

erwin laszlo | marco roveda

Finding bliss in the shift



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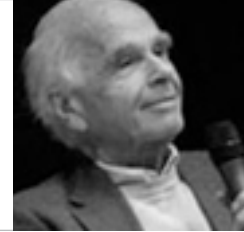
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Preamble

Two authors face a new challenge together: to start the expression of a “collective thought”. To create an important book that will be a collection of the contributions and the reflections of many great people, icons that constitute the gotha of the world of values in order to promote, inform and delineate a new style of life for everyone, together. Because at the root of the bad things that happen throughout the world (global warming, desertification, over-population etc) there is a lack of consciousness, although there is also a great possibility of change. It is important to heal the effects but, more than anything, it is important to cure the cause.

Ervin Laszlo

brief biography



Ervin Laszlo is founder and president of The Club of Budapest, president of the WorldShift Network, founder of the General Evolution Research Group, co-Chair of the World Wisdom Council, fellow of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences, member of the International Academy of Philosophy of Science, senator of the International Medicine Academy, and editor of the international periodical *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*.

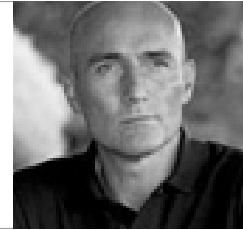
He has a PhD from the Sorbonne and is the recipient of honorary PhD's from the United States, Canada, Finland, and Hungary. Formerly professor of Philosophy, Systems Science,

and Futures Studies in various universities in the US, Europe, and the Far East, he lectures worldwide. Laszlo received the Peace Prize of Japan, the Goi Award, in 2002, the International Mandir of Peace Prize in Assisi in 2005, and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. He promoted the WorldShift Council on the G20 (WS20), a sort of shadow cabinet of the G20.

He is the author or co-author of fifty-four books translated into as many as twenty-three languages, and serves as editor of another thirty volumes in addition to a four-volume *World Encyclopedia of Peace*. He lives nearby Pisa in Tuscany.

Marco Roveda

brief biography



In 1978 he embraced biodynamic agriculture establishing the Scaldasole farm in 1981 that immediately became the first organic food company in Italy. Within a very brief period of time over 60.000 companies, inspired by his success, followed suite and began to produce and transform organic products pushing Italy from last to first place for organic production in Europe. In 1997 he received the Entrepreneur of the Year prize from the CCIA in the category Quality of Life. In 2000 he founded LifeGate that rapidly became the meeting point for people and companies that want to realise their own ethical and sustainability principles. In 2002 he received the RCS Cenacolo prize for Publi-

shing and Innovation. In 2008 the Schwab Foundation and the World Economic Forum conferred the international prize Social Entrepreneur of the Year on Marco Roveda. In 2004 he published, for Ponte alle Grazie, the book *That's Why We Can Make It*.

In 2008 he was the protagonist of the series *I Sostenibili* for Salerno Publishing with Will Ecobusiness Save Us?, book-interview-biography by Enzo Argante. In 2010 he has become a member of the WorldShift Council on the G20 (WS20). Today he lives in the province of Como, in what was the first headquarters of the Scaldasole farm and that is today home to Italy's first solar tracker photovoltaic park.

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Introduction

In the last few years, and especially since the financial-economic crisis of the fall of 2008, it has become unmistakably clear that there is something seriously wrong with our world. The media is full of reports on crises, and suggestions on what to do about them. But the diagnosis and the cure are highly sectoral and partial. There is talk about the financial crisis, and the overall economic crisis. Then of the environmental crisis and various resource-crises: energy, food, water, among others. There is also talk about consumerism, power-hunger, and greed. There is no integral, encompassing overview of what's wrong, and what is needed to correct it.

This pamphlet attempts an integral treatment of the world's health problem. It reviews the factors that make the planet sick, and suggests the nature of the treatment that would heal it.

What's wrong with the world?

A holistic analysis shows that the contemporary world is:

- one, socially, economically, and ecologically unsustainable,
- two, saddled with irrational behaviours,
- three, governed by obsolete beliefs and aspirations.

THE ROOTS OF CRISIS

The strands of unsustainability

Unsustainability in society

The contemporary world is more and more polarized; the gap is growing between rich and poor, powerful and marginalized. The gap is usually stated in economic terms, but it is a social reality. It depresses the quality of life, and even the chances of survival, of vast populations.

The wealth and income gap is of staggering proportions. At the end of 2008 there were an estimated 946 billionaires in the United States — fifty years ago there was not one — of which 178 were added in 2008 alone. The combined wealth of the world's billionaires equals the income of nearly half the world's population: three billion poor people. Eighty percent of the global domestic product belongs to one billion people, and the remaining twenty percent is shared by nearly six billion.

Poverty has not diminished in absolute numbers. The World Bank estimates that of the total population — currently near seven billion — 1.4

billion live on less than 1.25 dollars a day and an additional 1.6 billion on less than 2.50 dollars. In the poorest countries seventy-eight percent of the urban population subsists under life-threatening circumstances: one in three urban dwellers live in slums, shantytowns, and urban ghettos, and more than 900 million are classified as slum-dwellers.

The gap shows up in food and energy consumption, and in the load placed on natural resources.

The American places twice the environmental load of the Swede on the planet, three times that of the Italian, thirteen times the Brazilian, thirty-five times the Indian, and two hundred and eighty times the Haitian.

Social structures are breaking down in both the rich and the poor countries. In poor countries the struggle for economic survival destroys the traditional extended family. Women are obliged to leave the home in search of work. They are extensively exploited, given menial jobs for low pay. Fewer women than ever have remunerated jobs and more are forced to make ends meet in the “informal sector”. According to the International Labour Organization fifty million children are employed for a pittance in factories, mines, and on the land, for the most part in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Many more are forced to venture into the streets as beggars. In some countries destitute children are recruited as soldiers.

Unsustainability in the economy

Resource use. The economy, in its original and basic sense, is the management of resources for the household (from the Greek *oikonomia*, where *oikos* is household, and *nemein* is manage). The global economy can be viewed as the system concerned with the management of the resources of humanity's household. In this context the global economy faces a structural crisis because, for the first time in history, the rising curve of humanity's demand exceeds the descending curve of global supply.

Until the present, human demand has been insignificant in relation to global resources. But in the six decades since World War II, more of the planet's resources have been consumed than in all of history before then. Human consumption is nearing, and in some cases has already surpassed, planetary maxima. The production of oil, fish, lumber, and other major resources has already peaked; forty percent of the world's coral reefs are gone, and annually about 23 million acres of forest are lost. Ecologists also speak of "peak water," since henceforth the quantity of water suited for human use is bound to diminish.

Reducing excessive resource use is made urgent by the rapid growth of the population. World population has increased from about five billion twenty-two years ago to nearly seven billion today. Since the amount of available land remains constant—and is actually shrinking due to over-paving and erosion—the per capita availability of land for meeting hu-

man requirements has shrunk from 19.5 acres per person in 1900 to less than 5 acres today. This is the maximum share of the planet that's both physically available, and is sustainably exploitable.

The financial system. The precarious structure of the world's financial system is another factor in the unsustainability of the global economy. Instability in this system is not new, but it was not generally recognized until the credit crunch of 2008. Worldwide the crash resulted in the greatest loss of wealth ever recorded apart from a major war: 2.8 trillion dollars.

The structural unsustainability of the world's financial system is of longer standing than the creation and burst of speculative bubbles: it's rooted in the imbalance of international trade and in the preposterousness of endless growth.

Unsustainability in the ecology

Water. Today about one-third of the world's population doesn't have access to adequate supplies of clean water, and by 2025 two-thirds of the population will live under conditions of critical water scarcity. By then there may be only 4,800 m³ of water reserves per person.

Land. There is a progressive loss of productive land. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that there are 7,490 million acres of high quality cropland available globally, seventy-one percent of it in the deve-

loping world. This quantity is decreasing due to soil erosion, destructuring, compaction, impoverishment, excessive desiccation, accumulation of toxic salts, leaching of nutritious elements, and inorganic and organic pollution owing to urban and industrial wastes.

Worldwide, 12 to 17 million acres of cropland are lost per year. At this rate 741 million acres will be lost by mid-century, leaving 6.67 billion acres to support 8 to 9 billion people. This would be catastrophic, as the remaining 0.74 acres of productive land could not produce food beyond the level of bare subsistence.

Air. Changes in the chemical composition of the planet's atmosphere constitute another unsustainable trend. Since the middle of the nineteenth century oxygen has decreased mainly due to the burning of coal; it now dips to nineteen percent of total volume over impacted areas and twelve to seventeen percent over major cities. At six or seven percent of total volume, life can no longer be sustained. At the same time, the share of greenhouse gases is growing. Two hundred years of burning fossil fuels and cutting down large tracts of forest has increased the atmosphere's carbon dioxide content from about 280 parts per million to over 350 parts per million.

Global warming and climate change. During the 20th century human activity has injected one terraton of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Currently it's injecting another terraton in less than two decades. The rapid injection of

carbon dioxide makes it impossible for the Earth's ecosystems to adjust. In the oceans, the explosive growth of CO₂ at the surface makes the water too acid for the survival of shell-forming organisms, the species that is the basis of the chain of life in the seas. On land, absorption is reduced by the destruction of the ecosystems that had previously sustained a stable climate. As much as 40 percent of the world's forest cover has disappeared, due to acid rain, urban sprawl, and the injection of a variety of toxins into the soil. The influx of greenhouse gases from human activity is now matched by the influx from nature.

In Western Siberia an unprecedented process has commenced that will dramatically worsen the greenhouse effect. A group of scientists released new findings demonstrating that the permafrost of an area of land equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined is starting to thaw and will release billions of tonnes of, up until now, trapped methane gas into the atmosphere over the next few years, a gas 21 times more lethal than carbon dioxide in its impact on the greenhouse effect. The permafrost — which is melting for the first time since it formed over 11 thousand years ago — covers the world's largest peat bog and is capable of producing approximately 70 billion tonnes of methane gas. According to Dr. Stephen Sitch, a climate impacts scientist of the Meteorological office Hadley Centre, the thawing process of the permafrost will likely take a number of decades meaning that the methane will not be released into the atmosphere at any one given moment. His calculations, however, demonstrate that even if the methane seeped through the per-

mafrost over the period of the next 100 years, it would still release 700 million tonnes of gas into the atmosphere annually, equivalent to approximately 15 billion tonnes of CO₂. This is a catastrophic contribution to the greenhouse effect potentially capable of increasing global warming by 10-25 percent.

Climate models show that even relatively minor changes in the composition of the atmosphere can produce major effects, including widespread harvest failures, water shortages, increased spread of diseases, the rise of the sea level, and the die-out of large tracts of forest. Currently the cumulative effect of the changes includes the greenhouse effect. A shield in the upper atmosphere prevents heat generated at the surface from escaping into surrounding space.

Global warming is an indisputable fact: in recent years the average global temperature has risen significantly, and the warming is accelerating. Currently debate centers on whether warming is due to human activity or to natural causes. There were other warming periods in the history of the Earth; geologists speak of alternating hot and cold stable states — “hot-houses” and “ice-houses”. The best known previous hot-house occurred 55 million years ago, when between one and two terratons of carbon dioxide were released into the air, most likely by the impact of a large meteorite. This caused temperatures to rise 8 degrees Celsius in the Arctic zones and 5 degrees in the tropics. It took about 200,000 years for temperatures to return to their previous level.

Conservative elements claim that today's warming is due to natural causes, at the most exacerbated by human activity. A new cycle in the fusion-processes that generate heat in the Sun sends more solar radiation to Earth and heats up the atmosphere. Unfortunately, for the most part those who ascribe global warming to solar activity dismiss the need for doing something about it — after all, what can humans do to change the chemistry of the Sun?

This, however, is a mistake. Whereas we can't do anything about the chemistry of the Sun, we can do something about reducing its effect on Earth. Doing so is indicated, whether the warming is due to the Sun, or has a significant anthropic component. In any event it's producing climate change, ecological stress, and depresses the food supply of the entire human population. (However, carbon dioxide, together with methane and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, is likely to be a significant factor in global warming. The historical record of the past million years shows that the amount of CO₂ in the air correlates with variations in temperature: more carbon dioxide goes hand in hand with higher temperatures.)

Regardless of its causes, global warming has a highly negative impact on food production; it produces nefarious changes in the climate. There are storms and violent rains in some parts of the world, and persistent drought in others. Drought has become a worldwide phenomenon.

— California is facing the worst drought in recorded history; thousands of acres of row crops have already been fallowed. The snowpack in the Northern Sierra, where some of the state's most important reservoirs are located, is 49 percent of normal.

— In Texas the drought is reaching historic proportions; it's estimated that 88 percent of the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions, and 18 percent extreme or exceptional drought.

— The worst drought in half a century has turned Argentina's once-fertile soil to dust and has created a state of emergency. The country's wheat yield for 2009 is expected to be 8.7 million metric tons, down from 16.3 million tons in 2008.

— Brazil, the world's second-biggest exporter of soybeans and third-largest exporter of corn, has cut its outlook for these crops after assessing desiccation damage to plants in the drought-stricken regions.

— In Northern China the drought has been the worst in 50 years, creating water shortage for 4.37 million people. The Chinese government has resorted to cloud-seeding, which produced some, but not sufficient, rainfall.

— Australia has been experiencing unrelenting drought since 2004; an

estimated 41 percent of its agriculture is hit by the worst drought in the 117 years that records have been kept. The devastating firestorm of February 2009, though it was triggered by arson, was a consequence of extreme dryness in the region.

— In the drought-affected regions of the Middle East and Central Asia, total wheat production has declined by more than 22 percent. Major reservoirs in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria are at low levels, and irrigation supplies from reservoirs, rivers, and groundwater have been critically reduced.

Low international food reserves exacerbate the problem of falling agricultural yields. The combined average of the stock levels of the major food exporting countries — Australia, Canada, United States, and the European Union — has been steadily declining. In the period 2002-2005 the combined reserves amounted to 47.4 million tons, in 2007 they dropped to 37.6 million tons and in 2008 to 27.4 million. Quite apart from the economics of paying for the mounting cost of food imports, these stocks are not sufficient to cover the needs of the food-deficit countries.

Irrational behaviors

A holistic diagnosis of what's wrong with the world must not fail to take account of the element of irrationality in the way we manage ourselves and the environment. We have created paradoxical, unjust, and basically

intolerable conditions.

— Millions are suffering from overeating and obesity, and a thousand million go hungry. Someone dies of hunger every six seconds.

— Six millions children die annually of starvation, and 155 millions are overweight.

— Millions are suffering from overeating and obesity, and a thousand million go hungry.

— There are millions of intelligent women ready to play a responsible role in society, but they don't get a fair chance in education, business, politics and civic life.

— Vast herds of livestock, consisting in part of intelligent and sensitive animals, are brought into the world for the sole purpose of slaughtering them, a procedure that, apart from its questionable ethical and health implications, is wasting an enormous amount of resources (it takes 1303,5 gallons of water and sixteen pounds of grain and soy to produce one pound of beef, and not much less to produce a pound of pork).

— The wellbeing and possibly the very survival of humanity is in question, but most of us remain occupied or preoccupied with making money and holding on to our privileges.

— We fight cultural intolerance and religious fundamentalism in others, but have been, and many of us still are, willing to subscribe to virulent forms of nationalism under the banner of patriotism and national security.

— We tell children to abide by the golden rule “treat others as you expect others to treat you” but we seldom if ever treat other people, other states and other businesses as we expect other people, states and businesses to treat us.

— The problems we face call for the commitment and participation of every able-bodied human being, but we put millions out of work to save on the cost of labor.

— The problems we face also call for long-term solutions, but our criteria of success is the bottom line in annual or semi-annual corporate profit-and-loss statements.

— The planet is bathed in energy (if fully used, forty minutes of the solar radiation reaching the Earth would cover all of humanity’s energy needs for a whole year), and technologies are on-line to derive energy from sunlight, wind, tides, geothermics, and plants, but the global economy continues to run predominantly on polluting and finite fossil fuels.

— Hi-tech weapons that are more dangerous than the conflicts they

could possibly resolve are being developed and stockpiled, at vast investment of money and resources.

— The ineffectiveness of military force to achieve economic and political objectives has been proven over and over again, yet the world's governments still spend over \$1.2 trillion dollars a year on arms, wars and military establishments, and similar amounts on empire-building objectives thinly disguised as national defense and security projects.

Obsolete beliefs and aspiration

Some of the beliefs that guide action and aspiration in the contemporary world are now seriously obsolete and highly counterproductive. For example:

The planet is inexhaustible. The long-standing belief that the Earth is an inexhaustible source of resources and an inexhaustible sink of wastes leads to the overmining of natural resources and the overloading of the biosphere's regenerative cycles.

Nature is a mechanism. The belief that we can engineer nature like a building or a bridge is producing a plethora of unforeseen and vexing side-effects, such as the destruction of natural balances and the disappearance of untold living species.

Life is a struggle where only the fittest survive. The (mal)adaptation of Darwin's theory of natural selection to society produces a growing gap between rich and poor, and concentrates wealth and power in the hands of a small group of smart but often unscrupulous managers and speculators.

The market distributes benefits. Affluent people tend to hold on to the belief that the free market, governed by what Adam Smith called the "invisible hand" distributes the benefits of economic activity.

When they do well for themselves, they maintain, they do well also for society. The poverty and marginalization of nearly half of the world's population is eloquent testimony to the fact that this tenet doesn't work in the context of today's power and wealth-distorted global markets.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HEAL OUR WORLD? FINDING A CURE

The objectives of enlightened politics

Many constructive steps can be taken to cure our world, creating peace and sustainability in place of crisis and violence. They call for more timely objectives in politics, in business, and in everyday life.

Enlightened politics is democratic politics: it serves the genuine interests of the demos, the people. The genuine interests of the people include physical survival, a meaningful social role, and a likewise meaningful social and cultural identity.

Safeguarding these interests calls for political objectives that ensure the availability, and the social and economic accessibility, of the required basic resources.

Security of physical survival calls for access by all members of the

community to the basic resources of life: adequate supplies of food, water, shelter, and clothing.

Meaningful interpersonal relations calls for social and economic conditions suitable for maintaining family life, and stable, meaningful, and potentially beneficial relations among individuals.

A meaningful social and cultural identity requires in turn a system of justice with social and economic equity, and a system of education and information that furthers unity through diversity, enabling people to recognize themselves as members of their ethnic group and culture, unique yet integral parts of their community.

Beyond these basic goals, enlightened politics is dedicated to objectives that are specific to our time and place. In today's world this means commitment to economic, social, and ecological sustainability both domestically and internationally.

