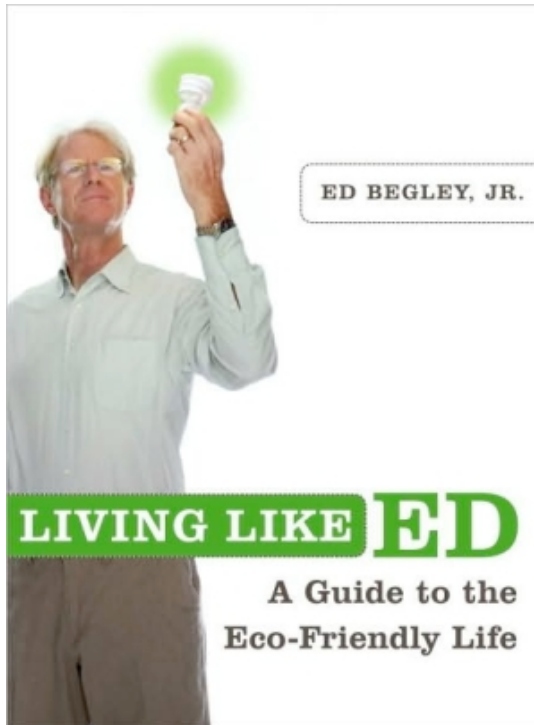


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Book Review: Living Like Ed

Clothilde Dastugue on Mon, 10/27/2008 - 06:24.

Actor Ed Begley Jr. is known for a long list of movies and TV appearances, including his long-running stint on "St. Elsewhere." But Ed is now one of the leading proponents of ecological sustainability and host of the HGTV series "Living Like Ed," where he shows viewers how



to live simpler, shop better and turn their homes into sustainable ones.

He's also author of *Living Like Ed: A Guide to the Eco-Friendly Life*, a handy, down-to-earth (no pun intended) book that goes beyond the typical guides on the market today. Begley shows us how he changed his house and living habits to recycle more, waste less and leave a smaller carbon footprint. But he doesn't hit readers over the head or make you feel guilty for not doing more. He offers tips in the areas of home, transportation, recycling, energy, garden and kitchen and clothing and hair and skin care with three levels of action: "easy changes," "not-so-big changes" and "big changes." Using this book as a guide, readers can choose what measures to initiate in regards to their budget and time.

"Do what you can afford," Begley said at the Oct. 18 Louisiana Environmental Action Network's 22nd Annual People's Conference in Baton Rouge. "Be fiscally responsible and do what you can today. You move up

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the ladder. You do not run up Mt. Everest.”

Begley began his passion in helping the environment in 1970, the year of the first Earth Day and a time when Los Angeles was drowning in smog. He bought an electric car.

“It was hard to breathe,” he said of L.A. “And I’m talking 365 days a year.”

Although Begley believes we need to work harder at solving environmentally problems — such as buying recycled materials, moving toward a zero waste society and pushing for alternative energies — he called our time an “interesting place.”

“We can do this,” he insisted. “We just have to set aside being serious about it.”

His book is an excellent way to start. Readers can do small things to help, such as buying nontoxic paint, donating magazines and watering plants early in the day, or larger projects such as converting to solar or wind energy. Begley’s wife, Rachelle, pipes in throughout the book offering that aesthetic argument, the one most of us feel guilty about saying aloud. You know the ones, arguing against water barrels because they are ugly!

“I think we have the only Hollywood pre-nump that includes carbon credits,” Begley said with a laugh.

And that’s another reason to enjoy the book. Rachelle’s insistence on style gives us alternative — and creative — ways to make sustainability attractive.

All the actions both Begleys suggest in the book will save readers money as well.

“I didn’t see this coming — I saved money,” Begley said. “Everything I have done for my environment has helped my bottom line.”

Everything people do to help the environment will pay off, he added.

“I stand before you filled with hope after all these things I mentioned,” he said to the conference attendees, adding that since 1970 there are four times as many cars on the L.A. freeways but half of the smog, plus the ozone hole has decreased. “We’re starting to solve some of these things.”



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