



SCHOOLS OF THE SACRED HEART SAN FRANCISCO
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FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT: CHRISTINE@MOREGREENMOMS.COM

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GOOD MORNING – I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW HAPPY I AM TO SEE ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY. I WANT TO THANK JAIME DOMINGUEZ AND MICHELLE KEENE FOR MAKING THIS GATHERING POSSIBLE. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO I BEGAN SEPARATE DIALOGUES WITH EACH OF THEM TO LEARN ABOUT HOW THE STUART HALL SPEAKERS PROGRAM IS MANAGED. I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO SHOW FOR MYSELF AS MY GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN THROUGH **MOREGREENMOMS** HAD ONLY RECENTLY LAUNCHED. BUT A PERUSAL OF MY PRESENTATION PROVIDED THE REQUISITE FAITH THAT THIS TOPIC WOULD BE OF VALUE TO OUR COMMUNITY.

INTERESTINGLY, I HAVE SINCE COMPLETED SEVERAL SIMILAR PRESENTATIONS AND HAVE GATHERED ENOUGH DATA TO KNOW THAT 1) NO ONE EVER LEAVES WITHOUT LEARNING AT LEAST ONE NEW PIECE OF USEFUL AND OFTEN SHOCKING INFORMATION; 2) WHILE THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF THIS TALK WAS WRITTEN FOR "MOMS," THE STORY IS UNIVERSAL AND RELEVANT TO ANY AND EVERY PERSON WHO HEARS IT AND 3) IT IS DENSE AND INTENSE AND BORDERLINE OVERWHELMING. THEREFORE PLEASE RELAX AND GIVE YOUR BRAINS A CHANCE TO SIMMER AS WE WIND OUR WAY THROUGH 40-MINUTES OF NARRATIVE AND THEN DIVE INTO AS MUCH Q&A AS THE GROUP HAS TIME TO ENJOY. I WILL POST TODAY'S SPEECH ON WWW.MOREGREENMOMS.COM, FOR YOUR REFERENCE SO NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT PROPERLY DOCUMENTING SOME OF THE COMPLEX JARGON I WILL REFERENCE AS WE MOVE FORWARD.

OKAY BEFORE I OUTLINE THE SPECIFICS OF THE INFORMATION I'D LIKE TO COVER TODAY, I FEEL THE NEED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I AM NOT A SCIENTIST, OR A DOCTOR, OR A POLITICIAN OR EVEN A VEGAN. I HAVE NO BACKGROUND IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH. I LIKE TO SHOP. I LOVE McDONALD'S FRENCH FRIES. MY FAMILY OWNS A SHAMEFUL NUMBER OF CARS, NONE OF THEM YET A HYBRID. AND ALTHOUGH I TRY VERY, VERY HARD, I DON'T ALWAYS REMEMBER TO TAKE MY CANVAS BAGS TO THE GROCERY STORE.

BUT, ON AUGUST 24, 2007 (YES, JUST EIGHT MONTHS AGO) I BEGAN TO CLOSELY EXAMINE THE DAILY PRACTICES OF MY LIFE FOR THE HEALTH OF MY CHILDREN, AND HOPEFULLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR EARTH AS WELL. ON THAT DAY, I ATTENDED A PRESENTATION BY JOHN KERRY AND HIS WIFE, TERESA HEINZ KERRY, THAT CENTERED ON THEIR BOOK, THIS MOMENT ON EARTH: TODAY'S NEW ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND THEIR VISION FOR THE FUTURE. PUTTING ALL POLITICS ASIDE (WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS WE FACE) THE STORIES THEY TOLD ARE A HEARTBREAKING CHRONICLE OF THE DAMAGE WE AS AMERICANS ARE DOING TO OUR NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE MARCHED FORWARD IN THE NAME OF THIS PROGRESS AND TRAMPLED THE RIGHTS OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE IN OUR SOCIETY WHO LIVE NEAR TOXIC HAZARDS OR HANDLE THEM EVERY DAY. WE HAVE CREATED A MONSTER OF NATIONAL CONSUMPTION THAT FAILS TO CONSIDER FROM WHENCE OUR SHINY NEW PRODUCTS HAVE ARRIVED, AND CERTAINLY WHERE THEY WILL GO ONCE WE NO LONGER HAVE USE FOR THEM.

DURING THEIR MOVING PRESENTATION, I REALIZED THAT THIS SAD CYCLE OF CULTURAL IRRESPONSIBILITY EXTENDS DIRECTLY INTO MY OWN HOUSEHOLD. WHAT MADE ME CONNECT THE DOTS? NAIL POLISH. YES, NAIL POLISH. WHEN TERESA HEINZ KERRY REVIEWED DETAILS FROM HER CHAPTER ON COSMETICS AND THE POTENTIAL HEALTH DANGERS THEY PRESENT, SHE MENTIONED THAT ONE OF THE MOST TOXIC PRODUCTS IN THE MARKET WAS OPI NAIL POLISH AND SHE WARNED THAT WE SHOULD AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS. MY HEART LITERALLY SKIPPED A BEAT AS I HAVE BEEN SLATHERING OPI PRINCESS PINKS ON MY DAUGHTER'S NAILS FROM THE MOMENT SHE COULD SIT STILL LONG ENOUGH TO LET THEM DRY. I FELT A SENSE OF PANIC AND BECAME COMPELLED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF MY FAMILY.

SO NOT ONLY DID I READ THE KERRYS' BOOK (WHICH UP UNTIL THEN HAD SIMPLY LOOKED RESPECTABLE ON MY BED SIDE TABLE), BUT I BOUGHT MORE THAN 34 OTHER GREEN-THEMED BOOKS, DOVE INTO THE INTERNET, FLIPPED THROUGH ECO-MAGAZINES, ATTENDED CONFERENCES, INTERVIEWED DOCTORS, SCIENTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS AND TALKED WITH FRIENDS ABOUT WHAT I WAS LEARNING. DID I GO A LITTLE OVERBOARD? PERHAPS. BUT EACH DISCOVERY SEEMED TO LEAD TO ANOTHER QUESTION. AND WHAT I FOUND IS THAT WHILE THERE IS GROWING CONSENSUS AROUND THE LINKS BETWEEN HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES, THE INFORMATION AT THAT TIME WAS NOT YET TRICKLING FAR ENOUGH DOWN THE PATH OF AWARENESS TO THE GENERAL POPULATION. SO I TOOK IT UPON MYSELF, MOST HUMBLY, TO LEARN AS MUCH AS I COULD, AND DELIVER IT BACK TO ANYONE WHO INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS.

I WILL TELL YOU, THAT THE MORE I HAVE LEARNED, THE MORE I INTUITIVELY BELIEVE THAT THERE IS AN CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR INSATIABLE AMERICAN APPETITE AND THE BELLYACHE OF ILLS WE ARE ONLY BEGINNING TO SUFFER AS A GENERATION. AND THE VERY GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE

WORD IS INCREASINGLY SPREADING — IN JUST THESE EARLY MONTHS OF 2008, THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS MAINSTREAM NEWS REFERENCES, AS WELL AS COMPELLING NEW BOOKS, INTRODUCED FOR OUR FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT ON THESE TOPICS.

BECAUSE THERE IS SUCH GROWING CONSENSUS WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ON THE DATA THAT I WAS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, I BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT I HAD BEEN TRAVELING A PATH OF BLISSFUL IGNORANCE. AND DUE TO THE REGULATORY STRUCTURE OF OUR COUNTRY'S "PROTECTIVE AGENCIES," WE, AS CONSUMERS, ARE AT THE MERCY OF MASTERFUL MARKETING, POWERFUL LOBBIES AND STUNNINGLY LOOSE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FOOD, OUR WATER, OUR PERSONAL CARE ITEMS, OUR HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS AND EVEN THE FABRICS WE WEAR AGAINST OUR SKIN. WHAT MAKES US VULNERABLE ACROSS THESE DISPARATE CATEGORIES, YOU MAY ASK? SIMPLE, MAN-MADE CHEMICALS AND THE EXTRAORDINARY POWER LEVERAGED BY THOSE WHO MANUFACTURE, DISTRIBUTE AND MARKET THEM TO A TRUSTING POPULACE OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS.

AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE TABLE IN THIS ROOM, I HAVE BROUGHT A SMALL SAMPLING OF THE CLEAN SWEEP I HAVE MADE TO RID AS MANY HAZARDS AS POSSIBLE FROM OUR DAILY USE. AND IT HAS BEEN VERY HARD NOT TO LOOK BACK WITH GRAVE REGRET AND MOTHER BEAR FURY THAT I HAD NO IDEA OF THE POTENTIAL DANGERS THAT INNOCENT PRODUCTS LIKE RUBBER DUCKS, INFANT FORMULA, FROSTY LIPSTICK, DIAPER BALM, BABY BUBBLES AND DISH SOAP MAY HAVE POSED TO MY FAMILY'S HEALTH, AS WELL AS TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

I THOUGHT THESE ITEMS WERE SAFE BECAUSE I BOUGHT THEM FROM MY TRUSTED GROCERY STORE AND PHARMACY. WE HAVE THE USDA, THE FDA, THE EPA AND COUNTLESS LEGISLATORS ALL WORKING TO PROTECT US. SO AS AMERICAN CITIZENS, WHAT WE BUY WILL NOT CAUSE US HARM, RIGHT? NOT NECESSARILY. AND NOT ONLY ARE THESE PRODUCTS POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS TO US, BUT AS THEY WASH OFF OUR BODIES, DESCEND THROUGH OUR KITCHEN SINKS AND SEEP THROUGH OUR YARDS, THESE CHEMICALS ARE POISONING OUR WATER, OUR SOIL, OUR AIR AND THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS WHO THRIVE WITHIN THESE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS.

