

Reverence for Life

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The belief that powers my life came to me in an instant as I was driving to work listening to a news story about the tragic losses in Iraq. BAM, my core value formed: I believe that it's time for good people to do good things in assertive ways. Meaning, it is time for those of us who mean well, to be assertive about it - get out there and be nice with verve. Give back, help out; show compassion and concern. My cause in this lifetime is best summarized as Reverence for Life, a philosophy I've borrowed from humanitarian Albert Schweitzer. Reverence for Life manifests itself in my life in three ways: compassion for fellow humans; protection and recovery of species; and habitat conservation. An amazing thing is happening on the planet right now. The gap between people who think the earth needs help versus those who are engaged in creating change is getting a lot smaller. We are awakening to the understanding that something has to give – that Earth is a gift that needs cared for, not an object that can be taken for granted. Two years ago I set out to make my professional life more philanthropic. I knew I wanted to be part of something bigger than business-as-usual. Little did I know that buying a small chocolate company would change my life. Things became crystal clear – endangered doesn't just mean animals on a list. We're all endangered unless we start actively taking care of one another and the planet. Since becoming CEO of Endangered Species Chocolate, I have witnessed first-hand the practice of ethical trade in Nigeria, where our cacao is farmed and purchased for a fair wage. I have learned that sustainable farming and living is

the only way to coexist with other life; been challenged to defend my beliefs on animal and human rights; and grown stronger in my belief that it's time for good people to do good things in assertive ways. At work and at play, I purposefully surround myself with committed people who want to make a difference. Each of us has an opportunity to help out right now, whether your passion is homelessness, disease, the environment or any other cause. Whether you choose to help a family halfway around the globe or tend to a median down the street, now is the best time ever to pick something, dig in and make a difference. I believe that all life is precious and deserves respect, kindness and care.