



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

Our destructive, exploitive, perfectly insane relationship with nature carries the promise of dire global consequences. Rising temperatures, oxygen-depleted oceans, drought and the pollution of natural resources are affecting the lives of hundreds of millions. Environmental degradation has no boundaries and saving our planet constitutes our biggest challenge and our greatest opportunity.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?

The potential of the internet and social media is staggering. The Arab Spring of 2011 and the spontaneous revolutions that followed were championed by 'powerless' people. At a time when so many feel marginalized, texts, tweets and videos were PR weapons that galvanized and empowered millions. Whether this new freedom of expression is long-lasting or short-lived remains to be seen, but the ability to organize and communicate spontaneously is truly game changing. Going Green: We live in a world of diminishing natural resources and the third industrial revolution will feature clean, renewable sources of energy - solar, wind, geothermal, algae, human combustion.

What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?

Spa as an invitation to true connection with oneself. With a focus on the nutritive and soulful quality of food, spa dining will transcend the righteous and joyless logic of calories and fat. Cleansing, purifying and buoyant in spirit. Water/bathing experiences will painlessly address chronic aches and pain and serve as the healing medium of interpersonal and communal rituals. Spas will be an expression of our emotional and physical landscape. It will be an experience of re-discovery and personal empowerment. Locally grown food, education tapping into community wisdom, customized spa services, educated touch and nature's pharmacopia will demonstrate that spa is a natural, non-invasive and viable alternative to much conventional medical care.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?

The resolve, courage and conviction to embrace our true potential.

What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?

As a starting point, training, education and developing the therapeutic skills to focus on the specific needs of the guest will infuse our industry with tangible economic value. Beyond the training, and in keeping with eco-green values, we must develop water hygiene technologies that will usher in a new era. Water is both a resource of energy and a healing entity. As an industry we must take an intelligent and mindful approach to its use. We should find ways to dissolve the antiquated laws that insist on the use of chlorine for sanitizing waters while more friendly and efficient methods are available. Recapture of water from treatments could provide valuable fertigation from mineral and herbal bath therapies. Spa must adapt to today's challenges and our innovation will be key to our future.

SUBMITTED BY

Anne Bramham, President,
Founder American Spa Therapy Education, Certification Council (ASTECC)
United States E: bramhami@aol.com W: www.astecc.com