



Our Toughest Foes: Apathy and Cynicism

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I am in the middle of a [local campaign](#) to bring [bike lanes](#) and [greenmarkets](#) to my [powerful neighborhood](#). Today Super G and Yankee joined me for the afternoon as we posted flyers on telephone poles and handed them out to regular folks on Second Avenue. In the past 2 weeks I have given out at least 500 of these and combined with others, the number is well over 3500 now.

Afterward we had lunch and discussed our experience. Trying to get people's attention is quite a demanding task. A lot of people are totally apathetic, and either don't look at you, or look right through you. This experience with the average person was eye-opening. Our toughest enemy in creating a more sustainable world is not the cornucopians like [John Tierney](#), but rather the pervasive apathy and cynicism in our post-modern society. And in particular, I'd like to call out my own demographic - Caucasian men and women between 20-35 years old (with an ipod in their ear and a latte in their hand). If we don't try to create change now for the world we will inherit, who will?

The most receptive audiences were any non-caucasians, elderly and in particular women between 40 and 55. Perhaps it takes time to develop the perspective to appreciate the types of ingredients to build a sustainable society. But it wasn't just the blank stares that got to me, it was the smug look of young professionals that said "Why care? You're not going to change anything." And to a certain extent, if everyone follows that cynical attitude they will be right.

Even if I achieve all that I hope to in my neighborhood, it would help somewhat but not stave off a severe PO scenario. But at least we would have done our share and we would be in a better position to adapt to the new realities.

Herein lies the answer: It would take all the neighborhoods in America together to find ways to solve the peak oil associated problems.

So TODers, what's your local plan to take action to make your community more sustainable?

Here are some [suggestions](#) on how to frame your thinking about taking action locally.



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