

Essay by Morgan Sander
A New Manner of Thinking

"We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive." This famous quote by Albert Einstein is extremely pertinent to the situation of the world today. The election of President Barack Obama has demonstrated that the citizens of the United States are ready for change. With the looming threat of global warming and the continuing apathy toward responsible consumerism, clearly we need to start doing something different; we need a paradigm shift.

We can start by continuing to support efforts to find other affordable sources of renewable energy and educating people, especially youths, about the importance of reducing carbon emissions and increasing environmental conservation. Though American only accounts for five percent of the world's population, we use fifteen times more energy per person. Solar power, hydro power, wind power, these are the alternative energy sources that we should be harnessing. We are already on our way to becoming climate-conscious citizens, but we can do more.

We can start by taking a look at consumerism. In American, bigger is better; big cars, big houses, even the drinks are supersized. This, however, is not only unnecessary, it is greedy. Is it viable for a capitalist society to be completely without greed? Unfortunately not, but it is possible to evaluate our lifestyles. The United States alone consumes 25 tons of raw materials per person per year. At the rate we are going, there will be nothing left for future generations.

So we must begin to change.

If mankind is to survive, we need to learn to be more tolerant. We need to be willing to accept lifestyles that differ from our own, recognize that personal prejudices interfere with personal growth, and understand that diversity is a vital part of our development as human beings.

If mankind is to survive, protecting the environment needs to be our main objective. True, other important situations will demand our attention, but we can put out those fires without losing sight of the importance of conservation and the need to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

If mankind is to survive, everyone needs to realize that this is not just a fad for a small group of concerned citizens. It is not just a fleeting fling to merely provide entertainment; it is a change in thinking; it is the mindset that giving back to the community is important, that projects require both a passionate drive and financial backing, that dreams do not come without hard work, and that it is necessary to be empathetic, not just sympathetic.

Albert Einstein also said, "The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking." It is impossible to see a solution with the same eyes that helped create the problem.

So we must begin to change.