SO I WANTED TO CONNECT THE DOTS. I WANTED TO LEARN WHY WE, AS A SOCIETY, HAVE BECOME SO VULNERABLE. AND I WANTED TO KNOW HOW TO AVOID MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES IN THE FUTURE. BECAUSE AS I SEE IT, HERE IS WHERE WE CAN MAKE OUR DIFFERENCE — HERE IS WHERE WE CAN USE MORE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE QUALITY OF OUR FOOD, WATER, TOYS, BUILDING MATERIALS, CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS, BEAUTY PRODUCTS, ELECTRONICS, ENERGY AND AUTOMOBILES TO MAKE CHANGES THAT ARE HEALTHIER FOR OUR FAMILIES — AND ULTIMATELY FOR OUR PLANET.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHERE THE REAL STORY OF SOLVING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS CAN TAKE A TURN, AT LEAST ONE THAT IS WITHIN OUR POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE. IT'S WITH US, THE CONSUMERS, THE INFLUENCERS OF PURCHASING FOR OUR HOUSEHOLDS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR COMPANIES AND OUR COMMUNITIES, WHERE WE CAN MAKE A COLLECTIVE DEMAND FOR THE ECONOMICS OF ORGANICS TO SWING SO THAT EVERY INCOME BRACKET CAN AFFORD GOOD FOOD, FOR THE POLICIES OF OUR LEGISLATORS TO CHART A MORE PROTECTIVE CONSUMER-FRIENDLY COURSE THAT IGNORES THE PRESSURES OF BIG BUSINESS SEEKING TO OBFUSCATE THE DANGERS OF CHEMICAL EXPOSURES AND FOR THE AWARENESS TO SPREAD THAT WE MUST ALL TAKE ACTION AND KNOW THAT EVERY IMPROVEMENT IS JUST THAT AND THAT COLLECTIVELY WE HAVE POWER TO RE-AUTHOR THE NEXT CHAPTER OF THE STORY OF OUR GENERATION.

SO LET'S GET TO SPECIFICS. I'D LIKE TO TOUCH ON SOME VERY KEY DISCOVERIES WORTH PASSING ALONG, FOCUSING ON FOOD, WATER, PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS, HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS AND A MYRIAD OF COMMONLY USED ITEMS. I'LL CLOSE BY REFERENCING SOME OVERALL IMPORTANT GREENER LIVING THEMES TO KEEP IN MIND, MANY OF WHICH YOU MAY ALREADY BE PURSUING IN YOUR PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO PURSUING A GREENER LIFESTYLE.

AS WE BREAK DOWN EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES, IT'S INTERESTING TO THINK OF YOUR OWN BODY AS A REPOSITORY OF DAILY INTAKES OF VITAMINS, NUTRIENTS AND HEALTHY SUSTENANCE, AS WELL AS TOXINS SUCH AS AIR POLLUTION, CONTAMINANTS IN OUR WATER, PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES IN NON-ORGANIC FOODS, CHEMICAL ADDITIVES OR PRESERVATIVES IN SHAMPOO AND FACE CREAM, PHARMACEUTICALS, EVEN FLAME RETARDANTS FROM THE FABRIC ON YOUR COUCH. YOU GET THE IDEA. THE COLLECTIVE SUM OF THESE CONTAMINANTS, SOME OF WHICH WE EFFICIENTLY EXPEL, BUT MANY OF WHICH CAN BIOACCUMULATE IN OUR SYSTEMS, IS NOW BEING LABELED AS OUR BODY BURDEN. WE ALL HAVE ONE AND IT IS UNIQUE TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL BASED ON OUR EATING HABITS, OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES TO TOXINS AND OUR ABILITY TO ELIMINATE THESE POISONS BEFORE THEY CAUSE US HARM.

ALTHOUGH THIS CONCEPT WAS ENTIRELY NEW TO ME, SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN GATHERING DATA TO EXPLAIN THEIR THEORIES OF HOW CHEMICAL POLLUTION IMPACTS HUMANS FOR MANY DECADES. IN 1962, RACHEL CARSON, A BIOLOGIST AND RESEARCHER, PUBLISHED THE BOOK, SILENT SPRING, AN EXTRAORDINARY COMPILATION OF DATA ATTEMPTING TO LINK CHEMICAL PESTICIDE EXPOSURE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ANIMAL HABITATS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1950'S. HER WORK LED TO THE EVENTUAL BAN OF DDT TEN YEARS LATER.

THE FOLLOWING QUOTE WAS WRITTEN 45 YEARS AGO, BUT HER COMMENTS SOUND AS IF THEY APPEARED IN YESTERDAY'S NEWS COMMENTARY.

“ALONG WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EXTINCTION OF MANKIND BY NUCLEAR WAR, THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF OUR AGE HAS BECOME THE CONTAMINATION OF MAN’S TOTAL ENVIRONMENT WITH SUCH SUBSTANCES OF INCREDIBLE POTENTIAL FOR HARM — SUBSTANCES THAT ACCUMULATE IN THE TISSUES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS AND EVEN PENETRATE THE GERM CELLS TO SHATTER AND ALTER THE VERY MATERIAL OF HEREDITY UPON WHICH THE SHAPE OF OUR FUTURE DEPENDS.” HER WORDS WERE PRESCIENT, INDEED. ACCURATE? I BELIEVE EMPHATICALLY YES. IF ONLY HER VOICE HAD NOT BEEN SILENCED TWO YEARS AFTER HER BOOK WAS PUBLISHED. SHE DIED OF BREAST CANCER.

FAST FORWARD THE SPAN OF MY LIFETIME, AND CONSIDER AN INTERESTING STUDY CONDUCTED IN 2004 BY THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP, A NON-PROFIT WATCHDOG AND ADVOCACY GROUP, WHICH TESTED THE UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD OF 10 NEWBORNS WHO HAD NOT YET BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THESE SAMPLES, RANDOMLY SELECTED THROUGHOUT THE U.S., REVEALED THE PRESENCE OF 287 DIFFERENT CHEMICALS, 180 OF WHICH ARE KNOWN TO CAUSE CANCER IN HUMANS OR ANIMALS AND INCLUDED TOXINS THAT HAD BEEN BANNED 30 YEARS PRIOR. WHAT THAT SUGGESTS IS THAT THE PERSISTENCE OF SOME OF THESE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MAY LINGER IN SUCH A WAY THAT HARMFUL AGENTS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE, AND QUITE POSSIBLY THOSE FROM MY OWN MOTHER, IMPACTED THE FETAL PROGRAMMING OF MY CHILDREN AND MAY HAVE DIRECT LINKAGE ANY FUTURE DISEASE THEY MAY FACE.

SO EVEN IN THE WOMB, THE BODY BURDEN BEGINS TO GROW. AND SOME ARGUE, THAT DUE TO THE QUICK REPRODUCTION OF CELLS AT THIS STAGE AS WELL AS THEIR FRAGILE STATE, THE DANGER IS EVEN MORE EXTREME, THUS OPENING THE DOOR FOR MUTATION. HENCE THE WARNINGS NOT TO SMOKE, USE BLACK HAIR DYE, EAT MERCURY-TAINTED FISH OR HAVE A PEDICURE WITH FORMALDEHYDE-LADEN NAIL POLISH WHEN WE ARE PREGNANT. BUT GIVEN WHAT WE’VE JUST LEARNED, A 10-MONTH ABSTINENCE FROM HAZARDS HARDLY SEEMS SUFFICIENT IF WHAT WE REALLY NEED TO CONSIDER IS OUR LIFE-LONG ENVIRONMENTAL BUILD-UP.

THIS IS SCARY. WHAT CAN WE DO?? WELL, WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IS THAT THERE IS NO “ONE THING” WE CAN CHANGE IN ORDER TO ASSURE A SAFER JOURNEY. IT IS THE AGGREGATE OF OUR CHOICES THAT WE MUST CONSIDER. AND WE MUST BECOME WILLING, AS A SOCIETY, TO APPLY THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE WHICH STATES THAT IF THERE IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE FROM SCIENCE TO ESTABLISH A LINK BETWEEN A CHEMICAL WE INGEST OR BREATHE OR LATHER ON OUR SKIN TO POTENTIAL HARM, THAT WE SHOULD TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT OURSELVES AGAINST THE IMPACT OF THAT EXPOSURE. IF WE FIGHT FOR IT, THIS PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE MAY SOMEDAY BECOME AMERICA’S PROTECTIVE DEFAULT SO THAT WE CAN SHIFT FROM A REACTIVE TO A PREVENTIVE APPROACH TO OUR GROWING HEALTH EPIDEMICS. RIGHT NOW, OUR RESEARCH DOLLARS ARE SPENT

PREDOMINANTLY ON TREATING DISEASE, RATHER THAN ASSURING ITS AVOIDANCE ALTOGETHER.

