

GREEN IQ

Daniel Goleman wants to start a revolution to save the Earth. The unlikely weapon? Your brain. **AIMEE LEE BALL** sits down to pick his.

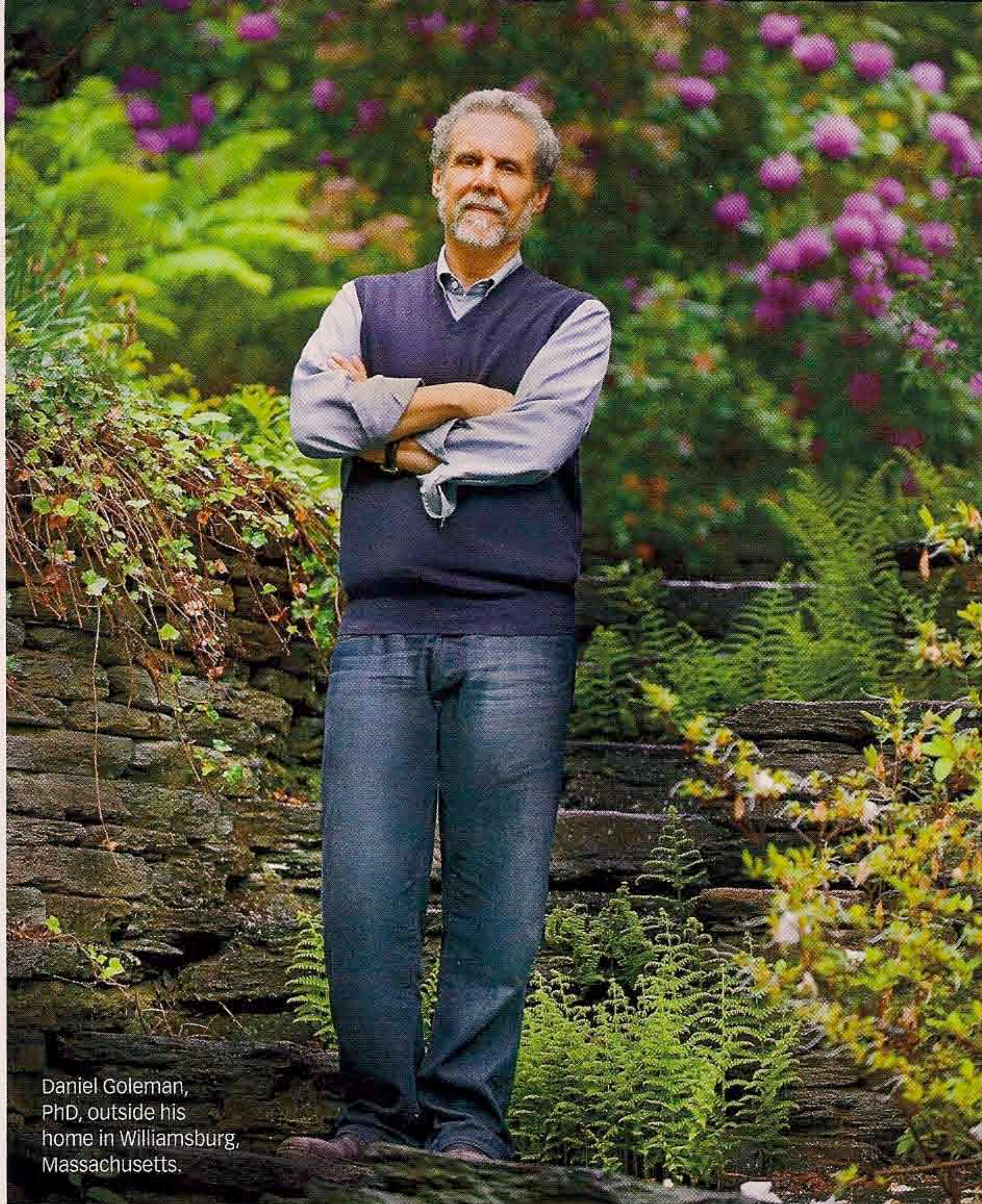
IN HIS 1995 BEST-SELLER *EMOTIONAL Intelligence*, psychologist Daniel Goleman, PhD, changed our concept of what smart is—from a high IQ score to a much broader, richer collection of personal and social capabilities. Now he is challenging our ideas about living green. With *Ecological Intelligence*, published this month, Goleman calls on all of us to think beyond terms like *organic*, *recycled*, *fair trade*—and to pursue a deeper, more critical understanding of how the products we buy, use, and discard affect the environment. Convinced that information is the tool we need for real reform, he offers a few lessons to get us started.

