

# CHANGE YOUR FUEL ... CHANGE YOUR WORLD

## An Interview With Josh Tickell Creator of "Fuel"

by Raina Lee



Growing up, I was taught the "3 R's:" Reuse, Reduce and Recycle. I thought they were enough in my part of giving back to the community, the city, and the country. I thought that just reusing my grocery bags or recycling all my paper and plastic products was enough. But deep down inside, I always knew that it wasn't. At times I even thought to myself, "I am but one person, what is the point?" Sometimes, I was so hopeless that it was actually easier to push it out of my mind entirely. They do say ignorance is bliss...or is ignorance just ignorance? Josh Tickell's documentary "Fuel" was definitely an eye-opener. It was also extremely informative, inspirational and entertaining. In my opinion, it certainly lives up to winning the "Audience Award for Best Documentary" at Sundance Film Festival, "Best Screenwriting" at Sedona Film Festival, and making Official Selection at Cancun Film Festival, Montreal Film Festival and countless other film festivals throughout the world. Yes, "I may be but one person," an individual, but the world is made up of many individuals, and "by the power of the individual, that is how a revolution will take place."

Did you know that the first diesel engine ever invented by Rudolf Diesel ran on peanut oil? That the diesel engine today can still be run by using vegetable oil and other alternatives — like algae oil and bio mass diesel fuel — without the engine having to be altered? What about how a majority of the school buses in Las Vegas run on Biofuel? Or that Germany invested billions of dollars for environmentally friendly alternatives for their people, like Biodiesel filling stations, and solar energy? That an oil made from algae, produced in about three-days time, is just as good as the oil that took millions of years to form — and can be used to make household cleaning supplies, industrial chemicals, jet fuels, diesel

fuels and plastics! Megaflora trees that grow full size in three-years time can be planted to clean up polluted soil and fuel can be manufactured with used vegetable oil. Trucking companies, Disneyworld, Virgin Airlines and many others made or are making the attempt to use Biofuels instead of petroleum. Not only do these things reduce the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the air, cause less pollution to our land and waters (a third of what is produced in the petro-chemical industry is toxic waste, which can only be burned, dumped on land or dumped in water,) but Biofuels are also more cost efficient and do not risk the lives of our young soldiers in a "war on terror" — which I consider to be a "war for oil." The United States of America drills two percent of the world's oil, but consumes 25%. What sacrifices are being made so that we can live beyond our means? After watching the wonderfully enlightening "Fuel," that is for you to decide for yourself. There is a significant amount one can learn by watching this film — more than I can sum up in a short little paragraph.

Josh Tickell took a few moments from his busy schedule to answer *The Whole Person Calendar's* questions.

### What is the next project you are working on?

With my wife Rebecca, I am working on a movie that begins with the oil spill and traces the money of oil through the government and offers solutions. We're also developing another movie filming in Australia that deals with overpopulation and algae.

### Have you inspired many of your friends or people that you meet to follow in your footsteps?

In some way, shape, or form; yes. Some have bought Biodiesel cars,

some have done solar or energy efficiency in their homes, some have made green investments — the list goes on, but certainly there is a heightened awareness.

### Would you say that the difference between your surroundings in Australia and in America had a traumatic effect on you as a child?

I would definitely say it was a shock. I went from a place with no particular restrictions on where I could go or what I could do, to a place that had skull and crossbones signs next to the rivers.

### You were almost disqualified by the state for a science project in which you tested the local water waste levels. Did you feel betrayed by the Environmental Protection Agency or your own government?

I was very surprised after doing all the water tests I'd done for two years that the project was disqualified. It was the first sign that things were not as they appeared with Louisiana's EPA. Fast-forward 20 years and now I'm only shocked by their complete disregard for "environmental protection."

### Do you think that America will have the chance to implement the type of farming you experienced in Europe?

Yes, there is a strong permaculture and small-scale organic farming movement in the U.S. I think that will continue to grow with CSA's and community gardens.

### Any suggestions on how we can "take the power out of big Industry and back into the power of our farmers?"

1) Grow your own food or shop at a farmers' market. 2) Get an electric car and solar panels. 3) Take your money out of big banks that own oil companies and put it into credit unions or a local currency.

### In the film, you mentioned that you felt hopeless, asking "what is the point to promote a sustainable planet, if we're going to destroy everything?" What suggestions do you have for readers who have a similar reaction?

Get out of the city for a few hours or a few days or a few weeks. Nature is very healing. We are addicted to our screens and gadgets. Getting away from all of that can bring incredible peace. Can't get away? Try yoga. The fight will always be there to fight. The more difficult battle is the one in your mind. If you can be at peace there, you can be at peace with anything that's going on in our society. The earth will be fine. Humanity on the other hand has some growing to do.

### Hero BX, Solazyme, Emerald Energy, Green Fuel Tech, and Petro Sun were some companies featured in your documentary...are there many more companies out there like them?

Hundreds. I often say that we picked the people in "Fuel" based on who would return our phone calls. It's really true. There were a lot of other companies and are even more today. Of course, you may not see them listed on the NASDAQ or written up in Fast Company — but

they're out there if you look for them.

### I learned the 3 R's growing up, but in "Fuel" I learned SB-WSPPE; Sustainable Biofuels, Bio Mass, Wind, Solar, Plug-In Hybrids/ EU's, Public Transportation, and Energy Efficiency... Whew! That's a lot to remember. How do you, Josh Tickell, implement all these into your daily life yourself and where should a person begin if they are new to this?

For me and my wife, we do our best where we can, when we can. We're not purists. My wife hates styrofoam. I can't tell you how many

restaurant owners she's convinced to change to paper products. I am a freak for turning lights and things off. It drives people in my office crazy. We also do a lot of things to reduce our life footprint. We work six blocks from our house and drive to work on electricity in our plug-in car. When we're on the road, we stay in our converted Biodiesel-powered school bus with 17 solar panels on it. But truthfully, I'm far from perfect. The most important thing is to make choices consciously and to understand the consequences of each one.

### Next time I purchase a car, I don't think there is any other option other than a Hybrid or a diesel engine vehicle. I got the impression that a lot of the Biofuel filling stations closed down a few years back? If I choose to go with a diesel engine, is there anywhere in LA now that provides that? What about the rest of the country? Are there information sites online listing places that have that available for the public?

Biodiesel isn't dead, but it's definitely got one foot in the grave. If you're committed, you can still run bio, but it takes time and energy. [www.nearbio.com](http://www.nearbio.com) is the site on which the Biodiesel stations are listed. My

favorite stations are in Berkeley, California and Bentley in Nevada. But truthfully, if you're going to buy a new car, get a plug-in hybrid or an electric car — there are six new models coming out in the next 24 months. The best solution to getting off of oil is to stop driving. Next in line is getting a car that doesn't use oil (i.e. an Electric Car.)

### Do you still have your "Veggie Van?"

Yes!

Larry David, Woody Harrelson, Richard Branson, Julia Roberts, Willy Nelson, Robert Kennedy Jr., Larry Hagman, and Neil Young are all recognized personalities in our community who do what they can to participate in preserving our mother earth. In the film, my opinion is that Sheryl Crow put it best; "It is not about an answer. It is about each person having a consciousness, the way we live affects the next person, the community, the country...the planet."

We all breathe the same air. Let us all do our part to help our community, our country and our planet.

Raina Lee is a writer and artist in Los Angeles. Her work can be seen at [www.starrlandia.com](http://www.starrlandia.com).

