

# The 2-Hour Energy Descent Action Plan: A Complete Guide to Doing it Anywhere

*(First held on London's South Bank, with London Transition Initiatives from Tooting, Brixton, Dulwich, Sutton, Camden and Haringey as part of the Lift Festival, July 5 2008)*

**Remember this is theatre - improvising is fine.** A sense of occasion is important, time is of the essence and big chunky props are quite sexy. Once underway, you cannot nip to the shops, so prepare for as though you would any very important event. You want each stage to proceed seamlessly one after the other, so delegate precisely so everyone knows their roles in advance. Let the thing run itself. It has a life of its own. Imagine it's a play.

*"Fun is a very silly word, but a very productive state" - Roy Faudree, US theatre maker.*

## Roles

- **2 Facilitators**
- **Additional team of helping hands of around 8-10, not counting speakers.**
- **A Peak Oil Speaker**
- **An Elder**
- **Someone with a large clock to keep the time** (speakers to be reminded when 1 minute is up.)

This workshop can be run by people who have never met each other and have not rehearsed as long as they all possess a well-prepared running order (such as this) with their name marked against designated props/actions/presentation/timings.

Have one person assigned throughout to all technical matters who does not stray from cueing desk.

Be enjoyably mindful of time without rushing...

## What you will need:

- A large room/hall/space: enough for sitting/standing/ moving around in. Chairs for 50-70% of people + big cushions maybe?
- A raised platform stage from which key presentations can be seen and heard
- An overhead projector & a sound system for PA and 2 microphones, ideally radio mikes
- 2 x 12 Boards with each transition step written on. Or moveable Plasma screen either side of 'stage area'
- Small table with a very, very, very large cake that can be seen and admired from afar, and a knife to slice it with. A beautifully made cardboard mayorial chain complete with fake gemstones (this is theatre after all...)
- Matches and a Big Knife + Napkins to go round. Flowers in a vase optional but would look nice. Confetti Magic – also optional (but good for effect) [www.confettimagic.com](http://www.confettimagic.com) (biodegradable paper)
- An extremely large book that can be dismantled and assembled with ease– bound with v. large ribbon. Min size 4' x 2'6" . Card needs to be tough enough to stand up easily. Each 'page' has 2 sides. On one side a coloured symbol (green star, yellow moon, red triangle etc – you will need as many symbols as you have pages. Each page represents a topic - 'land use', 'energy', 'transport' 'education'. Maybe 10-12 in all. Ideally you will have 1 facilitator/helper per page also)
- Small squares of cut up cardboard with safety pins that people can make up as name badges as they come in. NB Each badge is marked with a symbol (green star, yellow moon, red triangle etc – you will need 10-12 symbols – this gets people into their 'meet one another for the first time' groups
- Footage as evidence of 'Visible Manifestations of Project' + CD of Music, from back ground to upbeat/dramatic x 3-5 tracks.

## Schedule

The following is an example only. Adapt to your local circumstances. Timings for 3.30-5.30pm

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE
1.30	Gather with key speakers/ facilitators for bite to eat beforehand	Last minute check in on plans. Contact mobile phone numbers of key personnel Locate Carparking	
2.30	All	Proceed to venue/install Cake, Book, String and other props/materials	
2.30-3.15	All Hands!	Set-Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test mikes/film/power point presentations</li> <li>• Agree cueing with speakers</li> <li>• Light stage if possible and props assembled. Round table for cake</li> <li>• On Stage: Assemble 'Book' and 'Ball of String'. Check knife and matches</li> <li>• 2 chairs on stage</li> <li>• 30 chairs in 'auditorium' in clusters. Standing room all around.</li> <li>• Trestle Tables either side of entrance with 1) Badges and 2) Water Jugs and Cups and 3) Books for sale. Keep it this simple.</li> <li>• Keep doors closed until ready to admit participants</li> </ul>	Inside Venue
3.15	Liaise FOH for cue	DOORS OPEN TO PARTICIPANTS. BACKGROUND MUSIC. BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB-ish. ASKED TO WRITE NAME ON BADGES ON TRESTLE TABLE BY DOOR. Draw attention to symbol on badge which will be of significance shortly.	FOH and main space
3.15-3.40		Participants welcomed in for Transition Town Workshop, Pioneers to a process that is ongoing, positive, experimental AND practical asked to make selves at home, take seat or sit on floor Offered water or squash	Just inside Entrance
3.30/3.40	Facilitator 1; Facilitator 2 in position  Peak Oil speaker getting into position	Facilitator 1. WELCOME TO ALL (4 mins) TIME AND PLACE: TRANSITION TOWN ANYWHERE Explanation of what a transition town is in short series of statements. A positive response to the challenges of climate change and the end of cheap oil. Resilience. Relocalisation. Cutting carbon. Hosted by XXX (your organisation). Information that the workshop is to be practical and follow 12 steps by way of demonstration. Step one, has already been achieved: ie a group of people assembling. <b>Facilitator 2 (1min)</b> "BEGIN WITH AN END IN MIND". The task is to achieve a first for this town/city/settlement: the creation of The Energy Descent Action Plan for Transition Town Anywhere (ie this book) in 2 hours.	ON STAGE WITH (ASSEMBLED) BOOK STANDING PLAINLY VISIBLE

