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Love in Action

An Afternoon with Julia Butterfly Hill

Preservation of our land and wildlife is critical. Recently the tragic oil spill in Louisiana reminded many of how important it is to protect our oceans, and how easily they can be destroyed.

The oceans aren't the only objects of nature that are in trouble. Another extremely vital concern is that of our natural forests and wildlife. Over the years continued destruction by humans has driven many of these things of nature to extinction or at the very least the brink of extinction.

In fact, did you know that 97% of our original Redwood forests have already been destroyed? Of the remaining trees only 1% are protected. That is not a lot of trees left to save.

Learning this information is what inspired environmentalist Julia Butterfly Hill to take action to help preserve the Redwoods. Hill says she has always loved nature. "I grew up poor, traveling, with two brothers and no sisters, so I spent a lot of time playing outside and climbing trees," Hill says.

Hill was "appalled and heart broken" when she discovered just how much damage has been done to our Redwoods. "I felt like more people needed to know what was happening. My belief is that when enough people know about what is happening in our world and then take action from a loving and committed place, we change the world for the better."

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Julia Butterfly Hill

Changing the world for better is exactly what Hill has done in bringing forth the utter importance of this issue. The plight of our dwindling ancient redwoods has received international attention, and Hill has also written a book, *The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, a Woman, and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods*.

Hill says the biggest threat to our forests, as well as species ability to live, is what she calls the Disease of Disconnect.

"Every issue we look at - from deforestation, to global climate change, to people homeless and hungry in a world with so many resources - is a symptom of the Disease of Disconnect. When we are disconnected from the Earth, we can destroy forests without realizing we are ultimately destroying the health and quality of human life. When we are disconnected from people, we can throw away food while others go hungry, or we can drop bombs on people and call them a statistic instead of realizing they too are human beings."

How often do we really think about how the things we do affect our environment? It's so easy to just throw things away, and not really think about it. After all, we're not looking at it anymore, so it's out of our lives right?

"When you rip a plant out of its roots of connection to soil and water, it begins to die. So, too, as we have ripped out our roots of Connected Consciousness, the quality and health of our lives and our world is beginning to die. For those who don't quite understand the impact of the Disease of Disconnect, all we need to do is look at the term when we say we are, "Going to throw something away." Where is "away"?! We behave as if there is a place called "away." There is no such thing! There is a very real and very destructive impact directly related to the fact that we behave as if there is such a thing as away. As we work on any issue, we also need to work at healing the underlying disease that is causing the problem."

What can St. Louis residents do to help out our forests? An organization that Hill recommends to get involved with is [Heartwood](#). Heartwood is regional network that protects forests and supports community activism in the eastern United States through education, advocacy, and citizen empowerment.

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Their main efforts are rooted in the heart of the central hardwood region, with an emphasis on the "core states" of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri. Become involved by visiting their [website](#).

You can also come to Hill's Love In Action event on Saturday, June 12th from 11:30am -1:30pm at the Schlafly Tap Room. Hill will be discussing this very important topic on saving our forests. The event will include a vegetarian/vegan luncheon by Local Harvest Café and vegan cupcakes by SweetArt. Attendees will be able to get Hill's book signed, as well as talk with her about her environmental efforts.

Tickets are \$40 in advance, and \$50 at the door. All proceeds will benefit Operation Food Search. To purchase tickets, contact OFS at (314) 726-5355 (314) 726-5355 X 19 or visit OperationFoodSearch.org.

Operation Food Search is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide food and individuals in need with food and other basic necessities to help them alleviate the burden of hunger and its consequences.

Hill says "I love the work of Operation Food Search because it recognizes there is no such thing as "Throw Away." There are no throw away species, no throw away resources, and no throw away people. I love how Operation Food Search utilizes integrative and creative solutions to helping feed those in need."

"I became friends many years ago with Karen Klaus of Operation Food Search after meeting her at an incredible all women's art show, Venus Envy, launched by a dear friend of mine from high school days, Mallarie Zimmer. I am coming to St. Louis to celebrate Mallarie's marriage to her long time partner, Heath; and Karen, knowing that I love to support the work of organizations everywhere that I go, reached out to me to see about my helping do a benefit for Operation Food Search while I am in town. I am very happy and excited to come help raise awareness and financial support for this wonderful organization!"

Hill hopes that those who attend understand that we all benefit from "the rights and privileges worked for and sacrificed for by those who came before us who were visionary and committed enough to take a stand for making our world a better place. From civil rights, to women's right, to environmental protection, to parks for all to appreciate, everywhere we look we see the legacy of caring and committed action by those who came

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before us. Each and everyone of us are ancestors of the future. What do we want our legacy to be?"

"As no action, no choice, happens in a vacuum, it is literally, scientifically, as well as spiritually, impossible to NOT make a difference. It is completely impossible to have no impact. Even the choice to do nothing has an impact. It is past time that we stop asking ourselves, "Can One person make a difference?" And start recognizing that every single, thought, word, and action changes our lives, our communities, and our world! We need to ask ourselves, instead, "What KIND of a difference do I want to make?" And then go out and start living that difference. This is Love in Action!"

Want to be part of Love in Action? Come out to the event on June 12th! Hill is excited about this event and "looks forward to meeting everyone there and supporting the great work of Operation Food Search and the community of people they serve."

Learn more about Julia Hill Butterfly by visiting her [website](http://www.juliabutterfly.com).