

Deconstructing Democracy



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Facebook: From Democracy to Eco-Governance

Preface

Deconstructing Democracy was written as a response to global events and to a series of “democratic elections” across the world that ushered into power, governing parties increasingly antagonistic to the so called democratic foundations of freedom, equality and justice. Scanning the record of democratic countries worldwide, it was hard to identify any one country that could truly shine the democratic values they claim to uphold. All seemed, to some extent or another, to have sold out to incentives of profit and power and the exploitation of people and planet. And yet, mainstream conversations continued to idealize democracy as the royal road to healthy governance. The dissonance between the ideal and the real catalyzed this exploration into the fundamental flaws of the democratic system.

Deconstructing Democracy is the first part of an evolving process that seeks to unravel some of the myths and challenges of the democratic system. It has been published on the website www.togetherincreation.org and is available for download as a pdf in order to contribute to new ways of thinking about the history and future of governance.

The second part of the exploration is the work of **Co-creating Eco-Governance**. It is not sufficient to resist that which is not working. For healing and transformation, it is essential that we articulate a new form of governance that responds wisely to the challenges and opportunities of our time, and integrates evolving knowledge and wisdom in life-enhancing ways.

Co-creating Eco-Governance is a work in progress. Eco-governance is founded on the notion that the only legitimate purpose of governance is to cultivate the health and vitality of the planet and all its inhabitants for generations to come. Inspired by the rich tapestry of emerging wisdom, Eco-Governance seeks to offer a framework, organizing principles and

structure for a new way of organizing ourselves as a species on the planet. You can also learn more about co-creating eco-governance as it evolves on the website.

With blessings for the wise transition to a new and healthy form of global eco-governance.

Shelley Ostroff, (PhD)



Introduction

Democracy and beyond

A new consciousness is developing which sees the earth as a single organism and recognizes that an organism at war with itself is doomed. We are one planet. Carl Sagan - The Inspiration Journey

As the threats to people and planet spiral exponentially and we face the destruction of life as we know it, it is clear that we need a radically new governing system that puts the healing and rehabilitation of our interconnected world as the collective priority. The health of people and planet has been ruthlessly compromised by our current governance systems based on ideas of separateness, hierarchy, privilege and domination that abuse human and planetary resources for the benefit of a few.

It is time to articulate a new governance system – an interconnected, coherent system of local and global eco-governance for the well-being of all.

What would such a radically new system look like? How can we reverse the global disease and destruction and offer hope for a flourishing future? How can we extricate ourselves from the grips of the mainstream mindset and those that have hijacked the political, legal and financial resources of most governments? How can we reclaim the power of governance for the benefit of the whole?

In the face of vast global crises, people are uniting across boundaries to protest current systems and articulate alternatives. When the environment is diseased and dying, people across the world suffer and die. The immensity of global threats confront us now more than ever with our shared destiny. We can no longer believe that we can export our violence and pollution and remain immune to the consequences.

Wherever there is privilege, oppression and imbalance there will be disease. Where all feel safety, hope and the ability to contribute their talents to a better world for all, there will be peace and vitality. Coming together beyond self-interest to collective wellness is the only way forward.

People across the world are saying a collective NO to the current system. Now we need to articulate a compelling alternative to mobilize a collective YES. With a powerful and pragmatic vision, social media and a range of existing technologies, we can together overthrow unjust laws, redistribute resources and implement healthy practices in a way that best serves the healing of the planet and a thriving future for all.

While many examples in the coming chapters are taken from the United States, the patterns addressed are similar in democracies throughout the world. At the time of writing, Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton have emerged as the presidential candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties in the highly controversial 2016 US presidential campaign. In almost farcical fashion, the campaign provides a powerful and frightening mirror of global trends and of the culmination of many of the driving forces prevalent in democratic society. It underscores the corruption, dangers and absurdities embedded in the system and signifies the inevitable death of democracy as we have come to think about it.

To articulate a new form of governance it is essential that we first deconstruct the wide range of assumptions that drive our existing democratic and non-democratic societies. We must distil the wisdom from the suffering and devastation, and integrate the lessons into a new system -

a system based on a mindset that cultivates life and puts the planet and all its inhabitants first.

As we witness the current systems implode from within, leaders from all walks of life are rising to offer new pathways.

As daunting as the task may seem, the ideas, information, technology and people are in place to make it happen. What we need now is to co-create a compelling vision and coherent process for the radical uncompromising healing and flourishing of life on the planet.



PART 1:
DECONSTRUCTING
DEMOCRACY



Chapter 1

Democracy and the domination mindset

Despite the often brutal consequences of democracies to people and planet we have been led to believe that democracy is the optimal form of governance to which all countries should aspire.

Democracy can be seen as the most evolved form of modern governance. It was created with the intention of giving voice to the people, protecting their rights and offering equality in the name of the law. It evolved in opposition to other forms of governance such as monarchies, dictatorships and oligarchies where absolute power is held by individuals or a small group of people. But history has shown that most democracies have become contaminated by the very same dynamic of abusive power, oppression and corruption evident in these other forms of governance. While democracy legitimized the issue of individual rights to equality, freedom and justice, democracies have for the most part failed to deliver on these basic values.

Over the last centuries, democratically elected governments have participated in some of the most devastating activity against humans and the environment. We can no longer rely on the promises of the democratic system to bring about a better world.

Democracy, has given people a political voice and an opportunity to experience how we use the power that comes with it. However, being given a voice and a vote is not sufficient to ensure we use it to create a more just and healthy world. While democracy was conceived in order to right many of the wrongs of other systems it was nevertheless rooted in the same mindset of separateness and domination. It is only when we move beyond this mindset, learn about our interconnectedness, and learn from life how to cultivate life that we will be able to develop a healthy form of

governance and heal and transform our damaged world. To move beyond the mindset of domination it is important to first step outside of it, question its assumptions and acknowledge its limitations and consequences.

Our experience with democracy has provided us the opportunity to reflect on how we have chosen to use power within an hierarchical framework. What we have done with our democracy confronts us with the consequences of the choices we have collectively made. In this sense democracy has been a powerful catalyst for human evolution, and the evolution of how we govern ourselves.

We are now facing the consequences of how we have taken up our roles as citizens with a voice and a vote and how we have co-created the reality we currently live. Unlike in dictatorships there is no-one else to blame. This is a big step forward in our maturation process.

The history of democracy is often reflected in stories of the painful struggle between our capacity for ruthlessness on the one hand and compassion on the other. In the overall picture, like other systems of domination, democracy has led to the destructive power of a ruling group over all other groups, and of humans over other species and the environment.

Domination: the framework of separateness, hierarchy and privilege

The domination of life mindset is a mindset based on the notion that the world is comprised of separate parts with an intrinsic relationship of superiority and inferiority among these parts. A superior status is seen as bestowing the privilege to dominate that which is considered inferior to oneself for one's own benefit.

While the democratic ideal emerged in opposition to a system where one or a few have power of all, we are to a large extent blind to the way in which the domination dynamic is at the core of the democratic framework itself.

Rooted in a human centered framework, the democratic worldview colludes with the notion that humans are superior to other species and the environment. It privileges humans over other species and legitimizes exploiting them and the environment for human benefit. The dynamic of oppression is thus an integral part of the framework, and where there is oppression of one part of a system by another there will inevitably be conflict and disease.