A government embracing enlightened objectives:

- Provides incentives for the use of alternative energy and resource-saving or recycling technologies, and technologies of low or zero toxin and waste emission;
- Gives priority to eco-labelled, organic, ethical, and fair-trade products;

- Works with the business community to promote practices that incorporate criteria of sustainability in the processes of design, production, and marketing, and the disposal of manufactured products, raw materials, and of waste;
- Pays attention to the availability of natural common goods at acceptable cost, including energy, water, and land;
- Improves the quality and increases capacity of the public transportation system, creating realistic alternatives to the use (and overuse) of the private car;
- Channels funds to reconstruct and revitalize derelict or disadvantaged areas;
- Uses safe and efficient energy and resource technologies in public services, including electric power generation, transport, and communication;
- Monitors and regulates civil and industrial activities that destroy ecological balances and despoil or reduce wilderness areas;
- Applies strict criteria for urban design and construction, requiring renewable energy technologies and efficient insulation to be part of public housing and in licensing the construction of private dwellings,

commercial buildings, and industrial plants;

— Makes accessible fields, forests, rivers, streams, lakes and seas in the surroundings with adequate provisions for the integrity of ecological cycles and processes.

The social objective in business

Business is the private sector, but it's so powerful that it's no longer a truly "private" sector — it's the most public sector there is. Yet, in the course of the last century business companies had progressively excluded themselves from concern with and responsibility for society, seeking only their own profit and growth. If they are to be reintegrated in society, they need to adopt a basic social objective.

The classical objective was, and to a large extent still is, centered uniquely on making money for the owners of the company. The "shareholder philosophy" is now outdated. It became a major source of the world's problems: it polarizes society and leads to an over-exploitation of the environment. It must be replaced by the "stakeholder philosophy" — responsibility for all the people who are affected by the actions of the company, whether they are shareholders or executives, employees or partners, customers, clients, or members of the host community.

Classically, the business of business was said to be business. With the stakeholder philosophy the business of business changes: it's the health and wellbeing of people and society. The principal *raison d'être* of a business company is then no longer to garner the maximum profit in the shortest time, but to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number while ensuring its own economic viability.

A shift in the business world is not impossible. It requires close cooperation among the market leaders. They need to join together not to suppress competition, but to implement socially and ecologically responsible practices in their sector of industry.

There are business leaders who would be ready to take this step; they no longer subscribe to the shareholder philosophy.

Many leading companies are controlled by individuals and families who identify with the companies as founders and principal executives. They are the contemporary equivalents of the legendary "captains of industry" of the first decades of the 20th century. A Rockefeller, a Vanderbilt, a Ford, a Mellon, and a Carnegie didn't think of himself purely as a businessman, out to get the maximum money for himself and his family; he considered himself a builder of society, a force for the common good. As IBM founder Thomas J. Watson Sr. said, companies were not created "just to make money" but to "knit together the whole fabric of civilization".

This spirit is not extinct today. A Bill Gates and other business leaders create charitable Foundations to champion their preferred causes, much like Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie and others did before them. But today this is no longer enough.

In the 1920s and 1930s nobody doubted that the company's pursuing business as its business would have negative consequences. Society obviously had need of motor cars, gasoline, steel, and the other products and services provided by the major companies. For business people being public spirited didn't involve changing the orientation of their company; at the most it meant ensuring fair treatment for workers and staff, and espousing selected social causes on the side.

Today it's not enough to "do good" as peripheral philanthropy while being narrowly focused on "doing well" in the marketplace. The damage done by companies staying with short-term profit-maximizing strategies is not made good by funding charitable causes, however important they may be.

The need is for those who have the wealth and the power to control major companies to become a force for the public good not by philanthropy, but by re-orienting their companies. The companies can then do well and do good at the same time.

The social objective recognizes that the company's stakeholder is so-

ciety itself. Embracing it brings the private sector into the fold of societal actors dedicated the cause of human wellbeing and ecological sustainability.

CURING THE CONSUMPTION ADDICTS

The end of materialistic culture

Our world is becoming smaller and smaller, and more and more crowded. The airline industry has made it possible to cover huge distances in only a few hours whilst the internet digital technology has made distances shrink in time and space. How many people travel in the world everyday? Hundreds of million, billions. We only need to think of the “virtual travels” in Google and in the big social networks.

We must view the planet as one body. It's not difficult: we only have to remember how we feel when we travel by airplane and a beautiful day allows us to see the tiny things and organisms moving on the Earth below. Let's imagine ourselves astronauts, hundreds of thousands of kilometres away from the Earth. Close our eyes and imagine the planet: what are they doing, how do the two-legged creatures who inhabit this planet **live**?

FINDING BLISS IN THE SHIFT - CURING THE CONSUMPTION ADDICTS

More or less a third of those inhabitants do not even have water to drink; another third suffers from hunger; the remaining third lives well, or indeed too well. It is obvious that something doesn't make sense on this planet.

There are more than 4 billion people who wake up in the morning haunted by the constant worry: "what will I have to eat and to drink today?", and approximately 2 billion people live in an industrialized "developed" society. About half of these 2 billion behave rationally, the remaining billion is ensnared by the materialistic culture of contemporary civilisation.

With our uncontrolled and short-sighted actions we have created a crisis in the ecology; with our lack of values we have damaged our only world.

This two-legged creature is a strange animal: on the one hand it acts in a self-destructive way polluting air and water, destroying the ecosystem, establishing lifestyles that are unhealthy and threaten both its psychological and biological balance; on the other hand it invests huge resources so that science and medicine can resolve or at least mitigate, the problems they themselves have created. The two-legged creature continues to shoot itself in the foot, only to then desperately try to heal the wounds...

FINDING BLISS IN THE SHIFT - CURING THE CONSUMPTION ADDICTS

Fortunately there are a number of humans — for now only a minority — that have taken a better path: who don't gorge themselves with the consumption of material things but focus on sustaining their family and maintaining their health, job, safety, culture, and creating a future without false myths and ephemeral satisfactions.

The irresponsibility of today's compulsive materialist civilisation is about to be unmasked. What the "consumption addicts" call crisis is in fact the end of one era and the beginning of another: the civilisation of genuine values and a new consciousness.

People will cease to pollute indiscriminately; to purchase more and more cars that are more and more powerful and wasteful; build wider highways in order to flood the market with an ever greater number of vehicles; cease to build energy intensive houses and shopping centres that devastate the ecosystem; and destroy the forests, the lungs of the planet.

The addicts — and those who incite them — need not entertain false hopes: their problems will not end any time soon. It's not true that "within two years everything will go back to the way it was before". It will not happen, because change is irreversible: the world has begun a gigantic transformation, a process of veritable detoxification!

The fact is that five of the seven billion inhabitants of the planet are

FINDING BLISS IN THE SHIFT - CURING THE CONSUMPTION ADDICTS

not consumption addicts. They want to live as comfortably as possible but they don't want only material things. Maybe their ideas are still not clear, but their wish for a higher quality of life is genuine and it's gaining momentum.

Two thirds of the world's population has been subjugated by a minority that has imposed rules, methods, lifestyles and role-models that only go in one direction: the hoarding of money and the accumulation of power. Guided by the one billion conscious consumers, these two-thirds of the population will be the salvation of the planet.

This kind of process is already taking place in the United States, and it will occur also in Europe. The falsity of the idea "make money and so reach happiness" is becoming evident. Money is not everything!

Let's look at the future optimistically. Humankind is not experiencing a negative crisis — it is experiencing one of the best eras of its existence: the era of transformation.

For the time being the consumption addicts hold the reins of power in the levers of the system, but their way of acting is beginning to show signs of wear. The more conscious people are still a minority, but they have an enormous potential for development. They possess values that apply to all people, regardless of race and creed.

After a necessary interval of crisis, also the consumption addicts

will discover the civilisation of values and will seek sustainability for themselves and their families. The compulsive culture of materialistic consumption is destined to disappear.

A signal from America

Nobody would ever have imagined that this country, where the most advanced trends unfold, where the financial system works 24 hours a day where health systems only treat you if you have the money, where dealers sell guns without even asking for an identity card... Nobody would have imagined that the critical indictment of the consumer culture will start from here.

But is this merely a fortuitous coincidence?

The United States, the temple of compulsive consumerism, the country whose leadership have dominated the world, is transforming. The crisis of its financial institutions serves as an example. The mortgage crisis was the classical straw that broke the camel's back. Millions of citizens signed mountains of papers to buy houses (or cars) that they could not afford. The banks had stopped regulating the flow of money, they were occupied in printing it, producing not real banknotes but mountains of documents. Yet financial and business empires were built on this basis. This wealth, with its underground flows of money,

exploded in a catastrophe that the world has now come to know.

Today another course is expected of the United States. President Obama is personifying a new model of sustainable development, one that other governments will also have to confront.

The United States of political cynicism, of capitalism with a top hat, of ruthless dominion over the world is destined to be confined to history. In ten or twenty years we will read that the years 2008 – 2009 were the years of the America's transformation from a cynical and pitiless system to a system committed to environmental recovery, alternative energy production, health-care for the poor, to a state no longer inclined to favour the greed of any lobby and more inclined to social welfare, to genuine assistance — to real humaneness. This, at any rate, is what we seem to be witnessing today.

A new chapter will be added to the history books, a chapter that shows the rise of an Ecological Revolution after the much acclaimed Industrial Revolution, bringing about a better equilibrium between people, nature, and the economy.

People, Planet, Profit. These three P's stands for concepts that apply always and everywhere. Always and everywhere we must envisage systems that regard people with solidarity, support, assistance, the defence of the values of civilisation and love...

Always and everywhere we must envisage systems that consider the planet: the protection of air and water, the defence of forests and animals, the humanisation of cities and work places, the rethinking of systems of transportation for people and goods....

Always and everywhere we must envisage systems that have a concern for the economy: for production supply chains, distribution, consumption, but that also have a concern for the planet in all its dimensions, that ensure real answers to real questions, that circulate money so that there can be remunerated work for people, and that generate legitimate and fair profit for entrepreneurs, for enterprises, and for all people who do useful work.

The fifth element

But what is the process that delivers the new worlds of the conscious consumerism, of People, Planet, Profit, and generates the historical shift?

It would be simplistic to think that we have arrived at this point only because of the crisis of the old lifestyle. That is not the reason. The process is harmonious, constant and coherent as well as relatively fast, given that it's a lifestyle born only in the post-war period.

We live in the aftermath of a frightened and desolate world of continents

devastated by the greatest and most destructive war in the history of humanity. Major powers were razed to the ground — Germany, Japan, France, Italy, England — there was a planetary drama of death and destruction from which we must learn to exit in a hurry.

Men and women reconstructed cities and factories and re-launched the industrial and consumer civilisation, thanks to the contribution of the United States, a country that was not subjected to this traumatic break in its industrial development.

Today a powerful instrument is beginning to have its effects on consumers. Television literally subverts the world's markets.

Take Italy for example: from agricultural country, all tourism and naturalness, the richest in culture and fine arts, the most beautiful, has been radically transformed and, thanks to what the history books call the “economic miracle”, has mutated into an industrial country: with highways, many metal mechanical, chemical and oil industries, the concrete that transforms the cities and far more. But it is also the lifestyle and mentality of the people that undergoes profound changes: the hair oil is applied; they learn about household appliances, the chemical detergents needed to make them work, and then the consumer electronics and other technologies in their home and in the workplace...

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Is such progress a real advance? It has meant turning one's back on nature, urbanizing and polluting, and becoming "super-accessorized" in the ways of modern consumerism.

Our fathers, too, have learned to consume. Now consumerism has entered into the everyday spheres of people's lives, becoming the principal point of reference: consume therefore I am.

Consequently the industries, the entrepreneurs, even Italians of peasant origin have been rapidly transformed, becoming captains of industry who want to produce more and more of everything.

But the absence of values creates distortions in the system. This is a bulimic phase of consumption. Everything is produced, everything is sold, with insufficient controls on quality and wholesomeness on the products, think of the example of the Ddt: it's all indiscriminate. TV commercials fills public squares and bars and even the cinemas have been enlisted to spread the messages of the small screen.

And people consume and consume, spend and spend, sitting dazed in front of the television.

This has been the first element in building the market: quantity, the bare fact of the product, without more ado. What counts is only accessibility: *distribution*.

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The second element has been the consideration that the product must also be good, in the wider meaning of the term. This mean not only tasting good in the case of food, but also a more intangible asset: *quality*. “This garment is good” my father used to say in his fabric shop.

Variety in the offer permits comparison — comparison not only of price, or rather not only the price: the economic boom is accompanied by a full-bodied even if embryonic hedonism that motivates paying attention to the aesthetic factor, the search for beauty. This is an activity on which Italians have much to say about. It’s an essential part of the the industrial development of a country that became one of the ten most powerful economies in the world despite its the defeat in the last war and the misery at its borders.

This is the third element: *aesthetic*.

It was the birth of the art of design that changed the cards on the table and defined the markets for the products, including their range and their target clientele.

Gradually, as the market grew and evolved, the consumer became more demanding, and asked to be respected not only as a purchaser of a product but also as a person. At this stage consumers shifted from an attitude of awe, from acceptance, to active subjects that discriminate, consider and weigh differences. Here the product must possess

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still another element: it must not be harmful to health; it must be checked and controlled. Here is the fourth element. The product must be *healthy and safe*.

This is the element that brings us to where we are today. It must be healthy for whoever uses it (or, in the case of food, whoever eats it) and it must be healthy for the pocketbook and safe in regard to one's life.

The fifth element is *ethics*.

At the highest stage of development it's not sufficient for the product to be accessible, good, beautiful, healthy and safe. It must also be ethical. It must respect human beings, the atmosphere, the ecosystem, it must be eco-compatible, non-polluting; eco-sustainable, constructed with renewable resources; offered through fair trade, and not have the shadow of child labour and discriminatory practices ast on it.

People are beginning to develop a different mindset compared to that which was accepted but a few years ago. Think how quickly, for example, the relationship with the automobile has passed from status-symbol for size and luxury to a symbol for economy and ecological responsibility. Think how quickly cities small and large decided to no longer allow access to cars to their centre, converting them into pedestrian zones accessible only to public services. Today freshness,

simplicity and respect are part of the vocabulary of consumers who are less and less compulsive and more and more aware.

The new consumers are the standard bearer and champion of the market. The new brands and the companies that promote them must also, and above all, provide ethical assurances in production: respect the workers, the suppliers, the surroundings, and the environment. The companies must be concerned with the interests of the people who buy their products and perhaps invest their savings in them.

We are speaking about the social responsibility of business. This is a topic about which much has been written and said over the last few years. Now the discourse is assuming an ever more discriminating tone: consumers expect ethics even in the company's supply chain.

At this point we question everything. We question our lifestyle and our mindset, and our old and already transcended ways of living.

The cause and the effect

This is the historical moment to take a step forward, not to dwell on a problem but to take flight, to see things from above, to see them in their totality. This is the moment when we must heal the effects — but

first we must find the causes.

Poverty, Aids, terrorism, global warming, desertification, wars, perennial dissatisfaction and problems that will come are due to a lack of consciousness and civilisation. Because civilisation means the ability to respect other people, the environment, and all things in it. This is from where the crisis comes: from a lack of civilisation.

The spiral of involution, the genesis of the economic crisis stems from the non-sustainability of a business model based on limitless growth, of consumption crushed by the lack of hope for the future, and by the critical instability of markets and institutions. What we are experiencing is not a destructive crisis but a period of change that definitively and irreversibly marks the end of the era of compulsive consumerism and its materialistic values. It marks the beginning of a journey towards a society of conscious consumers, and of “three P” companies.

The true danger, the real threat for the system, to the future of humankind and the planet is the out of date consciousness of an as yet much too high number of consumers.

If we shed light on the cause-effect relationship we must now truly believe and everyone must assume their own responsibilities.

In light of this relationship of cause and effect everyone must assume his or her responsibility. This means responsibility assumed by

business companies, many of whom have already given indications that they are ready to assume it. We only need to look at the communications they send out — in recent months they have assumed the tones of a real turnaround: ecology, recovery, recycling, reduction of consumption, renewable energy, CO₂ compensation, are all terms that were, until a short while ago, totally absent from their communications, but that today are beginning to convey merit and value in advertising and promote change. How much comes from the “heart” and how much from the “brain” is not that important, important is the fact that these transformations produce positive effects in society.

The change

We have already seen where today’s historical change is coming from. Now we must try to discover the fastest and safest way to go before the effects of old thinking and obsolete values destroy the motivation for change.

That which scares many people is the idea of change itself. Yet change doesn’t necessarily mean renunciation. It was not a sacrifice to replace DDT, the CFCs that damaged the ozone layer, and to practice differentiated waste disposal, and it will not be a sacrifice to give up polluting cars and make purchases that actually exceed our means... or to choose renewable energy, to put a brake on useless consumption, to purchase seasonal and locally grown fruits and vegetables, and to

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maintain genuine friendships and to surround ourselves with people whom we love and who love us in turn. In short, it's not a sacrifice to live a good life with real chances for happiness.

The new civilisation will be based on new lifestyles. We will need new role-models and points of reference, not more and more wealthy football players but people who are rich in ideals. Obama and the new politics of the United States — if actions follow words — will provide answers regarding the change we need at this historical moment, much as the LifeGate project in Italy, with its aim to convey new values and promote a new consciousness.

Initiatives can be decisive factors in promoting change. The pioneering Italian “green” enterprise Fattoria Scaldasole has become a point of reference in the birth of 60.000 companies in the organic sector in Italy, taking this country from the last to the first place in organic production. This achievement is even more significant when we consider that Fattoria Scaldasole also pioneered a new form of communication. Here is an ad that appeared in the newspaper Corriere della Sera on 13th January 1994:

We are living at a time that will be known in the future as the second renaissance achieved in a relatively bloodless way.
Politics, communication and industry are changing.
The rules of the game are changing.

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People are asking for spiritual values.

In politics honesty and clarity, in communication truth and concreteness, in industry relationships people and environmentally oriented measures.

Nature is no longer merely an image and a persuasive argument.

We could summarise it all in one phrase: when you use your brain, leave a little room also for your heart.

The basic objective: the growth of our consciousness

Albert Einstein said that we can't solve a problem with the same kind of thinking that generated the problem. We can apply this to the contemporary world: we can't heal our planet with the same kind of thinking that created its malady. Here "thinking" is intended in an inclusive way: it's the totality of our perceptions, values, beliefs, and aspirations. It refers to our consciousness.

Today's predominantly materialistic and ego-centered consciousness is obsolete and must change. Fortunately, the consciousness that dominated the world for the past one hundred years is not a permanent feature of the human species. For most of the twenty or fifty thousand years that humans had possessed a higher form of culture and consciousness, they didn't think of themselves as separate from the world

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around them. They lived in the conviction that the world is one, and that we are an intrinsic part of it. The radical separation of a thinking, feeling human being from an unthinking and unfeeling world came only with the modern age, and came mainly in the West. It prompted the uninhibited exploitation of unthinking and unfeeling nature by the thinking and feeling, and therefore superior, human race. Insightful people have never accepted this narrowly anthropocentric view, whether they were artists, poets, mystics, or scientists. Giordano Bruno, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Nicolas Copernicus, and in more recent times Albert Einstein, gave eloquent testimony of their belief that the world around us, though in many respects still mysterious, is intrinsically whole and meaningful.

The dominant consciousness of humankind could shift again in the coming years; and there are indications that it has already begun to shift. The new cultures emerging at the creative margins of society have a mindset very different from the materialistic, narrowly self-interested consciousness of the mainstream. Social psychologists, experimental parapsychologists, sociologists, and even physicians and brain researchers are discovering a different kind of perception and awareness in people, especially in young people and children: “integral consciousness”, “extended mind”, “nonlocal consciousness”, “holotropic mind”, “infinite mind” or “boundless mind”.