LET'S ADDRESS SOME OF THE KEY CATEGORIES OF OUR POTENTIAL DAILY EXPOSURE TO CHEMICALS, STARTING WITH FOOD. I'M GOING TO MAKE A BIG ASSUMPTION THAT SINCE WE ALL LIVE IN CALIFORNIA'S FOOD MECCA, THE BAY AREA, MOST PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM HAVE A PRETTY SOLID UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO EAT WELL. I THOUGHT I DID OKAY IN THIS CATEGORY, BUT I FOUND MANY WAYS TO IMPROVE ONCE I BECAME A LITTLE MORE AWARE OF HOW FOOD MAKES IT WAY TO OUR TABLES.

I HAVE READ SEVERAL RESOURCES ON THIS TOPIC AND I THINK THAT THE WRITER WHO HAS DONE THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY JOB OF RESEARCHING ALL THAT IS BROKEN WITHIN THE AMERICAN FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN IS MICHAEL POLLEN. IF YOU WANT TO PURSUE SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT, READ OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA. IT WILL FOREVER CHANGE YOUR SAFEWAY EXPERIENCE.

WHETHER YOU LEARN FROM MR. POLLEN OR ERIC SCHLOSSER AUTHOR OF FAST FOOD NATION, WE ALL NEED TO BE AWARE THAT ANIMALS IN THE U.S. MEAT INDUSTRY PRODUCE 61 MILLION TONS OF WASTE EACH YEAR, WHICH HAS POLLUTED SOME 35,000 MILES OF RIVERS IN 22 STATES AND CONTAMINATED GROUNDWATER IN 17 STATES. THE WASTE FROM THESE ANIMALS PRODUCES 18% OF GLOBALLY EMITTED METHANE, A GAS THAT IS 24 TIMES MORE POTENT A GREENHOUSE GAS THAN CARBON DIOXIDE. TO PUT THAT IN PERSPECTIVE, LIVESTOCK-PRODUCED METHANE EXCEEDS THE GREENHOUSE GAS INDEX FOR ALL TRUCKS AND CARS COMBINED IN THE WORLD! AND GROWING THE CROPS NECESSARY TO FEED FARMED ANIMALS REQUIRES NEARLY 80 PERCENT OF AMERICA'S AGRICULTURAL LAND AND HALF OF ITS WATER SUPPLY. BY THE WAY, THEY ARE NATURALLY HERBIVORES.

EAT LESS MEAT IS THE GREEN MESSAGE HERE, EVEN IF IT'S CUTTING YOUR CONSUMPTION BY ONCE/WEEK. AND WHEN YOU DO BUY MEAT, BUY 100% GRASS-FED ORGANIC. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE ANIMAL HAS BEEN FED A HEALTHY DIET OF GRASS AND HAS BEEN RAISED WITHOUT EATING BIO-ENGINEERED CORN PRODUCTS, WHICH I WILL DISCUSS IN A MOMENT, OR RECEIVED REGULAR INJECTIONS OF ANTIBIOTICS, STEROIDS OR HORMONES. BOTH OF THESE RULES, EATING LESS MEAT AND STICKING TO ORGANIC, ARE FAR BETTER FOR OUR ECOSYSTEM AND OUR BODIES.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T EAT MUCH MEAT, YOU MAY CONSUME DAIRY. THE RECOMBINANT GROWTH HORMONES WHICH ARE INJECTED IN COWS TO ENABLE THEM TO PRODUCE MORE MILK (UP TO 100 POUNDS A DAY VERSUS THE NATURAL 10 POUNDS/PER COW) ALSO PRODUCE AN INSULIN-LIKE GROWTH FACTOR, IGF-1, THAT STUDIES SAY PERSISTS IN OUR BODIES, AND IS LINKED TO A HIGHER RISK OF COLON, PROSTATE AND BREAST CANCERS. WHAT RINGS IN MY HEAD IS THE INCREASING RATE OF CHILDHOOD DIABETES

— IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP? RAMPANT MASTITIS IN THE COWS ALSO ENCOURAGES FARMERS TO INCREASE ANTIBIOTIC USE, WHICH CONTAMINATES THE MILK AND TRAVELS TO THE CONSUMER. MOST OF THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS NOW REJECTED DAIRY PRODUCTS WITH RBGH. BUT COMPANIES LIKE MONSANTO IN THE U.S. HAVE LOBBIED HARD TO KEEP IT IN OUR AMERICAN FOOD SUPPLY. UNLESS YOU BUY ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCTS, YOU ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO POSSIBLY INGESTING TAINTED MILK. BY THE WAY, STARBUCK'S DOES NOT SERVE ORGANIC MILK. THINK ABOUT THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU ORDER A LATTE.

LET'S LOOK AT FARMING.... ACCORDING TO THE CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY, ORGANIC FOOD REQUIRES 80% LESS ENERGY TO GROW THAN CONVENTIONAL CROPS. AND IT IS CLEAR THAT MANY FARMERS WHO PRACTICE NON-ORGANIC GROWING METHODS ARE CAUSING DAMAGE THROUGHOUT VAST REGIONS OF OUR FOOD CHAIN. THEY ARE POLLUTING THE SOIL, THE WATER, THE FOOD AND THEIR WORKERS WITH POTENT HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES THAT ARE ALTERING AND SOMETIMES KILLING SPECIES THAT COME INTO INADVERTENT CONTACT WITH THESE CHEMICALS.

ONE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE IS THE WIDELY USED WEED-KILLER ATRAZINE, WHICH HAS BEEN DISCOVERED BY BERKELEY ENDOCRINOLOGIST, TYRONE HAYES, TO CAUSE MALE FROGS TO PRODUCE FEMALE EGGS (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS HORMONE DISRUPTION, WHICH WE WILL REVISIT IN A BIT). AND THE WORKERS WHO BREATHE IN THESE TOXINS OR COME IN CONTACT WITH THEM DURING PLANTING, MAINTENANCE OR HARVEST ARE INCREASINGLY SICK WITH CANCERS AND DEBILITATING RESPIRATORY AILMENTS. THE RUN-OFF FROM THESE CHEMICAL-LADEN CROPS IS POLLUTING OUR RIVERS, OUR LAKES AND OUR OCEANS AND IS HAVING DEVASTATING IMPACT ON THOSE ECOSYSTEMS. IF THESE CHEMICALS ARE POISONING OUR EARTH, HOW CAN THEY BE ACCEPTABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION?

THE OTHER LAYER OF COMPLEXITY CONCERNING OUR FOOD IS THE PRACTICE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING, WHICH IS WIDESPREAD AND USUALLY HIDDEN IN OUR DAILY INTAKE OF PRODUCTS. AS EXPLAINED IN THE BOOK, YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW BY ANDREW KIMBRELL, NOT ONLY DO THESE ALTERED SPECIES PRESENT POTENTIAL HARM TO HUMANS (STILL UNKNOWN AND WE ARE THE LIVING SCIENCE EXPERIMENT), THE BY-PRODUCT OF THESE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES IS A MORE AGGRESSIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE USE OF HERBICIDES, AS WELL AS THE DISRUPTION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES THROUGH GENE-POLLUTION. AGAIN, I AM NOT A BIOLOGIST, BUT CAN THERE BE A RELATION BETWEEN THE VAST ACREAGES OF THESE GENETICALLY ALTERED CROPS AND THE UNPRECEDENTED DIE-OFF OF THE POLLINATING BEE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES?

ACCORDING TO THE SAME BOOK, TODAY 52% OF ALL CORN, 87% OF ALL SOY, 55% OF ALL CANOLA AND 79% OF ALL COTTON GROWN IN THE U.S. IS GENETICALLY ENGINEERED. MOST GE SOY AND CORN BECOMES ANIMAL FEED (NOT ONLY LIVESTOCK, BUT PET FOOD AS WELL). GENETICALLY MODIFIED CORN SYRUP, SOY AND CANOLA OILS AND CORNSTARCH ALL

SNEAK INTO MANY ITEMS THAT MAY BE ON YOUR SHELF. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 75% OF ALL PROCESSED FOODS, INCLUDING COOKIES, CHIPS, HOTDOGS, BREAKFAST CEREAL, SALAD DRESSING, JUICES, CRACKERS, TOMATO SAUCE, FRENCH FRIES, ICE CREAM, PEANUT BUTTER, GRANOLA BARS AND MOST DEVASTATINGLY, BABY CEREAL, FOOD AND FORMULA HAVE GMO'S AS INGREDIENTS. BELIEVE ME, MANY OF THESE ITEMS WERE ON MY SHELF, SOME OF WHICH I THOUGHT WERE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES, LIKE CHEERIOS. KNOWING WHAT I KNOW NOW ABOUT OUR AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES HAS INSPIRED MY TREMENDOUS INTEREST IN THE EMBATTLED FARM BILL, AN ISSUE THAT I NOW FOLLOW AS CLOSELY AS THE PLOT TWISTS IN GREY'S ANATOMY.