The pyramidal leadership structure and the majority vote are examples of how the democratic system encourages dynamics of power and privilege of some over others, a class based society and a rule of the financial elite. While democracy came to give an equal voice to all people, the history of democracy shows that this concept is still not fully applied in most countries.

Hierarchy is a hallmark of most patriarchal societies. In modern western culture hierarchy takes many forms such as: humans over other species, men over women, races, ethnicities, cultures and various identity groups over others. Within these groups there are further and further fragmentations and layers of perceived superiority, inferiority, privilege and oppression. With the notion of hierarchy, we have even learned to perceive the mind as superior to the body and the rational mind as superior to other intelligences. These concepts generate cultures severely in conflict within themselves.

The idea of separateness and superiority, leads to the investment in one's individual and group status privilege and entitlement. It cultivates the notion that one's own self-interest is achieved at the expense of others. Governance systems based on privilege and exploitation produce cultures of ruthless competition, corruption and violence.

Rooted in the human-centered mindset of separateness and domination, democracy is a framework that lends itself to the abuse of power. Now, the stakes have never been higher. The system has become an exceptionally sophisticated tool for implementing brutal agendas. Democracies are

complicit in leading and spreading war, poverty, disease and terror across the globe. Under the guise of promoting freedom, equality and justice they have been used to promote domination and exploitation. The corporate elite have hijacked democracy, and are imposing on the malleable system a culture of life-threatening consumerism and conflict. Democracy has been used to control human and planetary resources in ways that go violently against life.

Democracies claim to offer a different ethos to dictatorships. They claim to right the wrongs of previous systems, but while the patterns of domination in democracy are more camouflaged, the essence of suffering and destruction are essentially the same. Even the most well-meaning and competent leaders find themselves helpless in the face of a legalized, technocratic corporate monstrosity that has permeated governments worldwide. When one looks closely at the framework – the language, principles, structure and process we can understand the devastation we witness today as an inevitable outcome of the democratic system itself.

Given that democracy is built on the paradigm of human domination of life, it cannot bring the healing we so desperately need. When the mainstream mindset is one of separateness domination and privilege, with a structure of a class based society and majority rule, even more direct democracy and greater citizen involvement is not the solution.

As Einstein said ... “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them”

The domination dynamic: The Victim - Persecutor - Saviour Triangle

With the hierarchical domination mindset people perceive themselves in relation to each other as superior and worthy of privilege, or inferior and unworthy. The comparison inevitably leads to feelings of envy, shame, fear, arrogance, greed and guilt that in turn generates conflict and violence. Leadership is outsourced to those with formal authority who are

positioned in a hierarchically superior way and are given power and privilege.

This hierarchical mindset produces the victim-persecutor-saviour dynamic in which people fall into these archetypal roles and experience others through this prism. The result is a perpetual struggle in the triangular dynamic over who is the 'real' victim, the 'real' persecutor and the 'real' saviour.

The narrative of democratic systems can often be understood in terms of this age-old, patriarchal dynamic and locks democratic culture into these three self-defeating and destructive roles. The dynamic exists in the relationship among different identity groups as well as in relation to those in roles of leadership and authority. While all may technically have a voice in democracy, the psychological power of that voice is experienced very differently among these different roles.

Democratic elections generally portray candidates as the 'ultimate saviour' of the public, portrayed as a 'victim' of what the other candidate, portrayed as the 'persecutor', stands for. The 'persecutor' can take many forms such as an ideology, the current government or an identity group such as a nation, religion or immigrants depicted as the ultimate threat to those lobbied for their vote.

The saviour role may offer a sense of power and righteousness, but it is lonely, vulnerable and a set up for inevitable failure and blame. It evokes burdensome expectations and dependence from those who perceive themselves as victim. It evokes rage from those branded as 'persecutor' whose image and power are threatened by the 'saviour's' role. Many leaders who have been seen as 'saviours' have been assassinated.

The victim role comes with a deep sense of helplessness and suffering but also with the secondary benefit of self-righteousness which is hard to relinquish. Many groups try to gain power by positioning themselves as the underdog.

The persecutor role comes with a sense of power and privilege but is not a role often consciously owned. It is a role generally projected onto the 'other'. Of course, the 'victim' and 'persecutor' roles switch depending on perspective. One's own persecutory behaviour towards 'the other' is often justified by seeing oneself as 'victim' in a self-perpetuating spiral of blame and trauma.

The dynamic of persecutor-victim-saviour typical of hierarchical societies create fragmented cultures fuelled by fear and distrust of the other. And so in so many democratic societies we see repetitive cycles of different groups playing musical chairs with these different roles with no real resolution of key issues or transformation of the narrative itself.

The paradox is that as long as we look at reality from within this hierarchic paradigm, the conflict will never be resolved. And as in monotheistic mythology, we will continue to wait indefinitely for the omnipotent messiah who can save us from ourselves. It is pointless to try and locate any of these roles solely in one person or one group because we all hold the capacity for each of them, and move between these roles in different contexts. The only way to get out of this loop of suffering and destruction is to change the entire story.



Chapter 2

Democracy: A system of deceit

The Hoax

Our democratic system has become a breeding ground for legitimized lies that have generated entire societies struggling with fundamentals of open, honest and kind communication

Lies have become a normalized part of the culture and a key organizing principle in society. A sophisticated system of deceit and manipulation of information is employed to sell agendas of power and profit. Deceit can be found at every level of democratic systems including the way “democratic values” are abused in the election campaign industry and in the buying of people’s votes and lawmaker’s allegiances. From false political promises and corrupt deals to economies driven by legalized false advertising, honesty has almost disappeared from our collective expectations. We are sold the notion that it is not only legitimate but enviable and a sign of success, to use one’s brilliance to manipulate a system based on exploiting humans and the environment.

Falsehood is so pervasive in contemporary societies that many have learned to not recognize truth, expect truth or speak truth. Instead citizens learn from the system how to play the game of manipulating information in their own interest.

The splitting virus

Deceit is the mechanism that splits form from essence, what is communicated from what is true. It is the splitting virus that permeates our societies. The idiom of “speaking with a forked tongue” conveys the image of the split communication that happens when one says one thing and means another. A forked tongue society is constantly under stress to sift that which is truly nourishing from that which is harmful.

Every living system is dependent on accurate information for its healthy functioning. Information is the nourishment we take in, whether it is physical, emotional, cognitive or spiritual. False information, whether in the form of inaccuracies, or outright lies, contaminates and depletes the informational system and undermines the health and integrity of the whole.

False information acts like a splitting virus that spreads through entire societies fragmenting body and soul and creating cultures of people bereft of their connection to themselves, each other and nature, and thus more vulnerable to agendas imposed by external authorities. If we compare our global system to a computer, we can apply the analogy of a virus that installs destructive and false information, multiplies exponentially and disrupts vital communication pathways. Lies behave in society like a cancerous virus behaves in a human body.

On an emotional level, consistently being subject to manipulative information and false promises are known to be determining factors in severe emotional disorders. Similarly, on a societal level, political manoeuvring, false marketing, and divisive notions about social hierarchies multiply rapidly and drive addictions, confusion, disease, violent societal splits, terror and war.

