

Upcycled Love
conscious transformation, by Lynn Fang

Raam Dev: Laying the Groundwork for Sustainable Abundance

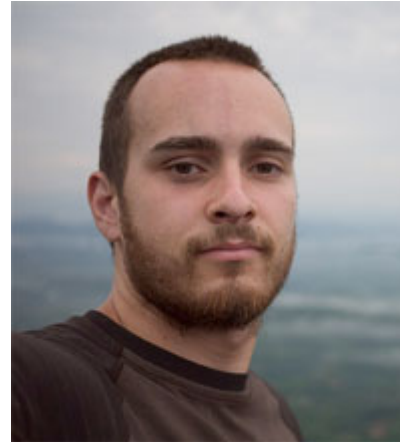
Posted on November 9, 2010 by Lynn Fang

Editor's note: This week's interview is with Raam Dev, writer, changemaker, and digital nomad. Because this interview is another lengthy one, I've provided the questions here for guidance:

- 1. Can you tell us a little about your latest adventure through Nepal? What brought you to Nepal and what did you come away with?**
- 2. I really love your message of using your life's time to do something valuable for our world. Can you elaborate on what you mean by 'sustainable abundance'?**
- 3. Now that you're back in the States, what are your upcoming and/or future plans?**
- 4. I'm always curious about where people derive inspiration for their remarkable pursuits in conscious living. What inspires you at your core?**
- 5. What is your ideal vision of our future?**
- 6. What do you think is the best way to begin organizing people around a cause or movement?**

7. Do you believe we will one day reach the ‘collective awakening’ necessary for real ecological and social change? Why?

Can you tell us a little about your latest adventure through Nepal? What brought you to Nepal and what did you come away with?



The visit to Nepal was part of a six month journey; I had just spent three months in India and two weeks in Vietnam, living on a meager budget of \$250/month and traveling with all my possessions in a small backpack. It was also my first time traveling abroad.

A friend from the States was visiting family in Nepal and he invited me to stay with him for a few weeks, so I took him up on his offer. I loved Nepal so much that I ended up staying for a full two months.

A few days after arriving in Nepal, something started the spark that became the Small Ways to Make a Big Difference ebook project. I spent the following three weeks doing nothing but working on that ebook from a cafe in Kathmandu.

I had planned to spend a few weeks trekking in the Himalayan mountains after the ebook was released, but then someone from a small NGO read the ebook and invited me to come see the work they were doing building schools in remote villages of Nepal.

Even though it meant stepping way out of my comfort zone — spontaneously going off with a stranger to an unknown remote town in a foreign country and staying in their house for a few days — my intuition was telling me to go with it and not pass up the opportunity.

I rode on the back of a motorcycle for eight hours, going up into the mountains on roads that sometimes looked more like the side of a mountain than a road. The following day we hiked even further by foot, this time going up through the clouds and passing through fields of corn, rice, and wheat.

The school secretly planned a big welcoming party for me and I found myself standing in front of over a hundred children, all who then approached me with a small bouquet of handpicked flowers. As if that wasn't overwhelming enough, I was then asked to give a small speech (my first public speech) entirely unprepared and still sweating from the grueling climb.

I was so humbled and moved by the presence of so many children looking at me with eyes that asked for help. They were just as human as me, just as capable of learning, and yet the amount of knowledge contained in my brain and my potential for interacting with the rest of the world far surpassed anything they could imagine.

All because I was born on a different spot on the planet.

Not a day goes by now when I don't think about those children. It's not that they're suffering or in pain, but that their future isn't anywhere near what it could be; their human potential is being wasted.

On the flip side, I have so much knowledge, experience, and know-how, more than I know what to do with; I have an excess of potential that isn't being fully utilized and now I feel a responsibility to do something to fix that imbalance of abundance.



I really love your message of using your life's time to do something valuable for our world. Can you elaborate on what you mean by 'sustainable abundance'?

When I was traveling by bus through Nepal, I noticed that the roads were in horrible shape but that the trenches carrying runoff water from the mountains were well kept, often neatly built with flat rocks that kept water from seeping out. I observed more people sweeping the trenches and keeping them free of debris than people working on the roads. Why was that?