NEARLY 60 COUNTRIES REQUIRE THE LABELING OF GENETICALLY-MODIFIED FOODS, OR IN SOME WAY RESTRICT THEIR GROWTH OR IMPORT. OUR GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROTECT US OR MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO EVEN KNOW WHAT WE EATING, EXCEPT IN THE CATEGORY OF OUR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. NEXT TIME YOU ARE IN THE PRODUCE SECTION, TAKE A LOOK AT THE STICKERS YOU FIND ON THE PRODUCTS: A FOUR DIGIT # MEANS IT'S CONVENTIONALLY GROWN, I.E., WITH PESTICIDES; A FIVE DIGIT # STARTING WITH "9" MEANS IT IS ORGANIC, AND THE GMO PRODUCT WILL HAVE A FIVE DIGIT # THAT STARTS WITH "8." AS CONSUMERS, OUR REJECTION OF GMO-TAINTED PRODUCTS IS A VOTE FOR OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY, WHICH ARE TOO OFTEN SACRIFICED IN THE NAME OF PRODUCTIVITY AND CONVENIENCE.

AS WE CLOSE ON THE TANTALIZING FOOD TOPIC, LET'S REMEMBER THAT IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE HELP GET THIS GENERATION OF KIDS OFF THE OBESITY TRAIN AND STEER THEM TOWARD A HEALTHIER FUTURE. THE FAST FOOD AND HEAVILY PROCESSED OPTIONS WE HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS ARE POISONING THESE VULNERABLE CONSUMERS AND INCREASING THE INCIDENCE OF DIABETES, ALLERGIES, AND TRAGICALLY, CANCER. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE CONFLUENCE OF POOR NUTRITION AND ENVIRONMENT ARE CAUSING THESE DRAMATIC INCREASES SO AS RESEARCHERS CONTINUE TO PAINT THE PICTURE FOR US, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY DISCOVER AND SUPPORT NECESSARY CHANGES, NOT ONLY IN OUR OWN HOUSEHOLDS AND SCHOOLS, BUT IN THOSE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THERE MAY BE LESS ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND FEWER HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES.

SEARCHING FOR RULES TO GOVERN MY OWN BEHAVIOR, I RECENTLY ASKED 2 DOCTORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ONCOLOGY WHAT THEY WOULD RECOMMEND AS SAFE FOOD GUIDELINES FOR MY FAMILY AND DR. JUDY BALK, A MOTHER OF THREE, SAID, "DON'T EAT ANYTHING YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WOULDN'T HAVE EATEN." THE OTHER, DR. DEVRA DAVIS, WARNED, "BEWARE OF ASPARTAME." I LEARNED FROM DR. DAVIS' BOOK, THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WAR ON CANCER, THAT ASPARTAME WAS REJECTED EIGHT TIMES BEFORE ITS FINAL APPROVAL FOR COMMERCIAL CONSUMPTION BY OUR FDA. THIS POLITICS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS SUBJECT ALONE COULD

WARRANT A SEPARATE HOUR OF CONVERSATION. READING HER RESEARCH CURED ME OF MY 25-YEAR DAILY DIET COKE ADDICTION.

MY STRATEGY IS TO BUY ORGANIC, LOCAL, SEASONAL, WHOLE AND UNPROCESSED FOOD WHENEVER POSSIBLE. AND PLEASE COMMIT TO COMPOSTING. ACCORDING TO GREG HORN'S BOOK, LIVING GREEN, "FOOD SCRAPS AND YARD CLIPPINGS MAKE UP 25% OF U.S. SOLID WASTE." WHEN THIS ORGANIC MATTER ENDS UP IN LANDFILLS AND DECOMPOSES WITHOUT AIR, IT PRODUCES METHANE, THAT SAME POTENT GREENHOUSE GAS WE HEARD ABOUT IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MEAT INDUSTRY. SO BUY SOME GREEN BIOBAGS, USE THEM IN YOUR KITCHEN AND YOU WILL BE VERY SURPRISED BY HOW MUCH FOOD AND RELATED PACKAGING PRODUCTS YOU CAN MOVE TO THE COMPOST BIN EVERY DAY.

OKAY, ON TO WATER. AS YOU HAVE PROBABLY NOTICED, MORE AND MORE GREEN-MEANING PEOPLE ARE SHIFTING AWAY FROM PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES. WHY?? 1) WE USE OIL TO MAKE PLASTIC AND WE ALL KNOW WHERE THAT STORY GOES. 2) PLASTIC BOTTLES, ALTHOUGH THEY CAN BE RECYCLED, ARE MORE OFTEN PUT IN THE TRASH WHERE THEY WILL LANGUISH FOR MORE THAN 1,000 YEARS BEFORE THEY BIODEGRADE. 3) THE CARBON FOOTPRINT THESE TRAVELING VESSELS OF H₂O ARE LEAVING IN THEIR WAKE EQUALS AN ESTIMATED 1.5 BILLION GALLONS FUEL/YEAR FOR THEIR DELIVERY. 4) BOTTLED WATER IS AN UNREGULATED INDUSTRY AND MANY OF THE BOTTLED PRODUCTS ARE NO HEALTHIER OR CLEANER THAN TAP WATER. 5) RESEARCHERS ARE FINDING THAT PLASTICS, ESPECIALLY WHEN HEATED (I.E., THE SUN BEATS DOWN ON THE BOTTLE IN YOUR CAR), CAN DEPOSIT PARTICLES WHICH IN TURN ARE INGESTED INTO YOUR SYSTEM FOR AN UNHEALTHY ADDITION TO YOUR PERSONAL CHEMICAL COCKTAIL.

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT REASON #5 ABOVE AND GIVE A NAME TO THOSE PLASTIC PARTICLES – WHICH DOCTORS AND SCIENTISTS IDENTIFY AS PHTHALATES, SPELLED, P-H-T-H-A-L-A-T-E-S. PHTHALATES ARE USED TO SOFTEN VINYL PLASTIC AND HOLD SCENT AND COLOR IN A VARIETY OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS. FOR A GREAT VISCERAL EXAMPLE, IMAGINE THE SMELL THAT PUNCHES YOUR SENSES WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A BLAST FROM A TAXICAB AIR FRESHENER! THESE ARE THE PETROCHEMICALS THAT HAVE BEEN SHOWN IN ANIMAL STUDIES TO EMASCULATE MALE OFFSPRING AND TO CAUSE EARLY PUBERTY AND REPRODUCTIVE MALFUNCTIONS IN FEMALES. CHEMICALS THAT DETER OUR NATURAL HORMONAL SYSTEMS ARE CALLED ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS AND PHTHALATES PARTICULARLY DISRUPT OUR ESTROGENIC ENDOCRINE PATTERNS, MEANING THEY MIMIC THE VERY POWERFUL HORMONE, ESTROGEN, FOUND IN THE FEMALE BODY.

IN MALES, THE PRESENCE OF PHTHALATES CAN DISRUPT THE PRODUCTION OF ANDROGEN, OR LH, WHICH IS A HORMONE WHOSE PRIMARY ROLE IS TO TRIGGER CELLS TO PRODUCE TESTOSTERONE. THE RESULT COULD INCLUDE GENITAL MALFORMATION AS A FETUS, LOWER SPERM COUNTS, DECREASED SEX DRIVE, LOWER ENERGY AND TESTICULAR CANCER.

TO CITE AN INTERESTING PASSAGE REGARDING PHTHALATES FROM THE FORE-MENTIONED, LIVING GREEN, "HUMAN SPERM COUNTS IN THE U.S. HAVE DROPPED BY 50% OVER THE PAST CENTURY. NO ONE KNOWS WHY FOR SURE, BUT ESTROGENIC PHTHALATES FROM PLASTICS AND SYNTHETIC GROWTH HORMONES IN CONVENTIONAL MILK ARE THE MOST LIKELY CULPRITS." AND THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THESE FINDINGS EXPONENTIALLY OUTPACE THE RATE OF NORMAL HUMAN EVOLUTION. IN FACT, A 2007 REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES DETERMINED A NOTEWORTHY DECLINE IN THE RATIO OF MALE/FEMALE BIRTHS IN THE U.S. AND JAPAN, "YIELDING ABOUT 250,000 FEWER BOYS THAN IF THE RATIO CIRCA 1970 ENDURED." SCIENTISTS ARE POINTING BLAME AT ENDOCRINE DISRUPTION. IF THIS IS INDEED A MEASURABLE DATA POINT, SHOULDN'T WE BE A BIT MORE TERRIFIED?

AS FOR THE FEMALE EXPOSURE RISKS, A STUDY PUBLISHED IN AUGUST 2007 BY DR. SANDRA STEINGRABER, REPORTED THAT THE AVERAGE AMERICAN GIRL IS NOW REACHING PUBERTY A FULL 18 MONTHS EARLIER THAN GIRLS OF JUST 40 YEARS AGO. ENDOCRINE-DISRUPTING HORMONES, ALONG WITH AN INCREASINGLY OVERWEIGHT POPULATION, PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESSORS ARE ALL BEING LINKED TO THIS STATISTIC. THANKS TO SHEILA BROWN, ANOTHER STUART HALL MOM, WHO IS ON THE BOARD OF THE BREAST CANCER FUND, WE HAVE COPIES OF THAT REPORT AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO READ TODAY.