The consciousness now emerging bears out the predictions of a few remarkable thinkers and spiritual people. The Indian sage Sri Auro-

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bindo viewed the emergence and spread of what he termed “super-consciousness” (the kind of consciousness that surfaces in samadhi, satori, and similar states of meditation) as the mark of the next evolutionary stage of human consciousness. The Swiss philosopher Jean Gebser defined the next stage as the coming of four-dimensional integral consciousness, arising from the prior stages of archaic, magical, and mythical consciousness. The American mystic Richard Bucke portrayed this stage as cosmic consciousness, beyond the simple consciousness of animals and the self-consciousness of contemporary humans.

For the mystic Eckhart Tolle consciousness is part of the universe: the essential part. It’s the intelligence, the organizing principle behind the cosmic arising of form, which is the basic evolutionary process. Through evolution, consciousness has been preparing forms for millions of years, and today it’s ready to create form without losing itself in it. The next stage in the evolution of human consciousness is the state of awakening — the consciousness of mastering the art of “awakened doing”.

Social scientists Chris Cowan and Don Beck elaborated the colorful scheme they call spiral dynamics. According to this concept human consciousness evolved from the strategic “orange” stage, which is materialistic, consumerist, and success-, image-, status-, and growth-oriented to the consensual “green” stage of egalitarianism and orientation toward feelings, authenticity, sharing, caring, and community, and

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is now shifting to the ecological “yellow” stage where it’s focused on natural systems, self-organization, multiple realities, and knowledge. In the future it would reach the holistic “turquoise” stage of collective individualism, cosmic spirituality, and Earth changes.

Spiritual traditions, too, speak about the coming of a new consciousness. The Mayan elders predict that the coming era will be an era when the ether, the long-neglected fifth element of the universe, will become dominant. “Whereas the four traditional elements [air, water, fire, and Earth]... have dominated various epochs in the past,” said Mayan spokesperson and high-priest Carlos Barrios, “there will be a fifth element to reckon with in the time of the Fifth Sun: ether.” Ether is a medium, he pointed out, it permeates all space and transmits waves of energy in a wide range of frequencies. An important task at this time is “to learn to sense or see the energy of everyone and everything: people, plants, animals. This becomes increasingly important as we draw close to the World of the Fifth Sun, for it is associated with the element ether — the realm where energy lives and weaves” (source: SacredRoad.org).

Coincidentally, but perhaps not accidentally, physicists are discovering that the ether was not correctly discarded one hundred years ago when experiments failed to detect the friction it was predicted to cause in the rotation of the Earth—the place of the ether is not replaced by empty space, the vacuum. What physicists now call the quantum

vacuum is far from empty space: according to grand-unified theories it's the unified field, the womb of all the fields and forces of nature. It contains a staggering concentration of energy, and carries and transmits information.

In Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy the ether was considered the most fundamental of the five elements; the one out of which all the others arose. The ether was known as Akasha, the element that also connects all things — as the “Akashic Field” — and conserves the memory of all things — as the “Akashic Records”. Today, in the form of a cosmic energy — and information — field, the ether regains the preeminent status it had enjoyed five thousand years ago.

A consciousness that recognizes our connections through the ether — an “Akashic” consciousness — is a consciousness of connectedness and of belonging, ultimately, of oneness with people and nature. It's the transpersonal consciousness foreseen by mystics and philosophers from Aurobindo to Wilber, predicted by the Mayans, and supported by discoveries at the leading edge of the sciences. The evolution of this consciousness in more and more people may be a basic precondition of healing our fragmented, and chronically but not incurably unsustainable planet.

From words to actions

How can we interpret and implement today's historical shift? In other words: how can we be in tune with the change that's needed, and encourage others to do so as well? How can we build a new civilisation of values?

Individual behaviour has become the critical factor. What we do has an effect on others and either contributes to the healing of the world or exacerbates its disease. We need conscious and responsible behaviour.

Responsible individuals adopt the objectives of improvement of life and sustainability in their own life.

They understand that their freedom must be compatible with the freedom of others.

They satisfy their own needs without reducing the chances of other people to satisfy theirs.

They respect the right to life and to development of all persons, wherever they live, regardless of their ethnic origin, sex, citizenship and creed.

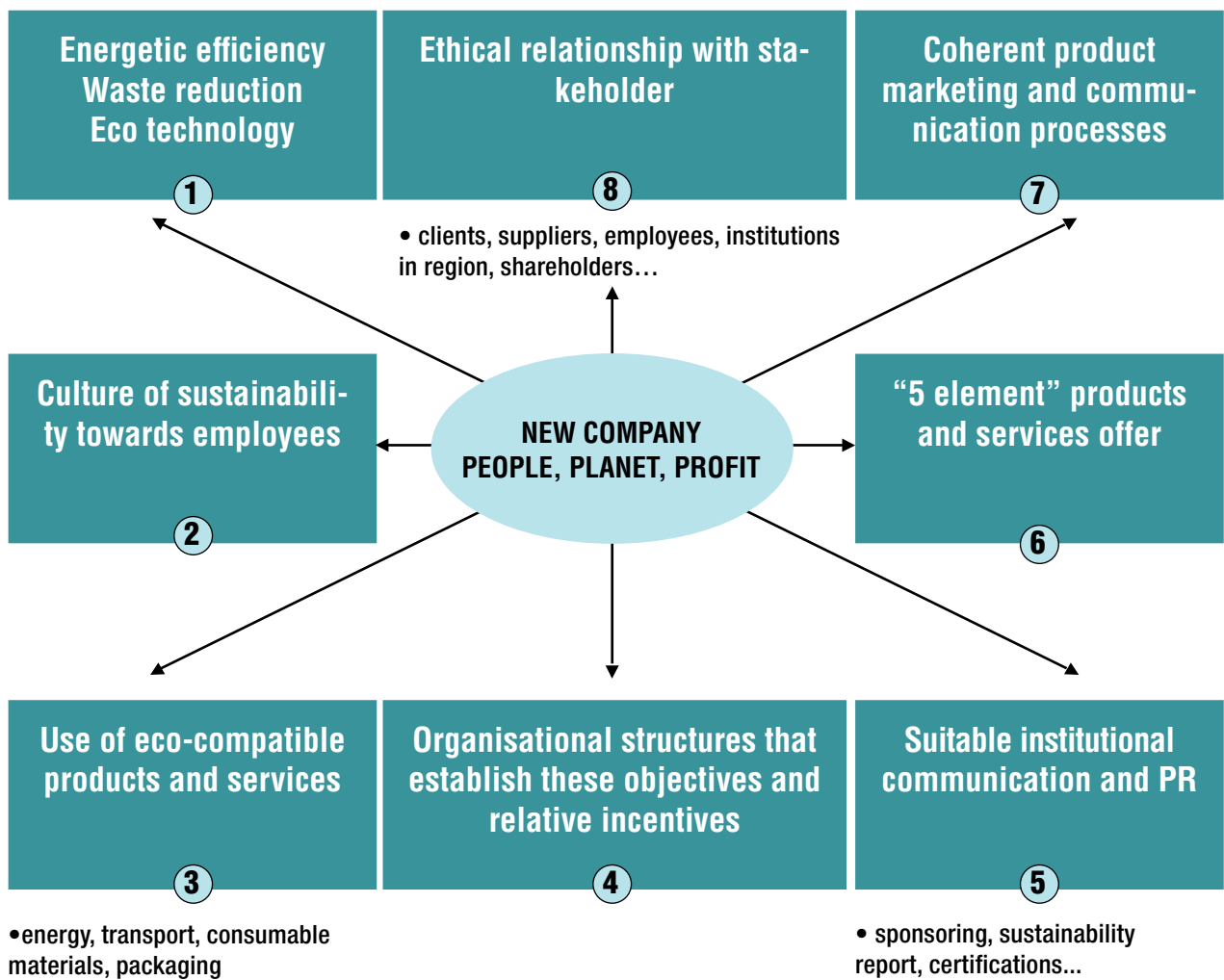
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They safeguard the right to life in a healthy environment of all the things that live and grow on Earth.

They search for happiness, freedom and personal development with consideration of the similar search of others.

They adopt a critical approach to consumption, shunning ostentation, and using products that respect people, the environment. Typically, such products are those offered by 3P companies.

The new future 3P enterprise



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Here is a reference layout that may be of help with regards to personal values.

CIVILISATION WITHOUT VALUES	CIVILISATION WITH VALUES
have	be
live on the back of nature	be a harmonious part of the ecosystem
GMO and pesticide agriculture	biological agriculture
selecting work on the basis of 'having'	selecting work on the basis of "be"
take advantage of your neighbour	consider others
live superficially	give life a sense of meaning
business is business	life is life
personal interests	common interests
public relations	real friends
exploitation	respect
conditioning	freedom
inconsiderate consumption	ethical consumption
seriousness	honesty
being a spectator	being part
money	love

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The question of time

We are now faced with the fact...that tomorrow is today.
We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now...
Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous
civilizations are written the pathetic words — “too late.”

— Martin Luther King (April 4, 1967)

We need to change, individually and collectively, but how much time do we have to change? The answer is, not much. The window of time available for meaningful change is closing faster than we had thought. There are two major reasons for this.

There are two major reasons for this.

Accelerating trends

Critical trends build rapidly toward phases of irreversibility. Time-estimates of when these critical “points of no return” will come about have shrunk from the end of the century to mid-century, then to the next twenty years — and for some trends to the next five to twenty years.

For example, the sea level has been rising one and a half times faster than predicted in the Ipcc’s Third Assessment Report published in 2001. Forecasts published at the end of 2008 project global sea-level rise that is more than double the 0.59 meter rise forecast even by the

Fourth Assessment Report.

Carbon dioxide emissions and global warming have likewise outpaced expectations. The rate of increase of CO₂ emissions rose from 1.1 percent between 1990 and 1999 to over 3 percent between 2000 and 2004. Since 2000 the growth-rate of emission has been greater than in any of the scenarios used by the Ipcc in both the Third and Fourth Assessment Reports.

The warming of the atmosphere progressed faster than expected as well. In the 1990s forecasts spoke of an overall warming of maximum 3 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Then the time-horizon for this level of increase was reduced to the middle of the century, and presently some experts predict that it could occur within a decade. At the same time, the prediction for the maximum level of global warming rose from 3 to 6 degrees.

The difference is not negligible. A three degree warming would cause serious disruption in human life and economic activity, while a six degree warming would make most of the planet unsuitable for food production and large-scale human habitation.

Feedbacks and cross-impacts among the trends

Unexpected acceleration is one reason for the reduced time-horizon,

the other is the disregard of feedbacks and cross-impacts.

Most predictions take only one trend into consideration — global warming and attendant climate change; water quality and availability; food production and self-reliance; urban viability, poverty, and population pressure; air quality and minimal health standards, or others. They fail to consider the possibility that a critical point in one trend could drive other trends toward a critical point.

Yet there are multiple feedbacks and cross-impacts among the global trends, both in nature and in the human world.

In nature, all the trends that affect human life and wellbeing also impact on the cycles that maintain the planet's ecology within a humanly favorable range. This is the case in regard to the global water and the global carbon cycle — the alteration of these cycles by any one trend affects the way the other trends unfold.

For example, an increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere leads to global warming and that affects rainfall and the growth of forests. That, in turn, reduces the biosphere's carbon absorption capacity. Feedbacks are also conveyed by air and ocean currents. Warmer water in the oceans triggers hurricanes and other violent storms alters the course of major ocean currents, such as the Gulf and the Humboldt. And that triggers further changes in the climate.

Feedbacks can involve both ecological and socio-economic trends. For example:

— The warming of the atmosphere can produce prolonged drought in some areas and coastal flooding in others. Starving and homeless masses would then move from the highly impacted areas to less hard-hit regions and create critical food and water shortages there, too.

— A drop in the quality of the air in urban and industrial megacomplexes below the minimum required for health creates a breakdown in public health, and could trigger epidemics spreading over vast areas.

— A point of no return in the global financial crisis would impact not only on banks and stock markets, but on the world economy as a whole. International production and trade flows would be paralyzed with serious consequences for countries and people both rich and poor.

Cross-impacts among global trends reduces the time available for effective change. There is now a distinct probability that one or another vital trend will reach a critical point within four or five years from today. If that happens, the chain-reaction catalyzed by it would engulf not only the immediately affected region and its population, but entire continents — and ultimately all continents. The bottom line is that the time left for averting a global breakdown is close to the famed 2012

prophesies of the end — or perhaps just the transformation — of the human world.

Will change actually happen in this reduced time-frame? We do not know; but we do know that it can happen. In an unstable, near-chaotic system butterfly effects can come about and they can be powerful — even initially small impulses can “nucleate” and spread with great rapidity, altering the behavior of the entire system. But the challenge is not to foretell whether timely change will, or will not, happen. The challenge is to make it happen.

A few pointers to find the bliss

How do we find happiness in change? We should first try to understand what we mean by happiness.

Certainly, happiness it's not getting a bargain, winning a competition, or cheating with taxes.

The promoters of the old civilisation of consumption bombarded us with messages that tried to make us believe that making and having money is happiness, and some of us have ended up believing it. But it's not true.

Money at the most can give us a feeling of contentment. One of us has

written in a book titled *Perché ce la faremo* (Why We Shall Make It):

Contentment is the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction that we feel when something goes well for us, when we meet a new partner, receive a promotion, win something, we have an athletics result, when someone says “bravo” to us. It is an emotion, an ephemeral excitation, and always depends on something else.

In excess, the sense of contentment can be destructive. Think, for example, of rich and famous people who commit suicide: material wealth not only doesn't compensate for spiritual poverty and the lack of love, but accentuates it!

Happiness is, instead, a state of grace. It is not a passing mood, but something deeper, more lasting, it is a state of consciousness that grows within, independently of external events. It can be only reached if you have embedded the true values of civilisation in your own emotions.

Let's put it this way: happiness is “doing something good for yourself and at the same time for others”. This may seem like a narrow definition, but it's sufficient to define the change in civilisation:

— the old compulsive materialistic civilisation incites you to look at yourself, emphasises egoism, lack of accountability;

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— consciousness is the culture of the new civilisation based on sharing, altruism, love for your neighbour, and for the world around you.

It is to the extent that values and feelings intertwine that we are at peace with ourselves and are happy!

But how do we get to this stage? Here is another key insight, although it may be painful at first.

Happiness is not driving around in a car with a blaring loudspeaker (as was once the custom) and telling people what to do and how to do it. The raising of consciousness is a very personal act, the fruit of self-analysis, of inner processes, of genuine search...

You arrive after having personally experienced a crisis in which you have touched the dryness and the illusion of the consumer myth, in which you feel the painful existential emptiness left by the race for profit as an absolute priority, in which life urges you to remember that there are things more important than any monetary amount, and that it can be the matter of a simple smile... the passage is from a life lived by values induced from outside, to a life live by one's own values, own tastes, own inner requirements of body and soul. It's not an easy leap and is often accompanied by a deep sense of unease and existential malaise. When the old myths fall by the wayside there is an unavoidable moment of

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emptiness before we find new points of reference, this time solidly rooted in our own mind, so as to reconstruct a consciously chosen and therefore more authentic scale of values...

At the end the new point of reference we find is ourselves. For humanity these personal points of reference are as different as the men and women who live on this Earth. But they have the same texture and the same objectives: to value ourselves, our own feelings; to have and to reach new objectives that are connected with humankind and with nature. Wealth is and will always be a myth, neither a means nor an end, but pure energy that can be oriented toward the good, completed by the inner wealth of consciousness and love.

Happiness is the consciousness that makes you discover a new, worthy “You” that expresses itself and can satisfy your aspirations... It’s love toward your neighbour and the environment in a real, visceral way in which it satisfies your deepest instincts.

The caterpillar loses all contact with its old reality — it undergoes a drastic reorganisation before it becomes transformed into a butterfly.

THE FACES OF THE SHIFT

Mikhail Gorbachev brief biography



Mikhail Gorbachev was born on March 2, 1931 in the village of Privolnoye, Stavropol Territory, in the south of the Russian republic into a peasant family.

In 1950 was graduated from high school with a silver medal and was admitted to Moscow State University. He studied at the law faculty, graduating in 1955. Later, he took correspondence courses from Stavropol Agricultural Institute, and in

1967 added a degree in agricultural economics to his Moscow law degree.

Having received his degree, Gorbachev was ready to work as a lawyer. Soon upon his return to the home city of Stavropol, however, he was offered a position in the local Komsomol youth league. Thus his political career started. In 1970 he was elected member of the CPSU Central Committee. In November

1978 he became a Central Committee Secretary and moved to Moscow. Gorbachev initiated the process of change in the Soviet Union - what was later called perestroika, the fundamental transformation of the nation and society. Glasnost became perestroika's driving force. A sweeping process of the nation's democratization was launched and reforms were planned to put the nation's ineffective economy back on track to market economics.

In recognition of his outstanding services as a great reformer and world political leader, who greatly contributed in changing for the better the very nature of world development, Mikhail Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 15, 1990.

Destructive social and ethnic developments, which the emerging Soviet democracy was unable to curb,

eventually led to the disintegration of the multinational Union of republics that Gorbachev led. In his attempts to prevent such an outcome Mikhail Gorbachev made maximum efforts, save the use of force, which would have been against his inner principles of political vision and morality.

On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev stepped down as Head of State.

Since January 1992, he has been President of the International Non-governmental Foundation for Socio-Economic and Political Studies (The Gorbachev Foundation). Since March 1993, he has also been President of Green Cross International - an international independent environmental organization with branches in more than twenty countries. Mikhail Gorbachev also chairs the United Russian Social Democratic Party, established in March 2000.

Getting Down to the Basics

The book in our hand, dedicated to global, world-encompassing problems, addresses us in plain and logical language and marshals persuasive evidence. This makes our task easier. The task is simple. Get down to the basics, understand that global problems are not foreign to us. They are our problems. We are all touched by them, and touched by them not any less than we are by ordinary, everyday things. And it is we, each one of us, who not only can understand these problems, but can also do something significant to overcome them.

The fact is that with the passing of time a whole pyramid of diverse problems has been accumulating in every part of the world: social, political, economic, and cultural problems. Contradictions have appeared in society—in a different way in each country, but present all the same—and they have created conflicts and crises. Even wars. The relationship between humans and nature has become more and more complex and strained. The air has become poisoned, rivers polluted, forests decimated. The numbers of contradictions keep growing, and they are becoming deeper. Symptoms of illness in society became obvious.

People everywhere began to show discontent with this state of affairs and demand changes. Violent movements have arisen, such as strikes, disturbances. Society has entered a period of crisis. How will this crisis be resolved? It is difficult to predict. Society's sickness affects every single citizen, and threatens everyone with suffering. The end result may be an explosion, a bloodbath that nobody wants, yet which may come about spontaneously.

