

# Cameron Diaz

Once, as Kermit the frog famously lamented, it was “not easy being green” in showbiz. Now it is so fashionable that it sometimes seems there is a whole ecosystem of Hollywood big beasts competing to be more environmentally aware. But Cameron Diaz is both one of the biggest of them, and a pioneer — a star who walked the talk before either became popular, and was one of the first to buy a hybrid car.

Indeed, as she explains it, she seems to have been green before she knew it. The daughter of a second generation Cuban American oil worker and of an import/export broker of English, German, and native American descent, she owes much of her environmental concern to her maternal grandmother’s influence in rural California when she was a child.

“My grandmother raised her own livestock in her backyard, her own vegetables in her backyard”, she remembers. “I watched her reuse tinfoil and plastic bags. She would make soap out of the fat drippings off of the meat she cooked. Nothing went to waste. Everything was reused and recycled.

“She lived a true sustainable existence. Everything she took from the land she put back. Everything that she put back, she would take out again. It was a continuous cycle. And I witnessed that, and I was influenced a lot by that. My mother was influenced by that and she passed it on to me.”

Although she originally wanted to be a zoologist — and kept two pet snakes, and bred mice to feed them — she says she was originally put off by the rhetoric of the environmental movement. “I really didn’t connect to what was being said, and how it was being said. I’m a selfish American. I don’t want to give it all up”.

But then, she adds: “I found I was already practicing the basics, everything from recycling to composting to saving energy to hybrid cars. I had been pursuing those things myself without knowing that they were part of the movement. Then I started listening more closely to what was being said because I was looking for a way in. I wanted to do more than I was doing just for myself. I wanted to help other people do more.”

Sure enough, she has devoted most of her attention to putting the message across, often in a surfer-girl patois that reaches the young. And indeed, she says, “surfing is a religious experience for me. You get to be part of Mother Nature and experience its power.”

Nominated for the Golden Globe four times as an actress, she has promoted hybrid vehicles, energy saving lightbulbs, and other carbon saving measures in a series of advertisements with Gwyneth Paltrow, and fronted a television series, *Trippin’*, which gets across green messages by taking celebrities to environmentally important places. Last summer she joined Al Gore to promote the Live Earth concerts.

“This is”, she says, “the only issue in the history of mankind that affects every single one of us. It is everyone’s cause. It’s the one thing that we actually all share in common; the planet.”

She insists that the message must be put positively. “We shouldn’t look at it as ‘Holy s\*\*t! We’re all going to die! We should look at it as ‘Yay! We’re all going to live!’ It isn’t about cutting everything out. It’s about creating something better. We have the answers and we have the power, and the resolve, and the ability to change it. If everyone just changed one aspect of their life, if they just did one thing differently, that alone is a step closer to solving the problem”. G.L. 