

# **A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift**

by  
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## **Why I Am Committed to Talking About the Environment**

I have been writing about the environment for over eight years, and my focus has been to bring awareness of the deterioration of the environment and recommendations for mitigating this critical problem. For instance:

- Globally, we are consuming the natural resources of planet at a rate of 50% greater than they can be replenished. In other words we are currently requiring 1½ earths. By 2030, it could be two earths.
- The one billion people living in the developed countries have a consumption rate of 32 times that of the six billion people living in the developing countries.
- Of all the water on this earth, only 0.1% is available for human, agricultural and industrial use, and with the rapid growth in population (adding 10 million people every six weeks), water quality and quantity may be our greatest environmental problem.
- The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 called for a 5% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below 1990 levels by 2012. Instead, global GHG emissions are now 58% greater than they were in 1997.

I could list many more environmental issues, but how can these issues be brought to the attention of everyone so we can collectively do something about the problem? One way is to write about these in an article or blog, hope that many people read about them, and more important feel an obligation to do something about them. Another way is to bring these issues to people's attention via an audio resource like radio. Or a third way is to present these issues in person with the assistance of visual resources such as Power Point so that the audience can visualize the problem with graphs, diagrams or photos. Is one better than another, or does it really make any difference.

In the late 1960's, Albert Mehrabian began his pioneering study dedicated to the understanding of effective communications. Basically, he looked at the relative importance of verbal and non-verbal communications. Through extensive research, he concluded that when a person is conveying a message, the components of an effective message are based on the following:

- 7% of message is in the words that are spoken.
- 38% of message is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said).
- 55% of message is in facial expression (or body language)

As a result of his research, many people have been quoting the 7%-38%-55% rule but have been interpreting it loosely and using it for all communications. It really applies only to messages expressing feelings and attitudes. If someone is talking about an issue that is very dear

to the person, that 55% component of delivering the message becomes very important. That is why people passionate about protecting the environment are much more effective conveying their message in person so the audience can really feel the concern. Unfortunately, the potential size of the audience for a personal presentation tends to be the smallest while the size of a reading audience tends to be the largest. While I have been writing these articles for several years, I do prefer to convey my message in person as it is much more effective.

This 7%-38%-55% rule is more applicable to the personal communications we have been experiencing the past few years with the advent of new technologies. Before the development of mobile phones, most communications between people were in person which resulted in very effective communications. Then people started using mobile phones and their message was only 45% as effective. It seems that more people today, mostly the younger generations, are communicating via text messaging which is only 7% as effective. Do you see this as a growing problem in the future?