

Story Card 1



I am a Danish professor in Business Administration and Statistics. I'm taking an active part in the current debate on Global Warming because I think it's high time to disprove some dangerous and totally unwarranted positions. In fact, if it's true that global warming has been caused by man and that, sooner or later, it will inevitably affect both human beings and the environment, it is equally true that official statements and positions on the matter often sound catastrophic as well as exaggerated and they tend to take as possible solutions extremely tough measures that, in truth, end up with damaging the countries' economies while proving totally ineffective. I think there are far many other more important issues to fight for: famine, poverty, diseases... Concentrating our efforts on these problems, we will be able to help many more people, spending less money and with a higher success rate.

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StoryCard 2



I am a Swiss entomologist and I've worked many years in Africa, particularly devoting myself to fight cochineals which infest and destroy manioc crops. Manioc roots, in fact, are rich in starch and are part of the staple diet of million Africans. In the 1970s and '80s this insect has been the cause of a drastic reduction in crop yield, as high as 80%, in the whole continent. After carrying out extensive research for 10 years, we successfully set up biological control of the pest, without using chemicals, but using their natural predator to destroy them, a wasp. This way we've been able to avoid severe and widespread famine but, more than that, we've shown the world that organic farming is feasible, and that by 2050 it may be possible to produce -in harmony with our environment- enough food to nourish the whole planet. I'm quite sure we can make it. The question is: do we really want to?

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StoryCard 3



I am a pensioner, I'm 78 and live on my own in a house located in the old town centre of a city in Northern Italy. A couple of years ago the municipal administration decided to make waste disposal the citizens' own responsibility, by adopting a system of waste separation which I frankly deem totally impracticable: in fact, I find it so difficult to understand how to separate waste; it's not easy for me to actually tell one material from the other; I often forget to put the containers outside on the right days and by the appointed time, and so they start to smell bad and my flat ends up being swamped with it all! Moreover, with my ailing back, it's a hard job for me to go down the stairs carrying those heavy containers, full to the brim, especially during the winter. Is this what a civilized society is supposed to be? When I was a child, we used to produce less waste and we would use things again and again. Are we sure this 'waste separation' is the right thing?

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StoryCard 4



I'm an engineer working for a Canadian company specialised in drilling and mining from ocean floor. We've just entered into an important agreement with the Government of Papuan New Guinea to mine metals, chiefly gold and copper, 1500 metre deep on the ocean floor. In fact, as the ore reserve is running out, we are forced to look for new supply in ways and places that would never have seemed a viable option only a few years ago. Although this project is sure to guarantee the country huge financial profits, nonetheless public opinion, influenced by environmental movements, totally oppose it, on the grounds that it could have destructive consequences. I consider these positions completely irrational. My company has carried out research in the field: the environmental impact will be very low. So why this strong aversion towards technology?

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StoryCard 5



I'm a housewife and mother of three, now adolescent, children. When they were little children, I used to be very careful about what I was cooking for them, using only organic food, since I was convinced that it would be the best food for them to grow up with. Theoretically, I think that sustainable farming is, in the long run, the best choice for the future of our planet but, from a practical point of view, I eventually gave up buying organic products because they're outrageously expensive and hard to get. I must say I'm sorry about that, but I believe there are many more people who have made the same choice as mine. Well, obviously, things would change if, to the price of a cheaper product, we would add up all extra cost for water pollution, the loss in biodiversity and all related social and sanitary issues .

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StoryCard 6



I work at the Department of Public Utilities in San Diego. I'm completing a research project on a new methodology to reclaim, treat and purify greywater and blackwater and make them suitable for drinking. So far, we've got excellent results: the water we obtained is in fact cleaner than the existing drinking water and it is also cheaper than that produced, for example, in a desalination plant. For San Diego this could represent a revolutionary process. However, public opinion is bitterly opposing it out of a sense of sheer repulsion as well as distrust towards the effectiveness of this purification methodology. Maybe, what with the worsening drought and further development of coastal settlements, who knows? People may eventually change their minds on the matter! I wonder if our future necessities will be able to force us to change our present habits and beliefs.