The Branding

The marketing of democracy as a just and caring system of governance can be seen as a sophisticated, sinister and dangerous hoax.

Under the cloak of righteous democracy, endless wars have been waged, nature has been ravaged, people have become enslaved to a ruthless economic system and an ongoing holocaust of animals, terror and disease plague the entire planet. Yet we continue to be sold the idea that democracy is the fairest of all possible governing systems. And we continue to believe it.

Billions are spent on the psychology of marketing democracy as the optimal form of governance. It is the ultimate facade behind which power hungry individuals and corporations have taken control over human and planetary resources. Democracy has provided the convincing cover for a multi-national corporate system to define global laws, control governments and media and determine public agenda. The democratic system is the efficient tool for the financial elite, and they will be pushing the benevolent illusion of democracy for as long as they can benefit from it, while they themselves remain untouchable.

Leaders of corporations are in a position where they can puppeteer the system. They employ lobbyists and politicians to manipulate debate and influence votes in such a way that no one gets to see what is really happening. The corporate agenda is to protect and perpetuate the notion of fair democratic governance. Media presents existing inequalities and abuse as isolated “undemocratic” issues rather than as inevitable symptoms of the rigged democratic system itself.

In corporate-controlled media no-one calls the hoax. Nobody challenges the fundamental principles and structure of democracy. Facing the injustices and corruption of the system, we blame individual bought politicians for their wrongdoings, who then become the media scapegoats while the financial elite remain unscathed.

We are led to believe if we tweak the system, change the leaders or create new laws everything will be okay, but this belief system is a sponsored mirage that gets further and further away with every attempt to fix the symptoms. Discussion as to the nature of democracy in different countries may vary but democracy itself is not up for mainstream debate.



Chapter 3

The Voting Game

According to Larry Diamond, democracy consists of four key elements.

- (a) A political system for choosing and replacing government through free and fair elections;
 - (b) Active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
 - (c) Protection of the human rights of all citizens,
 - (d) A rule of law, in which laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.
- (Wikipedia)

Reflecting on democracies in the light of these elements, the discrepancy between what is declared as democracy and the reality is striking. The voting system itself, a keystone of democracy, contributes to this discrepancy.

The tyranny of the majority

Voting works according to the principle of majority rule. “Equality” in the right to vote is immediately counteracted by the inequality embedded in the outcome of a vote. This means the very voting system created to promote equality actually entrenches a system of inequality where the majority voice is privileged over the minority one.

This dynamic is often referred to as the tyranny of the majority. It is based on the myopic premise that it is the size of the vote that will indicate what is better for the whole or what is fair. Instead of caring for the entire system, the win-lose approach splits the people and neglects essential perspectives held by the minority on behalf of the whole. The majority rule

concept is based on the mindset of domination, separateness and superiority and denies the interdependence of all parts of the system.

In an interconnected system privileging one part over another is about as ludicrous as privileging one part of the body over another part. It is akin to believing that the biggest part of the human body is the part that should be most carefully tended, while the smaller parts can be safely ignored.

We have witnessed a range of atrocities that majority votes can endorse. Humanity does not have a very successful record regarding "majority knowing best". The pressure to get a majority vote in elections and to pass laws in parliament in order to get ones way, contributes to a manipulative and often ruthless culture of corruption. Not only will such a system generate constant discontent and conflict, the neglect and oppression of minorities will ultimately bring about disease in the entire system.

The oppression of the minority vote is often echoed in countries where two primary parties dominate elections and the smaller parties are side-lined through sophisticated power play. This creates polarity rather than multiplicity of voices. It flattens diversity, dumbs down debate into artificial binary choices and effectively silences minority voices and activists working with different frameworks outside of the mainstream status quo. Not only does the process entrench inequality, it rigidifies the system that becomes immune to fresh evolving resources cultivated on the fringes of society.

The Election Drama

The election system is sold to citizens as the ultimate way to enable them to influence politics, however the opposite is true. It is skilfully designed to maximize citizen dependence and impotence while giving free reign to those in power. The election hoax has created the mind-boggling belief that a single vote once every few years can actually offer citizens real representation or influence in government.

The vote, effectively silences the very voice it claims to give, by pacifying people with the hyped up meaningless but brilliantly advertised ritual of

putting a piece of paper in a box once every few years. In reality it limits active citizen involvement in processes that affect daily lives.

The entire election campaign industry is a well-oiled machine through which individuals and corporations buy candidates, and candidates buy citizen votes. A huge amount of taxpayer and corporate money is funnelled into glitzy campaigns. This is nothing short of bribery. It is criminal, especially when we think of how this money could otherwise be used for the real benefit of citizens. Politicians with vested interests often run on ridiculously narrow platforms. Generally, they have limited knowledge on the vast range of issues they deal with, and little accountability to truth and to the course of their future actions.

Election campaigns are designed to reduce complex matters into emotionally laden, fear and hope based catch-phrases, and to trigger simplistic liberal vs. conservative allegiances. Issues are reduced to slogans. Candidates often offer sweeping promises of redemption while devaluing and demonizing their opponents. This culture of violence activates and fuels parallel violence among supporters.

The intense hype of election campaigns and their contrived public debates offer a powerful illusion of citizen political involvement. After election results some celebrate, others mourn, but we are all sold the noble idea that “the people have spoken” and that we must now live with the “democratically decided” results, relinquish further involvement and let the politicians do their job until the next election. The entire system is designed to keep the average person lazy, oblivious and complacent. In this way the financial elite have hijacked governments and have succeeded in taking away most freedoms while voters were sleeping between elections. Rather than the voting system generating a culture of active citizens involved in ongoing decision making and constructive activism, it instead cultivates a culture of extreme dependence.

In what often appears like a mass media driven hypnotic process, citizens voluntarily relinquish authority on almost every aspect of their lives to decision makers with vested interests and little if any competence in the issues they lead.

The outcome is almost inevitable. The financial elite win, the weakest suffer most and entire countries are diseased by false promises, corruption, divisiveness and imbalances. This abuse of democracy has created a culture of winners and losers in a manipulative theatrical game and this dynamic fragments the moral, emotional, intellectual and physical fabric of society as a whole.



Chapter 4

The charade of Freedom, Justice and Equality for All.

In democracies across the globe, the words “freedom”, “equality” and “justice” have been perverted in the name of power politics and economic growth.

Citizens have been sold privilege in the name of equality, war and corruption in the name of justice, and oppression in the name of freedom. The deceit that has become part of the democratic culture generates the inevitable struggle of citizen’s to claim the rights they are promised by the very system that enables their rights to be methodically taken away.

‘Freedom for All’

Paradoxically, the concept of freedom has meaning only in a system of domination and slavery

True freedom cannot exist where some are oppressed. As long as humans remain in a mindset of domination and believe in their own freedom to steal the freedom of the earth and other species, the same dynamic of oppression will replicate itself in the relationship among humans. True freedom will only exist when we move beyond the human-centred mindset of domination.

It is thus worthy to be wary of any system where the word freedom must exist. In nature, the freedom of each species to manifest its unique

potential in replenishing relationship with the environment is a given. Nature organizes itself according to a principle of health, and not according to artificially created rights that are taken away or allocated by those in power.