Nepal gets an abundance of water, both from monsoon rains and from ice melting in the Himalayas, but without channeling those abundant water sources and making them more

sustainable there wouldn't be enough water to keep the rice and wheat fields fertile. If those trenches weren't built and maintained, all that water would simply overflow and disperse.

In other words, without finding a way to make the abundance of water more sustainable, the abundance wouldn't be very useful to the farmers. The agriculture industry that supplies food for the country and is responsible for 76% of all the jobs in Nepal simply wouldn't be able to function.

In the past few decades, there has been an incredible increase in our individual capacity to change the world around us. Technological advancements and unprecedented access to knowledge has given us a new opportunities and new responsibilities. We have nearly unlimited power to grow and improve ourselves and to make ourselves more capable of helping others.

We need to shift our focus towards looking for ways to make that abundance more sustainable. We cannot get so wrapped up in ourselves that we forget about the world we're going to leave behind when we're gone.

Instead of consuming and aimlessly creating new things just because we can, we need to live with purpose, conviction, and an eye on the future. Instead of traveling only for the sake of fulfilling our curiosity, we need to be looking for ways to distribute and share our abundance with those places that need it.

We need to actively work towards creating a world of sustainable abundance.

Now that you're back in the States, what are your upcoming and/or future plans?

When I sold all my possessions and left the United States six months ago, it was somewhat of an experiment. I needed to see if traveling was something I really wanted to do long-term or if it was just a bug that I needed to get out of my system.

I reached the conclusion only a month into my trip that travel is definitely in my blood. Travel makes me feel alive. My plan is to continue roaming the planet for the foreseeable future, living as a digital nomad with all my possessions on my back and letting the wind take me wherever it blows.

However, my experiences in India and Nepal unearthed a very strong sense of responsibility, a responsibility to use my time and my potential wisely. The suffering and poverty I witnessed in India and the children I met in Nepal made me feel compelled to do something with my life that will help change those imbalances.

Even as I attempt to readjust to life in the United States, those feelings of responsibility remain very much alive. Everything I do that could be considered even remotely selfish when compared with the rest of the planet reminds me that there are people out there who need my help.



Returning to life in the United States has also reminded me of the huge role money plays in modern society. Living in a developing country the dollar goes a long way, but here in the United States it leaves the bank real fast. The remainder of my savings was used during the trip, so I'm basically starting from the bottom.

My goal is to come up with ways to make money that will not only allow me to remain location independent but also help improve the lives of others. It's definitely going to be a long learning process, but I need to start somewhere.

I'm currently working on building an online business where I can offer digital products that promote sustainability and empower others with the skills and knowledge they need to improve the world around them. This business will also become a platform for others who have a similar philosophy and want to sell their own empowering products.

I'm taking my time getting this new business off the ground because I want it to be built on principals of sustainable abundance. Starting a business that fits within that vision is

more important to me than building a business that might be instantaneously profitable or an overnight success.

To pay for basic expenses while all that business development happens in the background, I'm taking on part-time jobs and also doing freelance work on the side. That means that I won't be traveling very much for the next few months, but it's a sacrifice I'm willing to accept in return for making my long-term vision a reality.

I'm also looking into joining Toastmasters to work on my public speaking and looking at volunteer opportunities to gain more real-world experience. The direction my life is headed is totally new to me, so I'm digging in and trying to learn as much as I can while also doing my best to share the journey with everyone through my blog.

I'm always curious about where people derive inspiration for their remarkable pursuits in conscious living. What inspires you at your core?

At my core, the future inspires me. The knowledge that time waits for no one and that my potential is only limited by the limitations that I impose; that inspires me.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the privilege of wielding the power of a human life. Knowing that my effort to live consciously will, in some small way, influence the future and somehow lead to less pain and suffering in the life of another human being; that inspires me.

At my core lies the desire to live my life to its fullest potential and to leave behind a world better than I found it. I firmly believe each of us has a responsibility to maximize our human

potential while simultaneously finding a way to share that potential with others.



What is your ideal vision of our future?

The future I'm working towards is a future where everyone is conscious of the affects of their actions. A future where everyone is educated enough not to be fooled by corporations who sell poison for profit. A future where each individual takes full responsibility for the care of their bodies and an active role in their own personal development.