Is there another way out, a path beyond the crisis? The book in our hand gives an answer: yes, there is another way. We must not wait until society's crisis reaches the danger point. We must act! Every person can act. If everyone does his or her bit, together we can accomplish what is necessary. We can make an impact on those who decide the politics and the destiny of society, and motivate them to begin making the necessary changes. Changes that will not only resolve the crisis, but also show us a path of survival, of healthy development for people and nature, and a better quality of life for all.

The human community has reached the point where it is obvious that events cannot be allowed to take their own course. It is necessary to make a turn that would change the character and the content of development for the benefit of humankind. We have already become conscious that change is truly necessary. Now we must understand what exactly we must do to avoid the worst, and how we must do it. This book will help us to evaluate the current situation of our planet and to find the path we must take.

Wangari Maathai

brief biography



Wangari Muta Maathai (Ihithi, Kenya, April 1940 – Nairobi, 25 September 2011) was the first woman from central-east Africa to obtain a Degree. She graduated in Biological Sciences at Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas (1964), and then attained a Masters in Science at the University of Pittsburgh (1966), and doctorates in Germany and Nairobi, in veterinary medicine.

She became head of the Veterinary Medicine Department at Nairobi University in 1976, and once again she was the first woman to get this post. She was at first an activist then head of the National Council of Women of Kenya from 1976 to 1987, and for this she was labelled

a subversive, arrested and tortured. As part of this experience in politics came the idea of planting trees as a domestic economical measure (to make firewood), for environmental purposes (to curb desertification) and for the emancipation of women: giving women a useful and profitable role, and enhancing their knowledge, promotes them in social terms.

In 1976 she founded the Green Belt Movement, which since then has assisted women firstly in Kenya and then across Africa in a unique initiative at global level: more than 30 million trees were planted around cities, schools, and churches.

She received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2004 for this campaign.

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She was the first African woman to receive this honour. minerals, diamonds, land, and timber.

“Time” magazine in 2001 asked her what the relationship between peace and the environment was: “Many wars are fought for resources: in the Middle East they are fought for oil and water. Here in Africa, we have What the Nobel Committee is doing is looking ‘beyond’ wars to understand what humanity can do to prevent it. The sustainable management of our natural resources will promote peace”.

The Power of a Green Web

There is a connection, a common vision behind my works and the recreation of Green Belt Movement. Definitely, yes, the charity of Africa in my reflection on the experiences I had during the implementation of the Green Belt Movement, the charities that I've built and the charities that I've felt were not only charities in Kenya but charities in Africa. What is changing according to me, and what are these kinds of changes spring from?

The only thing that I can see is that there is a great cooperation between players. We have the recent G20 in Johannesburg that, for example, is almost now becoming institutionalised so that there is greater cooperation in the world with how we manage our finances and that there will be greater control of how our finances are managed.

I think that people can the fact that we are very interconnected as far as our economy is concerned and we should be concerned as citizens wherever we are. I guess that what is happening in one part of the world affects the other part of the world and that we are not so

secure no matter where we are. We know that the problem started in The United States of America and before we knew they were affecting people all over the world and especially very ordinary people so I think as citizens we are more conscious and we ought to, I guess, encourage our government to be more vigilant so that we the ordinary citizens are not adversely affected by the decisions that are being made by our financial leaders.

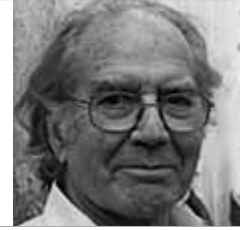
Yes, there is a lot of connection. We may be living very far from each other as countries, for example the countries in America, in Europe, in the East, in Africa but so much takes over our lives like the financial management are very interconnected it is being carried out in the world.

I personally think that the road to happiness is service and commitment. I think for us to be happy we have to be committed to something and we have to provide service and especially provide a service to our fellow human beings and our fellow, leaving tackiness, I want to say that we are not the only humans on this planet, we are also with the others, like animals, like plants, like birds and all of these. If we can solve their problems, respect their habitat and make sure they survive and if we can also be concerned about our fellow human beings to me I think this is one of the aspects of achieving happiness.

Connection, commitment and service.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel

brief biography



Adolfo Maria Pérez Esquivel (Buenos Aires, on November 26, 1931) is a pacifist from Argentina. An architect and sculptor, he attended the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Fine Art School) and the Universidad Nacional de la Plata (National de la Plata University). He taught architecture for twenty-five years at both secondary schools at academic level.

In the sixties, Pérez Esquivel began working with Latin American Christian peace groups. In 1974 he left teaching and devoted himself entirely to helping the poor and the fight against social and political injustice, embracing non-violence.

After the coup by Jorge Rafael Videla he contributed to the formation

of “El Ejercito de Paz y Justicia”, a human rights association that also acted to help the families of victims of the regime and the Falklands War. He was arrested by the Brazilian police in 1975 and imprisoned in Ecuador.

In 1977 he was arrested by the police in Argentina, who tortured him and keep him in custody for 14 months without trial. While in prison he received the Peace Memorial from Pope John XXIII. In 1980 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. In 1999 he also received the Pacem in Terris Award. In 1995 he published “*Caminando junto al Pueblo*”, which told the story of his experiences. Since 2003 he has been chairman of the International

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League for Human Rights and the liberation of peoples. He is also a member of the Permanent People's Tribunal. He is now an animator of the International Academy of Environmental Sciences (laes), based in Venice, which on 2 and 3 October 2009 hosted the World Venice Forum on "The health of planet Earth. Environmental disasters: irresponsibility and protection" in support of the establishment of an International Criminal Court for the Environment.

Nobody Can Be Happy Alone

I chaired the World Venice Forum 2009 which included the presentation of a project for an international criminal court for the environment. The International Academy of the Environmental Sciences (IAES) has been working on this on many different levels: firstly, regarding scientific issues, consisting in the analysis of the environmental situation at global level and the causes of environmental problems. The second, regarding economic issues, investigating the economy, because there are still companies that favour profit at all costs rather than the protection of human life. The third level – which is vital for our purposes - is to create awareness in people regarding taking care of the environment.

In legal terms we are facing a challenge that is even more important: we want to apply pressure to create supranational laws that penalise those who cause environmental disasters, and to do this it is necessary to create an international court with the power to punish whoever violates environmental and human rights anywhere in the world. However, the protection of nature passes firstly through education, which

is fundamental: we must raise awareness of the environment with public, government, and legal policies... with new educational policies.

As for the recession, we in Latin America live in a permanent recession, the recession is like ... a sister. The global recession in the autumn of 2008 has created an immoral and unjust situation; the governments of European countries and American are saving banks and multinational companies but are worrying less about their citizens. What recession are we talking about then? What are we really dealing with? Is it about a recession relating to banks and businesses, or people?

I don't see any kind of change in the upper echelons of the institutions of governments. The only changes that can be made start from the bottom. Through the reaction of peoples, organizations, protests by people, we can achieve real social, cultural, and political change. Cultural change! With a new sense of participation by the people we will achieve social, political, and economic change.

A French poet, Raoul Follereau said "nobody can be happy alone". Happiness means sharing, with others, as well as with the community, and with our people. One recipe is to restore balance. Balance within ourselves , balance with the community, balanced with mother nature, balance with the universe, and with God. Since it's not possible to give what you don't have, if we don't have inner peace we cannot give peace to others, nor share it. It is sharing that is important.

Shirin Ebadi

brief biography



An Iranian judge, lawyer and peace activist born on June 21, 1947. In 2003 she was the first Iranian and first Muslim woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Starting in 1965 she studied law at Tehran University and took the exams to become a magistrate. She started her career in the spring of 1969 and from 1975 to 1979 she was the chairman of a section of the court of Tehran. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 she was forced, like all female judges, to abandon her role, and only after extensive protests did she recover the possibility of working with a court of law in the role of “legal expert.” She considered this demotion intolerable, and for a few years her work activities were limited to publishing books and articles. Only in 1992 did she attain authorisation to work as a lawyer, opening her own professional practice. In 1994 she founded a non-governmental organisation, the Society for the Protection of Children’s Rights, of which she is still a manager. As a lawyer, she deals with cases of dissidents in conflict with the Iranian judicial system, which remains one of the bastions of the most conservative wing of the government, or in civil cases against members of the Iranian secret services. She is currently a lecturer at Tehran University and an active supporter of movements for women’s and children’s rights. She lives in Tehran with her husband and two daughters. Recently the threats to her life have, in her own words, “intensified.”

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Democracy as the Milestone for Peace

I have sworn to fight for human rights, particularly those of women, and I live in Iran, where human rights are violated constantly, especially after the last elections. Many of our students are now in prison. Only this morning, while making these statements, I heard the news that fifteen students had been arrested.

The Iranian people are not happy with the outcome of the elections in June 2009. At the reopening of universities, in late September, protests took place, and a large number of students were arrested. The situation in Iran mirrors that of many nations in the world. Is change happening? Is something changing? I know one thing: that people get what they want, and they will get it. I do not know when. Because of the complexity of the social situation, it is not possible to say when.

There are many forces involved. However, I know that everything can change: any change must start from the people. There is only one road to happiness, and it comes from democracy. Democracy means majority rule, but also that the majority that wins cannot then do anything

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it wants. It has to respect the limits of democracy. We must not forget that many dictators came to power democratically. The foundation stone for democracy is respect for human rights. Governments do not become legitimate just because they are voted for by a majority. They must respect the limits imposed by democracy. Democracy is the first condition for peace.

Lester Brown

brief biography



Lester Brown, born in New Jersey on March 28, 1934, started his career as a farmer in southern New Jersey during high school and college. After earning a degree in agricultural science from Rutgers University in 1955, he spent six months living in rural India where he became intimately familiar with the food/population issue. In 1959 Brown joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service as an international agricultural analyst. In 1974, with support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Lester Brown founded the Worldwatch Institute, the first research institute devo-

ted to the analysis of global environmental issues. While there he launched the Worldwatch Papers, the annual State of the World reports, World Watch magazine, a second annual entitled Vital Signs: The Trends That are Shaping Our Future, and the Environmental Alert book series.

He is the recipient of many prizes and awards, including 24 honorary degrees. He is one of the world's most widely published authors, has authored or coauthored fifty books and his books have appeared in some forty languages. The most famous of them is "*Plan B*".

Needed: A Copernican Shift

In 1543, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published “On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres,” in which he challenged the view that the Sun revolved around the Earth, arguing instead that the Earth revolved around the Sun. With his new model of the solar system, he began a wide-ranging debate among scientists, theologians, and others. His alternative to the earlier Ptolemaic model, which had the Earth at the center of the universe, led to a revolution in thinking, to a new worldview.

Today we need a similar shift in our worldview, in how we think about the relationship between the Earth and the economy. The issue now is not which celestial sphere revolves around the other but whether the environment is part of the economy or the economy is part of the environment. Economists see the environment as a subset of the economy. Ecologists, on the other hand, see the economy as a subset of the environment.

Like Ptolemy’s view of the solar system, the economists’ view is con-

fusing efforts to understand our modern world. It has created an economy that is out of sync with the ecosystem on which it depends.

Economic theory and economic indicators do not explain how the economy is disrupting and destroying the Earth's natural systems. Economic theory does not explain why Arctic sea ice is melting. It does not explain why grasslands are turning into desert in northwestern China, why coral reefs are dying in the South Pacific, or why the Newfoundland cod fishery collapsed. Nor does it explain why we are in the early stages of the greatest extinction of plants and animals since the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. Yet economics is essential to measuring the cost to society of these excesses.

Evidence that the economy is in conflict with the Earth's natural systems can be seen in the daily news reports of collapsing fisheries, shrinking forests, eroding soils, deteriorating rangelands, expanding deserts, rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, falling water tables, rising temperatures, more destructive storms, melting glaciers, rising sea level, dying coral reefs, and disappearing species. These trends, which mark an increasingly stressed relationship between the economy and the Earth's ecosystem, are taking a growing economic toll. At some point, this could overwhelm the worldwide forces of progress, leading to economic decline.

These increasingly visible trends indicate that if the operation of the subsystem, the economy, is not compatible with the behavior of the

larger system--the Earth's ecosystem--both will eventually suffer. Recent events in the economic and financial systems cause one to wonder if we're beginning to see the effects of an economy outgrowing its natural base. The larger the economy becomes relative to the ecosystem, and the more it presses against the Earth's natural limits, the more destructive this incompatibility will be.

The challenge for our generation is to reverse these trends before environmental deterioration leads to long-term economic decline, as it did for so many earlier civilizations. An environmentally sustainable economy--an eco-economy--requires that the principles of ecology establish the framework for the formulation of economic policy and that economists and ecologists work together to fashion the new economy. Ecologists understand that all economic activity, indeed all life, depends on the Earth's ecosystem--the complex of individual species living together, interacting with each other and their physical habitat. These millions of species exist in an intricate balance, woven together by food chains, nutrient cycles, the hydrological cycle, and the climate system. Economists know how to translate goals into policy. Economists and ecologists working together can design and build an eco-economy, one that can sustain progress.

Just as recognition that the Earth was not the center of the solar system set the stage for advances in astronomy, physics, and related sciences, so will recognition that the economy is not the center of our world create the conditions to sustain economic progress and improve

the human condition. After Copernicus outlined his revolutionary theory, there were two very different worldviews. Those who retained the Ptolemaic view of the world saw one world, and those who accepted the Copernican view saw a quite different one. The same is true today of the disparate worldviews of economists and ecologists.

These differences between ecology and economics are fundamental. For example, ecologists worry about limits, while economists tend not to recognize any such constraints. Ecologists, taking their cue from nature, think in terms of cycles, while economists are more likely to think linearly, or curvilinearly. Economists have a great faith in the market, while ecologists often fail to appreciate the market adequately.

The gap between economists and ecologists in their perception of the world as the 21st century began could not have been wider. Economists looked at the unprecedented growth of the global economy and of international trade and investment and forecast a promising future with more of the same. They noted with justifiable pride the sevenfold expansion of the economy since 1950, which raised output from \$6 trillion of goods and services to \$43 trillion in 2000 and boosted living standards to levels not dreamed of before. Ecologists looked at this same growth and realized that it was the product of burning vast quantities of artificially cheap fossil fuels, a process that destabilizes the climate. They looked ahead to see more intense heat waves, more destructive storms, melting ice caps, and rising sea levels that would shrink the land area even as population continued to grow. While eco-

nomists saw booming economic indicators, ecologists saw an economy that is altering the climate with unthinkable consequences.

Economists rely on the market to guide their decisionmaking. They respect the market because it can allocate resources with an efficiency that a central planner can never match (as the Soviets learned at great expense). Ecologists view the market with less reverence because they see a market that is not telling the truth. For example, when buying a gallon of gasoline, customers in effect pay to get the oil out of the ground, refine it into gasoline, and deliver it to the local service station. But they do not pay the health care costs of treating respiratory illness from air pollution or the costs of climate disruption.

We have created an economy that is in conflict with its support systems, one that is fast depleting the Earth's natural capital, moving the global economy onto an environmental path that will inevitably lead to economic decline. This economy cannot sustain economic progress; it cannot take us where we want to go. Just as Copernicus had to formulate a new astronomical worldview after several decades of celestial observations and mathematical calculations, we too must formulate a new economic worldview based on several decades of environmental observations and analyses. A stable relationship between the economy and the Earth's ecosystem is essential if economic progress is to be sustained.

Although the idea that economics must be integrated into ecology may

seem radical to many, evidence is mounting that it is the only approach that reflects reality. When observations no longer support theory, it is time to change the theory--what science historian Thomas Kuhn calls a paradigm shift. If the economy is a subset of the Earth's ecosystem, the only formulation of economic policy that will succeed is one that respects the principles of ecology.

The good news is that economists are becoming more ecologically aware, recognizing the inherent dependence of the economy on the Earth's ecosystem. For example, some 2,500 economists--including eight Nobel laureates--have endorsed the introduction of a carbon tax to stabilize climate. More and more economists are looking for ways to get the market to tell the ecological truth.

The existing industrial economic model cannot sustain economic progress. In our shortsighted efforts to sustain the global economy, as currently structured, we are depleting the Earth's natural capital. We spend a lot of time worrying about our economic deficits, but it is the ecological deficits that threaten our long-term economic future. Economic deficits are what we borrow from each other; ecological deficits are what we take from future generations.

Deepak Chopra

brief biography



Since the early 1980's Deepak Chopra (New Delhi, October 22, 1946), M.D., has successfully combined his credentials as endocrinologist with his exploration of mind/body medicine. He created a paradigm for exploring the healing process - a model he calls Quantum Healing. In 1984 helped to introduce Ayurvedic medicine to the United States and was also the founding President of the American Association of Ayurvedic Medicine.

Deepak Chopra is also known as prolific author of over 50 books and more than 100 audio, video, and CD-ROM titles, which have been translated into 35 languages. His book *Peace Is the Way* (Harmony Books) won the Quill Award, and *The Book*

of Secrets: Unlocking the Hidden Dimensions of your Life was awarded the Nautilus Award. His best-sellers include *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire: Harnessing the Infinite Power of Coincidence*; *Buddha: A Story of Enlightenment*; *The Chopra Center Herbal Handbook: Forty Natural Prescriptions for Perfect Health*. Many know Deepak Chopra from his regular television presentations for PBS.

Chopra lectures around the world making presentations to major corporations and organizations such as the World Health Organization in Geneva, the United Nations, London's Royal Society of Medicine, a number of major U.S. medical institutions. As the keynote speaker he

appeared at the inauguration of the State of the World Forum, hosted by Mikhail Gorbachev and the Peace and Human Progress Foundation founded by the former president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace prizewinner, Oscar Arias. "Esquire" magazine designated him as one of the top ten motivational speakers in the country; and in 1995, he joined the company of President Nelson Mandela as a recipient of the Toastmasters International Top Five Outstanding Speakers award.

Chopra is also the recipient of the Einstein Award through Albert Einstein College of Medicine in collaboration with the American Journal of Psychotherapy. Chopra joined

The Gallup Organization as a Senior Scientist in 2005. Now he's Chairman and co-founder of The Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California. Through the creation of this Center he established a formal vehicle for the expansion of his healing approach using the integration of the best of Western medicine with natural healing traditions.

Along with Nobel Peace Laureates Oscar Arias, Betty Williams and others, Chopra is founding director and president of the Alliance for a New Humanity, committed to creating a critical mass of consciousness in the world for social justice, economical freedom, ecological balance, and conflict resolution.

Shifting to the New World

We are already living in two worlds. One world moves ahead by inertia from the past—like a massive luxury liner drifting at sea—while the other steps into the unknown—like a child entering the woods for the first time. On the front pages of newspapers and on the evening news, the first world gains the lion's share of attention. A new crisis deepens yesterday's crisis in Africa or the Middle East. A fresh humanitarian outrage taints a faraway society. One war replaces another.

Despite the sameness of these events, they constitute the news of the world as far as the mass media shows it. Yet this world of inertia and non-change is deceptive. Beyond crisis-driven news, another world is rising.

The first world is a solid wall that looks impregnable, yet behind it people no longer feel protected. They dream of a shift in consciousness, the revolution that needs only to be asked for and it will begin. Material events are but the outward display of consciousness. Paying attention only to the world of inertia and non-change is like dwelling in illusions.