In a system of domination, the word freedom comes into being as the antithesis of domination, and is then both idealized and abused. When the word "freedom" is attached to words like "speech", "market" or even "fighter" it seems to magically bestow legitimacy to the accompanying term.

We have become indoctrinated with the bizarre and narcissistic notion that personal freedom can be gained at the expense of the freedom of others. The word freedom has been abused to refer to the freedom of the privileged to deny the freedom of others, including the freedom of other species and the planet itself.

When we separate our self-interest from the collective interest, we separate ourselves from the whole and in doing so damage both ourselves and the entire system. The belief that one group can have freedom at the expense of another group (human or other species) is a concept used to justify privilege and sell exploitation, conflict and war.

In the name of freedom we no longer have the freedom to breathe fresh air, drink clean water, eat healthy food, choose our natural medicines and live on the land in healthy mutual nourishment with our environment as other species know how to do.

We are dealing with the violence and insanity that results from the impact of the ruthless onslaught of "legal" false messaging on entire cultures under the guise of freedom of expression and freedom of choice.

"Free speech" has been perverted to mean the freedom to indoctrinate and manipulate the minds of others for one's own benefit. It has been perverted to justify the freedom to sell false promises, use legal language

to obfuscate the truth, sell deceitful ideologies and say things that can incite damage and destruction to others.

Under the umbrella of the seemingly noble value of free speech, companies are violating the right to freedom of a healthy mind and body and a thriving planet.

We do not have freedom from noise pollution when manipulative agendas are broadcast irrespective of truth or the discomfort it creates for others. We do not have the freedom to cultivate our instincts or intuition in a healthy natural environment.

There is very little freedom of choice when billions of dollars are spent on the psychology of advertising to manipulate the consumer. There can be no real choice or freedom of information when media is owned by those with their own political and economic agendas. Through seductive advertisements, films, video games, cell phone apps and reality TV, we have created a system that incessantly imposes empty addictive behaviours, the idolization of hedonistic lifestyles and physical and social violence on our conscious and subconscious mind. Healthy information is insidiously censored and perverted while toxic ideas and products dominate airtime.

The word “free-market capitalism” sells a seductive illusion of healthy economic competition. However, it is a system designed to enable conglomerates to expand and cannibalize small businesses and local economies.

Multi-national corporations have the power to influence laws that in turn legalize their own privileges ad infinitum. They now monopolize almost all branches of consumerism from basic water to the financial institutions themselves.

The United States, self-declared protector of democracy, goes to war in the name of bringing the gift of “freedom” – yet there are places where its own citizens are denied the freedom to collect rainwater, or grow food on their own front lawns. Individual privacy is increasingly infringed upon and the

police force is becoming more and more militarized and responsible for violence especially against minorities.

Freedom has become synonymous with the freedom to abuse one's own power at the expense of other people, animals and the environment. Examples abound of industries given the license to abuse the basic elements of life - earth, air, water and fire, and of stealing rights of citizens to their basic health and safety.

Genetically modified food industries are systematically poisoning the earth and creating health hazards across the globe. Countries suffer a severe drought while animal agriculture and bottled water industries exploit and drain water resources without limit. Citizens have the freedom to buy firearms but are not free of the resulting atrocities. The military industry profits off selling war across the globe.

In many democracies same sex couples do not have the freedom to get married and women do not have the freedom to make decisions about their own bodies. In some democratic countries where religion and state are not separated, religious laws “democratically” impose restrictions on women and on various minority groups. Laws restrict people from the freedom to use natural and free, accessible healing plants from nature, while dangerous drugs including cigarettes, alcohol and many addictive pharmaceuticals are legalized and marketed widely.

It is absurd to talk about democratic freedom when democracy is used as a pretext to invade and plunder other countries, perpetuate a class based society, enslave and kill other species and destroy the environment.

Today we are witnessing the mass migration of people from countries torn apart by the greed of military and mining industries to the very countries who breed these leeching corporations and peddle in war and conflict. The mass migration is tangible evidence of our fundamental interconnectedness and the impossibility of exporting destruction elsewhere while remaining immune to the repercussions of our actions.

‘Equality for All’

Paradoxically, the concept of equality only has meaning in a system of inequality.

In classic Orwellian style most democracies have embodied the idea that “everybody is equal but some are more equal than others”. From the birth of modern democracy there have always been population groups (women, racial groups and other minorities) denied basic human rights including the right to vote. The concept of equality is entirely human-centred and gives no thought to equal rights for other species or for the earth itself.

It is entirely incoherent yet widespread that democracies founded on the principle of equality allow political parties with clear ideological platforms of inequality to be elected and to create laws that entrench inequality in the system.

The inbuilt inequality is a self-reinforcing spiral that gives the existing elite the power to make decisions that in turn strengthen their own power. There is discrimination on every level from the way police behave towards different races to the ongoing neglect of those with physical challenges. In some countries “democratically elected” extremist religious parties entirely exclude women from political representation and control access to media. In most democracies women still do not get paid the same as men for the same jobs and minorities are discriminated against.

Democracies even allow extremism and fascism to emerge and flourish within them. More and more xenophobic and greed driven parties are taking centre stage in democracies across the globe. Hitler himself rose to power within a democratic political system. The contradictions are blatant and yet remain for the most part unaddressed.

The notion of “equal opportunity” is usually a smokescreen for oppressing diversity. It disguises the inbuilt structural inequality enabling the powerful to maintain power, and the rich to get richer while the poor get poorer.

Equality is undermined when a mould is set by power driven media for what is valued more and what is valued less. Media is flooded with one dimensional pictures of beauty and success that ensure opportunity for those in the mould and exclude those that aren't. Salary structure is designed to favour certain professions over others. This in turn reinforces the spiralling divide between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

The "game" is entirely rigged. The hailed "social mobility" and upgrade in social status available in democratic societies is the exception rather than the rule. The reality is that with the growing divides, the middle class is shrinking and more and more are struggling to make ends meet. And, while the working class must spend their time scraping together money for subsistence, the privileged use their existing privileges of money, networks and education to extend the income gaps. Cultivating dependence of citizens particularly the poorer sectors promotes a deeply unequal dynamic, and is part of the strategy of power. The more citizens are dependent, the more power the government has.

The inconsistencies are blatantly obvious yet conspicuously ignored. Despite the hailed value of equality, socio-economic class distribution among the financial elite, middle class, working class and the poor has become an unquestionable premise of democracy.

The overt debate is about the numbers rather than the premise itself. Discussion about inequality is deflected to a question of numbers. While there is contentious debate about the minimum wage rate and the amount allocated for government handouts, the idea of a maximum wage is kept out of mainstream debate and consciousness. The premise of socio-economic class based distribution itself is not questioned.

Any society that perpetuates the notion that it is normal and okay to have a distribution of wealth where some hoard ridiculous amount of resources while others live in abject poverty is a deeply unjust, unequal and unhealthy culture.

This democratically sanctioned class distribution is the basis of any unhealthy feudal society and will inevitably cause conflict and disease in the entire system. The fact that it has always been this way, does not mean it has to stay this way.

