

SUSTAINABLE ABILITY FOR THE REST OF US

YOUR NO-BULLSH^T,
FIVE-POINT PLAN FOR
SAVING THE PLANET

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MEDIA KIT

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Author name:

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AUTHOR BIO

A life-long pragmatic altruist, John Pabon's work has focused on the fields of sustainability, geopolitics, and strategic communications. For the past 15 years, he has advised governments, corporations, and organizations of all sizes. The result is a portfolio of leading programs, campaigns, and strategies across all industries.



John's global career has taken him from Los Angeles to New York, Shanghai to Melbourne. He's had the privilege of working with the United Nations, McKinsey, A.C. Nielsen, and as a consultant with BSR, the world's largest sustainability-focused business network. A decade of experience living and working in Asia inspired him to found Fulcrum Strategic Advisors with a mission to help companies, governments, and individuals understand, adapt, and capitalize on the seismic shifts happening in the world today.

He is a regular contributor to major publications, and speaks to an array of global audiences on issues of sustainability, geopolitics, communications, and societal change. John is a member of the United Nations Association of Australia and also serves on the board of advisors to the U.S. Green Chamber of Commerce.

When he's not working or writing, John is an avid dragon boater, out-of-shape Muay Thai fighter, reiki healer, and proud dad to the world's best Shiba Inu. He currently lives with his partner in Melbourne, Australia.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Everything we've been doing to save the Earth is wrong.

Everything we've been doing to save the Earth is wrong.

Well, maybe not exactly *wrong*. But, we have been doing a lot of things the wrong way. Whether that's the dreadlocked eco-warrior pushing environmentalism to the fringes of society, media scaring the bejesus out of us with their images of a dystopian future, or the myths negatively impacting our psyche, we've become overwhelmed, desensitized, and apathetic.

But, there's so much we can do if we just approach things a little differently.

In "Sustainability for the Rest of Us," John Pabon thinks back on his nearly two decades in the business to take a no-holds-barred, unorthodox look at what we need to change, why we need to change it, and practical steps everyone can take to make it happen. At its core, this isn't a book about saving the polar bears or hugging the trees. It's about changing the way you view your role in building a better future for yourself, your children, and those cute little kids in the graduating class of 3045.

Described as a "...foundational read for practical sustainability in the 21st century," and "perfectly articulating what many practical sustainability leaders speculate constantly regarding what is wrong with today's variant of sustainability," the question is, are you ready to cut the bullshit and get to work?

TARGET AUDIENCE

- People frustrated at the lack of progress with saving the world, climate change, or building a better future.
- Those who care, but wouldn't consider themselves "greenies" or environmentalists.
- Pragmatic altruists.
- Sustainability professionals.
- Readers keen for a new angle on an old subject.

BOOK EXCERPT

Point #4: Be A Pragmatic Altruist

It's 6:30 on a wet Friday evening and I'm running terribly late for a movie. Melbourne's traffic can be horrendous during rush hour, but the trams are a pretty safe bet to get you where you need to be on time. Not tonight apparently. We were making great time until we hit the central business district. Here, things just slowed to a crawl. The tram sat between stops for a good twelve minutes. Due to safety regulations, tram conductors can't let people off between official stops. After five minutes the grumbling started. After seven minutes, people started going up to the conductor and asking what in the world was happening. All the conductor knew was there were trams stopped in front of us and nowhere to go. Nothing was coming in off the radio, so she was running blind. By ten minutes, someone got so fed up they pushed open the doors on their own and let a good half of the tram off with them. Within another couple minutes, someone came onto the tram to say all services had been discontinued. We would have to walk the rest of the way. Mind you, it was pouring down rain at this point.

The second I stepped off the tram, I joined a sea of people headed up the main street of the CBD. I mingled amongst the typical tourists taking pictures, and business people on their way home for the weekend. It was certainly more crowded than usual. After about a block, I started to notice a third segment growing more populous by the foot. They grew in tandem with an overt police presence on the streets. Waiting at a traffic light, I turned to the woman next to me. She was soaked to the bone, mascara running down her face, wearing a garbage bag for a poncho. In her hand, she held a makeshift cardboard sign with the Shakespearean scrawling: "fuck the system, not the planet." Crap. It was a climate change protest march.

