



JOHN FRANCIS

Planetwalker

"Changing the World One Step at a Time"



John Francis, Ph.D., known the world over as the Planetwalker, gave up the use of motorized vehicles after witnessing an oil spill in San Francisco Bay in 1971. Several months later, he took a vow of silence and began a walking and sailing pilgrimage around the world. John's non-motorized lifestyle lasted twenty-two years and his silence seventeen years. During this time, he walked across the US, sailed and walked through the Caribbean and then walked the length of South America.

John's journey into environmental awareness began as a child in inner-city Philadelphia where his father, a West Indian immigrant, encouraged him to explore the world beyond their neighborhood. After completing his undergraduate degree and an MS in Environmental Studies while walking and observing his vow of silence, John went to the University of Wisconsin - Madison where he earned a

Ph.D. in Land Resources and wrote his dissertation on the intergenerational effects of marine oil spills.

After the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, John's dissertation proved to be the seminal work on the costs and effects of oil spills and he was requested to write new oil spill regulations for the US Coast Guard as part of the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) staff. In 1990, the United Nations Environment Program named him its Goodwill Ambassador for the World's Grassroots in recognition of his commitment to raising environmental awareness.



KEY THEMES

- **The Power of Silence:**
Stop talking and start listening
- **The Prisons We Choose to Live Inside:**
Letting go self-imposed limitations
- **We Are the Environment:**
Helping the environment begins with helping each other
- **Start with Yourself:**
When you change yourself the world begins changing

THE PRESENTATION:

Reflecting on both his inner journey into environmental consciousness and his outer journey on foot across North and South America, John discusses how the current environmental crisis is a reflection of world-wide social and economic inequity. He calls for an interdisciplinary approach to the crisis that addresses not only the scientific issues, such as climate-change and deforestation, but also the humanitarian issues.

From peace and justice to everyday civility, John contends that our connection to the earth as well as each other is at the heart of the environmental crisis.

John is a dynamic and inspiring speaker whose presentations have repeatedly been described by audience members as a "performance" and a "one man show." Accompanied by his banjo, he weaves captivating stories of his pilgrimage, such as being one of the only non-Indians given permission to walk through the Waimiri Atoari Reservation in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, into his message that we all have the power to make choices in our lives that can make a difference and contribute to a global solution to the environmental crisis.

info@extremeconnection.net
888-999-2828 / 415-717-8068

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE:

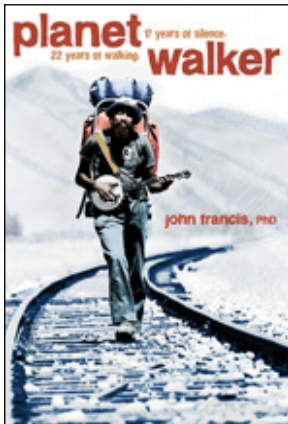
- Founder and Director of Planetwalk, a non-profit environmental education organization that promotes walking and community service in schools and universities throughout the U.S.

- Ph.D. in Land Resources, dissertation on the intergenerational effects of marine oil spills

- United Nations Environment Program Goodwill Ambassador, in recognition of his commitment to raising environmental awareness

- Author of Planetwalker: Seventeen Years of Silence, Twenty-two Years of Walking

- Planetwalker currently featured in Random House's "First Year Experience" program for freshman at colleges and universities throughout the country



QUOTES

"What a remarkable man, what a remarkable story, beyond the scale."
– TED Conference attendee

"Opened my eyes that we have living contemplatives with us still."
– TED Conference attendee

"A great find—the more true-blue, break-out culture types the better!"
– TED Conference attendee

"He's got a story to tell, and well, a lot of people have John's quiet passion, but they're not as cheerful about it. John can inspire people, and he can put things very simply."

– Carl Pope, President, Sierra Club

NEWS FEATURES:

National Public Radio
30 Minutes Bay Area
Charlie Rose
CBS
El Jazeera
Los Angeles Times
USA Today
San Francisco Chronicle
Associated Press
Newark Star Ledger
Lawrence Journal World
American Way
Backpacker Magazine
Hope Magazine
The Economist

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

TED 2008 Monterey, CA
National Geographic Live,
Washington, DC
Cambridge Forum
PINC Zeist, Netherlands
Telluride Mountain Film Festival
World Tourism and Travel Summit,
Lisbon, Portugal
Saint John's Cathedral
Garrison Institute
Bioneers
Cornell University
University of California, Berkeley
M.I.T.



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