

Letter to the Editor 4-12-07

All I Can Be Is Me

By Cindy Ball

I can't change the pollution in our waters. I can't recycle my neighbor's trash. I can't even be sure that my husband is charming or guarantee that my child will be well behaved. The only thing I can change is my own behavior. So, really, this is a personal essay. I will try not to point fingers. We are all here in the same time and place for a reason. Can you see something beautiful? Can you see clean water and air? Can you see a more sustainable community? Let's think about those beautiful bio-diesel public buses (which also happen to be *free*). Did you notice the amazing solar Christmas tree this past December?

A lot of people in Boone are doing something for the good of all. That sure is nice to think about in a time that seems so scary. These are scary times because they need to be. Without such desperate times, the necessary changes would not occur. We have traveled to the limit, and now we are forced to find our way back.

What would the world look like if everyone took responsibility? What would the world look like if everyone used compact florescent lights and then only when they were needed? What if everyone composted? What if everyone recycled? What if all our citizens put a halt to their gasoline addiction, or at least did a mindful slow-down? What if every man-made product was recyclable? What if all homes and new buildings were sustainable and we used renewable resources? What if there was more talk about wind turbines and solar panels? What if? I can imagine this world. This is the place I want to be. But I am only me.

What am I really responsible for? I am not responsible for my infant's colic or my husband's ideas. I am not responsible for my crazy family or my friend's good time, just because I invited her to a party. I am responsible for ME. My actions are the only ones that can be changed, by me. I envision the world that I want to live in and live for. Now it is time to ask myself, "How does this world look?" Then, if I were really trying, I might ask myself, "Am I living in truth with this world? Am I living the way I need to in order to support this world?" I am sure to discover that I am not perfect and can do better.

Take your mind back to the ideal world. Describe it to yourself. My ideal world is clean. There is no litter thoughtlessly scattered. There's less new construction too. Human beings are able to prove their brilliance, not by trashing oceans and outer space, but by turning trash into useful objects or by preserving untouched land.

I don't have the answer. I am struggling to see the beauty. I make choices, and I can make changes when I need to. I am only me and that is enough. It has to be.