In the 1980s the annual May Day marches of massive Soviet armaments through Red Square didn't reveal that the Communist system was about to collapse. Armies, wars, ecological disaster, unbridled greed and corruption, skyscraper cities springing up like weeds, a deluge of pesticides and pollutants, streams of refugees without a homeland, tyranny spreading violence without check, pandemic disease: these are the fruits of consciousness, too, but a kind of consciousness that is stuck and unable to raise itself above its self-created problems. Fortunately, the second world—the world of timely change—is poised to save the first. The dispossessed of the Earth are rising and won't be suppressed in their quest for prosperity. Materialism has reached its historical apogee and will decline or self-destruct through accelerating degradation of the ecology. As viewed from the first world, these are such overwhelming threats that the response of governments has been to look the other way or to make little more than symbolic gestures at reform. From the perspective of the second world, it's no surprise that governments are stymied, because the policies that despoiled the Earth can't be expected to renew it, either by doing less or doing more.

Among their many utterly cogent points, Ervin Laszlo and Marco Roveda declare that we need a new way to be happy. For me, this is the deepest and most salient point. When an American housewife drives her car to the supermarket, purchases brightly packaged processed food, leaves a full garbage can out on the curb, and sprays a can of insecticide to kill the aphids in her rose garden, none of these actions seem destructive—she's simply doing the ordinary things we all do in

our pursuit of happiness. But happiness based on waste, toxins, depletion of fossil fuels, and endless consumer goods—the paradise we have all chased since the end of World War II—can't be sustained. Still less can we sustain the massive military forces that serve to shut out 90 percent of humankind so that the privileged 10 percent can promote a worldview that over time will spell the end of their existence along with everyone else's. When stated like that, the future seems dire. So it comes as a relief that this e-book for conscious change goes beyond superficial pessimism or optimism, offering instead a new way to be happy. Without a doubt the outmoded world of materialism is leading to greater unhappiness, through pollution, overpopulation, lack of nourishing food and water, and the loss of natural habitats: a sizable percentage of the world's population already experiences these deficits. Timely change through a shift in consciousness can bring about a new model of happiness based on the principles of higher consciousness.

WorldShift is about an outer world built on inner realization. Such a world is possible, as this book shows, and indeed is already being born in the hearts of millions of people.

Fritjof Capra

brief biography



A graduate in physics from the University of Vienna, a researcher in the field of high Energy physics, Fritjof Capra (Vienna, February 1, 1939) was the first person to explore the bond between science, philosophical implications and matrixes of ancient knowledge.

He was the author of *The Tao of Physics* (1975). The book sold one and a half million copies all over the world, and was translated into twenty four languages.

He is the man who read a Chinese text dating back to 1200 a.d., perceiving a quantum bootstrap explanation in it.

He is the man who compared the writings of Oppenheimer with those of Upanisad (the most ancient In-

dian books in the world).

He is the thinker that thirty years ago (*The Turning Point*, 1982) predicted the arrival of the current energy crisis, the hyperbole of the age of fossil fuels. Also, he deduced the clue to the emergence of “new models of cultural evolution” from the hardening of social structures and values.

After *The Tao of physics* he has published a book every eight years, each of them fundamental, constitutive, historical, in recent years he has dedicated his time to new cultural reveries.

He founded the Center for Eco-literacy in Berkeley, California, and dedicated himself to explaining the cycles of nature to children throu-

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gh the cultivation of scholastic gar- Science of Leonardo, 2007, and in
dens and has revisited the genius of his book The Botany of Leonardo,
Leonardo Da Vinci of holism in The 2009, for Aboca.

The Tao of Sustainability

I have just published a new book on Leonardo Da Vinci, a thinker who developed a science of organic forms, schemes of relationships, processes, and a quality science. In the previous book I presented a summary of his method, life, and his scientific achievements; in this book I delve deeper into a certain subject, Botany, in order to exactly describe the main ideas of this quality science.

For Leonardo, life is central to science. There are many books on Leonardo's science, but I have to say that this one, and nobody has said it before me, is truly a discovery I made. Basically, Leonardo always asked himself "what is life?". The mystery of life, the nature of life; when he talks about water he talks about it as a matrix of life, of nutrition (and we know that this is right, because of the cells). When he talks about rocks, modelled from water, he talks about them as the Earth's bones, of a living system. When he talks about plants he studies their morphology, shape, the underlying metabolic processes etc.

Leonardo's science is relevant for the times in which we live, for many

reasons. One is that Leonardo was a systematic thinker. He thought in terms of relationships, contexts, processes. “To understand” something, for him, always meant “linking” it to other phenomena, to other subject matters.

This is exactly what we need today, because our sciences are fragmented, incapable of facing the problems we have.

In this historical moment, in this context, we need change. We are living it. Enormous change. Because we are facing an enormous challenge: perhaps we won't make it. There are good reasons for to think that the human race may not make it in the next fifty years.

I became very interested in the theme of change, and I've written books on this subject.

In a time of financial and economic recession, it's very important to understand that the banks are not central to the economy. It's the well-being of the human race that must be central to the economy, and the base must be the Earth, ecology.

Instead we have a “bank-centric” economy. An American journalist, Arianna Huffington, who manages a very popular on-line newspaper, sustains that nowadays it is as if we were back in the old Ptolemaic system in which everything revolves around a wrong concept, and complicated hyperbolas are used to justify this system. However,

it's cosmology that is false. Now they want to save the economy and they concentrate on the banks, but it's not the economy that revolves around the banks, it's the banks that need to serve the economy, to serve the people.

I think that starting from the seventies we got fed up with exaggerated materialism, of consumerism, of a life without values other than consumption, without spirituality. In fact, it was in the sixties that a wave of interest in yoga, meditation and oriental philosophy started. In the seventies feminism and the ecology came in, which are themes of an alternative lifestyle. We have discovered an alternative community which in America was called "counterculture", at the beginning. This alternative community then developed into what we now see in global civil society, with all the websites and electronic links, which ideally derives from those communities in the sixties.

Here we have discovered that a life of relationships is the life that can give us the greatest amount of satisfaction.

Firstly, the awareness that we are not alone in this world, that we are all bound together, all linked together, is changing. The central metaphor of global society is the internet. When I teach children that networks are the main organisational scheme of living systems, I find it easy. They are growing up with internet, mobile phones, Facebook... which are networks: they know that we are in social networks. With ecosystems it's the same thing. They are communities of plants, animals,

and micro-organisms organised in networks.

When I teach in my ecological training organisation, the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, in California, I outline the link between the ecological community and the human community. In fact, it's much the same concept as a "network": the social network is a scientific name for what we call a community in everyday life.

Therefore, what can we do to be truly satisfied, to be happy? Be with friends. Walk in the middle of nature. Eat good food in good company... All these things cost little or nothing. Because they are the pleasures of living in relationships. In a community.

We already belong to a community. When I was at a symposium by Nobel prize winners on the climate, in London, I met Wangari Maathai, an African Nobel prize winner, who founded the very famous Green Belt Movement. I didn't know her personally. We sat next to each other at dinner, and we already knew what the other person was thinking.

We are part of the sustainability community, which we need to widen. We have to communicate to others that we live well, that we're happy. It's true, we work a lot, because things have to be done, but we feel very satisfied, we feel gratified.

We have to make people understand that when you live in a sustainable way you live well. Objects don't symbolise power, or wealth, rela-

tionships do. I have a car, a Prius ibrida, but I also ride a bicycle, I walk, I organise myself to work from home. I live very well, with my friends, in a community, without disproportionate consumption. If I was now asked to point out an expert in any field, I could reply in an hour after two or three e-mails: because I'm part of a global network. This is our power.

Steve Killelea

brief biography



Steve Killelea (Australia, September 8, 1949) is an accomplished entrepreneur in high technology business development and at the forefront of philanthropic activities focused on sustainable development and peace. After successfully building two international software companies: Software Products which ended up listed on Nasdaq and Integrated Research Ltd, an Australian publicly-listed company (ASX:IRI), Steve decided to dedicate most of his time and fortune to sustainable development and peace.

In 2000 Steve established his own private foundation, The Charitable Foundation (TCF), which specialises in working with the poorest communities of the world. TCF is one of the

largest private overseas aid organizations in Australia. It aims to provide life changing interventions reaching as many people as possible with special emphasis on targeting the poorest of the poor. TCF is active in East and Central Africa and parts of Asia. Steve regularly visits and is actively involved in the projects he is funding. TCF supports projects that provide sustainable futures for the community such as clean water, housing, agricultural development and famine relief.

Steve is also the Founder of the Global Peace Index the first ever tool for measuring the peacefulness of countries and identifying the correlations of peace. With data collected and collated by the Economist Intel-

ligence Unit, the GPI has sparked a debate in government, the media and academia all over the world. The Global Peace Index is now considered the benchmark for measuring the peacefulness of nations.

Steve's latest initiative, the Institute for Economics and Peace, specializes on the linkages between business, peace and economics. The Institute is an independent not for profit research institute dedicated to empower the academic community, civil society, private sector, international institutions and governments with the knowledge to proactively use peace to achieve their desired goals. Together with Australian filmmaker Tim Wise Steve established One Tree Films, whose mission is to produce world-class documentaries and other forms of media (including online videos) that have a strong fo-

cus on social issues. The first production "Soldiers of Peace" is a documentary film narrated by Michael Douglas illustrating the connections between individual acts of heroism and the systematic changes needed, if we are to achieve a peaceful world. The film received international acclaim and won a number of awards including the Angel Film Award at the Monaco International Film Festival 2008 the Golden Ace Award for Superior and Outstanding Film Making at the Las Vegas International Film Festival 2009 and the Club of Budapest Worldshift Ethic Film Award. Steve currently serves on a number of Advisory Boards including the Alliance for Peacebuilding and the Oecd's Global Project on Measuring Progress of Societies, and is an International Trustee of the World Council of Religions for Peace.

The Global Shift to Peace

During the last twenty years humanity has entered into a new epoch in its history. This has been brought about by a convergence of many factors. Finite environmental barriers are now being reached, and on multiple fronts. World population is expected to reach 7 billion within a couple of years and in many places in the world it is already at straining capacity. Technology is fuelling change at an ever increasing pace which in many ways underpins the growth of globalization. The world is connected in ways that were unimaginable even fifty years ago. Wars are no longer economically viable and change is occurring so fast that nations are struggling to keep up with both the legal and social ramifications. Even our language is changing, daily incorporating new words to describe our changing reality. Our notions and concepts of peace are changing with it.

Global challenges call for global solutions and these solutions require cooperation on a scale unprecedented in human history. Peace is an essential prerequisite because without peace we will be unable to achieve the levels of cooperation, inclusiveness and social equity ne-

cessary to solve these challenges, let alone empower the international institutions necessary to address them.

Peace lies at the centre of being able to manage these many and varied challenges, simply because peace creates the optimum environment in which the other activities that contribute to human growth can take place. In this sense, peace is a facilitator making it easier for workers to produce, businesses to sell, entrepreneurs and scientists to innovate and governments to regulate.

But if peace is an essential prerequisite for solving our sustainability challenges and improving our economic and social well-being then having a good understanding of peace is essential. This poses the question “how well do we understand peace?”. Fifty years ago peace studies were non-existent. Today there are peace and conflict centres in numerous major universities around the world. Over the last century we have moved from having departments of war to departments of defence and we are now seeing the emergence of organizations that are lobbying for the creation of departments of peace. While these changes are beneficial in improving our understanding of peace, peace has not yet become germane to the major academic disciplines, nor is there a concerted approach to the cross disciplinary study of peace. There are no courses on the literature of peace in any of the Literature departments of the major universities yet there are profound works on peace. Similarly there is no chair on Peace Economists in any major economics faculties yet most business people believe that their mar-

kets grow in peace and that their costs decrease with increasing peacefulness.

War and violence are not inevitable. All human societies have developed mechanisms for settling unproductive conflicts and providing a conducive environment for human development. This is an essential part of our human nature. As globalization embraces humanity we now need to extend these natural impulses to be globally inclusive and create a peaceful world so that we can move forward with the things that really matter. Global governance becomes key, but today there are no adequate global institutions that will act in the best interests of all of humanity. The global institutions that do exist today generally consist of members representing a specific self interest such as the nation state.

In 2009, with the economic crisis impacting most societies, global peacefulness has actually slipped. However contrary to popular belief the world in the last twenty years has become more peaceful. The frequency and lethality of wars has been declining since the end of the Cold War in 1989.

Since 1990 more wars have ceased than have started and the number of negotiated settlements has steadily increased.

Through history peace has been one of the most valued concepts yet the formal study of peace is new, its value to society is not well under-

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stood and is also poorly funded. These issues are inter-related but the importance of peace in a global society where the major challenges of this century require international co-operation on scale unparalleled in our history means peace is central to being able to manage a better future.

Therefore peace is the pre-requisite for the survival of society as we know it in the 21st century. This is worldshift that must occur before we can hope to tackle our many global challenges.

Giampaolo Fabris

brief biography



Giampaolo Fabris (Livorno, January 6, 1938 - Milan, May 20, 2010) was the president of Episteme Srl. He was also full professor of Consumer Sociology, the first Professorship of this kind in Italy and President of the degree course in Communication Sciences at the Vita-Salute (Life-health) San Raffaele University.

Fabris taught at the University of Turin, at Ca' Foscari in Venice, IULM in Milan and in the Sociology faculty

of the University of Trento. He was president of the Milan Triennale for a period of five years.

He collaborated with a number of both foreign and Italian newspapers and magazines. Fabbri was a lead writer of the "La Repubblica" newspaper *Affari&Finanza* (business and finance) for the "Consumerism" column. He is considered one of the most important international exponents on consumerism and brands.

Repainting the House

Over the last couple of days Barack Obama has declared these to be “very hard times”. But he also added that “above all we need to be honest with ourselves because there are times when it is enough to repaint the house and times in which it is necessary to reconstruct the foundations.” This has been an unpopular affirmation largely disregarded on this side of the Atlantic [in Europe] in particular in my Country, Italy, where all the attention and the stress is laid on “repainting the house”, promoting consumption so that the economy recovers enough to build up the previous status quo again, to avoid the total collapse of the economy and save the levels of employment

This logic is flawless, a sort of unquestionable tautology, together with the appeals for trust when the Italians have still failed to understand what and who is to blame for such a dramatic crisis situation.

It is said that there will be better days ahead: perhaps then attention will be dedicated to the structural aspects. The logic of *primum vivere* now seems to be the only one viable and there is palpable intolerance

towards those who maintain that we will only exit structurally from the crisis by adopting new strategic thoughts.

Obama followed up his declarations with an exemplary manoeuvre which was, moreover, strongly at odds with powerful lobbies: 120 billion dollars for renewable energy (whilst in Italy the return to nuclear energy has assumed triumphant tones); a 14% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020; rigid containment of arms expenses and the deficit re-entry with a reduction in the expenses for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan; tax increase on the richest, capital gain and dividends; accessible health care for all.

The last point is probably the most radical for a society that has always proudly chosen recourse to the market even in those areas in which, in Europe, it is the Welfare State which takes responsibility. The necessary reconstruction of the foundations of the system and the need to look at the future does not seem to play a part in either the government's plans or sensibility and, truth be told, the opposition is no better.

The perception that this crisis attests to the end of a historic era and that we need to leave the past behind and change appears to be totally absent. That economic growth and social well-being are no longer intrinsically bound together but moving wider apart. That "living well" and "being well" [play on words with the Italian to be/well-being] are not synonymous. We cannot emerge from such a serious crisis only by replacing old rules with new rules.

I recently participated in a round table discussion promoted by the Minister Giulio Tremonti, and listened with growing dismay to the most authoritative exponents of the financial community talking only about rules and new systems of governance.

There is no conscious awareness of the fact that we are really entering into an age where new ways of production, the flood of new technologies will create hitherto unimagined scenarios. But, above all, one in which the threats to the ecosystem assume a sacred priority and where well-being can no longer be pursued by accumulating material riches without end.

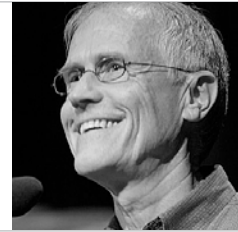
There is no pauperism in these affirmations. Only taking cognizance of the religion of limitless development, of pursuing the multiplication of consumption-which at this point becomes compulsion- means only, paraphrasing the American President, repainting the front of the building without noticing that it is, in fact, collapsing. That the damages inflicted on the environment, the heating of the planet, the dangers of intensive agriculture and the attack on the biodiversity are producing, to use a term beloved of economists, ever more serious externalisations for which there is no longer a remedy. That there are ever larger areas of need to which the market, as it is currently configured, cannot respond and which could constitute excellent productive opportunities for a languishing industry, instead of choking homes with products whose necessity is perceived less and less, accelerating with a plan-

ned obsolescence or with innovations that do not supply any benefits, a process of substitution which is by now only parasitic.

The dramatic employment implications of this crisis are well known as are the real problems faced by low income families where access to goods is still a conquest. But taking responsibility for this does not and cannot be an excuse for not observing that the current interpretation of the economy and way of life are now a thing of the past.

Paul Hawken

brief biography



He is an environmentalist, entrepreneur, journalist, and best-selling author. From the age of 20 Paul Hawken (California, February 8, 1946) he has dedicated his life to sustainability and to changing the relationship between business and the environment. His works analyse how to start and run ecological businesses, his most important work coauthored with Amory Lovins is *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, which aims is to try and produce more with less.

His book *Blessed Unrest, How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming* was published in

2007. In it Hawken describes this movement which is composed of millions of organisations as the largest social movement in history. This movement fights all over the world for social justice and for the defence of environmental and local cultures. This kind of Movement is unique and is based solely on the power of the ideas. It has no leaders, nor chiefs. It is divided into groups, but it is one.

Although his biography lists no formal education, he has been awarded six honorary doctorates including his most recent award from Portland University in May 2009, where he gave the speech from which this excerpt has been taken.

A Set of Instructions for the Earth

You are going to have to figure out what it means to be a human being on Earth at a time when every living system is declining, and the rate of decline is accelerating. Kind of a mind-boggling situation... but not one peer-reviewed paper published in the last thirty years can refute that statement. Basically, civilization needs a new operating system, we are the programmers, and we need it within a few decades.

This planet came with a set of instructions, but we seem to have misplaced them. Important rules like don't poison the water, soil, or air, don't let the Earth get overcrowded, and don't touch the thermostat have been broken. Buckminster Fuller said that spaceship Earth was so ingeniously designed that no one has a clue that we are on one, flying through the universe at a million miles per hour, with no need for seatbelts, lots of room in coach, and really good food—but all that is changing.

The Earth is Hiring. The Earth couldn't afford to send us recruiters or limos. It sent rain, sunsets, ripe cherries, night blooming jasmine, and

that unbelievably cute person you are dating. Take the hint. And here's the deal: Forget that this task of planet-saving is not possible in the time required. Don't be put off by people who know what is not possible. Do what needs to be done, and check to see if it was impossible only after you are done.

When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on Earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this Earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. The poet Adrienne Rich wrote, "So much has been destroyed I have cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." There could be no better description. Humanity is coalescing. It is reconstituting the world, and the action is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, campuses, companies, refugee camps, deserts, fisheries, and slums.