A future where trust, respect, and compassion are highly regarded qualities and where *all* life is respected. A future where we have learned to appreciate and utilize our infinitely unique individual potential, instead of creating farms and factories where we stifle our creativity and sentence our lives to a slow and stressful death.

The imbalance in the world today stems from the deteriorating connections between our mind and body, and between our

spirit and Mother Nature. Those deteriorating connections lead to shortsightedness and a lack of concern for the future. They lead to the building and accumulation of abundance with no concern for long-term sustainability.

Starting with ourselves, we need to make conscious decisions and conscious choices. We need to live, breath, work, create, and consume consciously. We need to eliminate the excess from our lives and spend more time fine tuning our relationship with the universe.

What do you think is the best way to begin organizing people around a cause or movement?

We need to set an example by living the change we wish to see and then sharing the results of those changes with others (by talking about how they're affecting us and the world around us).

If we want to see a movement grow beyond us and take on a life of its own, being the change we wish to see is the most important step. It's like that saying, "Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime."

If you just give people words and ideas for how the movement might be beneficial, or if you just ask for some money and then let them go away, the movement isn't going to last very long.

But if you can show people what happens when they take action — if you take action and affect your small world so that others see how their own actions will have a similar affect in their world — then you've given them the power to become their own beacon of change.



Do you believe we will one day reach the ‘collective awakening’ necessary for real ecological and social change? Why?

Yes, and I think nature will force it on us. Nature is already doing it. We create unsustainable and unhealthy junk food that *tastes* good, but is detrimental to our long-term health. Nature reacts by giving us a plethora of health issues. Over time, enough people will question why all these negative things are happening and when the solution becomes obvious, we will collectively change course.

I don’t think it’s going to happen overnight, but I see the “collective awakening” as having already started and as stretching out across several generations.

However, the beautiful thing about it is that we — me, you, and the person reading this interview — are all part of that collective awakening. The effort we put into making the future something we’ll be proud of, that will be our legacy. After we’re

gone, others just like us will look back and see the collective result of all our individual actions.

We are the future in the making and it will be made with or without our participation. I say we should all choose to participate and make something beautifully sustainable, something where our children will not just grow, but where they will thrive; a place where they can reach their fullest human potential and leave behind a world even better than the one we gave them.

Thanks so much, Raam!

Raam Dev is a writer, changemaker, and digital nomad. He writes about sustainable abundance and practical minimalism on raamdev.com. You can follow him on Twitter or join his community of passionate changemakers.

share

This entry was posted in Collaboratory, Social Change and tagged Featured, practical minimalism, Raam Dev, sustainable abundance. Bookmark the permalink.

4 Responses to *Raam Dev: Laying the Groundwork for Sustainable Abundance*



Raam Dev says:

November 9, 2010 at 11:51 am

Thank you so much for putting together this interview, Lynn!
Answering these questions was an adventure in and of itself! 😊

Reply



Lynn Fang says:



November 9, 2010 at 4:09 pm

No problem, Raam! Thanks for the opportunity! Haha, I like to ask the sticky questions. I'm inspired by your development of a business based on sustainable abundance. I am aiming to do the same.

Reply



Sandra Lee *says:*

November 9, 2010 at 1:29 pm

Thank you both for this inspiring interview. Raam, it was interesting to hear about your process of building a business based on sustainable abundance. I'm glad you are going about it in a very thoughtful way. I'm sure this will produce the best results. I was also very encouraged by your optimism and the fact that you see a collective awakening in the present and the future.

Reply



Raam Dev *says:*

November 9, 2010 at 3:41 pm

Thank you, Sandra!

The whole business thing has been in the back of my head for a while now, but it feels like such a touchy subject (touchy to my inner self).

I hate the idea of "selling" something, but at the same time the modern world operates with money, so I need to earn it somehow. Doing something to earn money that supports the development of sustainable abundance is the only thing I can see myself dedicating lots of time to.

Reply

About the Author



I'm a caring global citizen, aspiring urban farmer, biologist, truth-seeker, and writer. I write to express my dream of a more harmonious and sustainable world. Read more about me [here](#).

I also design stuff.

Subscribe + Connect

First Name:

Email:

[RSS](#) | [Twitter](#) | [G+](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[WORK WITH ME](#)