SO CRITICAL IS OUR ATTENTION TO PHTHALATE-RELATED DANGERS, THAT IN OCTOBER 2007, GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, SIGNED A BILL THAT "PROHIBITS THE MANUFACTURE, SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF TOYS AND CHILD CARE PRODUCTS USED BY CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THREE THAT CONTAIN PHTHALATES," THUS ESTABLISHING CALIFORNIA AS A NATIONAL LEADER IN PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM THESE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL CHEMICALS. WHILE WE APPEAR REVOLUTIONARY IN OUR STATE, EUROPE HAS HAD SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE SINCE 2005, AND CANADA ADOPTED A VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT NOT TO USE PHTHALATES IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS IN 1998.

WE WILL REVISIT PHTHALATES WHEN WE EXAMINE WHAT IS IN OUR BEAUTY, GROOMING AND HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS, BUT ANOTHER PLACE TO WATCH FOR THEM IS IN MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS TUBING, CATHETERS AND INTRAVENOUS BAGS. IN FACT, *USATODAY* REPORTED IN MARCH 2008, THAT THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION IS URGING LABELING OF PHTHALATE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS IN HOSPITALS TO PROTECT NEWBORNS "OUT OF CONCERN THEY COULD DAMAGE BABY BOYS."

SO BACK TO WATER BOTTLES... EVEN IF YOU DON'T BUY YOUR DRINKS IN SOFT PLASTIC CONTAINERS, YOU MAY TRANSPORT THEM IN A HARDER POLYCARBONATE PLASTIC VESSEL, THINK NALGENE, WHICH CONTAINS A CHEMICAL CALLED BISPHENOL-A THAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY SCIENTISTS

TO ALSO MIMIC HORMONES AND CONTAMINATE HUMANS AT THE LOW LEVELS TO WHICH THEY ARE COMMONLY EXPOSED. IN EARLY ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS, RESEARCHERS HAVE NOW LINKED EARLY BISPHENOL-A EXPOSURE TO MISCARRIAGES, PROSTATE CANCER, BREAST CANCER, ATTENTION DISORDERS, DISRUPTION OF INSULIN REGULATION (A PRECURSOR TO DIABETES), INCREASE IN BODY WEIGHT, REDUCED SPERM COUNTS AND INFERTILITY. THIS DATA INSPIRED CANADA'S LARGEST SPORT RETAILER TO PULL ALL NALGENE PRODUCTS FROM ITS SHELVES IN DECEMBER 2007. AND AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD IN THE NEWS RECENTLY, THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP PUBLISHED RESEARCH INDICATING THAT BPA IS WIDELY USED TO LINE THE CANS OF INFANT FORMULA. I CRINGE WHEN I CONSIDER THAT I FED ALL THREE OF MY CHILDREN FROM AVENT BOTTLES, AND WHAT THEY INGESTED WAS GMO-LADEN FORMULA WITH AN EXTRA SHOT OF BISPHENOL-A LACING THE POWDER. IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN...

MY RECOMMENDATION IS THAT YOU SHIFT YOUR DAILY DRINKING HABITS AWAY FROM PLASTIC BOTTLES TO FILLING FILTERED WATER INTO STAINLESS STEEL CONTAINERS SUCH AS THOSE MADE BY KLEEN KANTEEN OR SIGG. AND TELL THE YOUNG MOTHERS YOU KNOW TO BUY BISPHENOL-A-FREE, PHTHALATE-FREE BABY BOTTLES MADE BY COMPANIES LIKE BORNFREE AND GREENTOGROW. YOU CAN ELIMINATE ALL OF THE ABOVE CONCERNS IN ALMOST EVERY INSTANCE, OTHER THAN DURING A LONG RUN WHEN THE WORK TO CARRY YOUR HEAVIER BOTTLE MAY JUST BE TOO MUCH EVEN FOR THE GREENEST ATHLETE IN OUR MIDST.

FOR KIDS ON THE GO, MY FAMILY REALLY LIKES A PRODUCT CALLED WATEROOS, WHICH IS WATER, IN A RECYCLABLE CARDBOARD BOX. AND WHILE ON THE FINAL BREATH ABOUT WATER, NEVER FLUSH YOUR POST-RECALL CHILDREN'S COLD MEDICINES AND EXPIRED PAINKILLERS DOWN THE TOILET — EVEN THE BEST MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES CAN'T STRIP OUR WATER OF THESE POWERFUL CONTAMINANTS. FISH CAN'T SWIM IF THEY'VE TAKEN A MUSCLE RELAXER — AND FOR THAT MATTER, NOR CAN YOU.

LET ME REMIND YOU THAT WE ARE LUCKY TO BE UNCOVERING THIS KNOWLEDGE ALONG WITH OPTIONS. REMEMBER, BY EATING ORGANIC AND ABSTAINING FROM PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES, OUR FIRST TWO "TO DO'S," WE ARE ABSOLUTELY DELIVERING ON OUR GOAL TO BE MORE GREEN AND TO SUSTAIN OUR RESOURCES RATHER THAN SUFFOCATE THEM. SO FAR, NOT THAT HARD, RIGHT?

SO THIS NEXT SECTION IS WHERE I'VE BEEN REALLY DIGGING DEEP. AGAIN, FOR REFERENCE, THINK BACK ON YOUR MORNING AND HOW MANY PRODUCTS YOU MAY HAVE USED ON YOUR BODY — SOAP, SHAMPOO, CONDITIONER, FACE WASH, LOTION, MAKE-UP, SHAVING CREAM, HAIR GEL, TOOTHPASTE, HAIR SPRAY, THE LIST IS IN YOUR MEMORY BANK. ALL FOODS ASIDE, EVEN THE LAZIEST (ME) OR MORE NATURAL BEAUTIES AMONGST US HAVE PROBABLY ALREADY COME IN CONTACT WITH MORE THAN 150

CHEMICALS TODAY. AND THOSE HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO OUR BODIES THROUGH OUR LARGEST ORGAN, OUR SKIN.

GIVEN OUR NATIONAL DAILY DOSE OF THESE MANY PERSONAL CARE ITEMS, THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOW BREWING ARE A) WHAT IMPACT ARE THESE CHEMICALS HAVING ON OUR NEAR- AND LONG-TERM HEALTH B) ARE THE ESTABLISHED “SAFE” LIMITS TO INDIVIDUAL EXPOSURES REALLY “SAFE” AND C) WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THESE MULTIPLE EXPOSURES DEPOSIT A LASTING CHEMICAL COCKTAIL IN OUR SYSTEMS, I.E., IS THE COMBINATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR UNIQUE GENETIC CODE WHAT IS DANGEROUS TO US? THIS THIRD POINT IS THE ONE I’M MOST INTRIGUED TO FOLLOW AS DR. DEVRA DAVIS REPORTS, “NINE OUT OF TEN WOMEN WHO DEVELOP BREAST CANCER ARE BORN WITH PERFECTLY HEALTHY GENES.” AND TODAY IN THE UNITED STATES, A WOMAN IS DIAGNOSED WITH THIS SAME ILLNESS LESS THAN EVERY TWO MINUTES.

AS GENERAL REFERENCE, THERE ARE MORE THAN 80,000 CHEMICALS PRODUCED IN THE U.S., OF WHICH ONLY A SMALL FRACTION, PERHAPS 11,000, HAS BEEN TESTED FOR THEIR IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH. AND THESE TESTS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN ABSENCE OF REPEATED OR COMPLEX EXPOSURES, I.E. IF YOU INGEST X% PARTS/MILLION, YOU WILL BE SAFE. WE ALL KNOW THAT IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BREAK AN ANALYSIS DOWN TO A SINGLE EXPOSURE RISK, THUS THE LIMITED DATA ON THE SUBJECT AND THEREFORE THE SAGE WARNINGS TO FALL BACK UPON THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE, IF YOU THINK HARM MAY BE CAUSED, TAKE ACTION TO AVOID OR MINIMIZE YOUR EXPOSURE.

IN ADDITION, WHILE THE FDA HAS TECHNICAL JURISDICTION OVER THE SAFETY OF OUR PERSONAL CARE AND HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS, THERE IS CURRENTLY NO FEDERALLY RESTRICTIVE LABELING OR TESTING PROGRAM IN PLACE TO ACT AS WATCHDOG FOR THE CONSUMER. EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE FDA’S AUTHORITY TO TEST COSMETICS WERE THWARTED BY HEAVY LOBBYING IN 1938 AND THE LIMITATIONS HAVE REMAINED IN PLACE DUE TO THE CONTINUED COLLECTIVE MUSCLE FLEXED BY PROCTOR & GAMBLE, REVLON, ESTEE LAUDER AND OTHER INDUSTRY LEADERS. THE WAY OUR GOVERNMENT NOW PLAYS IT IN THE U.S. IS IF THE MANUFACTURER SAYS IT’S A SAFE PRODUCT, THE BURDEN IS ON THE CONSUMER TO PROVE THAT IT ISN’T.

ACCORDING TO AUTHOR STACY MALKEN WHO RECENTLY PUBLISHED, NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE, THE INDUSTRY IS ALLOWED TO POLICE ITSELF THROUGH THE COSMETIC INGREDIENT REVIEW PANEL, WHICH IS FUNDED AND MANAGED BY ITS TRADE GROUP, THE COSMETIC, TOILETRY AND FRAGRANCE ASSOCIATION. FREQUENTLY WHEN STORIES ARE WRITTEN TO EXPOSE POTENTIAL DANGERS IN COSMETICS, LIKE THE RECENT PIECE ON LEAD IN LIPSTICK, REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CTFA ARE THOSE WHO VOCALLY DISPUTE SCIENTISTS’ CLAIMS FOR CONCERN.