We have become blinded to the fact that this kind of class based wealth distribution goes against the fundamentals of human morality and against the health and vitality of the entire system. It is a parasitic dynamic that leeches off the vulnerable and off the planet without replenishing that which is taken. To say that it is unsustainable understates the severity of the disease.

"The vast and growing gap between rich and poor has been laid bare in a new Oxfam report showing that the 62 richest billionaires own as much wealth as the poorer half of the world's population." (Larry Elliott Economics editor, The Guardian 18.01.2016)

Democracy boasts values of equality, yet has created a context where a tiny percentage of people own vast amounts of global resources, billions live in poverty and all of this inequality is structured in the system and legal. According to economist Kate Raworth, In 2010 the top richest 10% of people in the United States captured 93% of increase in national income that year. Two thirds of the world's population today live in countries that have greater inequality than they had in 1980. Where is the equality in a system that allows a minimum wage to be less than 8 dollars an hour while CEO's can earn \$20 000 an hour? Money creates more money in a manipulated system where a person's earnings have very little to do with their real work or contribution to society.

Corporate owned media broadcasts the illusion of healthy economic growth by using reductive and deceptive statistical jargon that highlights certain variables while hiding others. General concepts like increased gross domestic product and economic growth hide the fact that most of the growth actually goes into the pockets of a few while middle and lower classes find themselves more and more in debt and the entire system is severely damaged and depleted.

In this so called system of 'equality' or 'equal opportunity', the legitimacy of individuals or corporations earning and hoarding exorbitant amounts of money at the expense of people and planet is not up for discussion. Instead, the wealthy are idolized and protected by the self-perpetuating law-making system no matter how ill-gotten their stash may be. Arguments as to the precise minimum wage may take on heated forms, but the possibility of instituting a maximum wage or redistributing the wealth of the multi-billionaires is kept off limits.

According to the "Occupy Democrat" movement since 1978 in the United States:

the cost of college tuition has gone up by 1 120 %

Medical care has increased by 601%

Food has increased by 244%

Meanwhile the pay of:

Average workers rose by just 10%

Minimum-wage workers fell by 5.5%

Average CEO's increased by 937%

Multi-national corporations create inequalities not only among individuals but among countries. Citizens are sold the idea that their countries need foreign investment in order to bring employment. What they are not told is the price of such employment. Foreign corporations often pay minimum wages, deepen inequality, deplete and pollute the environment and create health problems for the locals.

We are witness to the politics and wars of so called developed and often democratic countries vying with each other to sell weapons and other products to the poorer countries. "Investment" in poorer countries becomes a euphemism for owning and depleting them and amplifying the divides between the haves and have not's on global scale.

In 2015, the inbuilt financial inequality among countries was played out, with Greece (ironically, the historical birthplace of democracy) having

become a victim of the seductive financial system of the European Union. The Greek drama sent waves of unrest and dissent across Europe and the world. It highlighted how the corrupt system inevitably traps individuals and countries in a web of loans and interest. The system is designed to enslave the weakest in lifelong debt. The Greek finance minister called the manipulation of institutions that trade on speculation and bank on the debt no less than financial terrorism.

'Justice for All'

Paradoxically, the concept of justice has meaning only in a system of injustice

The meaning of justice, another cornerstone of the founding principles of democracy, has also been perverted to sell the vast injustices that characterize our world today. Law-making procedures are often more about wrangling over power than about the essence of the law itself.

The legal system has been hijacked by those in power to create the laws that privilege those in power and enslave people, animals and the planet. The legal system marketed as the ultimate protector of human rights has become the very system through which the abuse is legally carried out.

The arm of democracy is the legal system which is orchestrated by those that have power to legalize injustice. Those with money are the ones that can ensure certain people get into powerful political and influential positions in the judicial system. Only the rich can afford the "best" lawyers, the fines, the patent disputes and the array of sophisticated legal games to entrench their agendas and even to create the laws from which they themselves benefit.

'Everything I/we did was according to the law' is now a nauseatingly repetitive and sinister mantra. Individuals, companies and governments worldwide, challenged with corruption scandals that impact the lives of many, casually hold up this statement like an impenetrable magic shield.

This cold technical response to challenges regarding legalized abusive behaviour reflects how our so called justice system has lost its moral compass. What does it mean about our democratic system when those accused of corrupt behaviour do not say "everything I/we did was kind, just, or in the best interests of all" - but instead defend themselves by saying their behaviour was strictly "according to the law"?

The law has become a game of engaging the most brilliant legal minds to outwit each other. 'Justice' has been reduced to an expensive technical debate over the legality or illegality of a person's behavior according to dubious laws that privilege some over others.

The justice system is bound by a country's laws. The laws are made according to a majority vote rather than according to the intrinsic value of a law for the benefit of the entire human and environmental system the law supposedly comes to serve.

Of course, those closest to the business of law have also found ways to ensure that their professions are among the most lucrative. They have managed to manoeuvre the legal profession into a situation where people are increasingly dependent on lawyers in almost every aspect of life.

The painful paradox is that the injustices of the justice system now have the law with all its accumulated might on its side. This means that challenging injustice is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous for the individual.

There are many sophisticated methods of deception and manipulation in the name of justice including political appointments, lobbyists, bribery, favour swapping, vote swapping, legal jargon, fine print, exorbitant prices of legal representation, arduous red tape and clogged court rooms. Politicians often vote on laws couched in vague and long carefully crafted manuscripts designed to conceal more than reveal the full consequences of what is at stake.

To engage in basic technology and social services the lay person is forced to lie, on an almost daily basis by signing that he/she has read and understood endless fine print in convoluted legal language.

And as the legal system becomes increasingly owned and manipulated by the wealthy for the wealthy, the security systems put in place to protect people from abuse, become instead the systems used to enforce the abuse, and to quell any information and activity that goes against the political and economic agenda. Alongside the police and military is the legal system that cements this agenda.

The perversion of the justice system can also be seen in results of the privatization of prisons as money making businesses. The United States has the world's largest incarceration rate in the world, while it represents about 4.4 percent of the world's population; it houses around 22 percent of the world's prisoners. (Wikipedia)

As the laws that bind countries are increasingly determined by foreign policy and international agreements, justice has less and less to do with citizens' rights than with the interests of those at the helms pulling the strings. Local citizens have very little say regarding health policy, fracking policy, or any laws that affect the full spectrum of their lives.

If our justice system endorses or at the very least does not protect against the exploitation of people, animals and the planet, then the justice system as it stands cannot be considered a legitimate social structure.

As Chris Hedges says: "We now live in a nation where doctors destroy health, lawyers destroy justice, universities destroy knowledge, governments destroy freedom, the press destroys information, religion destroys morals, and our banks destroy the economy." Chris Hedges

The perversion of the cornerstones of democracy freedom, equality and justice is echoed in the Hopi Prophecy regarding the latter days of the Time of Purification.

