

“This Is What Triumph Feels Like”

The People’s Climate March in New York City was amazing. The main thought I had was this is what triumph feels like. Finally, this will put the issue firmly in the public eye, heart, and mind.

The sheer enormity of the crowd, the sights and sounds, voices and instruments, songs, shouting, drums, symbols, bullhorns, brass bands, cheers, chants, posters, beautiful and colorful paper statues—all were wonderful.

The second thought was, this is my tribe, the earth tribe. I was at home in this crowd of upbeat diversity, brilliance, and charm. We have a common cause and the sense of the march was that nothing can deter us from this cause.

Before we began to march members of a Native American group in full Native dress who had been involved in a ceremony elsewhere, approached the crowd and began to take their place near the front of the march. As they did, all marchers gradually broke into loud cheers and just kept on cheering, on and on. Sometimes on this planet, things come full circle, and this was one of those times.

As we were marching, a signal would occasionally come from the front line marchers. It went shhhhhhh, and without words, the message was to put your finger over your lips, turn around, and pass it on to those behind you. It took very little time for the message to get all the way through to the three hundred thousand plus marchers. Complete silence was achieved in just a few minutes! We stood in silence. Then starting from the rear of the crowd there began a loud roar that got louder as it caught on and the voices traveled like a great wave toward the front of the march until the entire crowd was roaring. In my view, this was the message of the marchers. We are together, we are connected, we are powerful, and we’re going to get this job done. This is what the power of people in solidarity looks like.

At various points I marched with these groups: Conscious Elders, Elder Women, Dutch Grandparents, Moms’ Clean Air Force, Women Elders Concerned about Climate Change, among others. Doctors from local hospitals associated with Physicians for Social Responsibility marched with signs about public health risks of climate change. Scientists (the “Nerds”) were there, also in white coats. They could have said “we told you so,” but they had more hopeful messages.

My thought is that probably never before in human history have humans been able to look into the future

Some posters seen at the March:

Tax wall street.

End climate change.

System change, not climate change.
End capitalism before it ends us.

*Capitalism has no solutions
for climate change.*

The only way to join the revolution
is to be abnormal.

***Today we all grow taller from walking
with the trees.***

Buddhists for environmental protection.

Be a good ancestor now.

Mother earth, the original matriarch.

*Mothers out front, perfectly built
to sustain life.*

We must leave a world to our children
as good as the one we received.

and predict the possibility of their own demise, thanks in large measure to scientific data. We owe a large debt of gratitude to scientists who have been warning us for more than a decade that we must take action against climate change.

Predominant among the messages at the march were that we must end capitalism, keep a focus on environmental justice and intergenerational justice, and work toward international cooperation.

Since the march there are signs that things are changing. Memories of the march do not dissipate, and there are plenty of films and photos and connections made to keep us going. I note that the messages on websites from environmental organizations are tougher and more optimistic now. I love this statement quoted in the film, *Disruption*: “Power concedes nothing without a demand.” There are two good videos on YouTube. One is “Symphony of Science—Our Biggest Challenge,” featuring Bill Nye the Science Guy, and author Isaac Asimov. The other is a great song for our movement, called “Remembering How to Dream.” Tune in; these videos are full of hope for the future. As am I.

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