WHILE WE AMERICANS ARE SHOPPING WITH A BLIND SENSE OF SAFETY, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE ESTABLISHED WHAT THEY HAVE LABELED THEIR “NEGATIVE LIST” OF MORE THAN 1,100 SUBSTANCES THAT CANNOT BE SOLD IN PRODUCTS, FORCING MANUFACTURERS TO EFFECTIVELY CREATE 2 “PRODUCT LINES, A HAZARD-FREE VERSION FOR EUROPE AND TOXIN-FILLED VERSIONS OF THE SAME PRODUCTS FOR THE U.S. AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,” ACCORDING TO MARK SHAPIRO, AUTHOR OF THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED EXPOSED: THE TOXIC CHEMISTRY OF EVERYDAY PRODUCTS AND WHAT’S AT STAKE FOR AMERICAN POWER.

IN ADDITION, THE EU HAS INSTITUTED AN INGREDIENT-NAMING STANDARD, WHICH, IF YOU BEGIN TO READ LABELS AS I HAVE BEEN OBSESSIVELY DOING RECENTLY, YOU WILL APPRECIATE. NOT ONLY ARE THERE DERIVATIVES AND INCREDIBLY COMPLEX NAMES FOR MANY OF THE TOXINS WE SHOULD AVOID, THEY ARE OFTEN EASY TO HIDE IN OBSCURE CATCH-ALL NAMES. THE BEST EXAMPLE I CAN THINK OF IS TO RETURN TO OUR NEMESIS THE ENDOCRINE-DISRUPTING PHTHALATES AND UNDERSTAND THAT THEY FREQUENTLY FALL UNDER THE INGREDIENT NAME, “FRAGRANCE,” WHICH CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS A TRADE SECRET AND IS THEREFORE PROTECTED AGAINST DISCLOSURE UNDER AMERICAN LAW.

ECONOMICALLY, IT DOESN’T APPEAR THAT THE EU RESTRICTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN MASSIVE CUTBACKS IN PRODUCTION AND SALES. RATHER THEY HAVE EFFECTIVELY MOVED TOWARD INNOVATIONS IN GREEN CHEMISTRY THAT ARE READILY AVAILABLE, YET IN SOME CASES, PERHAPS A BIT MORE EXPENSIVE TO IMPLEMENT. INTERESTINGLY, THE REAL WIN HAPPENS FOR THE GOVERNMENT’S CHECKBOOK AS THE BAN ON CHEMICALS WITH TOXIC PROPERTIES IS ESTIMATED TO RESULT IN A SAVINGS OF \$60BILLION IN HEALTHCARE COSTS OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS. I CAN’T HELP BUT ASK MYSELF WHY OUR POLITICIANS, ESPECIALLY OUR ASPIRATIONAL FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT, WHO HAS A PASSION FOR HEALTHCARE, HAVEN’T HIGHLIGHTED THIS ISSUE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON PREVENTION AS A PRIORITY AGENDA ITEM FOR OUR NATIONAL SAFETY AND OUR ENVIRONMENT.

BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY OUTRAGED AND CONFUSED CONSUMERS OUT THERE, AN IMPORTANT AND IMPACTFUL ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN CREATED CALLED THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP, WHICH I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED. AMONG OTHER HUMAN SAFETY EFFORTS, THEY ARE WAGING A CAMPAIGN FOR SAFE COSMETICS AND HAVE BECOME A RESEARCH REPOSITORY FOR CONSUMER REFERENCE. THE EWG HAS CREATED AN INCREDIBLE DATABASE OF PRODUCTS CALLED SKIN DEEP WHICH PAIRS INGREDIENTS IN MORE THAN 25,000 PRODUCTS AGAINST 50 DEFINITIVE TOXICITY AND REGULATORY DATABASES, MAKING IT THE LARGEST INTEGRATED DATA RESOURCE OF ITS KIND FOR COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE BEAUTY AND SKIN CARE PRODUCTS. IF YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS WEB SITE, YOU CAN VISIT IT AT WWW.COSMETICSDATABASE.COM TO LEARN

MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR EVERYDAY SHAMPOOS, LOTIONS AND LIPSTICKS RATE AGAINST THEIR HAZARD SCORECARD.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT WHILE OUR CONVERSATION REMAINS FOCUSED ON OUR PERSONAL EXPOSURES TO POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CHEMICALS THAT BIOACCUMULATE WITHIN OUR BODIES AND MAY RESULT IN FUTURE DISCOMFORT, ILLNESS OR EVEN DEATH, WE MUST SWIM DOWNSTREAM AND RECOGNIZE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS STUDIES PUBLISHED BY RESEARCHERS “THAT HORMONE SYSTEMS IN WILDLIFE ARE THROWN IN DISARRAY BY COMMON WATER POLLUTANTS, INCLUDING PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS, RINSING DOWN DRAINS INTO RIVERS” AND OTHER ONCE-PURE BODIES OF WATER IN MUNICIPAL ENVIRONS. OUR WASTE WATER SYSTEMS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF REMOVING PERSISTENT CHEMICALS SUCH AS TRICLOSAN, THE KEY INGREDIENT IN ANTI-BACTERIAL SOAPS, AND AN ENDOCRINE DISRUPTOR THAT IS WREAKING HAVOC IN FORMERLY PRISTINE ENVIRONMENTS.

SO GIVEN THAT ELIMINATING THE MANY POTENTIAL DANGERS FROM EVERY SHELF IN OUR HOMES IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE, I’LL SHARE WHERE I BEGAN THE TASK FOR MY FAMILY ONLY 8 MONTHS AGO. I WILL ALSO TELL YOU THAT IT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS, WITH NEW DISCOVERIES AND A GROWING WILLINGNESS TO BREAK OLD HABITS AND ELIMINATE MORE ITEMS EACH DAY. MY OVERARCHING STRATEGY IS TO BUY THE BEST PRODUCTS I CAN AND EFFECTIVELY REFUSE TO SUPPORT THOSE COMPANIES THAT DO NOT HAVE MY INTEREST AT STAKE. THE RESULT HAS BEEN COST SAVING, TIMESAVING AND UNQUESTIONABLY LIBERATING. FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER I HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE SIREN CALL OF THE SEDUCTIVE AND INCREDIBLY SAVVY BEAUTY INDUSTRY, BUT KNOWING WHAT I KNOW NOW, I FIND MYSELF WHIZZING THROUGH LOBBIES OF OUR DEPARTMENT STORES AND FAST-TRACKING THROUGH ONCE-FASCINATING AND ALLURING BEAUTY MAGAZINES.

I STARTED THE ELIMINATION PROCESS WITH MY KIDS’ BATHROOM BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, “POUND FOR POUND, CHILDREN ABSORB MORE CHEMICALS INTO THEIR BODIES AND THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEMS OFTEN DON’T DETOXYIFY AND ELIMINATE CHEMICALS AS EFFICIENTLY AS ADULTS.” SO I FOCUSED ON THEIR MAIN PRODUCTS — SHAMPOOS, SOAPS, TOOTHPASTE AND SUNSCREEN. ALMOST EVERY ITEM WE WERE USING REQUIRED A CLOSER LOOK. AND I REALIZED THAT WHAT NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED ON THEIR BEHALF ENCOMPASSED THE SAME CATEGORIES OF CHEMICALS THAT WERE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING TO MY HUSBAND AND ME AS WELL.

THE EASIEST CULPRITS FOR ME TO IDENTIFY ARE THE PARABENS, WHICH ARE ANTIMICROBIAL PRESERVATIVES, WITH PREFIXES SUCH AS METHYL-, ETHYL-, PROPYL- AND BUTYL- TO NAME A FEW. THIS FAMILY OF SHELF-LIFE ENHANCERS IS BELIEVED TO MIMIC ESTROGEN, AND CAN ACCUMULATE IN FATTY TISSUE SUCH AS IN THE BREAST. PARABENS MAY ALSO BE LINKED TO IMPAIRED FERTILITY, OR ALTERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FETUS OR

YOUNG CHILD. I FOUND PARABENS IN ALMOST EVERY PRODUCT WE HAD, OFTEN IN MULTIPLE FORMS.