There is a multitude of caring people. No one knows how many groups and organizations are working on the most salient issues of our day: climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation, human rights, and more. This is the largest movement the world has ever seen. Rather than control, it seeks connection. Rather

than dominance, it strives to disperse concentrations of power. Like Mercy Corps, it works behind the scenes and gets the job done. Large as it is, no one knows the true size of this movement. It provides hope, support, and meaning to billions of people in the world. Its clout resides in idea, not in force. It is made up of teachers, children, peasants, businesspeople, rappers, organic farmers, nuns, artists, government workers, fisherfolk, engineers, students, incorrigible writers, weeping Muslims, concerned mothers, poets, doctors without borders, grieving Christians, street musicians, the president of the United States of America, and as the writer David James Duncan would say, the Creator, the One who loves us all in such a huge way.

There is a rabbinical teaching that says if the world is ending and the Messiah arrives, first plant a tree, and then see if the story is true. Inspiration is not garnered from the litanies of what may befall us; it resides in humanity's willingness to restore, redress, reform, rebuild, recover, reimagine, and reconsider. "One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice," is Mary Oliver's description of moving away from the profane toward a deep sense of connectedness to the living world.

Millions of people are working on behalf of strangers, even if the evening news is usually about the death of strangers. This kindness of strangers has religious, even mythic origins, and very specific eighteenth-century roots. Abolitionists were the first people to create a national and global movement to defend the rights of those they did

not know. Until that time, no group had filed a grievance except on behalf of itself. The founders of this movement were largely unknown — Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, Josiah Wedgwood — and their goal was ridiculous on the face of it: at that time three out of four people in the world were enslaved. Enslaving each other was what human beings had done for ages. And the abolitionist movement was greeted with incredulity. Conservative spokesmen ridiculed the abolitionists as liberals, progressives, do-gooders, meddlers, and activists. They were told they would ruin the economy and drive England into poverty. But for the first time in history a group of people organized themselves to help people they would never know, from whom they would never receive direct or indirect benefit. And today tens of millions of people do this every day. It is called the world of non-profits, civil society, schools, social entrepreneurship, non-governmental organizations, and companies who place social and environmental justice at the top of their strategic goals. The scope and scale of this effort is unparalleled in history.

The living world is not “out there” somewhere, but in your heart. What do we know about life? In the words of biologist Janine Benyus, life creates the conditions that are conducive to life. I can think of no better motto for a future economy. We have tens of thousands of abandoned homes without people and tens of thousands of abandoned people without homes. We have failed bankers advising failed regulators on how to save failed assets. We are the only species on the planet without full employment. Brilliant. We have an economy that

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tells us that it is cheaper to destroy Earth in real time rather than renew, restore, and sustain it. You can print money to bail out a bank but you can't print life to bail out a planet. At present we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it. We can either create assets for the future or take the assets of the future. One is called restoration and the other exploitation. And whenever we exploit the Earth we exploit people and cause untold suffering. Working for the Earth is not a way to get rich, it is a way to be rich.

The first living cell came into being nearly 40 million centuries ago, and its direct descendants are in all of our bloodstreams. Literally you are breathing molecules this very second that were inhaled by Moses, Mother Teresa, and Bono. We are vastly interconnected. Our fates are inseparable. We are here because the dream of every cell is to become two cells. And dreams come true. In each of you are one quadrillion cells, 90 percent of which are not human cells. Your body is a community, and without those other microorganisms you would perish in hours. Each human cell has 400 billion molecules conducting millions of processes between trillions of atoms. The total cellular activity in one human body is staggering: one septillion actions at any one moment, a one with twenty-four zeros after it. In a millisecond, our body has undergone ten times more processes than there are stars in the universe, which is exactly what Charles Darwin foretold when he said science would discover that each living creature was a "little universe,

formed of a host of self-propagating organisms, inconceivably minute and as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

So I have two questions: First, can you feel your body? Stop for a moment. Feel your body. One septillion activities going on simultaneously, and your body does this so well you are free to ignore it. You can feel it. It is called life. This is who you are. Second question: who is in charge of your body? Who is managing those molecules? Hopefully not a political party. Life is creating the conditions that are conducive to life inside you, just as in all of nature. Our innate nature is to create the conditions that are conducive to life. What I want you to imagine is that collectively humanity is evincing a deep innate wisdom in coming together to heal the wounds and insults of the past.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once asked what we would do if the stars only came out once every thousand years. No one would sleep that night, of course. The world would create new religions overnight. We would be ecstatic, delirious, made rapturous by the glory of God. Instead, the stars come out every night and we watch television.

This extraordinary time when we are globally aware of each other and the multiple dangers that threaten civilization has never happened, not in a thousand years, not in ten thousand years. Each of us is as complex and beautiful as all the stars in the universe. We have done great things and we have gone way off course in terms of honoring creation. This is the most amazing, stupefying challenge ever bequeathed to

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any generation. The generations before the new one failed. They didn't stay up all night. They got distracted and lost sight of the fact that life is a miracle every moment of your existence. Nature beckons you to be on her side. You couldn't ask for a better boss. The most unrealistic person in the world is the cynic, not the dreamer. Hope only makes sense when it doesn't make sense to be hopeful. This is the century of the new generation. They have to Take it and run as if their life depends on it.

Rajendra Pachauri

brief biography



Dr Rajendra K Pachauri was born in Nainital, India, on August 20, 1940. He assumed his current responsibilities as the head of Teri (Tata Energy Research Institute) in 1981, first as Director and, since April 2001, as Director-General. Teri does original work and provides professional support in the areas of energy, environment, forestry, biotechnology, and the conservation of natural resources to government departments, institutions, and corporate organizations worldwide. Dr Pachauri has been elected as Chairman of Ipcc (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), established by World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme in 1988. He has taken charge as Chairman, Ipcc from 20th April 2002 onwards. He has been active in several international forums dealing with the subject of climate change and its policy dimensions.

The name of Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri, has become synonymous with climate change and the environment. Internationally recognised as a leading global thinker and leader of research, the more so since sharing the podium with Al Gore to receive the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the Ipcc, he has effortlessly worn these two hats. Now, however,

he finds himself catapulted into a third unnamed role as international statesman promoting climate change awareness. As the world wakes up to the reality of imminent climate change, environmental issues have suddenly taken on an extra urgency and Dr Pachauri's work schedule has expanded enormously. These days he is constantly on the move, criss-crossing the globe to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate chan-

ge and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counter such change.

When not speaking on climate change, chairing meetings, making decisions for Teri, travelling and assessing for the IPCC, Dr Pachauri has managed to write over a hundred articles for academic journals, more than 23 books and for light relief composes poetry. His other recreational diversion is cricket and for this he will always make time.

We Are One Universe, We Are One Family

We know now enough to take action because the 4th assessment report of the Ipcc clearly brought out not only the current state of climate change, which is very serious, but also came up with projections of the future which, if we don't address by mitigating the emissions of greenhouse gases, in other words reducing, drastically reducing, greenhouse gas emissions, we will see some impacts that are going to be much worse in the future. So I think the knowledge on climate change is now very clear and I think most people in the world now realise that we have to do something about this problem.

I hope we will come up with a very firm agreement on actions that the global community will take on climate change, and I hope this will include very clear commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, also some funding of actions in the developing countries, particularly to help them adapt to the impacts of climate change, and some means by which we can facilitate the technology transfer to the developing countries.

The thing is we have to be concerned about a problem like climate change because even if we feel that we are safe from climate change, that would be a terribly wrong conclusion to arrive at, because whatever happens in any part of the world is going to affect us in some way or the other. And we need peace in this world, we need a stable social order and if we allow climate change to create a crisis for us in the future it will affect all of us, so we are one universe, we are one family.

Karan Singh

brief biography



Visionary Indian Statesman, Cultural Ambassador, Karan Singh was born on March 9, 1931, in Cannes, France, to the last ruler of the princely state of Kashmir and Jammu (also known as The Royal House of Jammu and Kashmir), Maharaja Hari Singh and his wife Maharani Tara Devi.

He was educated at Doon School, Dehra Dun, and received a B.A. from Sri Pratap Singh (S. P.) College, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir University, and an M.A. in Political Science from Delhi University. He went on to receive a Ph.D. from Delhi University. In 1949, at age of eighteen, he was appointed as the regent of Jammu and Kashmir state after his father stepped down as the king, following

the state's accession to India. He served successively as regent, Sadr-i-Riyasat and governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from 1965-1967.

He was then, successively, Union Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation from 1967-1973, Minister of Health and Family Planning from 1973-1977 and Minister of Education and Culture in 1979-1980. In 1990-1991, he served as Indian Ambassador to the US.

From 1967-1980, and in 1990, Karan Singh served as an MP in the Lok Sabha; since 1996, he has been an MP in the Rajya Sabha. He served as Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, Jammu and Kashmir University, and Jawaharlal Nehru

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University. He is an active member of several boards, organizations, and foundations, including the Author's Guild of India, the Iccr, the Auroville Foundation, the Indian Board of Wildlife, and several others. Presently, Karan Singh is Chairman of the Aicc Foreign Department. In 1956, he married Princess Yasho Rajya Lakshmi (1937-2009), the granddaughter of Maharaja Sir Mohan Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana, the last Rana Prime Minister of Nepal from the Rana dynasty of Nepal.

The Imperative Shift

With all its astounding scientific and technological breakthroughs in the last few decades, ranging from a study of the minutest of particles to the farthest reaches of outer space, from instant communications to unraveling of the human genome, humanity still finds itself in the midst of a series of major crises which, cumulatively, represent a serious threat not only to individuals and States but indeed to the entire human race.

Among the gravest problems that we face today are global warming and climate change, with its concomitant threat of a substantial rise in the ocean levels, massive flooding, millions of ecological refugees, drying up of rivers due to the melting of the glaciers and serious disruptions of cropping patterns.

Another threat is in the form of religion based terrorism which has now extended its tentacles to the far corners of the Earth, creating havoc and insecurity around the world. Added to this is another terrorist-anarchic axis by groups and organizations determined to disrupt esta-

blished State structures and set up what they call 'Liberated Zones', a process that will inevitably lead to anarchy and violence. The third crisis has arisen as a result of global meltdown of capitalist economies because finally, the unbridled greed and avarice of corporate culture, unrestrained by any moral or ethical considerations, has resulted in the whole system coming to the verge of collapse, thus raising the specter of massive recession, unemployment, social tensions and violence in many parts of the world including the affluent and developed societies.

The fundamental question that faces us now is whether any of these and other related problems can be solved without a major shift in consciousness. Our present mindset is based upon the Newtonian-Cartesian-Marxist premise of rejection of spiritual values and exaltation of material and dualistic thinking. This has alienated us from our spiritual roots, as a result of which the spiritual grounding that is necessary for any civilization to flourish has been seriously undermined. Quite clearly, this philosophy, as well as the current lifestyle of affluent nations and societies, has become unsustainable. If we continue on this path, we will surely face disaster in the not too distant future, and will leave for generations yet unborn a devastated and chaotic world.

In this whole context one can discern a number of new holistic movements springing up around the world that seek to restore the balance between human beings and nature, and to develop new patterns of conflict resolutions and social integration. As against the grim, self-

fulfilling concept of the Clash of Civilization, so brilliantly articulated by the late Samuel Huntington, there are formulations of Convergence of Civilization, and several initiatives on the ground for achieving this. The whole Interfaith movement is based on the ancient Vedic dictum “The Truth is one, the Wise call it by many names”.

One such example is the multi-religious, multi-national, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural township of Auroville in South India, based upon the teachings of the great evolutionary philosopher Sri Aurobindo and his collaborator the Mother. Numerous other experiments are also underway around the world, but these are still few and far between, and lack effective networking. What we need to do is to inject a sense of urgency into what may be called the “Holistic World Project”, so that all the various strands of the alternative philosophy can be brought together in a benign and effective symbiosis.

It is also important to remember that the shift has two axes, the vertical and the horizontal. The horizontal axis involves close coordination and cooperation between individuals, organizations and institutions around the world committed to a holistic philosophy as an alternative to the prevalent failed zeitgeist. The vertical axis involves each one of us in the crucible of our individual consciousness shifting to a deeper and more profound level. The latter is essentially an individual quest, and can be pursued through a variety of techniques and philosophies including yoga, Zen, meditation and prayer. It is only if there is an effective movement on both the horizontal and vertical planes that we will be

able to survive our own collective avarice and technological ingenuity. Let us not forget that despite the end of the Cold War we have had almost a hundred wars raging in different parts of the world causing hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees, and also that the nuclear stockpiles on the planet are capable of destroying the entire human race many times over. We have, therefore, to infuse a sense of urgency to bring about the crucial shift in our consciousness as well as our outer activities. As the Chinese proverb says “It is later than you think”.

We are being rapidly overtaken by events and it almost appears as if the forces of violence and negativity have assumed unstoppable momentum. However, we must under no circumstances give in to a defeatist mindset. Rather we must mobilize our material, intellectual, moral and spiritual resources so as to shift into a higher level of consciousness. In this alone lies our individual and collective salvation.

Edgar Mitchell

brief biography



American pilot and astronaut, Edgar Mitchell was born in Hereford, Texas, on September 17, 1930. Mitchell earned a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial management from Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1952. The following year he joined the US Navy. He later qualified as a research pilot and taught at the Navy's research pilot school. While on active duty in the Navy, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and a Doctor of Science degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics from the MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mitchell was selected to be an astronaut in 1966 and was secon-

ded to Nasa. He was backup lunar module pilot for Apollo 10 and flew again as lunar module pilot on Apollo 14. As pilot of Apollo 14, he spent nine hours working on the lunar surface in the Fra Mauro Highlands region, making him the sixth person to walk on the Moon. Together with Apollo 14 commander Alan Shepard he holds the record for the longest ever moonwalking session (9 hours and 17 minutes). Mitchell remained with Nasa until he retired from the Navy in 1972.

Footage of Apollo 14 moon flight were featured in the opening credits for tv series "Star Trek: Enterprise". Mitchell was also portrayed by Gary Cole in the 1998 miniseries From the Earth to the Moon and is

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one of the astronauts featured in the documentary *In the Shadow of the Moon*. Later, Edgar Mitchell was awarded honorary doctorates from the New Mexico State University, the University of Akron, Carnegie Mellon University and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He has written several articles and essays, as well as books. He's currently Advisory Board Chairman of the Institute for Cooperation in Space and is a member of Inress. Now, he is one of the initial supporters of the Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly - which would be a first step towards a "world parliament".

A View from Space

Those of us privileged to have viewed our Home Planet from afar returned to Earth with an unexpected bonus. It is an overwhelming and joyous appreciation of our Home, this small planet orbiting a mainstream star, one of millions of stars in our galaxy alone. The appreciation is derived from personally observing the “big picture” of the cosmos and our place in it.

Seeing the heavens in this way engenders a natural desire to nurture and protect this small haven of life from the excesses that modern civilization is suddenly imposing upon it. With all the wonderful discoveries of the past century that enhance health, life and well being, consider for a moment a few of the other amazing changes the past 150 years have brought about on Earth: a) transportation has evolved from animal drawn wagons to railroads, automobiles, aircraft and finally spacecraft to take us off the Earth altogether and then to the moon; b) increases in average individual life expectancy by at least 50% due to advances in medical science. The latter has resulted in a global threefold increase in population from under two billion persons in 1900 to over six and a half

billion today. The most informed estimates reveal, unfortunately, that nonrenewable natural resources available on this planet to meet the increased consumption imposed by industrial life styles can sustainably support only two billion persons. Obviously, something must change! The very survival of our species depends upon it.

We humans have evolved cultural behavior patterns and social structures across hundreds of years around the ubiquitous idea that the key to personal happiness and acclaim is the unfettered accumulation of material goods which bring with it social and political power. Certainly, during all periods a few ascetic groups have dissented from the materialist views. Although such ascetics represent only a small minority of total humanity, perhaps there is something to be learned from their view points about simple life styles and personal happiness. In this modern period, where Earth's resources of the planet now seem inadequate to support the lavish abundance desired by the most affluent, and where greed and self service are the major cause of the recent near collapse of the global economy, we must ask anew what alternative paradigms are available, and how they can be effectively activated.

There is a rich history in cultures around the world of personal transformation and transcendence which result in one seeking to serve the greater good, and where the attendant mind states result also in joy and happiness beyond the ordinary. The words metanoia, samadhi, satori come to mind as descriptive of such states. It would seem that in this modern period where civilization is nearing collapse of its resource

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base from excessive consumption, that a paradigm based upon unity and service to others is worthy of a strong new look and effort devoted to creating such transformations. It is my opinion that the necessary next step in evolution of our species on this planet is one that requires us to choose, honor and discover the personal rewards such altruistic behaviors provide for those life styles. The unity of all life is now being recognized at the deepest levels of cosmology. And unity requires we recognize that all of us on this planet must resolve these issues together, or together we will perish.

This change is not a shift that will occur easily from the top down, but must begin with each of us to discover for ourselves the richness of transformed thinking.

Vandana Shiva

brief biography



A physicist, economist, political and environmental activist Vandana Shiva (Dehra Dunh, November 5, 1952), won the Right Livelihood Award, considered the alternative Nobel prize for peace in 1993 and is now a director of the Dehra Dunh's Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy in India.

The most significant social ecology problems of our time are dealt with in his research institute, in close cooperation with the local communities and social movements. Vandana Shiva is part of an extended movement that criticises the assi-

stance and development policies implemented in Asia, Africa and Latin American by international entities, and indicates new avenues to economic growth that respect the culture of local communities, which have the values of models that are different to those of a market economy. This scientist denounces the disastrous consequences that so-called "development" has brought to third world countries. Development, or rather "bad development" as she calls it, instead of responding to essential needs, threatens the very survival of the planet on which we live.

From Oil to Soil

I think environmental crisis is far deeper than it's being understood. Millions of people are already losing their lives and homes and becoming environmental refugees because of the climate change. The destruction of biodiversity of water systems especially in my country is so serious that the book that I wrote *Water Wars* is now a daily reality in many communities.

So the first thing we can do is to recognize the crisis. The second thing we need to do is recognize that the crisis is too deep to be left to a few NGOs or centralized government to act.

Over the last three decades, the environment was something green NGOs looked after, the rest of us could continue to be consumerists. I believe that for every citizen the ecological imperative has become to go beyond consumerism, go beyond thoughtless consumerism. And that is because consumerism is very very costly for the Planet. And each of us in the conditions in which we are, needs to move into living with a lower ecological footprint and a higher meaning in life. And that

is possible. As the economic crisis aggravates the overall crisis, the combination of economic crisis and ecological crisis is an opportunity for us each to be engaged in shaping other systems of production and consumption.

I do see signs of a shift! I see signs of a shift for example in North America which was where consumerism was the only way of life and President Bush has said “Our lifestyle”, which was consumerism, “is not up for negotiation” in a 1992 summit.

I have seen the growth of something that people were part of in primitive societies, but it is the only way you can survive if you don't have a job - and that is bartering, giving your skills in exchange for someone else's products.

But that doesn't mean that everyone is shifting towards the sustainable, the equitable, the just. This is also the period for example the global agribusiness or corporations like Monsanto are trying to use the crisis to expand their power and control over the world food system.