## Schedule (continued)

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE
3.45	2-4 Helpers dismantle Book and get ready to distribute pages around the space	Peak Oil speaker to give PO/CC presentation with images from Main Screen. (10 minutes) Twin Challenges of Climate Change and Peak Oil. Short and to the point. This is the getting real bit.  On Plasma Screens: STEP 2: Awareness Raising	Speaker on stage with projections onto screen
3.55	2 Helpers	PO+CC+TT Taking responsibility for passing on this information. V short demonstration of a Peak Oil Workshop with cards. (drop this if you do not have the time)	On Stage with 4 volunteer participants
4.00	Facilitator 1 and Facilitator 2	(10 mins.) Good to know who you are on this journey with. Pages of book distributed around. On one of them is a coloured symbol that matches your badge. Please could you gather in your symbol groups and introduce yourselves to each other; say hello; talk about what you are already doing about PO and CC. Lets find out what the sum total of our current activities already amounts to as a group. Alternative method: 5 mins of speed dating (needs a bell..)  On Plasma Screens: STEP 3: Lay The Foundations	
4.10	2 Helpers ready with cake candle and match; mayorial chain and confetti bomb. Surprise Guest standing by to cut cake after 'unleashing'.	(10 minutes) Facilitator 1 to build a head of steam. This will be LOUD and involved a lot of shouting 'YES', 'NO' and 'YES!!' as in Is this information good? No. Is there something we can do about it? Yes, Can we do it on our own, No, Can we do it together, YES etc. Keep going til lots of cheering.  Large announcement made to get everyone's attention and something fun, exciting, dramatic about to be unveiled. Music fanfare of some kind. Faciliator 2 Requests for someone to be The Mayor of Anywhere (need to read very clearly and place chain around their	All these actions from the stage and to be happen in quick succession to maintain momentum of energy and celebration.
		neck). They are handed a short speech* (see below) + mike, to announce launch of Transition Town Anywhere. Emphasis to be on the Big Picture and Shared Vision. Living within Limits, Relocalising and conviviality. "I welcome you here today...and now I shall launch this initiative" Facilitator 1 collects confetti bomb (or some such) from Helpers and hand over to be unleashed. Demonstrates 'twist' to release. As confetti comes down, candle on cake is lit. Cd be	

## Schedule (continued)

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE
		<p>If you like you can also have a Surprise Guest to cut the cake and read out one line message from 'Somewhere Else' . We had someone pretend to be from Totnes 'The eyes of the world are upon you, Go for it!'</p> <p><b>When confetti bombs explode TABS on stage could be drawn back to reveal bigger space or some kind of 'reveal'. Cheers.</b></p> <p>On Plasma Screens: STEP 4: Organise a Great Unleashing</p>	
4.20	<p>2 Helpers start to cut cake up into however many bits per no. of participants to be ready for end</p> <p>2-3 more helpers at ready with crayons for people to draw with.</p> <p>Visibile Manifestation of Project person getting their material ready here.</p>	<p>(20 mins) 10 Book Pages have been reversed and now say:</p> <p>FOOD, TRANSPORT, ENERGY, HEALTH, EDUCATION &amp; ARTS, WORK &amp; LIVELIHOODS, BUILDINGS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT WATER. Choose your own topics and assign a helper'/facilitator to each to lead discussion. Ask them to please take charge of a their 'topic' groups and begin following process with whoever comes to them:</p> <p>You have 15 minutes to VISION a future for Transition Town Anywhere around one of these issues. Choose which one you are most passionate about.</p> <p>Come up with Bullet Points, and Ideas, No discussion!</p> <p>Your vision can be recorded in drawings, words, sentences, anything that comes to mind/hand. Scribing mandatory.</p> <p>Team (as above) take responsibility for facilitating this process (be v encouraging and brainstorm visions and pathways to vision.)</p> <p>When 15 minutes is up, one person from each group (not necessarily the facilitator) carries a page up on the stage with 'Visions' for Transition Town Anywhere. Stand in row and present one thing from your discussion. (Good photo op.)</p> <p>On Plasma Screens: STEP 5 : Form Working Groups and STEP 6. Use Open Space</p>	All around main space.
4.40	Local Government Speaker getting ready	<p>(10 mins)</p> <p>Everyone relax and go into 'receive and listen mode'. May want to draw chairs back in again to face forward. Leave space at front to sit on floor (if possible, or maybe big cushions)</p> <p>Use this 10 minute slot to present a project that is well underway somewhere. Would be good if this could be as it breaks the pattern of presentation. Could also be a speaker. (We had a beautiful film that had been made about community allotments in Haringey.</p> <p>On Plasma Screens: STEP 7: Develop Visible Manifestations of The Project</p>	Film projected onto screen ABOVE stage

