we hope you will be guided to help foster this better world. It is here, and ready to grow at your feet.

This is our most pivotal hour. What we need most is to spark imaginations, to ignite our passions. We need to raise our voices in a global chorus.

*Our divided voices can only do so much;  
let's see what happens when we sing in  
chorus.*

We live in a time of infinite possibility. There are *so many* messages of truth and guidance to glean from this book, but if I were to highlight one in particular for this Preface, this would have to be it.

Throughout the work of *Global Chorus* I have had many contributors ask me if I was going to write my own page of words, as part of the 365 assembled perspectives on our global future. I don't feel this would be appropriate; but if I were to briefly sum up my assessment of our global challenges at this time in our human evolution on Earth, it would be that we are doing *far too much thinking about what is not possible* and *not enough believing about what is possible*.

To bring it to my own experience for a moment, to paint the picture clearly for you about how this project came to be, this book has been assembled by a guy with very few prior connections, little experience as an editor, no experience as an anthologist, and no previous experience in coordinating any kind of project anywhere close to something like this. A guy who has long been painfully concerned about environmental issues, and who simply had an idea in the shower one day that it would be amazing to read a book exactly like the one you're now holding. (And a guy who then listened to the wise advice of both his wife and Nolan Bushnell: "Everyone who's ever taken a shower has an idea. It's the person who gets out of the shower, dries off and does something about it who makes a difference.") A guy who did most of his work at home, in an old farmhouse

in the country in Prince Edward Island, Canada, mostly sitting around in his pajamas ...

A guy who originally thought that this project would be *far* from possible. But I guess I'm now a guy who has learned, in my own little way, what can be done when you choose not to follow what you think and instead follow what you believe.

Doing a project of this nature fifty years ago *would* have been next to impossible. Even twenty years ago, something like this would have taken a team of researchers and administrative assistants, a staggering amount of postage (and/or faxing), and many years of meticulous correspondence. I would venture to say that even ten years ago, pulling off a project of this nature would have been extremely difficult. But now, *we are connected*. And the connections are there to be embraced if you have an idea. This is the kind of thing that you – that anyone – can do in today's world.

So please, embrace this notion: if you do have any idea that can help your household, your workplace, your community, your city, your region, your country to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially harmonious, do not hesitate. Do it. Because the reality is that these kinds of helpful ideas come to us for a reason: to help us evolve. But a helpful idea is wasted if it is not borne by action into this help-hungry world.

I must emphasize, though, that as soon as I thought of this idea for *Global Chorus*, it became

very much not my own. I passed it to the hands of others right away, to let them shape it and bring it to fruition as they saw fit. I came up with the concept, yes, and I've been working incredibly hard over these years to invite, recruit, compile and edit – but mainly it has been created with care by several hundred of the world's most passionate and forward-thinking individuals. And what an astounding miracle it has been to watch it unfold and grow into what it now is.

Truly, I have felt like one of the luckiest people on Earth to have been at the helm of this project for the past four years. My days have been spent interacting with, incredibly, the most socially conscious and environmentally dedicated people in the world, to bring them together *for* our world. If you were to think of the group of writers included in *Global Chorus* as an *actual* choir, I would be like the director who would be standing in front of them, completely in awe of how glorious this choir is and how beautiful their voices sound together, and then lose my place in the music because I'm so enthralled and overwhelmed by the power of it all.

This being said, I did have to be driven by what I've affectionately come to call "failure fuel" many times: people telling me that something like this couldn't be possible, having all kinds of doors shut in my face along the way – and then always trying my best to spring out from the energy of that door slam, to find that other door to try (because, let's face it,

there's *always* another door). Moreover, as I initially thought this anthology would be a perfect project for a publishing house to do – or at least someone with a lot of connections – I soon learned that, in fact, if this project was going to get off the ground, *I* was going to have to be the one to do it, and that's all there was to it. In a way, I felt like Frodo accepting the one ring in *The Lord of the Rings*: "I will take the Ring ... though I do not know the way."

The incomparable Paul Hawken was thankfully one of the very first contributors to *Global Chorus*, and in his piece he speaks profoundly appropriate words for our time in history on this planet: "Do what needs to be done, and check to see if it was impossible only when you are finished."

I have followed his advice ever since then, and it has helped me immensely in the completion of this mammoth project. And it is my utmost hope that you too will follow his advice, to take on what's labelled as impossible and then acknowledge that "Impossible" signpost in your rear-view mirror when you've arrived at where you may not have *thought* you'd be, but where you *believed* you could be.

This world *desperately* needs your action-sprung-from-belief. Please believe. Please act.

And, for every day of your year ahead, please enjoy, be enlightened, be guided, be impassioned, be warned, be informed, be filled with hope, be inspired by all that is this *Global Chorus* in your hands.

Welcome to the Chorus.

OCTOBER 13

## JOHN POMEROY

We are in a very dangerous time in history due to rapidly rising greenhouse gas concentrations and other impacts of our growing population. Climate warming means that we are now starting to see exactly how loss of cold melts snow, permafrost, sea ice and glaciers and how intensification of the hydrological cycle results in severe storms, floods and droughts. This involves irreversible thermodynamics and complex ecohydrological regime changes which take time to manifest themselves and are often unanticipated. Changes to water are focused and magnified downstream in river basins and are inordinately directed to rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands and floodplains where key ecosystems and our main communities reside.

I have found humanity's response to the degradation of climate, ecosystems and water to be discouraging – we almost always respond and correct our behaviour only after a disaster and rarely with

foresight. And then we try to forget about it. I fear that we will only begin to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions after repeated catastrophes have limited our ability and will to emit. It is virtually certain that we will see more extreme climate, ecosystem and water problems before the effects of declining emissions on climate become apparent. But there will be no return to "normal." The responses to climate forcing will alter the Earth dramatically and irrevocably and require all the adaptation that humanity can tolerate.

Though unrecognizable in many instances, this will still be our home. Our clever species and many others will survive – intrinsically refigured by the trauma of change. Through this we must ensure that decency, diplomacy, integrity and our natural creative, hopeful spirit survive as we contend with irreversible thermodynamics and ecohydrological change.

– Professor John Pomeroy,

Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change,  
director of the Centre for Hydrology at the University of Saskatchewan