

## **Quotes from the Left regarding reducing our quality of lifestyle to save the environment – Al Gore**

### *Earth in the Balance*

“our bizarre focus on short-term thinking and instant gratification—not just as individuals, but more important in the behavior of markets, national economies, and political agendas—has led to a systematic exclusion of long-term consequences in our decisions and policies” (xvi).

“We need instead to lasso our common sense... the lakes and rivers sustain us; they flow through the veins of the earth and into our own. But we must take care to let them flow back out as pure as they came, not poison and waste them without thought for the future” (114).

“How important are the medical needs of future generations? Are those of us alive today entitled to cut down all of these trees to extend the lives of a few of us, even if it means that this unique form of life will disappear forever, thus making it impossible to save human lives in the future?” (119)

“What some have called the ‘throwaway society’ has been based on the assumptions that endless resources will allow us to produce an endless supply of goods...suddenly we are disconcerted—even offended—when the huge quantities of waste we thought we had thrown away suddenly demand our attention” (145).

“Simply put, the way we think about waste is leading to the production of so much of it that no method for handling it can escape being completely overwhelmed. There is only one way out: we have to change our production processes and dramatically reduce the amount of waste we create in the first place” (146).

“Our cavalier attitude toward this problem is an indication of how hard it will be to solve. Even the words we use to describe our behavior reveal the pattern of self-deception” (147)

“Mass-production has made it possible for millions of people to possess the much-desired products of industrial civilization...since each product is only one among millions, it no longer deserves to be appreciated for its uniqueness” (160).

“Mass civilization has led to the creation of impersonal, almost industrial, processes for educating, employment, sheltering, feeding, clothing, and disposing of billions of people” (161).

“We must address the deficiencies of our current methods for defining what is progress and what is absurdity” (195).

“Our civilization is holding ever more tightly to its habit of consuming larger and larger quantities every year of coal, oil, fresh air and water, trees, topsoil, and the thousand other

substances we rip from the crust of the earth, transforming them into not just the sustenance and shelter we need but much more that we don't need" (221).

"We are insensitive to our destructive impact on the earth... we consequently have a similar and very powerful need for denial" (224).

All citations from: Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance*. Rodale Publishers, New York. 1992.

### **Al Gore quotes—personal sacrifice to deal with global warming**

**We've sacrificed in times of war—we should do the same in the face of climate change.** "We must quickly mobilize our civilization with the urgency and resolve that has previously been seen only when nations mobilized for war. These prior struggles for survival were won when leaders found words at the 11th hour that released a mighty surge of courage, hope and readiness to sacrifice for a protracted and mortal challenge." (Al Gore, "Nobel Lecture," Oslo, December 10, 2007. [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2007/gore-lecture\\_en.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2007/gore-lecture_en.html).)

**Gore is less than willing to overtly say that personal sacrifice will be needed—rather, he says that it's easier to make sacrifices to deal with global warming than to be forced to deal with future sacrifices if we don't make lifestyle changes now.** "I agree that we're not going to solve this problem by buying Priuses and changing our light bulbs. But driving hybrids and choosing better technology is still important in two respects. First, it makes a small contribution to reducing CO2. And second, when people make changes in their own lives, they are much more likely to become part of a critical mass of public opinion and to support the bigger policy changes that are going to be needed to really solve the problem." (Eric Bates & Jeff Goodell, "Al Gore's Fight Against the Climate Crisis," *Rolling Stone*, June 28, 2007. [http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/15051572/al\\_gores\\_fight\\_against\\_the\\_climate\\_crisis/print](http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/15051572/al_gores_fight_against_the_climate_crisis/print).)

**You have compared the mobilization that would be required to deal with global warming to the way America came together to win the Second World War. But that effort required great personal sacrifice on the part of the American people. People did without. They melted their scrap metal, they planted victory gardens. Yet very few politicians are talking about the kinds of sacrifice that will be required to deal with climate change. What will Americans have to give up to stop global warming?**

"There's a philosophical question embedded in what you're asking: Is this important enough for us to make sacrifices? The answer is yes, of course - we're talking about the survival of human civilization. But in answering that way, I don't want to convey the faulty impression that most of what needs to be done involves hair-shirt economics or going back to some miserable standard of living. That's simply not true. Most of the changes we need to make don't involve sacrifice in the way you are using the word - instead, they require us to overcome inertia and eliminate absurdly wasteful practices. Amory Lovins, the brilliant and respected physicist, was addressing this question in a conversation with me recently. He said, "When it comes to making sacrifices, they've got the sign wrong." I'm thinking, "This guy's so smart, he must be talking about

trigonometry - sines, cosines." Turns out he was talking about a plus sign and a minus sign. His point was that most of the important changes that have to be made to sharply reduce CO<sub>2</sub> actually have a plus sign instead of a minus sign - they represent improvements to our quality of life. Changing the pattern that causes people to sit in traffic jams for an hour and a half every day is not a sacrifice, it's an enhancement. Changing the assumption that it's perfectly natural to take 4,000 pounds of metal with us everywhere we go doesn't have to be a sacrifice. Whether it's ultralight, ultrasafe vehicles or plug-in hybrid technology or some better alternative that is still on the drawing boards, let's have at it. ***Will there come a time when harder choices or more difficult and painful choices have to be made? Probably. But the sacrifices associated with not doing it completely overwhelm whatever difficulty might eventually be involved in making this transformation.***" (Eric Bates & Jeff Goodell, "Al Gore's Fight Against the Climate Crisis," *Rolling Stone*, June 28, 2007. [http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/15051572/al\\_gores\\_fight\\_against\\_the\\_climate\\_crisis/print](http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/15051572/al_gores_fight_against_the_climate_crisis/print).)

"Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each one of us can become part of the solution: in the decisions we make on what we buy, the amount of electricity we use, and how we live our lives. We can even make choices to bring our individual carbon emissions to zero." (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 278.)

**Sacrifices suggested by Gore in the book version of *An Inconvenient Truth*:** Sections of Gore's book are entitled "Get around on less" (pp. 311-313) and "Consume less, conserve more." Therefore, even though Gore may try to avoid the use of the word "sacrifice," his prescriptions for dealing with global warming would clearly result in personal sacrifice.

- **Buy less.** "A good way to reduce the amount of energy you use is simply to buy less. Before making a purchase, ask yourself if you really need it. Can you make do with what you already have? Can you borrow or rent? Can you find the item secondhand?" (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 316)
- **Eat less meat.** "Americans consume almost a quarter of all the beef produced in the world. Aside from the health issues associated with eating lots of meat, a high-meat diet translates into a tremendous amount of carbon emissions...If more Americans shifted to a less meat-intensive diet, we could greatly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and also save vast quantities of water and other precious resources." (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 317)
- **Limit travel, especially by plane.** "Take vacations nearer to home, or get there by train, bus, boat, or even car. Buses provide the cheapest and most energy-efficient transportation for long distances, and trains are at least twice as energy efficient as planes. If your airplane travel is for business, consider whether you can telecommute instead. If you must fly, consider buying carbon offsets to compensate for the emissions caused by your air travel." (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 313)
- **Compost.** "When organic waste materials, such as kitchen scraps and raked leaves, are disposed of in the general trash, they end up compacted deep in landfills...By contrast, when organic waste is properly composted in gardens, it produces rich nutrients that add energy and food to the soil—and of course also decreases the volume added to our

landfills.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 316)

- **Don't buy products with “unnecessary” packaging.** “Obviously, some degree of packaging is necessary to transport and protect the products we need, but all too often manufacturers add extraneous wrappers over wrappers and layers of unnecessary plastic. You can let companies know your objection to such excess by boycotting their products. Give preference to those products that use recycled packaging, or that don't use excess packaging. When possible, buy in bulk and seek out things that come in refillable glass bottles.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 314-5)
- **Limit use of paper products.** “In addition to recycling your used paper, there are things you can do to reduce your overall paper consumption. Limit your use of paper towels and use cloth rags instead. Use cloth napkins instead of disposables. Use both sides of paper whenever possible. And stop unwanted junk mail.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 315)
- **Change your driving habits.** “Avoid commuting in rush hour, if possible. You'll waste less time sitting in traffic and your vehicle will consume less fuel. Observe the speed limit—and not only for safety reasons: A car's fuel economy drops off sharply at speeds above 55 mph. Avoid unnecessary idling and keep your car in good running order. Regular maintenance improves performance and reduces emissions. And, as much as possible, plan ahead and combine different errands into one trip.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 311)
- **Unplug all appliances when not in use—TVs and computers included.** “Many appliances—including televisions, DVD players, cell phone chargers, or any other piece of equipment that has a remote control, battery charger, internal memory, AC adapter plug, permanent display, or sensor—use electricity even when they are turned 'off.' In fact, 25% of the energy a television uses is consumed when it is not even powered on. The only way to be sure your appliance is not using power is to unplug it, or to plug it into a power strip, which you can then switch off.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 309)
- **Limit home heating in the winter and home cooling in the summer.** “Pay attention to how high or low your thermostat is set, avoiding unnecessary cooling or heating. Lowering your heat by just a few degrees in the winter and setting your air conditioner a couple of degrees higher in the summer can add real energy savings over time.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 307)
- **Limit clothes and dish washing.** “Instead of running frequent partial loads in your dishwasher or washing machine, save energy by running only full loads. When you have time, wash your dishes by hand, and use a clothesline to dry your clothes instead of the dryer.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 307)

According to Gore, these sacrifices may have the result of “making our lives better. In some cases, the returns are quantifiable: Using less electricity and fuel, for example, saves money. Further: more walking and biking improve our health; diets of locally grown produce bring enhanced taste and nutrition; breathing cleaner air is energizing and healing; and creating a world

of restored natural ensures a future for our children and grandchildren.” (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*, (New York: Rodale, 2006): 305)

### **Quotes from other various leaders of the anti-energy left**

**Senator Obama against oil drilling.** “Obama said Thursday in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. ‘But even the Bush administration acknowledges that offshore oil drilling will have little impact on prices. It won't lower prices today. It won't lower prices during the next administration. In fact, we won't see a drop of oil from this drilling for almost 10 years.’” (Mike Glover, “Obama risks voter ire by opposing new oil drilling.” *Associated Press*. Aug. 1, 2008)

**Senator Reid against oil drilling.** “Even if the Republican proposal were enacted, it would take years - even decades - to conduct exploration and begin drilling,” Mr. Reid said on the Senate floor. “And even then, the Republican plan wouldn't lower gas prices.” (S.A. Miller, “GOP intensifies call for offshore drilling.” *The Washington Times* July 8, 2008)

**Senator Kerry--Cut driving miles to deal with global warming.** “Each gallon of gas your car burns releases about 22 pounds of atmospheric-warming carbon-dioxide. Reducing how much you drive by just five miles every day would prevent tons of carbon dioxide from entering the air.” (John Kerry & Teresa Heinz Kerry, *This Moment on Earth: Today's New Environmentalists and Their Vision for the Future*, New York: Public Affairs, 2007: 214).