## Schedule (continued)

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE
4.50	Faciliator 1 get ball of string ready.	(10 mins) Someone who can speak about the process of working with local government from a specific council/community perspective. A councillor would be great. (We had a Camden Cllr, Alexis Rowley who urged everyone to become a Cllr themselves.) On Plasma Screens: STEP 8: Build A Bridge to Local Government	On stage
5.00	Facilitator 2 and Elder get ready	(10 minutes). Everyone form large circle. Facillitator 2 leads Game with A Ball of String ( <i>not</i> the Giant One) referring to skills needed and to show resilience. ie ball to be thrown to someone who mentions a specific skill they have or would like. ie who can teach who what. Build up web of connections and lean back on to feel connections. Helps to have a small child running between people, with string on a long stick. Lay 'web' down gently on floor.  On Plasma Screens: STEP 9: The Great Reskilling	In main space
5.10	Team assemble pages into book, leaving last tying action until very very end...at 5.27ish. Facillitator 1 get ready for last group excercise	(10 minutes) Sit down again and relax. Listen to the Story of an Elder to talk about their experiences of life in 1950;s from a perspective of knowlege that can be valued now. Our Elder , John Prince, read an amazing verse from The Deserted Village, a Goldsmith poem from 18 <sup>th</sup> century. Honour the Elder with a phrase such as 'Mr/Mrs X We honour you!'.  On Plasma Screens: STEP 10: Honour the Elders	Sit wherever feels appropriate at this stage, so everyone can see/hear. Make sure Elder can be heard.
5.20	Helpers get ready at back of space to sell books, take people's contacts.	(5 minutes): Everyone get up/shake out/move around the space. Create a human 'map' of town/locality/world with your venue in the centre. People locate themselves v. Scotland and South Africa/Galway and Greece or wherever. Take one person's contact from someone near you and agree to talk further about one step you can take towards ideas/vision after workshop. On Plasma Screens: STEP 11 Let It Go Where It Wants to Go	In main space

## Schedule (continued)

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	WHERE
5.25	Team completing book preparation Helpers have maneuvered (cut) cake to accessible spot to be ready to be giving out as people leave.	<p>(5 minutes) (while all this has been happening, the pages have been assembled into the book) so that</p> <p>ALL! VOILA: the Transition Town Anywhere Energy Descent Plan is ready to go. Play very upbeat celebratory party-like music that people want to dance to. EAT CAKE. Congratulate selves. First page in book could be seen to read: (taken from Kinsale)</p> <p><b>"By 2028, the Town of Anywhere has made the transition from dependency to self reliance. Food growing has become an integral part of life in the town. Lawns are a thing of the past, lawnmowers now hang in pubs as old ploughs did in 2025, relics of a bizarre form of land use that people used to practice in the dying days of the Oil Age. All landscaping in the town comprises edible plants, fruit trees line the streets, all parks and greens have become food forests and community gardens, and every back garden contains a food garden. The resurgence in food production had great benefit for the community. People discovered old varieties, and began once more to save and exchange seeds. As people's diets improved with more and more fresh vegetables, and people enjoyed the exercise of making a garden, so health increased and common illnesses decreased. People in The Town of Anywhere are now more aware of the seasons, and a vibrant local economy in local honey, vegetables, fresh fish and poultry and fruit has now replaced the monoculture of the supermarket so popular in 2008"</b>  <i>Last action: (possibly) someone reads a (v short) celebratory poem.</i>  <b>THE END!</b>            On Plasma Screen: STEP 12: Create an Energy Descent Plan</p>	
5.30	Helpers hand out cake, take numbers, on hand to explain more etc.	<p><u>Everyone leaves and on the way out takes a piece of Transition Town Anywhere Cake!!</u></p> <p><u>Sell Transition Town Handbook.</u>  <u>Try NOT to have too many other materials around. Keep it all consistent with The Town of Anywhere.</u></p>	
5.30-6.00	<u>Get Out.</u>		

