

Conservation of energy

12 Jan., 2022

The energy released during the Tongan explosion was of a magnitude rarely recorded in our human history. In our typical human-centric way we analyze in terms of events driven by the human mind and hand, such as the multitude of comparisons by scientists to various nuclear bomb detonations. But nature isn't constrained by our need to put things in our own terms.

We look at this event as one of devastation. Understandably so, given the emerging images of destroyed dwellings and displaced people. But in geologic terms, this wasn't a disaster at all but rather a natural part of the process. Every now and then, the natural world reaches out to remind us of our place in the scheme of things. And it does so with neither overt intention nor recognition of the effect on humans.

We can't come within orders of magnitude of matching the energy that can be employed by nature when it needs to make an adjustment. The scales simply don't match up when measuring human activities against the unknowing shrugs of a mountain or seabed. Trying to make the comparison is a fool's errand.

What we can do is to redirect our own efforts in more positive directions than has frequently been the case of late. Hold back on giving the other driver the finger. Refuse to engage with the demonstrator. Walk away from the argument. Conserve our energy so it can be employed in more worthy pursuits.

Perhaps it is possible that some of the energy we expend in castigating each other could be redirected to help people who today are struggling even to find a way to communicate their needs.

Don't know how to help? Rely on the experts. As always, you can contribute to the International Red Cross. But more directly, Pita Taufatofua is a Tongan you might recognize as his country's Olympic flag bearer. He has set up a Go Fund Me dedicated to getting donations to where they will make a difference in people's lives on the ground in Tonga. It may be found at: https://www.gofundme.com/f/tonga-tsunami-relief-by-pita-taufatofua?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer