

**TRANSFORMATION** - A One Act Play by Duke Castle

A FATHER and his SON are having breakfast in the Spring of 2050. The son is a junior at Lake Oswego High School.

SON: Dad, can I ask you something?

FATHER: Of course.

SON: Ms. Wilson has assigned us a paper on the global warming crisis for our sociology class and I can't believe what I am reading.

FATHER: Like what?

SON: Well, in the midst of obvious evidence people were denying that global warming was even real. How could they have been so stupid!

FATHER: They weren't stupid. They were afraid.

SON: But it was so obvious! Oceans were rising, temperatures were breaking records. There were unprecedented levels of flooding and droughts. I mean it was so obvious! How could they have not seen what was going on?

FATHER: Some people did and the denial began to change. For many they realized that something was happening but felt that the earth had warmed up at previous times throughout history, so maybe that was what was happening now.

SON: But even in our science class we understand that significant CO2 emissions were coming from the burning of fossil fuel. Couldn't they connect the dots?

FATHER: Over time people did, but you have to understand that at some level everyone was afraid. It wasn't just that the global warming was happening. It was facing the changes that we were told had to occur.

SON: What do you mean?

FATHER: If you look back at the start of the Industrial Revolution and the use of coal and oil to drive it, you can see an era of unprecedented prosperity, at least for some, that went on for more than a 150 years. The feeling by many was that the changes we were being told had to be made would take us back to the Dark Ages. Very few were willing to risk that for what seemed like another "doomsday" prophecy for our planet.

SON: So what caused things to change?

FATHER: Well, as you pointed out, the effects of climate change started to have real, clear impact. It was hard to deny the changes people were seeing all over the world.

SON: And yet, there was still so much resistance. Why did the world leaders wait so long to do something?

FATHER: It's important to realize that world leaders can only do what people are willing to support. It took reaching a clear crisis before that happened.

SON: Although things aren't perfect right now, changes have been made. Virtually no one burns coal or oil these days.

Ms. Wilson says that a major turning point came about in December of 2015 with a climate change conference held in Paris.

FATHER: Yes, I think she is right. What occurred at the conference was unprecedented. 200 nations came together and agreed that we all had to accept the changes that were needed and to work together to make that happen.

It was inspiring to see what happened after the conference in Paris. Here in Oregon various environmental groups and the major utilities got together and agreed on a plan to eliminate coal as a fuel source and increase renewable energy -- sooner than expected. Another example of unprecedented cooperation.

SON: But what about Lake Oswego? What difference did it make here?

FATHER: You have to remember that I was just ten at the time but my father and a few others were wondering: would our community really take on this climate change issue? As you know we are a prosperous, upscale community where many had benefited from what had gone on before.

SON: Something must have happened because we are just like the other communities around us. We all have electric cars and charging stations are everywhere. What motivated us to change?

FATHER: I am not sure there is an easy answer to that. It seems to me that at a basic level virtually everyone wants to do the right thing. I think at some point that came in to play.

However I think there was something else going on. As you know we are fortunate to live in a community that values education. Your high school is one of the best in the country. Consequently Lake Oswego attracts people who are well educated and have skills that frequently result in leadership positions -- Leadership in business, community and government. Interestingly those folks not only helped lead the change in Lake Oswego but also became advocates in their businesses and other organizations. Their influence was felt way beyond our local community.

SON: Even as a kid, I would hear how Oregon was an example on a lot of issues like this. But I never thought that LO was. Instead at football games and things like that, other kids would tell us that people in Lake Oswego were all rich and stuck up. When I started working on this assignment I never thought that our community might have been a positive example to others.

FATHER: Our community is far from perfect. But some of those attributes that others might criticize can also be strengths that allow us to accomplish things others might find difficult. It could be interesting for you to find out who some of those sustainability leaders in our community were and what they did.

SON: Hmmmm...

FATHER: So I guess this has been a long answer to your question. Do you have enough to get going on your assignment?

SON: I do, Dad. Thanks.

See a video version of this play at <http://bit.ly/losn-trans>