O: Most of us turn down the thermostat, use canvas shopping bags, and recycle paper. Is any of this making a difference?

GOLEMAN: In ten years we'll look back on these efforts as baby steps. What we haven't understood is the full consequence of everything we buy and use. A glass jar has hundreds of ecological impacts we're blind to. Just to make the glass, you have to burn a gas furnace 24 hours at 2,000 degrees. That consumes a huge amount of energy.

O: You talk about "greenwashing." What is that?

GOLEMAN: Greenwashing is the selective display of one or two virtuous attributes of a product, meant to impart ecological friendliness. Used to shine up market appeal, it actually creates an illusion. The label may say 100 PERCENT ORGANIC COTTON, but it takes about 660 gallons of water to grow the cotton for one T-shirt. If the shirt is colored, a large amount of dye rinses off into factory wastewater, which can end up in rivers, and some commonly used textile dyes harbor



Daniel Goleman, PhD, outside his home in Williamsburg, Massachusetts.

carcinogens. These products are green-ish: They're draped with the appearance of ecological merit, but that's not the whole truth.

O: So how can we know the whole truth?

GOLEMAN: A method called life-cycle assessment looks at an entire range of a product's impact from the time its ingredients are extracted from the Earth: the chemical compounds used in manufacturing, how it's

transported to us, what happens when we use it and throw it away. Buying phosphate-free soap allows you to say, "My detergent doesn't have the harsh chemicals others do." The question is, how are you washing with it? The very worst thing for the Earth about detergent is that we heat water to use it. What we need is ecological intelligence, so we become a mass of shoppers who care, driving companies to do the right thing.

O: How should we educate ourselves?

GOLEMAN: There's a new software program, GoodGuide, that can calculate the specific

JUST ONE THING YOU CAN DO

"Educate yourself about how your personal decisions impact the Earth. Soy-based ink, a fashionable 'green' alternative, may have only 8 to 10 percent soy. An 'energy efficient' printer may be incompatible with recycled paper or ink cartridges."

—Daniel Goleman

ecological impact of a product during its manufacture, transport, use, and disposal. The visionary behind this idea is an industrial ecologist named Dara O'Rourke, PhD, at UC Berkeley. To help us make smart purchases, GoodGuide provides information like: What ingredients in the product are health concerns? How far did it travel? How were workers treated? GoodGuide

integrates data from hundreds of complex databases and summarizes the bottom line in the time it takes to exhale. A shopper can type in the bar code of a product in her cell phone, send it via text message, and within seconds an image appears, rating the product in terms of its environmental, health, and social impact. The software is still being worked out, but it's available for iPhones now, free, at goodguide.com.

O: Why is this kind of knowledge so important?

GOLEMAN: It's what I call radical transparency. It brings to the neighborhood mall the same full [CONTINUED ON PAGE 192]

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all its permutations, is likely to see some of its most industrious dreams come true.

Jones is determined to take advantage of this moment. Keeping up with him over two days in December demands stamina; his life is spent sprinting from panel discussion to community meeting, from a job-training site to a baby shower in the Green for All break room. In the backseat of a borrowed hybrid SUV hurtling down a Los Angeles freeway, he fields a phone query from a congressional aide, scans an agenda for his next meeting with East L.A. church leaders who want to go green, and edits a piece that is about to go live on *The Huffington Post*. At an activist confab held in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Jones quickly warms up the crowd. "How many of you people made a fool of yourself on election night? Crying all over the place, flying snot everywhere, traumatizing your children?" With a practiced ear, he lets the laughter build and then pushes it with what his 4-year-old son—he has an 8-month-old son, too—asked that night: "Mama, what is history and why does it make Daddy cry?"

During the question-and-answer session, a Sierra Club veteran offers broad support of green-collar goals, though the audience feels a "but" is coming. Sure enough, the man wallops the panelists with vehement criticism of one small aspect of the day's talk. Jones offers that he isn't easily discouraged. "Luckily, I've had a lot of therapy," he says, and repurposes the man's negative energy into something vaguely positive that everyone can agree with: "There are no disposable resources. There are no disposable species. There are no disposable children." His remarks create long lines of folks who want their books signed, their business cards pocketed, their related ideas absorbed, until it's time for Jones to literally close the door of the SUV and speed off to the next meeting.

