



JANA CHYTILOVA, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

David Chernushenko's Living Lightly Project will feature average Ottawans creating change.

**DAVID CHERNUSHENKO** preaches a no-guilt, sacrifice or preaching way to go green

## 'WHERE SHOULD I START? WHAT SHOULD I DO?'

BY MATT HARRISON

Canadians are constantly being told to "Go Green." Problem is, the deceptively simple catch-phrase is light on specifics. How exactly does one go green? And say you started by changing a light bulb, what do you do next?

"Most Canadians understand that they have to live more sustainable lifestyles, but they're not sure how or where to start," explains David Chernushenko. "The other night I was at a party and this woman asked me, 'Where should I start? What should I do?'"

These are questions the former Green Party member is hoping to answer with *The Living Lightly Project*, a documentary and lecture series which also includes a website ([www.livinglightly.ca](http://www.livinglightly.ca)).

"Living Lightly is not about guilt, sacrifice or preaching to others," he

writes on the website. "Living Lightly is about choosing to embrace a way of life that is exciting, challenging, rewarding, humbling, and as full of mistakes and dilemmas as it is full of achievements and certainty."

So where to begin? As he advised his fellow partygoer, "There's not one list that everyone should follow." Start with whatever makes you happy. "If you love gardening, start with food, or if you enjoy cycling, start biking to work."

The *Living Lightly* documentary will feature "local heroes" — not treehuggers exactly, but rather average Ottawans creating change.

"I could've found a person in a tie-dyed shirt, raising goats off the grid somewhere," he says, "or a wealthy high-tech person who wrote a cheque and a gleaming spaceship environment of windmills and solar panels appeared."

But he says most viewers don't relate to either example. "We can't afford to lose our audiences with characters that are too extreme, so I've erred on the side of ordinary."

Despite the anti-consumerist sounding title, Chernushenko says the documentary will feature positive, practical ideas and extend a vision "of what else there can be."

What it won't be is an eco-horror slide show.

"We could agree that we already know that and move forward."

Chernushenko says the spark for the documentary was David Suzuki's book called *Good News for a Change: How Everyday People are Helping the Planet*. "That book for me was an 'A-ha!' moment." The goal was to inspire change in an accessible and compelling way.

"If there were some evil that was clearly marching on the world, then we would have an enemy to point to, to

rally against and to fight. Where drawing the parallel to World War II, or any other crisis fails, is that the enemy is us; it's our own behaviour," he says. "We can't go to war against ourselves or our neighbours. Instead we have to try to entice and inspire by setting examples for others to follow."

Chernushenko and his mostly amateur film crew have shot 22 hours of footage so far. He's hoping to entice a producer into turning the film into a TV series. Next up, he plans to travel to Europe — purchasing carbon credits to offset the trip — to study the environmental movement in Europe.

As for politics and his future with the Green Party, Chernushenko just smiles. "I've run in a provincial election, two federal elections and a leadership race — all in four years. There will likely be a place for politics in my future," he says. "But it doesn't mean I can't take a break."