

# The Story That Could Save Our Planet

“When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.”

## The Second Time Around

In 1976, a dorky 28-year-old kid dropped out of Vanderbilt Law School to run for a seat in congress. As a former journalist with a passion for exposing corruption and injustice, particularly in areas of environmentalism, he knew that a congressional position would greatly help him bring his concerns into the public spotlight.

He won the '76 election easily, thanks in large part to the fact that his father had also been a successful politician in his hometown. That same year, he established the first congressional hearings on climate change, co-sponsored hearings on toxic waste and global warming, and began a lifelong crusade to raise awareness of the earth's environmental crisis.

He was re-elected back to congress for four additional terms, then went on to serve in the Senate for nearly 20 more years. All the while, he continued his efforts at raising awareness of what he thought was (and still is) the single most significant conflict mankind will ever face; the threat of cooking ourselves into extinction.

Unfortunately, his colleagues weren't really interested in this issue. He gave thousands of speeches and presentations across the globe, wrote articles and books, met with Nobel laureate scientists and climate experts, and continued to support legislative committees and caucuses on climate change. And still... nobody really seemed to notice.

He was up against two significant obstacles preventing his voice from being heard.

The first was the simple fact that “Green” issues of environmentalism and global warming were politically suicidal. No self-respecting politician could seriously consider making the environment a focal point of his/her campaign; it just wasn't relevant enough to everyday life, too intangible for the populace to grasp.

The second obstacle had to do more with his own internal struggles. Time and time again, he delivered the same speeches, followed the same formulas, used the same clichés, and...got the same poor results.

The problem was that he was just...well...boring.

In 2000, he decided to run for President of The United States, and lost the election in perhaps the most controversial election in U.S history.

He, of course, is former Vice President Al Gore.

Gore has traditionally been known best for three things:

- The guy that “used to be the next president of the United States.”
- The guy that claims to have “invented the internet.”
- The guy that delivers notoriously dry, sleep-inducing speeches to disconcerted audiences on a consistent basis.

Whatever your impression of the man may be, you've probably experienced the third point at some point in your life — If you've ever watched a pre-2000-era Gore speech, you've likely found yourself fighting back yawns, and perhaps wondering why Gore doesn't buy shirts with looser collars.

According to one political rival of Gore's in the 2000 presidential election, “When Gore has a fireside chat, the fire goes out.”

Over his 25+ years of public service, Gore successfully earned the reputation of “most boring presidential candidate in history.”

But then in 2000 — after he lost the election - something remarkable happened.

After the election, Gore took a long vacation and traveled the world with his wife. He bought himself a new wardrobe, put on a good 20 pounds, and refused to fasten the top button of his shirts. He threw away his old approach to influencing people and started anew.

If you've seen Gore lately, you may have noticed the significantly different approach he's taking to the same problem he's had for 30 years. Perhaps you may have seen his movie *An Inconvenient Truth*, read one of his many books, or witnessed one of his many new-and-improved speeches. But in case you haven't, take a look at him in action &ndash; here's a video of him from the 2008 TED conference in Monterey, California. Just watch the first 5 minutes:

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