If Jones began his green quest by communicating with outsider radicals like Hill, he's now solidly on the inside. Brainiacs in the environmental community, überlobbyists in Washington, Al Gore and other heavy hitters are not only supporting Jones but asking him what's next and what they can give him to get there. "He really understands that there is a lot of work that needs to be done and that there are a lot of folks who need work. He's been able to figure out how to connect those twin needs," says Fred Krupp, president of the Environmental Defense Fund.

Jones acknowledges that his race provides

more opportunities for his voice to be heard. "I'm just a friendly black guy," he says, and does an old-white-man voice, "Let's put him on the board." His new contacts have taken him to familiar left-leaning places—for instance, a Ben & Jerry's-sponsored get-together—and then to some more unexpected ones, like the Arctic trek the Aspen Institute and the National Geographic Society organized that had him gabbing with Jimmy Carter, Tom Daschle, Ted Turner, and executives from Google, Monsanto, and DuPont. The purpose of the expedition when it was planned the year before was to show power brokers the Great Melt up close, but when the hard-to-book guests flew north last summer, that awareness-first goal had basically become obsolete. As Jones says, "By the time we got up there, the conversation had pretty much moved on nationally." Still, he found inspiration just by looking around. "Every ten feet there would be some chunk of whale bone. You know, our forebears should have left us a bay full of whales and all they left us with was bones. They overfished the whales practically to extinction; that just rang in my head in terms of what we're leaving our kids. We'll be lucky if my grandkids can find a zoo with a tiger in it."

Despite his packed schedule—his talks, trips, and solar panel demos for Dan Rather—and his seemingly innate storytelling talents, Jones isn't a natural power broker. "I'm an extreme introvert in an extrovert's job," he says. "I'm most comfortable reading or in small groups." It becomes clear after the events of the past two days that he would prefer to retreat from any crowded room and instead to hole up with a biography of John Muir or a podcast of Ronald Reagan, whom Jones admires for "making it look so easy and telling a lot of stories." Reagan's example shows that as a president, you need to "plant your pole and let the country come to it," Jones says. "Actually, Reagan gave me comfort because he spent a lot of time in the wilderness."

Today the country is moving toward the ideas Jones has planted. He realizes there's a lot of communal goodwill for his goals right now and—he's learned this the hard way—a lot of conflict ahead, too. But he's clear about what he wants: hundreds of thousands of green-collar workers trained and deployed, returning energy to the power companies' grids, and finding roles for workers and investors in poor communities—all as this green economy recharges the nation's gross domestic product. "I'll work with anybody to get that," he says. "And I'll work *against* anybody to get that." **Q**

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disclosure that's in corporate financial reports. It means that shoppers know the entire life cycle of a product right at the point they consider buying it. It makes every one of us able to vote with our dollars based on sound information.

Q: *How will that affect manufacturers?*

GOLEMAN: Once shoppers become empowered, we will facilitate industries thinking in completely new terms; for example, making products that are totally biodegradable. The industrial processes in use today were developed at a time when no one had to consider what the environmental impact was. Who cared? But making ecological concerns matter to a company's bottom line will help it do the research and development that will reinvent everything we buy.

Q: *Your book was written before the economic downturn. Can we live green without paying more for it?*

GOLEMAN: Yes. You don't have to go to the most expensive organic food store. And some of the highest-priced shampoos have the worst chemicals, according to Skin Deep [cosmeticsdatabase.com], a Web site that evaluates ingredients in cosmetics.

Q: *Why will green information affect consumers any more than education about tobacco has? The surgeon general has been putting warning labels on cigarettes for more than 40 years, but 21 percent of the population still smokes.*

GOLEMAN: There will always be a group of people who just don't care, but look at the number of people who smoked in the 1950s [nearly 40 percent of the adult population in 1955] before the warning, compared with now. That's a massive improvement. And unlike the tobacco industry, which dug in its heels and fought every scientific fact about smoking, companies today are more than willing to make improvements that benefit the environment. The perception that an issue matters is important to companies because it's the perception that will change consumer behavior and, in turn, market share.

Q: *Who will lead the green revolution?*

GOLEMAN: I think it's going to be an army of eco-moms. In most families, it's the moms who shop, and moms care about the well-being of their families. The real leaders are not the Al Gores; they're the moms.

Q: *In your book, you urge us to be compassionate consumers. Do you mean compassion for the Earth?*

GOLEMAN: Making choices that improve things for all of us on the planet is an act of compassion, a simple act we can do any time we go shopping. **Q**