



Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet



By David Suzuki and Holly Dressel
2002 Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd.

For more information on this book visit
www.stoddartpub.com

For more information on the David Suzuki Foundation, please visit:
www.davidsuzuki.org

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Related links. a-z:

- Canadian Museum of Nature - www.nature.ca
- CBC, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation - www.cbc.ca
- David Suzuki Foundation - www.davidsuzuki.org
- Ottawa International Writers Festival - www.writersfest.com
- Place Bell Books - <http://cyberus.ca/~pbb/main.html>
- Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd. - www.stoddartpub.com
- The Ottawa Citizen - www.ottawacitizen.com

This review is also an interesting combination of events. It tells how I learned about this book and

the experiences leading up to and after reading it. I hope you will enjoy it and help spread the news.

The Review | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)

The Review

I really enjoyed "Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet". Of course, I would. I did although there were some lengthy explanations of scientific findings in environmental problems and subsequent solutions. Maybe those parts seemed lengthy because I would read it just before bedtime or on the workday commute into and out of the city of Ottawa.

[My favourite passages](#) were those called "Making Money like the Bee" and "Wrestling with Pluto". I have felt for a long time that businesses should be [conscious of the environment](#), ensuring not to harm nature in their processes. It was a good sign that *certified* organic products were becoming more and more popular in the grocery stores. I also felt that there were many harmful substances being dragged from the underworld; if not harmful to the health, more harmful than beneficial to societies with the greed of a few power mongers (i.e. gold and gemstones and oil).

Instead of the old "doom and gloom" approach, this book gives numerous examples of solutions being applied now by local communities, municipal governments and the lawmakers of some European countries. The authors tell of city dwellers in Europe that do their best to conserve water and reduce household waste by composting. They even provide examples of what can be done using natural, harmless, long-term methods. They encourage us to appreciate and respect the rituals and beliefs of indigenous peoples, the original caretakers of the land and water. One could conclude that some of the ancient rituals that they used had a good purpose and should not have been discarded so easily in the name of modern agricultural methods.

After reading this book, I feel more justified in questioning humanity's responsibility if our "advanced" societies trample down upon the natural world while placing themselves at such lofty heights. What is our unsettling obsession with speed, power and material worth? Where are we going so fast and with whom are we racing?

My Favourite Passages

"The similarity in myths associated with the underworld across so many cultures implies that somehow we've always known it was dangerous and unnatural to go underground and steal from Pluto. But now we know exactly why that's true, and having the coal mine cave in on us or the gas vein explode is the very least of our problems. We are gradually learning that minerals, oils and gases that were sequestered beneath the surface of the earth by biology, geology and time

actually have a reason for staying where they are. If they don't, they risk changing the make-up of everything on the planet's surface, including the atmosphere that protects the whole thing." (Wrestling with Pluto, page 277)

"A lot of people go public and expand their businesses away from this local ideal and become unwieldy corporations, Wicks explains, simply because they get bored. They have other interests they want to pursue, and they decide to compartmentalize their business, so it will provide the money to enable them to realize their other life goals, like collecting old books or race cars, or even, say, helping inner-city children. 'Rather than starting another restaurant when I got bored,' she says, 'I just went deeper into what I had. I started doing these programs because they were issues that interested me. And I discovered that I really could address every single subject I was interested in, through my business.'" (Judy Wicks, White Dog Café. Making Money like the Bee, page 15)

"It's a rare company founder who is able to hold on to a truly controlling share of the stock in their own creation. And the newcomers very often vote the founder out, simply because what they have invested in the business is not their time, passion or ideals, but their money, and that's the only thing they want out of it. In fact, under current corporate law, a business corporation is not allowed to use its assets for anything that cannot be proven to make it more money." (Making Money like the Bee, page 47)

"Modern money is only a number on a piece of paper or an electronic trace in a computer, that by social convention gives its holder a claim on that real wealth. In our confusion, we've concentrated on the money, to the neglect of those things that actually sustain a good life". (Withdrawing Consent, page 60)

"...One of the most important indicators of economic health is the presence of an active economy of affection and reciprocity, in which people do a great many useful things for one another with no expectation of financial gain. Anyone who has ever spent time in poorer countries, in rural areas or in small towns knows exactly what this means." (Withdrawing Consent, page 60)

Finally, the back of the book lists numerous resources and organizations one could contact and be a part of in the efforts to protect and preserve our beautiful, wonderful world. I highly recommend you purchase a copy of this book today at your local Independent Bookseller.


Theresa Jobateh
Posted: June 2002

[Return to Reviews](#) [Home](#)

[Top of page](#) | [The Review](#) | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)

The Discovery

I had not heard about the release of David Suzuki's new book. What kind of world was I engrossed in that I was not aware of this? Well, in the past few years, I had greatly reduced my TV watching time and preferred more to listen to the radio. I had also been a little distracted with family and work. It is important to mention that we are already conscientious consumers in reducing the amount of waste we generate. We re-circulate clothing and toys or donate them to charity. We participate in the recycling program in our community. Although I was already a subscriber to the newsletters, I had not even heard about the book reading event from the Foundation. Tsk, tsk!