This is as much as I can say that if we don't change, it will bring us to species extinction. But, as I said, if we change towards lower resource consumption, increased human expression of creativity, whether it is agricultural production or craft production and any other forms of work that can bind with creativity, there is a chance that the catastrophe we face can become a virtue.

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I see the biggest crisis of our times as the false assumption among people that they cannot do anything, that they are totally unskilled, that they have no knowledge and that awareness of human capacity is the biggest change that needs to be created.

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Peter Russell

brief biography



Peter Russell (London, May 7, 1946) is a fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, of The World Business Academy and of The Findhorn Foundation, and an Honorary Member of The Club of Budapest.

At Cambridge University (UK), he studied mathematics and theoretical physics. Then, as he became increasingly fascinated by the mysteries of the human mind he changed to experimental psychology. Pursuing this interest, he traveled to India to study meditation and eastern philosophy, and on his return took up the first research post ever offered in Britain on the psychology of meditation.

He also has a post-graduate degree in computer science, and conducted

there some of the early work on 3-dimensional displays, presaging by some twenty years the advent of virtual reality.

In the mid-seventies Peter Russell joined forces with Tony Buzan and helped teach Mind Maps and Learning Methods to a variety of international organizations and educational institutions.

Since then his corporate programs have focused increasingly on self-development, creativity, stress management, and sustainable environmental practices. Clients have included IBM, Apple, Digital, American Express, Barclays Bank, Swedish Telecom, ICI, Shell Oil and British Petroleum.

His principal interest is the deeper,

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spiritual significance of the times we are passing through. As one of the more revolutionary futurists Peter Russell has been a keynote speaker at many international conferences, in Europe, Japan and the USA. His multi-image shows and videos, *The Global Brain* and *The White Hole in Time* have won praise and prizes from around the world. In 1993 the environmental magazine *Buzzworm* voted Peter Russell “Eco-Philosopher Extraordinaire” of the year.

The Wake-Up Call

The ancient Chinese symbol for crisis, wei-chi, combines two elements: danger and opportunity. The danger is that if one continues to pursue approaches that are no longer working, then disaster is imminent. The opportunity is to let go of the old patterns and find new ways of being that unleash new, and possibly unforeseen, potentials.

The many global crises we are now facing are symptomatic of set of values and mode of thinking that is no longer working. Our tools and technologies have given us unprecedented control of the world around us. We have thus fallen into the trap of believing that the path to human fulfillment lies in manipulating the world us, manufacturing ever more things, and so creating ever more waste. This is clearly no longer working. Over consumption of resources and unbridled pollution of the oceans, atmosphere and soil are now threatening human civilization, if not humanity itself.

This approach also no longer works on an individual level. Despite all our burgeoning material comforts people as a whole are no happier

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than they were fifty years ago. The need to feel in control of events leads to greed, anxiety and fear, states of mind which, by their very nature, take us away from the peace and fulfillment we truly seek.

Many in the past have seen through the illusion that fulfillment would come from what we have and what we consume. We call them the wise ones, the liberated, the enlightened. These are people who have discovered a deeper meaning to life, an inner joy that is not dependent on circumstances, and a compassion that leads to care for other beings. Such people are often revered as saints, yet there is nothing special about them -- apart from the fact that they have woken up from the dream in which the most of us live. They hold the key to our future. A world in which we can live together, free from unnecessary fear, and in harmony with our surroundings.

Our various crises are pushing us towards this shift in consciousness, calling us to a collective awakening, and to a world governed by wisdom and compassion rather than greed and fear. The time to make wake up is now. The danger is too immense to risk. The opportunity is too good to miss.

Tomoyo Nonaka

brief biography



Beginning in 1979, Ms. Nonaka (Tokyo, June 18, 1954) was a newscaster and anchorwoman for NHK, the national TV station in Japan. Her main programs at NHK included 'Weekly Abroad', 'Sports and News', 'Sunday Sports Special' and others. From 1993 to 1997, She was the anchorwoman for the popular business program 'World Business Satellite' at TV Tokyo. In addition to activities as a journalist, she has been member for many Japanese government committees for Cabinet Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. She graduated from Sophia University with a major in Journalism, and went on to study photo journalism at the

University of Missouri, Columbia in the USA. Furthermore, she has been adviser and a member of the board of directors for many large Japanese corporations such as Asahi Breweries, Sumitomo Corporation, NTT Docomo, Nikko Citigroup, and Unisys, Japan.

In 2002, she became an outside director of the board for Sanyo Electric. In 2005, she became CEO for Sanyo Electric. In her position, she created the new corporation vision 'Think Gaia' and started to restructure many business divisions under the new vision for Sanyo to become a leading company to solve environmental problems with its technology. She created a three-year Evolution Plan aimed at reor-

ganizing the business portfolio and improving the corporate financial structure and conditions.

In a short time, Sanyo introduced more than ten new Think Gaia (TG) products, and the following four “world-first” products:

1) Eneloop batteries: rechargeable batteries that can be recharged up to a thousand times.

2) Aqua: a washing machine and dryer that reduces water usage in a wash-cycle from 200 liters to 8 liters by purifying the used water and making air-washing possible through ozone technology.

3) Enegreen: an innovative way to reduce electricity consumption in air-conditioners, refrigerators, and food show-cases in stores and supermarkets. Enegreen absorbs as

much CO₂ as a forest with an area 130-times larger than the store.

4) Virus-Washer: an air-cleaner that eliminates up to 99 percent of airborne viruses, including avian influenza (bird flu) virus, using a technology that electrolyzes simple tap water.

‘The Gaia Initiative’, a not-for-profit organization was established in 2007 to call not only one corporation, Sanyo, but also wider stakeholders (corporations, citizen, government and NGO/NPO) for solving environmental problems in the world, Gaia. In may of 2008, NPO Gaia initiative of Nonaka agreed to collaborate with The Energy and Resources Institute (Teri) in India with Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of Ipcc and the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The Need for Global “Lunacy”

In my small garden there are many ants running here and there at a fast pace—they believe that this garden is their own planet. If I would tell them that the land beyond the garden continues and is round, shaped like a ball, I am sure that they would respond with something like ‘Give me a break! We are too busy looking for food to take time for lunacy!’

I wonder how different we are from the ants in my garden from a cosmic point of view.

Is there anyone who can really believe that the ground under our feet rotates at 1600 km per hour? Is there anyone who can really believe that within just a few years we will reach a ‘point of no return’?

Unfortunately it is extremely difficult for most humans to believe something that cannot be seen, even if it is true, and it is even more difficult to for them to take actions without being firmly convinced of the necessity for them. There is no difference in this regard in the world of

business. Most business leaders think that success depends on short term results with immediate monetary returns.

Four years ago, when there was no serious interest and concern by global business leaders in climate change and its consequences, I became the chairperson of one of the largest consumer electric companies in the world.

I created a new corporate vision 'Think Gaia' and oriented the corporation's mission to develop and manufacture products designed to solve our environmental problems and leave our beautiful planet in a good condition to our children. I witnessed dramatic change and evolution in the company, beginning with a new awareness among the staff, spearheaded by engineers and designers and spreading to many business groups and divisions. However, I had to constantly battle with management and with financial advisors and investors who insisted that cash and short-term return are the only measure of success and are more important than vision and the mission to improve society and our chances for the future.

In the two short years of my tenure as chairperson, we were able to introduce more than 10 industry-first and/or world-first products. No additional big investments for R&D were needed. What was needed above all was for employees to have and to share a new awareness and sense of mission, and have the will and the pleasure to do work that is for the good of society. These developments empowered the

strategy to develop and produce new products based on existing and available technologies, as well as to develop new technologies.

At the end of 2008 the global financial meltdown crushed everyone's condition of life in the world, including those of people in developing countries who had nothing to do with the crisis. Business decisions and behaviors based on the principle 'money is everything' and 'success is only measured in monetary terms' have been proven not merely mistaken, but seriously damaging to our society and our planet.

Monetary capitalism is the devil, so are we going back to working the soils and basic agriculture? Or are we moving from Wall Street to Woodstock?

What is the truly important element in shifting our world? The shift, I believe, has to start with each individual, with each person reflecting how his and her own life and *raison d'être* can be changed, and what the necessary actions in his or her own life and given situation are—and then to share his or her knowledge and wisdom so we could work together toward shared goals. It's high time to take action to start a worldshift.

I should note that 'lunatic' in Japanese means 'cosmic literacy'. Perhaps we need to be lunatic to be able to solve the problems of the world. As Einstein said, 'No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.'

José Argüelles

brief biography



José Argüelles (January 24, 1939 - Washington, March 23, 2011) as a world renowned artist and educator, was the author of more than 20 books translated into several languages. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in Art History and Aesthetics in 1969, and taught at numerous universities including Princeton University, University of California, Davis, and Naropa Institute.

As one of the originators of the Earth Day concept, Argüelles founded the First Whole Earth Festival, Davis, California, 1970, now in its 40th consecutive year. In 1974, he was honored by the State of California for his contribution to the art and culture of that state. As a noted

painter and visual artist, he provided illustrations for numerous books, as well as mural paintings at different universities. He was the co-founder of the Planet Art Network (1983), promoting art as the foundation for global peace, while reviving the Nicholas Roerich Peace Pact and Banner of Peace (1935). In 2009, he was nominated to receive the Roerich Peace Medal by the International Banner of Peace Society. In 1987 Argüelles organized the world's largest global peace meditation, the Harmonic Convergence, August 16-17, 1987.

Through his lifelong investigation of the mathematics underlying the Mayan calendar, he made the ground-breaking discovery of the

Law of Time (1989). Since 1992, Argüelles has promoted the Day Out of Time Peace Through Culture Festivals every July 25, which is celebrated around the world. In 1994, he co-founded the World Thirteen Moon Calendar Change Peace Movement and developed various tools for exploring time-science, mind and consciousness.

In 2002, he was honored by a council of nine indigenous elders at Teotihuacan, Mexico for being the renewer of the ancient system of knowledge. In promoting the 13-Moon calendar, Argüelles convened numerous congresses, seminars and workshops around the world to promote universal planetary peace

and a sustainable future, including the World Summit on Peace and Time (Costa Rica, 1999); the First and Second Planetary Congress of Biospheric Rights (Brasilia, Brazil, 1996 and 2006).

In 2000, he established the Foundation for the Law of Time, a non-profit educational organization to promote the understanding of the Law of Time in relation to the biosphere-noosphere transition. He was the director of the Noosphere II project of the Foundation's Galactic Research Institute, inclusive of the First Noosphere World Forum. With his research associate, he worked on the seven volume series, Cosmic History Chronicles.

Noosphere and Mass Awakening. Preparing for the WorldShift

“Enlightenment is realized by knowing mind confusion happens because of losing touch with nature ... Just trust in the truth and preserve your basic inherent mind.” Chan Master Hongren, Treatise on the Supreme Vehicle.

The current global crisis in all of its multiple aspects is ultimately a crisis of the human mind and spirit. Of all of Earth’s creatures, only the human species has lost touch with nature and lives apart from the natural order, causing it to be profoundly and self-destructively out of touch with itself as well. Why is this so?

While one can point to many factors contributing to the human malaise and alienation from nature, one comprehensive and observable factor unconsciously keeps humanity not only alienated but deviating farther and farther, faster and faster everyday: A self programming system called artificial, mechanistic time.

The fact is that all the rest of life on Earth – comprehensively understood as the biosphere – lives according to the rhythms of natural time; the human species alone lives according to its own self-created standards of time. This key perceptual disorder owes to the mechanization of time which occurred some 400 years ago, thoroughly dominating every aspect of modern civilization, and contributing completely to the final crises of globalization and global warming.

However, no matter how insulated modern humanity has made itself in its artificial bubble of globalization, it is still an integral member of the biosphere.

This deviation of mechanized time within the biosphere resulted in the creation of an industrialized, machine driven social order furthered by what Lewis Mumford described as man's most powerful hallucinogen, money. Fueling this abdication to the machine was the dominant philosophy of the modern world, time is money. Within a matter of several hundred years the biosphere was turned upside down by this species running amok. In pursuit of profits in exchange for Earth's resources, it created, as a by-product, a fantastic artificial planetary superstructure called the technosphere.

Today, despite our efforts at observing Earth Day and developing "green" technologies, we all live within a technosphere that holds the biosphere captive and devours it without heed. Within the technosphere, there is a final stage called the cybersphere – a virtual noosphere by

which both our unification as a planetary organism is demonstrated and which, at the same time, contributes to an electronic Tower of Babel, the mass confusion of the mind in its ultimate alienation from nature.

From the whole systems perspective of the law of time, the human/environmental disorder caused by the self-hypnotizing effects of artificial time is referred to as the biosphere-noosphere transition. This transition is characterized by an exponential increase in: Mechanization, industrial consumption, population, toxic waste and pollution, species extinction, social disorder and the generalized phenomenon known as global warming. We are now at the peak of this complex climactic transition whose transformative deadline date is 21/12/2012.

Understood from the perspective of the law of time, this unprecedented transformation is preparing us to enter a new geological era altogether, the noosphere. What we are undergoing is an evolutionary shift that is absolutely inevitable. Cosmic evolution is an unstoppable force – it is moving us, the entire heliosphere, and the galaxy into another order of reality, which ultimately can only be for the good, for true evolution is mental and spiritual in nature. The question really facing us is: How do we wish to negotiate this inevitable change?

Even though it appears that more and more humans are becoming aware of the evolutionary deadline of 21/12/2012, the greater mass of humanity are still embroiled in karmic patterns that seem to be in a

deadlock of mortal combat. If the noosphere is the mental sphere of the entire planet, then are we all not going to be included in this new planetary mind? How can this come about given the present thickness of the veil of ignorance? Can there be a mass awakening in advance of the noosphere?

The key is education and information regarding the root cause of the ever-accelerating artificial timing program and the nature of the human mind. As has been reasoned, the human mind through its machines has already profoundly impacted the geology of the Earth. Thus far this impact has been of an unconscious nature. In this regard, the noosphere represents the emergence from the cosmic unconscious to the cosmic conscious. In the conscious phase of the noosphere, our impact will be positive and constructive transforming ourselves and the environment to reflect a super conscious, supermental phase of cosmic evolution.

From a planetary point of view, we could say that if it was unenlightened mind that created and remains immersed in the crisis, enlightened mind is the solution. Enlightened mind is the noosphere. If the confused state is perpetrated by the artificial timing programs, the enlightened state represents a return to living harmonically in synchronization with the natural cycles of the universal order.

If enlightenment is brought about by re-establishing the connection with the natural order, then there should be great enlightenment in

knowing that the mass mind lost touch with nature due to following the artificial timing frequency (12:60) which caused it to disconnect altogether from the natural order. The natural order of reality is no different than true mind. This perception broadcast and experienced as a mass event, would bring about a mass awakening.

To think about the noosphere in this way, one thing is certain. Civilization as we know it must cease to be. The cause contributing to the demise of the present world order would most likely be a CME (coronal mass ejection) knocking out the entire electronic grid. According to Nasa this is set to occur in 2012, when it is predicted that a massive solar flare is likely to occur disabling the entire grid, an event that would take months to repair. Such a blow would terminate the system of artificial time and its technological support structure, providing the natural, albeit catastrophic preparation for the noosphere. However, only in this way could the human mind have the opportunity to connect and interact telepathically with the Earth's electromagnetic field as well as with the sun. In this lies the crux of the global shift – a massive alteration of human consciousness. Consequently, the noosphere would be realized as a field of cosmic harmony, turning human potential toward realizing Earth as a work of art.

In light of the highly probable “Day the Earth Stood Still” scenario, advanced education about the nature and advent of the noosphere is ethically mandatory. This educational process should obviously offer survival cues as part of the preparation – mass awakening being the goal.

The noosphere is the inevitable goal that can unite the forces now tending in different directions. The task of attaining this goal by leading the world out of confusion back to order defines the purpose of the First Noosphere World Forum: Envisioning Earth as Work of Art.

Such a Forum, together with the Club of Budapest's WorldShift 2012 events and projects, intends to function as a nexus of exchange and unification for the numerous networks and web sites now converging on behalf of the noosphere. Keeping in mind the purpose of the law of time is to make conscious what was unconscious, by participating in these events, the very consciousness of the noosphere will be evolving. The luminous global network foreseen by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin as the genesis of the noosphere would be fulfilled. With super human effort, the success of the Noosphere Forum and the WorldShift 2012 initiatives could ensure that humanity might then pass en masse through the omega point of 21/12/2012 – the Harmonic Convergence of 2012 - and enter a New Time, where time is no longer money, but time is art. As the ancient Maya foresaw, while 2012 is the ending of one cycle, it is also the beginning of a new one – Earth's new geological era, the noosphere.

Ennio Morricone

brief biography



Ennio Morricone was born in Rome on November 10, 1928. In 1946 he obtained a trumpet diploma at a Conservatory, and in 1954 he graduated in Composition there. In 1958 he was hired as a musical assistant by Rai (the Italian state broadcasting company), but he resigned on his very first day.

His career as a composer of film music began in 1961 with Luciano Salce's *Federal*. However, he became famous throughout the world with Sergio Leone's *Western*. Since 1960 Morricone has composed music for more than 400 films, working with many Italian and international directors, including Sergio Leone, Gillo Pontecorvo, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bernardo Bertolucci, Giuliano

Montaldo, Lina Wertmuller, Giuseppe Tornatore, Brian De Palma, Roman Polanski, Warren Beatty, Adrian Lyne, Oliver Stone, Margarethe Von Trotta, Henry Verneuil, Pedro Almodovar, and Roland Joffe. The following are among his most famous films: *The Battle of Algiers*, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, *Cinema Paradiso*, *The Legend of the Pianist on the Ocean*, *Malèna*, *The Untouchables*, *Once Upon a Time in America*, *Mission* and *U-Turn*.

His production of 'absolute music' includes more than 100 compositions since 1946 to the present day. Ennio Morricone has conducted various orchestras around the world. On February 2, 2007, Maestro Morricone conducted a major concert

with the Rome Symphony Orchestra at the UN General Assembly to celebrate the inauguration of the new UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The following are some of the awards: eight Silver Ribbons, five Baftas, five Oscar nominations, seven David Di Donatellos, three Golden Globes, one Grammy Award, one European Film Award, as well as a Golden Lion and an Oscar for Lifetime Achievement. In 2009 the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, signed a decree appointing the Maestro Ennio Morricone to the rank of Knight in the order of the Legion of Honour.

In the record business he has had twentyseven gold records, seven platinum records, three gold plates and in 1981 the “Records critic” prize for the music of the film *Il Prato*. The soundtrack of the film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* is among the new entries into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2009.

The Value of Talent

Is there a possible relation between the recession in the autumn of 2008 and a latent crisis of values? Yes. It seems obvious that people are increasingly less attentive to important values, while on the other hand, they pay too much attention to money. I think the consequence of this belief is that more and more people try to become rich easily to find happiness. In this way a kind of imbalance has been created: on one side there are those who earn, on the other those who do not earn. In the end I believe that all this can be translated into a simple phrase: a lack of morality.

