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# OPINION

## No Such Thing as Clean Coal

Air currents do not have borders

BY M. LINDA JARAMILLO

The recent Earth Day celebration was an opportunity to renew our commitment to being responsible stewards of our planet.

Every year, we are reminded of the multiple concerns related to eco-justice that need attention. Among the issues is how U.S. consumerism affects lives all over the world because of demand for lower priced products such as radios, computers, and televisions.

Climate change has finally come to the center of global attention as a key environmental justice issue. Numerous scientific reports have been released describing the urgency of taking action right now to stop the trajectory of the global warming, even though we can't turn back the clock on damage already

done.

Coal is the dirtiest of the fossil fuels producing toxic chemicals that include mercury. The damage caused by coal dust to humans as well as fish, wildlife, farmland, and water sources is well-documented, but many insist on ignoring this tragedy.

Due to stricter U.S. environmental standards being imposed to reduce hazardous pollutants in this country, the use of coal energy has dropped by over 7 percent since utilities have used cleaner burning natural gas.

Instead of taking steps to reduce the coal's carbon footprint with alternative sources of energy, coal producing companies have resorted to exporting coal to countries all over the world, most recently to Asia in name of profit margins.

By encouraging and expanding worldwide coal use, not only will our global neighbors suffer similar negative health consequences just as we have, but more U.S. and international communities will

be impacted by the transfer of products across land and sea.

For example, coal producers have leased the rights to mine more than 2.1 billion tons of coal in the Powder River Basin, which stretches for more than 250 miles through Wyoming and southern Montana. Since the coal is mined so far inland, there is no choice but to transport coal across the western portion of the United States and Canada.

Trains carrying coal are already going across British Columbia. Now, Cloud Peak Mining Company has secured the rights to ship coal through Washington to terminals in Bellingham and Longview.

As a coal train, up to 1½ miles long, moves down the tracks in uncovered cars, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway managers confess that between 500 pounds of coal is lost, spreading a ton a coal dust on its way.

While the coal industry benefits, thousands of human lives are in jeopardy and jobs are lost in tourism, small business,

farming, fishing, and other sectors near the tracks and the loading terminals.

Denis Hayes, chief executive of the Seattle-based Bullitt Foundation and the organizer of the first Earth Day put it well she explained how we don't accomplish a better environment when we export coal to countries in Asia, because it will pollute the atmosphere we all share.

We join major national organizations such as Earth Ministry and Sierra Club along with thousands of religious leaders, elected officials, community activists, environmental leaders to oppose to the further leasing of federal lands to pave the way for contaminating the whole earth in the interest of financial profit for a few.

We must understand that air currents do not have borders. No matter what coal producers say, there is no such thing as clean coal.

M. Linda Jaramillo is executive minister of Justice Ministries with the United Church of Christ.

## The Unlikely Path to Entrepreneurship

Building on success as you go for your dreams

BY DEDRICK MUHAMMAD

The path to a career in the early 21st century is anything but a straight line. The very idea that you will just have one career is becoming increasingly antiquated.

We have to be creative in our plans for economic sustainability. This means building upon success and, even as you go for your dreams, having a practical means to meet the demands of your economic reality.

Diana St. Louis' transformation from a prestigious lawyer to a successful entrepreneur is the perfect example of the versatility and mixture of realism and

optimism needed.

St. Louis left a stable position as a lawyer to open her own business, Bijte Lingerie – a successful store that sells lingerie for full-busted women. "It's a journey that's going to be long, but ultimately, fulfilling if that's what you really want to do," St. Louis says.

Though her passion lay elsewhere, St. Louis earned a law degree and worked at a law firm for five years before striking it out on her own. "For me, lawyering was a means to end. I knew I would always have it -- it's one of those things where it could have gone either way. I wanted to create as many options as possible," she says.

Her lucrative position helped her save up a sizeable nest egg for her business. And having a Plan B if something went wrong was important. "I needed to do this so I have a basic foundation I can go back to if something goes wrong," she says.

When she was finally ready to take the leap, she did her homework by learning as much about the industry as possible. But research doesn't just mean looking up the risks -- it means checking in with yourself to make sure you're emotionally ready for a long, unpredictable and sometimes scary journey.

"Figure out how deeply you desire to have your own business -- you have to be prepared for anything good, bad or ugly." Beyond that, St. Louis suggests planning out a business trajectory. "Will it remain a hobby or will it become your primary source of income? Either way, you need to know how your business should develop in the future," she says.

St. Louis was also fortunate enough to have the guidance of an industry mentor, though she found the mentor relatively late in her entrepreneurial journey. Having the guidance and help of an industry mentor is absolutely pivotal when starting your own business, she says. "Even

if that person can't answer a question, they will at least know individuals who can," she says.

She also found it helpful to set up a support system of people to vent to -- whether that's a fellow business owner you can commiserate with, or, as she puts it, "people who might think you're crazy but who still support you."

St. Louis also has advice for students who are trying to figure out their career path: Don't get stuck on a track too early, and don't be afraid of inventing or combining job positions. "Talk to as many people as possible and learn more about the jobs that are out there," she says. She stresses the importance of pursuing all your interests, "So much of it is about really making a point of enjoying every experience, even if it doesn't turn into a billion dollar opportunity."

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