Enter my six-legged mascot...  On March 23rd, after reading in one local newspaper about the recent emergence of sleepy ladybugs, I went nibbling for more information on the Web. I went first to the Museum of Nature's Web site hoping they would have some information I could refer to and link to from my little [hobby site about Ladybugs](#). I was looking for information from a Canadian source to support the role of the ladybug (or ladybeetle) as a natural solution in ridding pests from gardens and farmers' fields. My eldest son had recently received an A+ on a [fairy tale](#) he wrote on this topic (with a little help) for his grade six Language Arts class in February.

Right there on the home page of the [Canadian Museum of Nature](#) I saw a picture of David Suzuki, an enduring figure in the quest to protect nature and the environment. I saw the heading "Book Reading". Whoa! Then I saw a picture of the cover of his recent book "Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet" which he co-authored with Holly Dressel. Double Whoa!

I immediately printed off the page (double-sided - tree hugger), and did some research on where to purchase the book and tickets to the event as well as working out costs for transportation and meals for the whole fam-damily. I wanted to take everyone even if it meant digging into my humble savings. I wanted to share an experience with my husband and children and wanted them to see, hear and perhaps speak with one of the heroes from my youth.

There was a problem. The event was to happen on a Tuesday evening, a school night. My husband, the self-appointed responsible one, explained to me that the kids had homework to do during the week and we could not neglect their education. My non-verbalized reaction was, "Screw the homework! This is an experience of a lifetime!" Well, finally he convinced me (after some pouting and rolling of eyes on my part) and suggested I could plan to go on my own if I wanted to experience it so much.

So I did. That Monday on my lunch hour I walked eight or ten blocks to Place Bell Books, one of the [Ottawa Independent Booksellers](#) and purchased my very own copy of the book and ticket to

the event. I felt like a kid again and it was to be my night out.

[Top of page](#) | [The Review](#) | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)

The Experience

On the Tuesday afternoon, the Ottawa region started receiving quite a bit of snow. This was March 26th remember. The previous week had been up to the twenties Celsius. We were getting what seemed to be more snowfall than we did in December. The airports were delaying flights. Roads were being closed. At 4:30 PM I panicked and called the museum to confirm the event was still happening. A pleasant sounding lady assured me that it was still "a go".

At 5:30 PM, I started walking from the office over to Metcalfe Street. As I made my way down I felt as if I was in a dreamland. The snow was quite a few inches deep and drifting down in large, fluffy flakes. "This is what December should have looked like", I said to myself. I gazed around at all the old brick and stone buildings along Metcalfe Street as I headed south. I met up with many people who were out walking their dogs and even patted a few on the head (*the dogs, not their masters*). Isn't it interesting how one will start up a conversation with other human beings if they are walking a pet but not always if they pass each other otherwise?

I felt like a child on a little adventure and I was heading for the magnificent castle at the end of the road. I'm sure many of you who have visited the Museum of Nature as children have pretended it was a castle at some point in your own imaginations. I felt as I used to when I was about eleven or twelve. I wasn't in a hurry but I was feeling a great sense of anticipation and wonder.

Safe, rosie-cheeked and covered with snow, I arrived at the museum castle. As I entered through the large, stained-glass entrance and dusted myself off, I was surprised to see so many people already in line! Immediately I got into the nearest lineup and organized myself by peeling off my coat, gloves and other winter accessories.

After quite a few minutes of exchanging pleasantries with others in line and reading from the books' introduction, I saw a young man approach to ask if we had our tickets in advance and that we could go to the other line. Well, yes! Apparently, I was in the line for purchasing tickets! Quickly and gleefully I skittered over to the other line that got to enter into the auditorium and choose a suitable seat.

It did not take very long for the auditorium to fill. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation in the air. I became involved in conversations around me about other endeavours; one to save the oceans; another by a young student who was gathering signatures on a petition for the environment - that she herself had started. We discussed our preferences and opinions of the

various environmental organizations.

Finally, there were introductions by the leading members of the Ottawa International Writers Festival, who were presenting the event. First we would hear Dr. Suzuki read from his book, then we would be able to hear and ask questions of a panel consisting of Suzuki and two local media personalities.

When he was introduced, I was thrilled. Right there, standing on the stage was David Suzuki! He said hello, thanked everyone for coming in this weather and started reading from his book. He would stop and make comments related to the topic he just read. I heard and savoured the voice that I admired and respected since I was a youth. It was euphoric.

The rest was a blur. There was an intermission, and then the panel sat, talked and entertained questions from the audience. There were many questions and some incomplete answers from panel members. I remember the one audience member who posed the questions of 1) how do I take legal action against a business up the road that is dumping and polluting the water table that I share; 2) When we as consumers purchase a product, who makes sure the producer of the product will be responsible for taking it back when it has reached it's lifetime of use? Yea! Yea!