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StoryCard 7



I'm an agronomist and I work at the International Rice Research Institute. Our Institute produces every year dozens of new varieties of rice, obtained through the new genetic engineering techniques that improve varietal characteristics through cross-breeding among same-species plants. We have varieties resistant to drought; others enduring a salty environment and others that can survive completely underwater for up to about 15 days. In the name of what out-of-date, antiscientific position are we expected to renounce such a great richness in varieties? In fact, in my opinion, one thing is to talk about multinational corporations' interference in the world food production; a completely different matter is to consider using the tools supplied by genetic engineering to improve crops and thus help solving peoples' real problems.

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StoryCard 8



I'm 15 and I'm attending a secondary school specialised in scientific studies in my home town. My parents, as staunch environmentalists, have always been deeply committed with associations for the preservation of the natural environment and keen on organic food. I've been brought up under those principles but, honestly, without ever asking myself too many questions: I just thought it simply was the right thing to do. But, recently, I've started to have my doubts. Most of my friends' families are not at all concerned about environmental issues and behave in a way my parents do stigmatise. They all use their scooters to get around, while my parents refuse to buy me one because they say it's a polluter and that I'd better be happy to ride my bike. I wonder: what can the three of us do against the rest of the world? And why on earth should I be the only one to make this sacrifice?

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StoryCard 9



I'm an architect and, about 10 years ago, I planned and built an affordable low-environmental-impact prefabricated house. I called it "Loblolly House" from the name of the trees which have been used to build at least a part of it and that are typical of the area where it has been located. It has become a symbol of a new attitude to building, that involves keeping in mind the environmental impact. I think the most cost-effective way to build a house is to have it built in a plant and subsequently assemble it on site. This enormously reduces the amount of energy required to build it ("energy investment"). Traditional building industry has become a "dirty word" and it should be banned. We have proved that building in a different way is possible. So, now, when will Governments take action and control by regulations the building sector?

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StoryCard 10



I'm working as a fishmonger at the fish counter in a supermarket that is part of a large-scale retail company. I like my job very much because in a way it keeps me closely related to my great true passion: the sea. However, to my great displeasure, every day I have to witness, with a feeling of impotence, the choices made by our Purchasing Managers: all issues related to fishing and ichthyic resource policies are not in the least considered. The consumer's tastes rule, and most customers ask always for the same kind of fish: 90% of them want it "easy and quick to cook and with no bones". I'm dreaming of opening my own Fishmonger's so as to be able to support fishermen practicing a sustainable fishing. But how long would I be able to survive on the market? What can be done to inform consumers and make them aware of what lies behind their "no-bone fish"?

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StoryCard 11



I am a Councillor for Social Mobility and the Environment in a Po Plain town in Northern Italy. Data from last year's statistics summary on the 'Quality of the Air' related to fine particulates (PM2.5) are, as usual, alarming for my town: that value has exceeded the acceptable safety level of $50 \mu\text{g} / \text{m}^3$ for 61 days, thus putting at risk our citizens' health. Even the current year's values are not at all good. In a short while I will be forced to adopt drastic measures to reduce the number of circulating vehicles; at least, operating the alternating numberplate scheme. The Associazione Commercianti (Traders' Association) is already on war footing and ready to wage war against the new measures, branding them as useless and detrimental to retailers in town. They might even be right from their point of view, but what alternative measures should I take? Air is not the traders' sole possession: it belongs to everyone.

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StoryCard 12



I'm a research worker from the Faculty of Agriculture of Bologna University and I've taken part in the project "Last Minute Market". The project started in 1998 as a research activity, and became a real professional system for the reuse of the unsold goods by the large-scale retail trade. Thanks to our organisation, food products (and not only those) bound to be destroyed are being set aside for charities, with obvious environmental, social and economic benefits. In the world one third of food is wasted while 800 million people starve to death. In Italy every year food worth 15 billion euro is being wasted and each Italian is said to be throwing into the garbage an average of 42 kg of food per year. So, before stating we should go on increasing production, why on earth, I wonder, don't we learn to waste less?

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