I THEN TURNED MY ATTENTION TO SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE, AND ITS TOXIC SIDEKICK, 1,4-DIOXANE. ANYONE EVER HEARD OF IT? YOU WILL NOT FIND THE LATTER LISTED ON A LABEL BECAUSE IT IS AN UNINTENDED BY-PRODUCT OF CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING AND THEREFORE NOT REQUIRED TO BE LISTED AS AN INGREDIENT. THIS PETROLEUM-DERIVED CONTAMINANT AND PENETRATION ENHANCER IS CONSIDERED A PROBABLE HUMAN CARCINOGEN BY OUR EPA AND A CLEAR-CUT ANIMAL CARCINOGEN BY THE NATIONAL TOXICOLOGY PROGRAM. IT IS ALSO ON CALIFORNIA'S PROP 65 LIST OF CHEMICALS KNOWN BY THE STATE TO CAUSE CANCER OR BIRTH DEFECTS. THE HEALTH CONCERN IS THAT 1,4-DIOXANE ALTERS SKIN STRUCTURE, ALLOWING OTHER CHEMICALS TO PENETRATE DEEPER AND POTENTIALLY REACH THE BLOODSTREAM. SLS AND ITS UNINTENDED (YET UNRESTRICTED COMPANION) ARE FAIRLY UBIQUITOUS AND CAN BE FOUND IN LIQUID AND SOLID SOAPS, SHAMPOOS, CONDITIONERS, MASCARA, SHAVING PRODUCTS, MOISTURIZER, TOOTHPASTE, SUNSCREEN, MAKE-UP REMOVER, PERFUME AND COLOGNE, AS WELL AS COUNTLESS CLEANING PRODUCTS. PUT IT THIS WAY, OUT WENT BOTTLE AFTER BOTTLE OF BUBBLE BATH, BABY WASH, SHAMPOO, DETANGLER, TOOTHPASTE AND CONDITIONER. ALL I CAN SAY IS, SHAME ON JOHNSON & JOHNSON. AGAIN, IF I ONLY WOULD HAVE KNOWN...

AS REPLACEMENT, OUR FAMILY'S SOLUTION WAS TO SWITCH TO SHAMPOOS AND CONDITIONERS MADE BY TWEEN BEAUTY AND BURT'S BEES, ALONG WITH BODY WASH BY CALIFORNIA BABY FOR THE KIDS. AND I'M NOW USING SOAPS AND SHAMPOOS, BY DESERT ESSENCE ORGANICS, MAX GREEN ALCHEMY AND PANGEA. TO AVOID SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE AND SACCHARINE IN OUR TOOTHPASTE, WE HAVE SWITCHED TO NATURAL DENTIST PRODUCTS. WE LOVE THE PEPPERMINT FLAVOR AND HAVE HAD ALMOST NO REBELLION FOR THE LOSS OF OUR SPARKLING, UNNATURALLY GREEN FORMER TOOTH POLISHES. WHILE WE ARE TALKING TEETH, CHECK OUT THE NEW TOOTHBRUSHES MADE FROM RECYCLED YOGURT CONTAINERS BY A COMPANY CALLED PRESERVE. VERY COOL EXAMPLE OF GREEN TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION!

AS FOR COSMETICS, I HAVE RELEGATED TO TOXIC WASTE ALL OF MY OLD MAKE-UP THAT RATED A "4" OR HIGHER ON THE HAZARD SCALE ON EWG'S SITE, WHICH NOW RECEIVES MORE THAN A MILLION SEARCHES/MONTH. VERY IMPORTANTLY, THAT INCLUDED THE MYRIAD OF OLD EYE SHADOWS, LIPSTICKS AND BLUSHES I HAD TO ABSCOND FROM MY DAUGHTER'S DRESS-UP CLOSET. PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS, I NOTED, WERE THE FROSTY LIPSTICKS OR EYE COLORS, WHERE BHA, A KNOWN HUMAN CARCINOGEN BANNED IN THE EU REARED ITS UGLY HEAD. WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF LIPSTICK, AN OCTOBER 2007 REPORT ISSUED BY THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAFE COSMETICS, REVEALED THAT IN AN INDEPENDENT STUDY EXAMINING LIPSTICK SAMPLES ACROSS THE U.S., 61% OF THE PRODUCTS TESTED CONTAINED DETECTABLE LEVELS OF LEAD, ALTHOUGH IT IS NEVER LISTED

AS AN INGREDIENT. SHOCKING IS A GOOD WORD, AS IS, UNNECESSARY. LEAD DOES BUILD UP IN OUR BODIES, IT CAN BE PASSED ON TO OUR BABIES IN VITRO OR VIA BREAST MILK AND NUMEROUS STUDIES SHOW THERE IS NO SAFE DOSE OF LEAD IN CHILDREN'S BLOOD.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I STILL HAVE PLENTY OF PRODUCTS INCLUDING A RANGE OF MINERAL-BASED POWDERS AND EYE SHADOWS FROM JANE IREDALE, COLORSCIENCE AND BARE ESCENTUALS, A FEW OF MY OLD LIPSTICKS (THAT RATED WELL) AND SOME NEW LIP GLOSSES FROM PEACEKEEPER AND 100% PURE, WHICH I BUY AT WHOLE FOODS OR RAINBOW GROCERY. MY DRAWERS ARE CLEAN, MY ROUTINE IS SIMPLER AND I'M SAVING LOTS OF MONEY BY KEEPING TO A MUCH SHORTER LIST OF COMPANIES WHOSE COSMETICS I'M WILLING TO BUY – A WIN, IN MY BOOK.

I ALSO PILED UP THE EXPENSIVE DOCTOR-RECOMMENDED SKINCARE LINES THAT WERE LOADED WITH PARABENS, PETROCHEMICALS AND THE POTENTIALLY VERY SCARY, SKIN-LIGHTENING AGENT, HYDROQUINONE, WHICH WORKS BY DECREASING THE MELANIN PIGMENTS IN SKIN. IT IS A CONFIRMED ANIMAL CARCINOGEN THAT IS TOXIC TO THE SKIN, BRAIN, IMMUNE AND REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS. HYDROQUINONE IS BANNED IN THE EU. BEWARE.

LET'S NOT FORGET THE VERY GLAMOROUS CATEGORY OF DEODORANT. BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO BREAST TISSUE AND THE LYMPH NODES, THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PRODUCT TO GET RIGHT. FIRST, DON'T APPLY ANTI-PERSPIRANT BECAUSE YOUR BODY WILL REMAIN MOST HEALTHY IF IT ELIMINATES TOXINS THROUGH ITS NATURAL PASSAGES. BY FOLLOWING THIS GUIDELINE, YOU WILL MOST LIKELY AVOID THE DANGERS OF ALUMINUM, A NERVE TOXIN, WHICH IS LINKED TO ALZHEIMER'S. UNNATURAL FRAGRANCE BRINGS US BACK TO THE HORMONE DISRUPTION AT A VULNERABLE SPOT ON OUR BODIES. I HAVE TRIED SEVERAL PRODUCTS AND MY FAVORITE IS AVALON ORGANICS' LEMON DEODORANT.

WE WILL CLOSE ON BEAUTY WHERE MY STORY STARTED, OUR NAILS. THE HARSH-SMELLING TOLUENE IS A DANGER IN THIS CATEGORY, AS IS FORMALDEHYDE, WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DAMAGE DNA AND IS BANNED IN THE EU. BUT DON'T OVERLOOK OUR OLD FRIENDS THE PHTHALATES WHICH PLAY A KEY ROLE IN MAKING POLISH PLIABLE. AS A LONG-TIME NAIL JUNKIE, I HAVE GIVEN UP MY HABIT, UNLESS IT'S FOR A TRIP TO THE NEWLY OPENED NOVA ORGANIC NAIL SALON ON MISSION AT 4TH STREET IN SAN FRANCISCO. THE OWNER, A WOMAN WHO HAS OWNED A NAIL BUSINESS FOR MANY YEARS, WAS SUFFERING FROM SEVERE RESPIRATORY AILMENTS, AS WERE HER EMPLOYEES. THUS SHE WAS INSPIRED TO RESEARCH THE DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH HER INDUSTRY AND MAKE A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT TOWARD CHANGE. SHE NOW FEATURES VEGAN, DIBUTYL-PHTHALATE-FREE PRODUCTS FROM SPARITUAL, AMONG OTHERS, THAT LOOKED GREAT AND LASTED MORE THAN A WEEK ON MY HARD-POUNGING NAILS.

YOU MUST BE GROWING TIRED OF THESE TERMS NOW AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN COVERED OUR NEXT CATEGORY, HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS. AS I HAVE NOW REALIZED, THIS TOPIC PROBABLY WARRANTS A CONVERSATION OF ITS OWN. AND BECAUSE OF TIME, WE WILL HAVE TO GLOSS THROUGH SOME HIGHLIGHTS. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE BOOKS, GREEN THIS! BY DEIRDRE IMUS FOR HER THOROUGH COMMITMENT TO EXPOSING DANGERS TO CHILDREN, WORKERS AND ANYONE WHO COMES IN CONTACT WITH CLEANING PRODUCTS, AS WELL AS NATURALLY CLEAN BY JEFFREY HOLLENDER, CREATOR OF THE SEVENTH GENERATION BRAND, FOR HIS EASY-TO-READ SCIENTIFIC ANALYSES AND EYE-OPENING OUTLOOK ON WHAT MAY BE MAKING US SICK WITHIN THE "SAFE" CONFINES OF OUR OWN HOMES.