"We are in the process of resolution of polarities we have caused through our limited comprehension of universal principles. I was told that good would be called bad, right would be considered wrong, that wealth would become poverty, and that men and women would tend to choose living apart. We are obviously in that predicament now. The instructions accompanying this condition are very clear. We are to identify the polarities in our personal lives and to begin mitigation of our issues, those both contrived and inherited, with deep intention, practice, and patience."~ John Kimmey ~ Hopi Elder



Chapter 5

The Dynamics of Disconnect

The dynamic of disconnect that leads to social fragmentation and environmental destruction is inbuilt into the democratic system. The culture of disconnect in every sphere of life that stems from the mindset of domination leads to an implosion of the system from within.

The Primary disconnect from Nature

The health and future of humanity is entirely dependent on the health and vitality of the environment. Any governance system that disconnects its policies from the life force that sustains us is not only absurd and criminal, it sentences us all to a fate of inevitable disease and destruction.

The foundational principles of democracy focus on the rights of humans, but neglect the basic rights of the earth and other species. The mainstream democratic narrative perpetuates the myth that humans are separate from and superior to other beings and nature and as such has a right to exploit and dominate life itself. It does not educate citizens to honor the environment on which we all depend. The disconnect from nature has a profound impact on the well-being of children and society, and reinforces many of the physical and emotional diseases rampant in our current urban lifestyles.

The fundamental disconnect of the democratic framework from nature is responsible for much of the planetary devastation and human disease we now face. The governance system takes absolute control over the environment with very little understanding or respect for the complex web of life.

In many democracies today, the governance system disconnects people from direct access to healthy water, air, energy, food and natural medicines in order to control resources for the purpose of power. This power over citizens and resources is reinforced by an education system that does not educate about nature and the healthy functioning of eco-systems. Citizens thus do not have the knowledge or skills to recognize the way the environment is being plundered and so cannot take action in this regard.

Almost everything people are taught is mediated by government, media and education systems with vested interests. The disconnect from experiential learning in nature, and the oppression of instinct means that people grow up in ways disconnected from vital parts of themselves. Passive learning with little focus on experiential education and critical thinking creates dependent societies susceptible to manipulative information that will inevitably collude with environmental destruction.

In the name of progress, land is systematically taken from those who live in integrity with nature and whose families have worked the land for centuries. The land is then considered to be owned by nation states and corporations invested in maximizing profits for the privileged. Interested parties invest in massive media campaigns to present this plunder as progress. They invest in lobbyists to legalize their agenda, get the media industry to sell their agenda and rely on the military and police to enforce it. Similarly our food system has been entirely corrupted and contaminated by this dishonoring exploitative relationship to the land.

The Disconnect from Each Other

The democratic system is used not only to disconnect people from their natural environment, but also from each other.

The divide and conquer system inherent in democracy, promotes the notion that society is made up of separate groups that must compete among each other for allegiance, power, status, privilege and resources. It cultivates a culture of conflict rather than consensus and creative life-enhancing complementarity.

Dividing people among themselves into interest groups pulling in different directions (left and right, liberal and conservative or a host of other identity groups), weakens them so that they do not unite against those in power for the good of the whole. The divisive strategy is based on manipulating the human psychology of identity and belonging. Under the guise of win-lose tactics, it creates a lose-lose outcome. It instigates conflict among groups, wastes resources and creates dependence on government. No organization, family or community could thrive with this divisive premise and structure.

The Disconnect of Identity

Political issues are often framed in identity-based terms such as gender, race, culture, nationality, religion and class.

Democracies sell the idea that different identity groups have different and often contradictory needs and therefore require unique representation to promote their interests at the expense of others.

Politicians play on this fragmented, one-dimensional notion of identities to create fear by constructing a common enemy. In this way they use identity to rally loyalties and obscure the real issues. Politicians generally work to activate primal feelings of allegiance and belonging by idealizing their own party and demonizing the other. Patriotic loyalty is used to distract from local issues.

The fragmentation inherent in the domination mindset insists on allegiance to one part of a system, one aspect of identity, at the expense of others. The notion of loyalty to one part of a system over another is as counterproductive as swearing allegiance to the left arm over the right arm.

Given that democracy gets its power from divisiveness, it is not coincidental that so many democratic countries find their votes split almost precisely down the middle. The 50/50 divide is most often manifested in terms of “left” vs “right” or liberal vs. conservative.

This struggle in the two party system often represents a fundamental psychological struggle within all of us between the resistance to change and the desire for change, between fear and courage, self-interest and altruism. The struggle can never be resolved by any one side winning. It is doomed to repeat itself until we change the fundamental mindset of splits and polarities and attend to the needs of the system as a whole.

The democratic debate is always about whose interests will be looked after and who’s side-lined. It makes all leaders susceptible to the lobbying of special interest groups in order to gain and maintain power. It rarely, if ever, addresses the entire society and the human and non-human environment as an interconnected living system with common interests and shared destiny.

Most politicians are overtly focused on winning middle class votes, while flirting with the wealthy and ignoring the most vulnerable. This perpetuates the class based system and creates a disconnect between groups of people who are artificially set up to be in conflict and completion with each other. Privilege of the wealthy and oppression of the weak are built into the system that a-priori justifies a class based system. The middle class hovers insecurely between the two extremes while having to work increasingly more hours for less wages while the rich get richer and the poor get poorer

The Disconnect from Integrity

The way democracy is structured disconnects citizens and politicians from their ability to act with integrity. People often find themselves having to compromise their conscience on important issues. They are often torn when having to choose one party over another when they may identify with different parties on different issues. Politicians can find themselves torn between duty and conscience when they are required to vote along party

lines. The game of bartering over votes to pass a law undermines honesty, conscience and integrity in law-making. The strategy of divide and conquer creates pressure, anxiety and conflict within society and within people's psyches.

Both citizens and politicians are to a large extent kept in the dark about corrupt proceedings behind proposed laws, which further limits everybody's capacity to vote on issues with awareness and integrity.

The Disconnect of Representatives from the People

The way democracy is structured often creates a deep divide between political representatives and the people themselves. Politicians usually come from a limited range of professions that do not represent the majority of citizens. The financial interests and reward system is designed to make them more attentive to their lobbyists than the will of the people. Given that many politicians are chosen by specific identity groups, they often represent the interests of only that particular group and neglect other groups which in turn heightens the divide and hostility between groups.

The Disconnect of Functions within the Government

The way governments are structured according to different ministries in charge of different functions, is based on a similar reductionist, atomistic and fragmented premise. Democracy artificially divides governance responsibilities into segments such as education, security, economy, environment, justice etc. despite the fact that these functions are entirely dependent on each other.

Ministries are set up and managed as isolated sectors that compete with each other for resources rather than creatively working together to promote common goals for the benefit of all. Lack of integration between ministries not only compromises each sector, it undermines the entire

system. Ministries locked within narrow role frameworks with rigid structures obstruct real learning and resonance with the larger system. **The disconnect from the needs of people and environment is amplified by rigid bureaucratic structures that make the system particularly resistant to learning and to change. Governance structures and policies are thus often the greatest obstacle to the healthy evolution of our societies, and government employees are generally among the last to learn about and integrate global cutting edge solutions to societal challenges.**

The dynamic of disconnect that permeates democratic society means that essential communication between the different parts of our human and environmental eco-system is disabled. The result is the immense dysfunction, conflict and disease that plagues our world.