## Additional Info

*If you want to travel fast, go alone. If you want to travel far, go together. African proverb...*

### **(Here is the introductory blurb used at the opening of the event)**

Hello. My name's Lucy. I'm from Transition Town Tooting. This is Duncan Law and he's from Transition Town Brixton. Amongst you are other transitioning London colleagues from Camden, Kingston, Haringey and Dulwich - all of whom you'll meet over the next 2 hours as they tell you about what they are doing. We're delighted to also welcome Mike Grenville and his wife Annie who have travelled all the way from Transition Forest Row, Sussex.

We've happily accepted LIFT's invitation to run a transition town workshop in this amazing new venue. We decided to be very practical and have created a workshop to step you through the Transition Town process, literally step by step. There are 12 steps. The beauty of them is that anyone can join at any stage of any step. Together they create a template for action. We hope that this will show not only HOW it is done, but that it CAN be done, and inspire you to engage with a process in your own locality wherever that maybe. The Transition Initiative is growing by the day not just across the UK, but in other countries world wide – even the Archers. As you may know, the Initiative was launched just under 2 years ago, in Totnes.

So, what is a Transition Town? Transition Towns get real. They look at the twin challenges of climate change and Peak Oil in the face. They work in a co-ordinated fashion to create a positive, collective vision of a future, beyond cheap oil for their local communities. By looking at these challenges together and raising awareness of them in their localities, it becomes clear that there is only ONE realistic course of action for us all to take: a complete systems rethink on energy use, business, health, food production, transport, education, housing, so on.

(cont'd)

They therefore focus on relocalising, (an inevitable consequence of the end of cheap transportation fuels) on building resilience to without energy shocks beyond their control and they work to reduce carbon emissions to combat climate change. They create a timetable descent from being a high energy using community to being a low energy using community.

They are not campaigning against anything. On the contrary, they believe a future beyond cheap oil will be preferable to the present – living within the limits of the earth's resources, healthier lifestyles, resilient, creative, collaborative communities, less waste, less pollution. They draw on everyone's imagination, everyone's skills, passions and experience. Exciting. Hopeful. They believe that the call to adventure of creating the future that we DO want is the first step to bringing that future into being. There is a way of seeing the situation that faces humanity on the planet now as a story of challenge and that this is now the chapter where we have to become heros and face the big challenge. That's what we're going to do today. DO A STORY: TRANSITION TOWN ANYWHERE.

Transition towns begin with an end in mind – the creation of an Energy Descent Action Plan. And Duncan is going to explain today's task: A WORLD FIRST....

## Additional Info

### The Mayor's Speech

It is my honour and privilege, as the recently elected Mayor of the Town of Anywhere, to launch this exciting Transition Initiative with you all.

Today marks an important and historic moment in the life of our community, as we address the challenge of transitioning from a high energy using society to a low energy using one. We will imagine a future for our community beyond cheap oil - more pleasurable, happier and healthier for us all.

To do this we commit to a big task: the creation of a shared vision for the next 20 years to live within the limits of the earth's resources. Looking at each aspect of our lives - food, transport, health, education and so on, we will create an Energy Descent Action Plan for the Town of Anywhere with timetabled pathways and practical steps to get from here to there

We will build resilience, cut carbon and relocalise. We will conjure with a world beyond our own interests, connected to the whole of earth's community. In the words of the African proverb, if you want to go fast, go alone: if you want to go further, go together. The Transition Town initiative grows by the day, and this cake symbolises that we are a part of it. The collective genius of ordinary people to design an energy descent will be unleashed to act creatively to change the way we live. We honour the traditions of our past, celebrate our present and nurture a future rich in opportunity for those that follow. We welcome a surprise guest to cut our cake. There's enough for all to share and celebrate. Together I am confident we shall surprise ourselves. And so without further ado,

It gives me the greatest of pleasure to declare this Transition Initiative.... UNLEASHED...  
(Release Confetti)

### TRANSITION UNITED STATES [www.transitionus.org](http://www.transitionus.org)

Tackling Climate Change and Peak Oil. Bringing the Head, Heart and Hands of Communities together to make the transition to life beyond oil.

Transition United States is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to catalyze, inspire, encourage, network, support and train communities throughout the U.S. as they consider, adopt, adapt and implement Transition Initiatives.

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