



## Julian Darley and The Relocalization Movement

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The day after the ASPO-USA conference, Julian Darley, founder of [Global Public Media](#), spoke with Boulder Valley Relocalization, a local chapter in a nascent but growing movement centered at the [Post Carbon Institute](#). Global Public Media is a valuable web service that features many live audio [interviews](#) (including transcripts) with a diverse collection of people concerned about the effects of oil depletion including Jim Kunstler, Roscoe Bartlett, Chris Skrebowski and many other lesser known figures--some of whom will no doubt be new to TOD readers. There are other worthwhile lectures, news reports and articles at the site as well.

So, what is the relocalization movement all about?

Post Carbon Institute's mission is to assist societies in their efforts to relocalize communities and adapt to an energy constrained world. We believe that production of oil and natural gas will peak soon, climate change is worsening, and the current global economic system is unstable and reinforces huge disparities. Our response is to promote drastically lower consumption, greater local self-reliance, and more cooperative and inclusive communities.

Here we'll describe Darley's thoughts on how dire our situation is and the specific recommendations he made to Boulder's relocalization chapter.

Even within the peak oil community, Darley is a radical. He believes we must start preparing now for the end of the Fossil Fuels Age, the "post carbon" world. As he said at a panel at ASPO-USA, "big energy is destroying the planet", a remark he repeated in the smaller setting. Darley believes the 200 year old Industrialization pathway has been a huge mistake which our descendants will pay for. We must start rectifying that mistake immediately. Humankind has moved too far away from Nature and no longer knows how to live in local, sustainable communities.

Talking to the small Boulder Valley Relocalization group, Darley emphasized the importance of *reduce & produce*-- the need to reduce consumption--especially of energy--you use and produce whatever you need to live locally as far as that is possible. This requires real personal sacrifices and the movement, like others of its type, must start small and grow from there. Refreshingly, Darley is a realist in this regard. He understands how hard it is to persuade others to adopt reduced consumption patterns because after all, the ethos especially here in the USA involves 1) staying out of other people's business and 2) giving people the freedom to do whatever the hell they want to. Of course, these values underlay our car culture, suburban/exurban sprawl, wasteful energy consumption, destruction of unspoiled land & water resources and just about any other environmental problem you can name. Darley's stated goal was a 10% reduction in energy

consumption over the next 10 years. Even if that goal can not be met, failure is no reason to quit trying.

But what are the practical solutions? Darley points to *reducing personal transportation usage* as the essential initial driver of meaningful change. What this means is getting rid of your car. Local communities must start up and use a car sharing service like the [Co-operative Auto Network](#) based in Vancouver, Canada where Darley lives. Taking again a realistic attitude toward human nature, he spoke to the need to set strict policies for this kind of service and the difficulties of getting people to cooperate without cheating or breaking the rules. He mentioned that it took about 10 years to actually figure out how to do this in a way that really worked. See Vancouver's Auto Network [FAQ](#) to see just how complicated such a venture is. Although such relocalization efforts must come about by trial & error, Darley emphasized that successful demonstrations such as the Vancouver project must accompany education and outreach in order to promote additional relocalization efforts in the coming "post carbon" world.

Beyond the car sharing strategy, Darley spoke briefly about [local energy farms](#) as another future strategy to achieve relocalized economies. It doesn't seem as though Julian Darley is some wide-eyed optimist who believes all this can be achieved overnight without great effort. In fact, his remarks indicated a belief that there will most likely be great suffering in the future due to oil depletion, global warming and other economic or environmental problems. But I think it is fair to say that for Darley, based on his remarks, there are two questions you can ask yourself about your life: 1) how did you live? and 2) what did you leave behind for future generations? And there's a certain idealism in that.



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