CHAPTER 6

Hierarchical Leadership: An Obsolete Model

The democratic system is built around one chosen leader overtly given power over almost every aspect of a citizens' life. This centralized model of leadership reinforces a culture of absolute dependence. While democracy positions itself as a modern form of governance its leadership model, rooted in the domination mindset, is based on the outdated hierarchical pyramid structure and centralized leadership. The overt power is often superficial with the leader, a clear bait for the power hungry, being severely handicapped by financial and political forces at work. The hierarchical model is replicated at all different levels of the governance structure creating a ripe field for abuse of power.

One leader at the top of the pyramid levels nevertheless has enormous control. This model reinforces the dynamic of an omnipotent, God-like leader who is able to know all, see all and care for all. The notion of a patriarchal saviour in the form of kings, priests, fathers, CEO's, professors or presidents, who can make everything okay is a seductive one that humans have been courting for millennia. It disconnects individuals from their own authority, responsibility, and creativity. The hierarchical structure means that most leaders work very much in isolation with limited access to different perspectives and few checks and balances.

The hierarchical mindset is based on illusions of superiority and inferiority, and generates power relationships based on dynamics of victim, persecutor and saviour. It reinforces a psychological dynamic where people relinquish responsibility to external authority for the comfort of dependence. They are pacified by a belief that someone else is 'in charge' and will 'sort it all out' and there's always conveniently someone to blame. This dependence dynamic protects individuals from having to confront their own responsibility, courage and limitations in co-creating our collective reality.

With this model of absolute authority, people tend to relate to leaders somewhat like a teenager relates to authority. They find themselves caught between polarities of love and hate, submission and rebellion.

When a leader is put on a pedestal it aborts any possibility of healthy relationship or creative complementarity between the leader and those he or she represents.

Being put on a pedestal is not only a lonely place to be but is also a set-up for disillusionment and failure. Leaders often become the object of obsessive projections of idealization or devaluation. It is not surprising that so many leaders in democracies find themselves ending their careers in a dynamic of blame and shame and that so few have emerged as admired and loved statesmen and stateswomen.

The hierarchical structure creates the very injustices it claims to protect. The position of power often gives the freedom to abuse power. The distance of leaders from citizens means many decisions are disconnected from real needs. This enormous power makes leaders particularly vulnerable to financial lobbying, corruption and sell-outs. Their power over media gives them the ability to abuse their influence over public opinion by manipulating truth, concealing information and presenting their ideologies as self-evident truths.

Political leaders usually emerge from legal and financial professions, and are generally steeped in technocratic language with little interest in the health of people and planet. Many leaders get into power due to political manoeuvring and personal charisma. The ability to gain power by incitement, fear mongering and bribery is inbuilt in the system.

In almost every profession there is a clear program of studies, a clear list of required qualifications and a rigorous application procedure. Democratic politics however has its own rules. While politicians lead the most complex of human and environmental systems, they are not required to have any formal training in global issues, leadership, human dynamics, whole system theories, ecology or other relevant skills.

The democratic structure creates a highly inefficient revolving door system for complex roles. Every few years new politicians allocate resources and define policies in areas they know little about. No responsible financial organization would dream of employing people on this basis. It would be considered business suicide.

The democratic system means that we collectively relinquish charge of the environment and our lives to leaders, who, even with the best of intentions, cannot be effective custodians of the complex systems they lead.

PART 2:

**Health – the
primary
casualty**



Chapter 7

Health: A Luxury Commodity

The health of people and planet is our most valuable resource and has become the greatest casualty of our current governing systems.

It would seem obvious that the health of the land and its people would be the primary purpose of any governing system, but this is far from true. The democratic governance system is contributing to spiralling trauma, disease and destruction. Health is rapidly becoming a luxury commodity with vast disparities among the wealthy and poor.

Aside from global warming and its direct threat to life on earth - physical diseases resulting from our interference with nature are spreading rapidly. We are at war with ourselves, each other and the planet as terror, poverty and devastation spread across the globe. Our emotional and mental well-being are continually undermined as we face unprecedented forms of social violence and emotional imbalances including addictions, social alienation, depression, attention deficit disorders, anxiety and stress disorders that result from living lifestyles out of balance with our environment.

Human health is dependent on environmental health. When we poison and deplete the environment we damage our own health. When we live out of balance with nature we create trauma and disease.

Given that the foundation and language of democracy is organized around power and control of people and resources, it is not surprising that the system is damaging to health and life itself. Our concept of health has been tragically narrowed to reductive concepts disconnected from deep body wisdom and the healthy engagement with the eco-system of which we are part. Our understanding of health is perverted by profit driven false

information. It has been largely reduced to narrow concepts of personal health, marketed in a way that creates an obsession with external form rather than holistic health of body, soul and environment. Words like “natural”, “healthy”, “green” and “energizing” have become empty buzzwords with little if any connection to what is being sold. We have reached the absurd point where healthy soil, the foundation of healthy nutrition and life itself is considered “dirty” while chemical household products are branded as “clean”.

Rather than organizing all governance around systemic health, health becomes an isolated governance function disconnected from other functions like education, agriculture, security, welfare, infrastructure and economy. The issue of health care is often reduced to citizens’ access to medical attention and its financial implications. To a large extent the health systems have become bureaucratic structures that focus on medical solutions defined by the lucrative health industry and approved by those with vested interests. While the economy pushes unhealthy lifestyles, government health care is often not available to all. In many cases private health care offers a higher quality service but becomes a privilege only for the rich. The health of people thus becomes yet another expression of privilege.

This reductionist approach to health enables the free reign of a political and economic system that profits off disease, with devastating consequences to people and planet. The economy, food system and education system are among the primary systems that perpetuate imbalance and disease. To grasp the impact of democracy on the health of people and planet it is important to explore how these systems led by democratic governments are contributing to the disease and devastation we currently face.



Chapter 8

The Growth Economy: An Economy of Disease

"Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell." Edward Abbey

A growth economy that idealizes growth at the expense of health is destined to be an economy of disease. The growth economy is indeed like a growing cancer. Any living system has a natural limit of growth within which it can achieve maximum health. No human being would want to grow beyond his or her own healthy limits.

Like a parasitic disease, the growth economy leeches off and depletes the living systems on which it depends. The economy becomes 'bloated' while feeding on fabricated money rather than real value. Industries that fuel the growth economy are industries that profit off disease and devastation.

For years most democratic governments have sold us the benefits of the "growth economy" using a marketing strategy that has duped most of us into believing in its crucial value while digging our collective grave. In most cases democracy has become synonymous with free market capitalism that is organized around exploitation of people, animals and the environment for the benefit of a few.

Under the guise of growth, and progress, we are sold lies and devastation. Citizens are subject to endless laws, policies and mind-manipulations that enslave them to the mindset of addictive consumerism, dependence, competition and conflict. Every aspect of a citizen's life including health, food, security, environment, media, technology and education is determined by hidden financial interests that have little or nothing to do with the well-being of citizens. Multi-national corporations steer global law

and politics and are destroying the environment, causing the depletion of many species.

Professions that are hurting the planet are often the highest paid while those that offer real value are among the lowest paid. The wealthiest are often owners or shareholders of industries responsible for a cycle of creating and fixing global crises in spirals of addiction, trauma and dependence. Service based professions such as farming, education, social work, nursing and artisans are low on the income scale. While the elite class skims resources, governments are calling for increased austerity measures for the middle and working class.

