

## Out of the hole, the land of ?tend and befriend? awaits

Donna Schaper | Jun. 12, 2013 Eco Catholic

News flash. People got sufficiently fed up with the culture of insincerity, the lack of ping in the process and decided to attend the small and the quotidian.

Climate change was abated, and air and water returned to sweet and clear. Fewer sleeping pills were sold, fewer hernias happened and a drastic decrease in anxiety medications put big pharma out of business.

Instead of believing the robot when it said, ?Your call is important to us,? people realized it wasn't. All the energy spent on wishing the core institutions weren't lying turned into energy creating new ones. Churches, law firms, schools, universities and cellphone companies saw a different kind of business walking in the door.

Churches greeted spiritual seekers instead of more hits on their websites; law firms happily adjudicated differences; universities taught students and cellphone companies joyously and actively researched whether their product was harmful to the human brain. Some people even tended their brains more than they tended their ?messages.?

The environment giggled at all the people carefully toting their banana peels to the bins. Twigs found themselves picked up by early morning twig picker-uppers. People tended and befriended each other as if it mattered. The fighting-or-fighting people became so unpopular they couldn't find anyone to have coffee with them, much less lunch.

So empowered were people by attention to their friends and banana peels and light bulbs that fossil fuel companies' stocks fell like a high diver jumping off an Olympic board. Universities divested from anybody who was going to do harm to the planet and reinvested their stocks in the wind people, and the sun people and the hydro people. They didn't even call it ?hydro? anything so much did they love water and its clarity.

Author and climate activist Bill McKibben says, ?When you are in a hole, stop digging.?

Fight-or-flight as the big theory for big actions has failed. It has failed ostensibly and powerfully. No one even believes in it anymore. Its only remaining product is cynicism.

When big actions are beyond our capacity or mental reach, we can stop them on behalf of what we can do. When we know that tornadoes take out schools and guns also take out schools, we try a different way.

We stop our monthly payment to the ?bigs.? We change banks and where we put our resources. We bank on tend and befriend and lose the megalomaniacal ?fix it? attitude that has built a nest in our brains.

We also stop saying, ?wouldaifIcouldabutIcouldntsolididn't.? We come up with new words, new theories and new behaviors.

I recommend tend and befriend. Anybody can do that.

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**Source URL (retrieved on 07/24/2017 - 12:04):** <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/out-hole-land-tend-and-befriend-awaits>