



STILLWATERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

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Happy Valentine's Day!

This is the season of love and celebrating friendship and partnership and all the good things about caring for our loved ones. It's intended to be a warm and fuzzy, comforting time of the year — if you can avoid the commercial trappings and pressures. We manage to avoid most of the candy hearts and Mylar balloons, but we definitely make a special attempt to share the love we feel in our hearts, both for our human companions and for our mother Earth.

Dr. King reminds us of another form of love that is at the forefront of our minds these recent days. This is a corporate attitude of love. It's a world-view that is based on the critical value of caring and acceptance and safeguarding for all that is important—other humans and all of nature, too. And it is a very different world-view than one based on power.

One of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites, polar opposites, so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love. [...] What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Vu Le, of the Rainier Valley Corps, writes an excellent weekly blog for non-profits. (If you want the link, just let me know.) His recent post coalesces many of our thoughts and comments from Stillwaters' supporters in the last few months.

The nonprofit sector . . . embraces love. So many of us are driven to this field because of love for our community, for our neighbors, for our environment, for animals, for justice. We love and speak up for many who may not yet have the strength and resources to raise their own voices. We are not always good at what we do, and we don't always know what to do, and we make mistakes and fail—but we are firmly on the side of love and everything it stands for. . . .

Our sector embraces love, but facing injustice we must now also embrace power. As our country moves further into intolerance and chaos, we must summon our strengths and be the balancing force. "Power without love is reckless and abusive." This is what we are seeing in this new administration. . . . I wish it were true that some of us are just being alarmists and the sky is not falling and that after a few glasses of white zinfandel and some time, things will calm down and we can read the news and not recoil in horror at every headline. . . . To believe that things will be OK

if we just wait it out, that would be sentimental and anemic. In these dark times, with so many lives at stake, love and justice demand we own our power and mobilize.

Vu works on behalf of immigrants and other citizens—humans—in need of love and assistance. And just like the beneficiaries of our love—the wildlife, plants and all of nature—right now they need more than our love. They need our power.

The non-profit charitable organizations that our society depends upon for a balanced life together is a powerful sector of our society. This includes the supporters of non-profit organizations. We have a corporate power—the good kind of power — larger than we may give ourselves credit for. Not only do we contribute \$900 Billion to the nation's economy and employ 10% of the work force, we are the conscience and the inspiration of the nation.

So join us in taking our collective power to share our love. We are engaging in more advocacy work and encouraging more individuals to do the same. We can take a few moments to write letters, send emails, or sign petitions of support for the organizations leading in the work of speaking up for the threatened environmental protections. We will support you in working diligently for protection of all natural spaces—whether the national parks or the stream in your neighborhood. We can encourage our friends and neighbors to be more vocal and more active in their care for Earth. NOW is the time for all of us to share our voice, our time, and our resources.

I encourage all organizations, not just advocacy organizations, to roll up their sleeves and fight. But all of us, as individuals who believe in a just and inclusive community, have our own personal responsibilities to embrace our individual power to make stuff happen. If you've never written an op-ed, write one. If you've never been in a protest, be in one. If you've never called your legislator, call one. If you've never testified at a public hearing, testify in one. And if you've never given feedback to someone who said something racist or misogynistic or Islamophobic or homophobic or anti-Nature, speak up; do it with love, but firmly. And if you've done all these things, keep doing them.

I encourage and invite you to join the Stillwaters folks who are fighting to preserve our Earth. In our weekly email newsletter we are posting places to become more active or learn more, locally or online. Are you on that mail list? We will be joining the March for Science on Earth Day, April 22. Do you want to join us then? Let us know!

And thank you for helping us to continue our passion-filled work and for working with Stillwaters! Happy Valentine's LOVE from all of us!



Naomi Maasberg, for the
Board and Staff of Stillwaters Environmental Center

PS. Please take a moment to take a look at our website and our new donation page — you can make a one-time donation or set up a pledge online, if you prefer, through our website — www.stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org.