WHILE CONSIDERING THIS TOPIC, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION LAID BY THESE CLEANERS BEGINS AT THE POINT OF MANUFACTURE WHERE TOXIC EMISSIONS FLOW FROM THE FACTORIES. THE NEXT STOP, VIA MASSIVE EXPENDITURES IN CARBON EMISSIONS FOR PACKAGING AND TRANSPORT, ARE OUR HOUSEHOLDS WHERE WE BREATHE AND INGEST VAPORS, SOLVENTS AND PARTICLES THAT ARE NOT ONLY LINKED TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTION, BUT ALSO RESPIRATORY STRESS, DANGERS TO THE DEVELOPING FETUS, WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS AND AUTISM. AND TO MAKE THE CYCLE COMPLETE, THESE SOLVENTS AND SUBSTANCES ARE WASHING THROUGH OUR DRAINS AND CAUSE DEVASTATION IN THE WILD. THEREFORE IT IS IDEAL TO FIND CLEANING SOLUTIONS THAT BIODEGRADE AND HAVE MINIMAL FRAGRANCE OR COLOR. MANY GREEN LIVING EXPERTS MOST HIGHLY RECOMMEND GOOD OLD-FASHIONED WHITE VINEGAR AND BAKING SODA FOR A MYRIAD OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES. MOST OF US OWN WAY TOO MANY OF THESE PRODUCTS AND COULD HAPPILY THRIVE WITH A MUCH SMALLER, WELL-CHOSEN SELECTION OF HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES.

I CAN'T IGNORE THIS LAST SUBJECT AS IT KEEPS CROSSING MY DESK AND I HAVE TAKEN ACTION ON IT IN MY OWN KITCHEN. THE STORY THAT REALLY CAUGHT MY ATTENTION WAS TOLD RECENTLY BY KEN COOK, PRESIDENT OF THE FORE-MENTIONED EWG, WHEN HE RECOUNTED TRUE REPORTS OF PET BIRDS DYING IN COUNTLESS KITCHENS WHERE NON-STICK PANS, COATED BY TEFLON, WERE EMITTING DEADLY FUMES WHEN HEATED. CANARY IN THE COAL MINE, ANYONE?? IT HAS BEEN 70 YEARS SINCE DUPONT FIRST INTRODUCED THIS POWERFUL AGENT AND SINCE THEN, ACCORDING TO DR. MERCOLA'S HEALTH WEB SITE, 95% OF AMERICANS TEST POSITIVE FOR IT IN THEIR BLOODSTREAMS AND THE EPA HAS "RECENTLY IDENTIFIED (IT) AS A LIKELY HUMAN CARCINOGEN." THIS UNREGULATED AND UNTESTED CHEMICAL LINES OUR MICROWAVE POPCORN BAGS, IT LACES IN OUR STAIN-RESISTANT CARPETS, IT COATS OUR GORE-TEX JACKETS – AND IT TAKES 20 YEARS FOR OUR BODIES TO ELIMINATE. STUDIES IN THE 1980'S (WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE PAID CLOSER ATTENTION TO AT THE TIME) REVEALED "TWO OUT OF SEVEN WOMEN WORKING AT THE DUPONT TEFLON PLANT GAVE BIRTH TO BABIES WITH BIRTH DEFECTS." MY NON-STICK PANS ARE NOW IN THE GARAGE AND WE ARE ON TO CAST IRON. DOING THE DISHES TAKES A

LITTLE LONGER, BUT I KNOW IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT.

FOR THE SAKE OF TIME, I'M GOING TO WRAP UP, BUT SOME TOPICS THAT ARE ON THE TOP OF MY LIST TO BETTER UNDERSTAND INCLUDE THE PROPOSED AERIAL SPRAYING OF PESTICIDE TO ERADICATE THE APPLE MOTH IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA; THE GROWING INSTANCE OF PERCHLORATE, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ROCKET FUEL, IN OUR FOOD SUPPLY AND BREAST MILK; FLAME RETARDANTS IN OUR FURNITURE AND ELECTRONICS; AND BECAUSE I SPEND A LOT OF TIME OUTDOORS, I'M VERY INTRIGUED TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT HERBICIDES AND FERTILIZERS IN OUR YARDS, OUR PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO KICK AROUND THE SOCCER BALL OR WATCH MY KIDS ROLL IN THE GRASS WITH THE SAME ABANDON SINCE BEGINNING THIS QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE. AS WITH THE CATEGORIES WE COVERED IN MORE DETAIL TODAY, WHERE ARE THE RISKS, HOW GREAT ARE THEY AND HOW CAN I CONTROL WHEN I WANT TO TAKE THEM?

AFTER LISTENING TO PERHAPS TOO MANY DETAILS OF WHERE THE HAZARDS MAY LIE, YOU ARE MORE AWARE. STEP ONE. WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THAT AWARENESS? MAYBE IT SPARKS YOUR CURIOSITY TO READ MORE, DO SOME OF YOUR OWN RESEARCH. MAYBE YOU DECIDE TO ELIMINATE A FEW PRODUCTS FROM YOUR HOUSEHOLD OR MAKE SOME CHANGES IN WHAT YOU EAT OR THE LIPSTICK YOU WEAR. MAYBE THE BABY STEPS LEAD TO THE REALIZATION THAT WHAT REALLY NEEDS TO HAPPEN IS THAT WE, AS AMERICAN CONSUMERS, NEED PROTECTION FROM OUR GOVERNMENT TO LIMIT UNKNOWN EXPOSURE TO POTENTIALLY HARMFUL CHEMICALS AND FOOD PRODUCTS. IF IT CAN HAPPEN IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, WHY CAN'T IT HAPPEN IN OURS? BECAUSE THAT'S THE REAL ANSWER HERE. AS GUARDIANS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND STEWARDS OF THE PLANET ON WHICH THEY LIVE, WE MUST FORCE THE CHANGE.

AS I MENTIONED AT THE BEGINNING OF MY TALK, I AM NOT A BIOLOGIST, A DOCTOR OR A POLITICIAN. I'M A RELATIVELY YOUNG MOTHER WHO HAS WITNESSED TOO MANY OF MY FRIENDS BATTLE INFERTILITY, DELIVER PREMATURE BABIES, SUFFER FROM BREAST CANCER AND TACKLE LEUKEMIA, AUTISM AND DIABETES DIAGNOSES FOR THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT IN EVERY CASE THERE IS SOME RELATION TO OUR ENVIRONMENT, WHETHER THE EXPOSURE WAS INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL, INGESTED OR INHALED, IN VITRO OR FAR BEYOND BIRTH. THERE IS A CONNECTION. SCIENTISTS ARE PROVING IT EVERY DAY. SO NO MATTER WHERE YOU REMAIN ON A SKEPTIC SCALE OF WHAT I'VE OUTLINED DURING THIS TALK, I AM CERTAIN THAT WHATEVER MEASURE YOU TAKE TO CONSIDER A MORE WHOLESOME APPROACH TO LIVING WILL BENEFIT THE ENTIRE EQUATION OF OUR COLLECTIVE HEALTH.

AND WE REALLY HAVE NO EXCUSE BECAUSE I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT I HAVE FELT NO SENSE OF SACRIFICE IN SWITCHING TO SAFER BEAUTY PRODUCTS, PURCHASING ORGANIC COTTON TOWELS, GARDENING RESPONSIBLY, BUYING CARBON OFFSETS FOR OUR TRAVEL, ARRANGING

WEEKLY DELIVERY OF LOCALLY GROWN ORGANIC PRODUCE, SWITCHING TO A GREEN DRY CLEANER, PURGING MY HOUSE OF CHEMICAL DISRUPTORS, COMPOSTING, SIGNING PETITIONS, WALKING MORE, DRIVING LESS AND MOST EXQUISITELY, TAKING MY KIDS FOR A WANDER THROUGH MUIR WOODS TO BRING IT ALL HOME.

EVEN THE GREENEST AMONG US CAN LEARN HOW TO BE BETTER CITIZENS OF OUR PLANET. AND THEN IT IS OUR DUTY TO HELP OTHERS TREAD A SIMILAR PATH IN WHATEVER WAY WE CAN. THE ALMOST ABSURD FACT THAT A HOUSEWIFE FROM SAN FRANCISCO IS STANDING BEFORE YOU AS TODAY'S FEATURED SPEAKER IS EXACTLY THE POINT TO REMEMBER. EIGHT MONTHS AGO, I DID NOT HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH DAMAGE MY HOUSEHOLD WAS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT. AND NOW, WITH SOME DEFT HANDLING OF SMOKE AND MIRRORS, COUNTLESS LATE NIGHTS OF RESEARCH AND A FIRM BELIEF THAT WE ALL DESERVE TO MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS, I AM ANOTHER WILLING VOICE IN THE CHORUS TO PROMOTE ESSENTIAL CHANGE.

TO PERPETUATE THIS PHILOSOPHICAL SHIFT IN OUR COLLECTIVE OUTLOOK, I OFFER A UNIVERSAL GUIDELINE FROM YVON CHOUINARD, FOUNDER OF PATAGONIA AND LIFELONG ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION. DURING A RECENT INTERVIEW ABOUT HIS EXEMPLARY BUSINESS PRACTICES AND PERSONAL MORAL CODE, HE REFERRED TO HIS COMMITMENT TO "LEAD AN EXAMINED LIFE.™" WHAT A POWERFUL AND MEMORABLE PHRASE TO USE AS A TOUCH POINT FOR CONSIDERING THE IMPACT OF OUR ACTIONS, LARGE AND SMALL. THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE DOMINO EFFECT CREATED BY THE COUNTLESS DECISIONS WITHIN OUR DAILY CONTROL, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS THAT OUR FOOTPRINTS WILL SOFTEN AND OUR EARTH WILL TAKE A LIGHTER POUNDING THAN WE ARE GIVING IT TODAY.

STAY TUNED FOR CHAPTER TWO BECAUSE I'VE REALLY ONLY JUST BEGUN.
THANK YOU.