I could see, smell, and hear them now. Angry greenies, vocal university students, and weirdos of every ilk mingling around chanting in unison (kind of). "Hey hey! Ho ho! The government has got to go! Hey hey! Ho ho! Scott Morrison has got to go!" Those marching down Swanston Street were furious at Australia's federal government for its less-than-stellar response to the country's escalating bushfire crisis. While the stories of bushfire tragedy gripped international headlines, the Prime Minister vacationed in Hawaii. His deputies, beholden to the interests of the coal industry, refused to admit climate change had anything to do with the disaster. Images of blackened forests and walls of fire were made grimmer by the loss of human and animal life. Some estimates point to upwards of 1 billion animals losing their lives, with the emblematic koala added to the endangered species list. The international outcry, and relief, was being met by political silence on the ground.

People had had enough and were demanding heads, and I have to say, I couldn't agree with them more.

But as I pushed my way up the street, narrowly avoiding that many umbrellas jamming into my eye, all I felt was frustration. Not frustration at the ineptitude of the federal government or the tram conductor sitting in her warm, dry seat blocks away. No, my frustration was with the protesters themselves. As they milled about, taking up four lanes of traffic and the entirety of both sidewalks, all I cared about was getting where I needed to be. In the busiest part of the city, at the busiest time of the week, these protesters weren't a force for good. They were just getting in the way.

This frustration only grew as the crowds began to morph from invested, well-intentioned activists to the parasitic hangers-on you often find at events like this. There was the fire dancer trying to get her torches going between downpours; the chanting of the Hari Krishna looking for converts; and, the inevitable Bible basher touting the end times. It was a mish-mash of characters diluting the message at the core of the march. For people on the outside, it was further confirmation that those fighting to save the world were just a bunch of freaks and geeks.

As I finally sat down for the movie, I started to think about all the frustrated people on the tram. Each was just trying to get where they needed to go. Maybe it was somewhere inconsequential, like a movie. Perhaps it was something more important, like a hospital visit or business meeting. Would they look at the protests as something meant to change the world positively? That's highly unlikely. They would remember the protests as a nuisance; something that forced them off the comfort of the tram and onto the cold, damp streets. It made them wet, late, and stressed.

For those with a keen eye, they'd also wonder what all this had accomplished. Weeks later the bush-fires still raged, and the government still sat on their hands. There was so much time spent organizing and creating witty banners, tax money used for police patrols and security, and mental capacity thrown into the cause. While certainly coming from a place of passion and good intentions, a simple cost/benefit analysis would have put the protest squarely in the "unsound" column. Lots of cost, little benefit, and even less impact.

However, sometimes people need an outlet to air their grievances. They're raising awareness of an important issue and demonstrating people power! That's how things change... the will of the people. Let's go with this idea of people power and imagination. Instead, all those thousands of people could have been doing something even more strategic and constructive. Maybe each could have donated a few dollars to relief efforts or supplies to emergency organizations on the front lines. Some could have corralled their passions to drive efforts at their places of work. Many of the university students, out on holiday break, were able-bodied enough to volunteer in fire-ravaged areas and could have availed themselves. Instead, they believed meandering a few blocks in the rain was going to make all the difference. What they forgot to do was to factor in the most important element to change. It's not people power. It's pragmatism.

I've said it earlier in this book, and I'll say it again: passion without pragmatism is just complaining.

INTERVIEW TOPICS

- The state of global sustainability today and why “people power” just isn’t working.
- The biggest myths out there when it comes to building a more sustainable future.
- Which country is the world’s leader in sustainability (hint: they love their pandas)?
- Why we should be doing more to embrace the private sector as the leader for change.
- How the greenies and eco-warriors have actually made the world a worse place.

Q AND A

- What was the inspiration for this book?
- We see a lot of talk about climate change and environmentalism. How is your perspective different?
- You call yourself a pragmatic altruist. What does that mean?
- What do you mean when you use the term “sustainability?”
- What can readers hope to gain, or how will they change, by reading your book?
- Do you have to be a sustainability professional or hard-core greenie to read this book?
- Of your five BS-free points, which do you see as the most important and why?

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