Personally I cannot say with certainty whether or not change may or may not be a way to happiness. I think without doubt that the most important issue is to be at peace with your own conscience and do your duty. These are principles that are more than ever up to date and necessary, and only superficially antithetical to the prevailing moral trend. At the end of any reasoning I believe that happiness consists in one thing: to find your own stability and reflect on it.

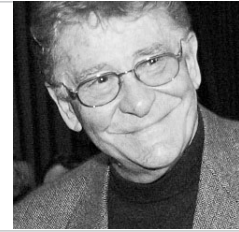
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Many say that passion for what you do is a steering wheel, a propulsive thrust to achieve objectives. I think there are many other elements that contribute to the achievement of results. I am convinced that passion is not enough but that a lot of effort, study, work, and perseverance are necessary, as well as and above all, without doubt, talent.

People often ask me if music is a force that can change the world, which can therefore be used for humanitarian purposes as well. It is certainly a tool, a means of expression, an opportunity that should be considered with confidence, but music does not change things. It can do good to a person, to an individual, but no more than that: I used to think that if everyone played an instrument all wars would end, but now I'm not so convinced.

Ermanno Olmi

brief biography



He moved from Bergamo to Milan when he was still very young to enrol in the Academy of Dramatic Arts. He worked at Edison Volta where he organised the cinematographic department, and from 1953 to 1961 he directed over thirty documentaries. His debut on the big screen was in *Time Has Come to a Standstill* (1959).

He won over the critics with *Il Posto* (1961), and he then starred in her masterpiece *The Tree of the Wooden Clogs* which won a Golden Palm Award at the Cannes Festival. In 1982 he returned to the big screen

in *Walking, Walking* and in the same year he founded the Hypothesis Cinema school in Bassano del Grappa. He then returned to full length films in *Long Live to the Lady!* (1987).

In 1998 he returned to win a Golden Lion award with *The Legend of the Holy Drinker*. In the mid nineties he directed the Genesis episode of the Italian state television broadcasting company project *The Story of the Bible*.

In 2007 he was involved in *Centochiodi* and in 2008 he won a Golden Lion Award at the Venice Cinema Festival for his career.

Happiness is in Choosing Essential Things

After the world economic recession, which is still ongoing, no significant change is forthcoming from the ruling class that could lead us to believe that there is a real will to lay the foundations of a new society, one that is aware that it has to respect the weakest strata of society according to a concept that elects social justice as the highest value of a true democracy.

Instead, what is changing in consideration of the recent scam in the finance world's schemes? Nothing. Through the new strategies being developed an attempt is being made to restore the same system that acts on the movement of the real money of savers, creating a false wealth that at the moment of truth reveals its criminal intent. A crime it certainly is, since savers do not have the possibility of defending their savings.

I repeat, no change has been forthcoming but only a cover up of the same old scam. People can positively contribute to change, but how? By re-ordering their priorities in accordance with values that give signi-

ficance to all our lives, just like the statement contained in the e-book by Ervin Laszlo and Marco Roveda: (“the way to happiness is in change”). Yes, this is a request that concerns everyone and everything.

However, in order to “attain” happiness we must first of all free ourselves of anything that is superfluous, which is false happiness. Happiness is not an objective that stands still and waits for us. Happiness is like a lightning bolt that shoots this way and that, faster than any attempt by our thoughts to try and grasp it forever; so it is necessary to be very aware to be able to at least be touched by a flicker of happiness. One of the ways that is possible in today’s world is to covert our lifestyles to a reasoned poverty. NOT a miserable poverty, but a poverty that is a free choice of essential things, a poverty that reduces our desire for the most precious items to the minimum amount necessary.

Love has still not been defeated by the practice of hate. Even if all comparisons of ideas, races, and religions become a reason for cruel conflict, and rites of violence and death are celebrated in the street. I am certain that the cause of all this is hidden in the many solitudes lost in a vacuum of trust. However, let’s ask ourselves where these elements of trust have disappeared to! Elements such as social justice, looking after the weakest levels in society, schooling, the aspects that come from a good example set by adults, have disappeared from the important institutions of states. Even the big private institutions that manoeuvre finance and the economy could propose a new concept of wealth that is also civil. However, the day will come when history will

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force us to face decisions that will have no margin for error. Therefore, we will be faced with decisions which cannot be reversed.

However, I haven't lost hope, which is the mother of faith. I think that very often the cause of our disappointment and discouragement is due to the fact that we are looking in the wrong direction. In other words, we see "reproduced and fabricated" realities, which others bring to our attention for their own convenience, instead of seeing life flowing past us directly through our own eyes.

Leonardo DiCaprio

brief biography



He was born in Los Angeles on November 11, 1974 and began his career as an actor at a very young age, starting in advertising to then moving on to television and movies. He has acted in many films, but the one that brought him to the peak of success with the general public was undoubtedly Titanic in 1997. His last film is called Shutter Island, directed by Martin Scorsese.

He has been involved in environmental causes for many years, and he is a strong supporter of ecological business practices. His com-

mitment goes back to the films The Beach in 2000 and Blood Diamond in 2006. The following year he wrote and produced the ecological and environmental documentary The Eleventh Hour.

He now drives a Toyota Prius, he has bought his New York apartment in an ecologically sustainable skyscraper, and he has bought a small island off Belize on which he is building an eco-resort. In 2010 he gave one million dollars to WWF in order to save tigers and to protect their habitat.

The Star System Towards Consciousness

We have to change mentality, to understand that ecological business, its ideas, and its revolutionary technology will contribute to the development of new economic relationships, and above all, it will save the world.

In an interview granted to the monthly magazine 'Style' of the Italian 'Corriere della Sera' newspaper, I stated that each time we pay for something we sustain business: we have to ask ourselves whether or not it's helping the environment. It would be great not to have to worry about these things, but we live in a market oriented society. One thing is certain; the future must move towards ecological business practices, which as well as creating jobs offer an identity and commitment to young people. Money must be placed alongside ethics, the future and civilisation, and this applies to the cinema as well. Of course, if a star promotes environmental issues, he or she has a certain influence and can make the public more conscious, more aware. Is this stupid? I welcome a star system that influences people in this way!

Personally, to be a supporter of the environment has made me more decisive over everything, capable of moving forwards, stopping relationships and friendships that were going nowhere. Just causes help us get out of a spiral of misunderstandings and remove insecurity. My life is not just my career: being part of the ecological cause has given me energy, also making me more optimistic. You can't be cynical if you understand that the struggle for the environment is a struggle for all mankind.

On the occasion of the presentation of the movie 'Shutter Island' in Rome I reiterated that I have been involved in the environmental issue for more than 13 years, but what I understood was that only after the film-documentary 'An inconvenient truth' by Al Gore did an environmental culture begin to have visibility and the strength necessary to stimulate change in society. Many people in the no-profit organisations sector had already exposed the disaster caused by global warming many years ago, but public opinion perceived it as a "serious" problem only after 'An inconvenient truth'. Al Gore has to be given credit for having explained certain urgent issues in a simple and brief manner, using the effectiveness of cinematographic language, thereby opening people's eyes. Well, now we have become aware that there are a lot of things we must do, and that they have to be done quickly. I have committed myself to this cause and I will continue to commit myself more and more.

Money cannot buy happiness: it can allow you to buy a lot of things

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you want, but not everything. We must not fall into the trap of excess, and I have to say that I have more than enough money. Money is useful for the environment as well nowadays, because if there was no economic development then progress in technological areas that relate to ecology would not be possible, and this allows us to do something solid to help the environment.

Robert Kennedy III

brief biography



Born on September 2, 1984 in Mt. Kisko, New York, he is the grandson of Robert Francis Kennedy, the Minister for Justice and senator assassinated in 1968 during a presidential campaign. Robert Kennedy III has a degree from Brown University.

He is fully dedicated to the environmental cause, an activity partly inherited from his father Robert Francis Kennedy II, the founder of Waterkeeper Alliance, an association that safeguards 250 rivers around the world and whose purpose is to sensitise people and institutions to environmental issues, in particular water pollution. Robert

Kennedy III is an ambassador around the world for the same association, including Italy: his decision was symbolic to adopt the River Lambro after the spillage of hydrocarbons in February 2010.

The young representative of the Kennedy dynasty nurtures a profound love of Italy, where he lived for some months and where he decided to record most of his film project "AmeriQua", the story of an American whose parents stop giving him financial support and after college decides to spend his money on a holiday, rather than creating a normal business lifestyle.

A Step Back for the Bliss

The economic crisis began with the crash in the Autumn of 2008 and lasted a long time. In fact, the USA even dealt with the economic aspects in the political campaign and the economic issue has been of great interest for some time. During my grandfather's era, they used to say the prosperity of a nation was measured by its GDP growth. I don't actually believe this. In fact, I believe the prosperity of a nation is also measured by other factors, such as the health of a population and environmental quality. Without these factors, we cannot consider the wealth of the USA, or even Italy. Currently, there is much publicity surrounding the economic problems, however the main problem is never dealt with, which is also obvious by how this is covered by the media.

I believe my father, Robert Kennedy II, is right when he says the green economy is not just of interest to politicians, but also individual people. In fact, these individuals must be called to contribute to a world in which people must not just simply rely on oil, coal or fossil fuels. We have to do so to ensure the government changes its way of working to build an international community where the people choose to act

when something has an impact on them, for example price controls. I don't think petrol has to cost so much, particularly when we see oil spillages like the one in the Gulf of Mexico (*Ed. April 2010*). Therefore, on the one hand it is necessary to invest in new resources, but on the other do so in such a way consumers change their way of reacting, obviously through a change in governments.

For me, happiness is hanging out with my friends, travelling (I love Italy). I believe people of my generation should be interested in the happiness of the next generation, seeing where it comes from. The government too should take an interest in this. I believe the government doesn't really have our future at heart or they are just wasting it away. We can also consider this in terms of economic liquidity. I want to be happy and I want my children to be too, as well as the future generations to come, so we have to think that to be happy we have to have fun, but also take a step back and see how things are going. Then, if things are working, we can all relax and drink a good glass of wine.

Our generation is also responsible for carrying the testimonies of those who came before us. I believe this is very true for my family and we have to respect that. It is not compulsory to throw yourself into politics or activism, but more so a family atmosphere where one speaks at ease of issues which must be dealt with in our society, rather than what's on TV after dinner. This also goes for the rest of my generation: Internet allows us unprecedented access to information and completely new means of collaboration. This can only help form a better world. Since

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we understand the opportunities for change is greater than the enormity of the problems we have to face and by taking advantage of such knowledge, we can make a better world for our children.

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Niccolò Branca

brief biography



Niccolò Branca is the chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of the Group Holding Branca International S.p.A and Fratelli Branca Distilerias S.A. Since 1999, under his chairmanship, he has lead the production companies in their dynamic international development and has implemented a controlled code of ethics in the companies, called the Environmental Statement, where an internal Regulatory Body uses a management system to control the quality and safety of the foodstuffs produced. This has lead to issuing of certification in compliance with the international standards, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and International Food Standard (IFS), a system of managing health and sa-

fety in the workplace.

Having studied accounting, he completed his training with a series of advanced scientific studies in the field of Human Psychology, taking a course in holistic medicine in 1990, a course in Psychosynthesis under one of Assagioli's students from 1991 to 1995, achieved a Masters in Psychotherapy from the Strategic Therapy Centre directed by Giorgio Nardone and achieved a Degree in the Usui System of Reiki Healing. He practiced meditation for over twenty years and teaches the Suryani Meditation method.

In the Nineties Niccolò Branca took on numerous cultural commitments alongside his entrepreneurial experience leading him to integrate dif-

ferent, but closely related, dimensions in humanistic and systemic leadership.

In the early 1990's he was chairperson of the Kosmos Ethos cultural association, a place welcoming of related, dynamic reason where religions and philosophy, science and art, ethics and technique meet. He also collaborated, in 1990, with a cultural scientific association of Holistic Research and also writes articles for one of the main magazines of its kind in Italy.

In 1991 he became director of the Saggazza Scienza e Tecnica series from the Nardini publishing house in Florence. From 1990 to 1998 he was the founder, with a group of friends, and then became chairper-

son, of a financial company which then became Banca Ifigest S.p.A. Also in the Nineties, he took on the role of Chief Operating Officer for New Investment Company S.p.A., a financial and M&A company.

A sports enthusiast, he is a rider for national and international horse races and has represented Italy abroad. He has also participated in three white water rafting expeditions: one in Zaire and two world firsts in white water rafting, one in Zambia, Africa, descending the Zambesi, and the other in Sumatra, Indonesia descending the Alas. Niccolò Branca is the author of the book Sumatra, l'Avventura sulle Acque che Corrono (1985) and numerous other publications.

The Power of Dreams, the Focus on Reality

Nowadays, three billion people (the poorest 57% of the global population) share the same portion of the global income owned, on the other end of the scale, by just 50 million people (the richest 1%).

We, inhabitants of privileged countries, are squandering a heritage that should be considered as a common good of the human race. Nevertheless we do it, due to the almost unlimited freedom that we have given ourselves to waste, exploit, squander, and drain every resource, even when clearly not renewable.

Many are convinced that governments' political actions could rectify the consequences of such extreme liberalism. Of course, governments' actions can contribute to the settlement and respect of the rules. These rules would provide for control analysis of products, and forbid the trading of flawed and dangerous ones. Moreover, they would prosecute consumer deception, misleading advertising, and hazy negotiations. They would define the regulations for stock markets, the communication of company financial records, auditing, so that economic

entities could operate while obeying the same rules.

However, if it actually was the right path, these problems should have been solved a long time ago. Unfortunately, they still exist. There still are people deceiving consumers, damaging environment or defrauding investors.

For this reason, the currently prevalent supposition that the degenerative process in the economics world can be attributable to the lack of effective rules is lately at odds with a widespread theory that rules are no longer enough. Almost everywhere in the world it is debated that a cultural gap able to change the rules' area of enforcement is now necessary.

As a matter of fact, it has become clear that even the most perfect government-controlled economy system can only affect the way companies behave in their business, but cannot have any effect on goals considered trivial by firms.

A self-aware and long-lasting acting cannot be motivated by any normative system or ideology. It should first come from an inner change. This is the innovation we should introduce to our firms, and in our everyday actions. This is the cultural and mentality change that all of us should do.

It is precisely in this moment, when even the most common respect and

civil principles seem to crumble around us that we have to learn once more to dare and have the courage to revert to following our dreams.

Each person, after all, is seeking to give a meaning to his or her life, a meaning that could come from the awareness of doing one's part to make the world a better place, starting from ourselves and from the possibilities offered by one's professional responsibility. This awareness should become a constant point of reference in our everyday actions. The outcome is global ethics, not just partial; this ethics should be considered as a genuine experience with our truth, as an action coming from our inner part, from awareness.

We are dealing with a new vision of the company. It should be concerned about the environment, social development, managed under a set of common values, by a new culture that conceives work in a close connection with passion, ideals, knowledge, utility, ethics, beauty, and harmony.

We are obviously not talking about throwing away the establishment of the economical value, but it is essential one takes a close look at a new efficiency, creation of an economics, but also social and environmental value. The profit, the creation of an economic-financial value, cannot be separated from the creation of a human value and of a long-lasting individual improvement of intangible preciousness.

An anthropological research carried out among the aboriginals hi-

ghlighted the customs of a nomad territory tribe changing its territory continuously to escape unfavourable weather conditions - a hard, rootless life.

The researcher asked them how they managed to keep their identity in spite of everything, even without a reference territory. A wise old man replied to the researcher's question just by pointing at the totem he carried on his shoulders. The totem symbolizes the centre of the world and that tribe always brought it with them. Everywhere they go, the world is symbolically with them.

This is the reason why, to enter in deep contact with oneself, to revert to our inner self, to self-consciousness and to awareness, before writing some rules, it is important to define which our centre of the world is.

All of this spurs a sense of responsibility that isn't only reflected in a limited area involving just us or our close surroundings. To come back to our inner part means to be engrossed in the matter and to become responsible for what is to come around us.

To generate a deep influenced, long-lasting change in the world, we first need to change ourselves and our attitude. This change will bring out the strong desire to solve those problems that, nowadays, aren't handled with the efficiency and urgency they deserved.

It is the power of dreams, of wishful thinking, of hope, but with a focus on pragmatism and on reality.

Christian Boiron

brief biography



Christian Boiron graduated in Pharmacy in 1970 and at the same time joined his family's company as the export manager. In 1971 he graduated with a Diploma at the Company Management Institute, and in 1972 he graduated with a Diploma from the Industrial Pharmacy Institute. In 1976 he became the general manager of the Boiron Group and in 1983 he became its chairman. When he became chairman of the board of directors of the Boiron Group in 2005, he asked his younger brother Thierry to return from the United States to become general manager of the group. Christian Boiron is currently chairman of the Boiron Group and Boiron Italia. He has held numerous

important positions in his career: among others he was Vice-Major of Lyon, responsible for economic and international development from 1989 to 1992 and he was a member of the "Mission du Développement et Evolution du CNPF (Conseil national patronat français)", a member of the MEDEF (Mouvement des Entreprises de France) ethics committee, and a member of the EM Scientific Committee. He currently teaches Human Science at the Lyon South University in the faculty of Medicine, and he is a member of this University's Board of Directors. He is also been a Knight of the Order of Merit since 1986, and since 2009 he has been Knight of the Order of the

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Academic Palms. Lastly, Christian Boiron is the author of five books, almost all regarding the subject of happiness. His last book was “We were all born to be happy” (Sperling & Kupfer 2011). He was awarded the Vivi Salute-Cergas prize in the competition’s seventh edition scientific – informative publications category.

Working on Yourself to Change the World

The current economic and social recession is a recession that concerns development. A person also goes from crisis to crisis in his/her personal evolution: the path to happiness is a path that contains numerous crises, for example even a child goes through health and physical problems in growing-up. Therefore, what is the significance of the financial and political crises? In my opinion the significance is that we become increasingly adult at a global financial level and in terms of global democracy. This is why in my book “We were all born to be happy” I proposed the foundation of the United States of the World, because I think that now is the time to establish it. It is a necessity, our duty for global justice, for the rights of women and children, to fight famine in the world, for an end to wars. We have a hundred years to do it and we need to start now.

We live in a constant state of change. The most important attitudes we have to develop to contribute in a positive way are the acceptance of the world as it is, and acceptance of ourselves and what we are like: this is not just the key to individual happiness, but also the key

to happiness in the world. In order to change we have to take into account what I refer to as the “evolutionary paradox”: if I do not accept the world I participate in the world’s difficulties in a negative way. If instead I accept the world as it is, I participate in positive change. Therefore we must accept the world as it is and work on ourselves to be increasingly happier and in a condition to participate in the evolution of the world. In order to be able to create happiness it is first of all necessary to understand its mechanism, which is currently little known.

I researched this and wrote a book to make everyone understand that happiness has nothing to do with what we normally think it is. Everyone thinks they know what it is, but normally they don’t know what it is. Happiness has nothing to do with pleasure; it concerns being yourself. What we have to do is modify the “program” in our interior computer, which is generally a “program” developed by others, to insert functions of our personal “program”. Therefore we have to work on our own philosophy of life and put it in practice, and get rid of bad conditioning that prevents us from being ourselves.

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