

I have a friend, an old friend, who once said to me, "I want to save the planet." I looked at his tense and aging face. He used to race cars, started five companies, his three daughters all in college now.

How do I talk to this race horse, this "typical" American? "We are the small, a tiny part of this beautiful planet, and we have indeed created quite a mess. But the planet is much bigger than we are. Is it for the weak to save the strong?"

He was unfazed. "I want to change the atmosphere so we don't trap heat. I want to clean up the water so fish can swim. I want the air so clean that asthma is forgotten. Ah, but I have so little time to do these wonderful things."

I thought a long time. "All things we make we borrow from our Mother. She kept them for us for ages, and now She kindly lets us play. The most beautiful places, the sacred ground, are places where people are not. Perhaps we can "save the planet" as you say by simply leaving Her alone."

He dismissed my words, anger flaring in his eyes. "You just don't get it, do you? I've won every battle I've ever fought. I made so much money you don't even know. Now it's time for me to give something back. I'll do it, either with you or without you."

Another long pause. "Everything you see around you is a reflection of some piece of yourself. If it did not resonate within you, you could not sense it. That's why you don't see wise spirits in the forest, nymphs in the gardens. You have not met these forces within you. What you think is wrong with Mother Earth is truly wrong in yourself. First heal yourself, of your anger, your greed, your ignorance. Then you will see our Mother who out of the deepest love for her children lets us play our games. If our games ever truly threaten Mother she is very capable of taking care of herself. Let us start by changing our games. "

He never spoke to me again until millions of barrels of oil started streaming from the Gulf. He called me in a panic, "I can capture the oil, ten times their current throughput."

I told him it would not be enough. "So what will you do? Meditate? This is a time for action, not dreaming!"

How do I talk sense to someone who does not hear? "Mother is speaking by simply giving us what we want most. Change what we want, change your heart, and Mother will happily change as well."

"So what does that mean? Man, what will you do!"

I took a deep breath. "I walk now instead of drive."

I wonder if he will call again.