

The Godfather of Green: An Eco-Spiritual Memoir

Jerry Yudelson

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In *The Godfather of Green*, environmental engineer, renewable energy activist, and green building pioneer Jerry Yudelson recalls the evolution of the environmental movement in the United States and the spiritual practices that helped him to navigate the complexities of the political, economic, and business worlds on behalf of the planet.

Growing up in Southern California in the “idyllic 50s” meant dealing with dense, choking smog, polluted beaches, and a degraded environment. Like most suburbanites of the era, Yudelson—then a skinny, nerdy kid with glasses—was happy to believe that food came from the grocery store, clean and nicely wrapped.

Spending his high school years trying to fit in, he soon felt lost in a society in which white male patriarchy, racial segregation, and the marginalization of Jews and other minorities were the norm. The tumultuous 1960s awakened his spiritual longings and his awareness of the corporate greed that was at the root of environmental destruction.

Detailing his studies with Indian masters Baba Muktananda and Gurumayi and his struggle to integrate his spiritual practices with his environmental work, Yudelson’s memoir is forthright and conversational. Its behind-the-scenes insights into the 1960s political and social zeitgeist reveal the motivations of some of the culture’s key players, which were too often centered around visions of unlimited economic growth. In contrast, Yudelson describes the simplicity of ashram life and the intense spiritual experiences that were aroused by his guru’s transformative gaze or touch.

Ending with a letter to young climate activists, Yudelson—the man dubbed “the godfather of green” by *Wired* magazine—shares his determination to live each moment from the highest perspective and in the spirit of selfless service. “I’ve learned one truth: love is the only story worth telling,” he writes.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2020)

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