Afterwards, most of us lined up to get David Suzuki to autograph the new book and some, previous books as well! I was hungry and weak so I dug into my backpack for a Nutrigrain bar. The line snaked its way slowly throughout the foyer of the museum. I wrote the names of my husband and children on the back of the program so he could just copy them when the time came. Finally, there I was in front of him hearing his voice say "and whom shall I make this to?" I nervously placed the program on top of the page of the book where he planned to sign. He copied the names of my husband and children plus added, "Spread the news" and his signature. I think I said thank you and continued on. The line of other tired visitors was pressing forward.

I kept moving and was pulled over to the table of the [Ottawa International Writers Festival](#). Proceeds from this event were going towards the festival and they were signing up new members. In my euphoric state, I announced shyly that I was an [amateur writer and poet](#). They were happy to oblige when I agreed that I would like to sign up. Then I embarrassedly asked if I could post-date the cheque. Of course they said. What an interesting turn of events - or a wonderful blend of related interests and desires!

I applied the layers of coverage for the winter wonderland waiting for me outdoors. Slowly I made my way over to Bank Street to catch a bus up to one of the connecting points to make my way home to my family. I felt fulfilled and inspired. I looked forward to reading the book even more after my experience.

[Top of page](#) | [The Review](#) | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)

The Affirmation

In early March 2002, I had received written communication from an organization of which I had been a part for a long, long time. The document announced my many years of service and that I would be rewarded by a generous reimbursement for the purchase of a personal item such as jewelry or art.

Well, first of all, I tend to lose jewelry and scoff at the expensive kind. Second, I consider myself an [evolving artist](#) so why would I want to purchase *someone else's work* to hang on my walls or clutter my very limited space in this world?



In early April I had a wonderful idea. Why not use this generous gift to pass on to a cause that would work hard to protect and preserve our beautiful planet? This would be very personal to me at the same time as part of a legacy to share with my loved ones, especially my children in providing hope for the future. The good news is that my choice of service award was approved by the organization.

When I received the receipt and a typed letter with thanks signed by David Suzuki (!) included was a handwritten note from Suzuki himself! I was very touched that he had taken the time to do this.

In June 2002 I finally convinced my husband that we should try a backyard composting unit. Before he could change his mind, I went to Canadian Tire, purchased the last ***Garden Gourmet*** and assembled it shortly after on my day off . In addition to efficient use of resources and diligently recycling, I am looking forward to reducing our kitchen garbage by 25% AND creating some nourishment for my husband's flowers.

These are small steps by one person (and loved ones) in helping to "Spread the news".



Theresa Jobateh
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Update: July 2002 - This article / review was picked up by The Green Pages.
www.thegreenpages.ca

Update: October 2002 - Airing on CBC Television is a series based on David Suzuki's book "The Sacred Balance". Visit the Web site for more interactive information. www.sacredbalance.com,
David Suzuki's vision of humanity's place in nature.

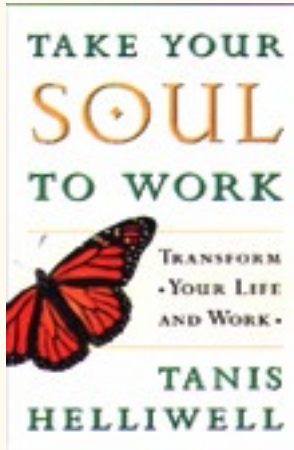
[Top of page](#) | [The Review](#) | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)



[Reviews - Main](#) | [Home](#) | [Web work](#)



Take Your Soul to Work



For more information on this book and Tanis Helliwell, please visit:
<http://www.tanishelliwell.com>

Have you ever had an employer, a job or contract that didn't feel quite right or made you uneasy? Have you ever had one that gave you a feeling of pride and fulfillment all the way through to completion?

I would like to introduce you to a book that I obtained almost two years ago. It is called "Take Your Soul to Work" by Tanis Helliwell.

Okay, okay. Don't go thinking I'm leading you into some religious thing here! Although the book touches often upon the subject of spirituality, I believe it has much merit and provides guidance for people in choosing and staying with certain lines of work - or certain employers.

It's not just about how the type of job or career affects the individual but also how it can affect a work team, community and [businesses world-wide](#). It's about how you let your "personality" and your "soul" work together in letting you achieve wellness and success. If more people paid heed to these teachings, perhaps the world would be a healthier, happier place.

As Tanis puts it, *"This book is dedicated to all people who are committed to creating a healthy world"*

I highly recommend it. This much-valued book has a place of honour as a reference in my *humble* home office bookshelf. It is rewarding to see how far I have come since beginning this journey myself.

Theresa Jobateh

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[Top of page](#)

[Return to Reviews](#)

[Home](#)

