

Student Speak-Out Introduction by Ethan Bond-Watts ('09)

I can feel electricity on the green right now. I can feel power here. The power of Focus the Nation, is that it brings together people from all different walks of life, because we all have some things in common.

We come from different cultural and geographical backgrounds. We have different academic interests. We have different spiritualities,

We may revere Krishna, Gaia, Jehova, and Allah.

Some of us celebrated our own secular high holy day just this Monday, on the 20th.

Whatever your spirituality, this movement, of reverence and stewardship for our living planet, is both secular and spiritual. It is adaptable and it is inclusive.

We share a common interest in the destiny of our children and our planet, and at this very moment, our world is barreling forward in time and space.

Relative to the sun, this little blue space ship we call Earth is literally hurdling into the future at about 70,000 miles per hour, that is one revolution around the sun, once a year.

In the context of the Milky way, our whole solar system is moving into future at 500,000 miles per hour, and the milky way itself is flying through the Universe at close to a million miles per hour.

Time... is just a relative comparison of change.

If Earth's orbit is a poor measure, then is the cesium world clock better? All measures are relative. I think that Einstein had some thoughts on that subject, but I would need to do some more research on that.

If time itself is just a measure of change, then when we talk about the future, we can think about how through change and progress, we can create our future; now. And we will live in our future tomorrow.

As brilliant human beings, we can recognize our own construction of the bounds of reality, and that recognition will liberate us to transcend the entrenched scales of space and time, such as the spatial limits of one person's mental map, and the time duration of the individual lifetime.

It has been the conceptual framework born of this tiny scale, of the individual human sensory experience, that has created a crash course for the stable ecosphere as we know it.

Be honest with yourself about the scales of your reality, and you will be interested in how that can affect your judgment and decision-making.

I have just a couple of thoughts on the **human dimension of environmental progress**.

There is an inextricable connection between social and economic progress and environmental stewardship.

Some people paint the world of international politics and economics as a zero sum game, in which every autonomous player is in a constant struggle for more power and wealth.

The truth is that we are all on the same team.

Anyone who has roommates can confirm this essential truth about the human community.

Together we win, and together we lose, when we are talking about creating a more rich and productive environment.

Social and economic inequality and exploitation sustain world order only inasmuch as they perpetuate the status quo, which is an ultimately dying paradigm.

We all win and we all lose together. Question any doctrine that alienates or marginalizes potential allies.

Inclusive environmentalism

The new environmentalism is not about specific ideals, dogma, or technologies.

It is about the process of critical thinking, and the process of integrating ideas from diverse people, cultures, and belief systems.

The new environmentalism is about a reconciliation between ancient wisdom and cutting edge knowledge, that is both rooted in place and universal in scope.

The emerging paradigm will integrate ancient wisdom;

about the synergy of living systems,

about principles for tapping into the elemental energy sources that drive all of earth's processes, organic and inorganic alike.

We will tune in to ways of building relationships with our natural ecologies that create mutually beneficial positive feedback loops between the human civilization and the natural systems that provide the foundation for a living planet.

The wisdom and knowledge we need to create this future already exist.

We simply need to reconsider how we ask the questions, and the processes we use to answer to answer those questions.

In our lifetimes we will live the emerging paradigm of the 3rd millennium.

We can already see it, and feel it, here today.

Look around you and you see the innovators and leaders who will ease us into the great transition of culture and ecology.

Really listen to yourself, and to your friends, And come to your own conclusions about your world.

Because the only answers exist in us, the people, the citizens of the planet, with the power to manage ourselves, the power to question ourselves, and the power to look deep into our past and deep into our future, and to be honest with ourselves about what we see, and what we want.

Thank you.

Thank you for coming, and participating in Focus the Nation

and thank you speakers for taking a risk and sharing your thoughts with us here today.