Companies focused on profit at the expense of people and planet actively invest in cultivating narcissistic, self-indulgent people with little interest in social and environmental issues. The self-obsessed, competitive mindset creates unhealthy social dynamics that spawn alienation and social violence and in turn serves the frenetic consumer "selfie", "pokemon" culture.

Money is fabricated by the financial system based on intricate mathematical formulas manipulated by those who lead these institutions. The financial system is based on corporate privilege, speculation, loans, interest and debt. It is a ruthless system designed to benefit those in the know and enforce economic slavery of the masses. The system creates an addictive gambling culture that manipulates the true values of currencies. The system justifies and legalizes boundless salaries and wealth of those at the helms while keeping the minimum wage at poverty level. It means that a small group of people are hoarding trillions of dollars gained while creating poverty, enormous suffering and devastation.

The practice of hoarding of money can be seen as blocking the healthy flow of energy resources to where it is most needed. In any living system blocked energy is a symptom of disease.

The growth economy portrays the elite as the job creators and encourages the belief that citizens are dependent on big monopolies for jobs. This hides

the fact that monopolies are actually deeply destructive and deplete local economies and the environment. Mining and fossil fuel industries are known to plunder resources while leaving a wake of destruction in the local communities. Monopoly based systems deny people the right to make an honest healthy living in vital community based economies. People are not given the choice or information as to healthy existing alternatives. They are denied investment and rights to develop their own agriculture and local green industries that would make them less dependent on the government, financial institutions and foreign corporations.

“Anyone who's ever run a business knows that hiring more people is a capitalist's course of last resort, something we do only when increasing customer demand requires it. In this sense, calling ourselves job creators isn't just inaccurate, it's disingenuous. That's why our current policies are so upside down. When you have a tax system in which most of the exemptions and the lowest rates benefit the richest, all in the name of job creation, all that happens is that the rich get richer.” (Nick Hanauer, a billionaire advocating rethinking the system, TED talk.)

The growth economy has developed sophisticated methods of siphoning taxpayer money into the pockets of the rich. Ultimately it is the taxpayer that must carry the increasing tax burden on welfare, health, and defence generated by the very corporations who specialize in creating their own tax cuts and havens.

Most big industries feed each other. The processed food, chemical, military, security, pharmaceutical and media companies are often linked to each other or owned by the same groups of people. Even so called “humanitarian aid” generated by the wars that feed the military industries is given in the form of plastic water bottles and GMO grain that in turn fills the pockets of the food conglomerates.

‘The United States is now an “oligarchy” in which unlimited political bribery has created a complete subversion of our political system as a payoff to major contributors.’

- Former president Jimmy Carter

The following table from the Center for Responsive Politics provides information about the amount of money from different sectors that goes into ‘lobbying’ politicians on an annual basis. It provides insight into the money behind every government policy. The table shows the exorbitant numbers that have gone into influencing the American government for the last twenty years. It gives a glimpse into the hidden interests that determine not only which wars we wage, what resources we destroy, but also what is in our food and medicine and what guides the ideas we are sold about the world we live in through education and media.

The Center for Responsive Politics: Amount spent on lobbying by sector between 1998 and 2014 in the US.

Amount spent on politician lobbying

Sector	Total
Misc Business	\$7,141,963,247
Health	\$7,001,980,306
Finance/Insur/RealEst	\$6,970,385,725
Communic/Electronics	\$5.630.410.373
Energy/Nat Resource	\$5,120,681,028
Other	\$3,602,200,848
Transportation	\$3512,790,751
Ideology/Single Issue	\$2,243,754,586
Agribusiness	2,078,232,924
Defence	\$1,966,193,957
Construction	\$749.137,740
Labor	\$695,796,539
Lawyers and Lobbyists	\$445,047,045

Among those whose impact is most destructive to people and environment, are the ones that spend the most on lobbying governments. This means that democratic governments are voting to a large extent according to the interests of dangerous industries and our vote is giving these industries the power to decide the fate of our individual and collective health. The

industries are influential in determining the course of world events and driving climate change, war and human and environmental disease.

“The truth requires that we call the corrosion of money in politics what it is – it is a form of corruption and it muzzles more Americans than it empowers, and it is an imbalance that the world has taught us can only sow the seeds of unrest.” (Secretary of State John Kerry, in 2013 farewell speech to the Senate.)

Media

Media is an essential tool for the wealthy to promote their agendas. Mainstream media is to a large extent owned by the same small groups of people who are linked to, or dominate the financial system. Given that mainstream media is profit driven, it is clear that those who want to have power over peoples’ minds invest in owning media outlets. Power and profit are the primary forces shaping our belief systems and culture. The art of covert advertising and mind manipulation has been refined to function on the most subliminal levels. This makes citizens entirely vulnerable to profit driven agendas.

Advertising can be likened to prostitution of the soul. It’s all a matter of price and involves the willingness to be involved in selling an idea or product, directly or indirectly, no matter how damaging the consequences may be. The enormous power of advertising means that the minds of citizens are regarded as valuable property available for sale to the highest bidders. We have been seduced by media to lust for more, to believe that the path of competition is the only legitimate way - that this is human nature - that those in power are doing what they can to create a better world, and that with a bit of extra work, we too can move up the social ladder and eventually join the coveted elite status.

Vast amounts of money are spent to colonize consciousness and determine how we think and behave. The sophistication of the system lies in convincing us that we are choosing these thoughts ourselves.

The growth economy relies on creating problems from the personal to the global: from preoccupation with body image and unhealthy food, to large scale wars and dependence on fossil fuels. It fabricates artificial needs and desires designed to alienate people from nature and from their deepest wisdom. Consumerism cultivates the idea that people need stuff that is usually unnecessary and unhealthy as well as being produced at the expense of people, other species and planet itself.

With the spread of social media and independent journalism, there are cracks in the media system. Yet, even “free” social media has a price. Social media itself entails exposure to endless floods of carefully crafted overt and subliminal messaging. Social media is one of the most powerful and profitable businesses and has been severely corrupted by advertising and corporate interests. Once again privilege is inbuilt in the system by empowering those who can afford to advertise their agendas and manipulate human consciousness.

The military industrial complex

The power of the military industrial complex is vast and shrouded in mystery. Under the guise of defence, the industry instigates conflict, glorifies war, ferments fear and hatred and sells suffering and destruction. To a large extent it sets the political agenda across the globe.

Exorbitant amounts of money are funnelled into secretive security budgets used with no accountability towards government or taxpayers. As journalists follow the money, and whistle-blowers leak information to the public, more and more stories of the corrupt and ruthless selling of terrorism and war for profit abound. The stakes just get higher as the weapons become increasingly dangerous.

Beyond the wars themselves the entire military training industry uses billions of tax payer dollars while contributing to the ongoing destruction of the environment - all in the name of “security”. The US navy for instance is killing thousands of whales and dolphins with sonar and weapons testing.

Aside from the vast amounts of tax payer money being wasted, the industry contaminates and destroys entire eco-systems with noise, fire and chemicals.

Gun violence in the US is another frightening symptom of the powerful arms industry and its lobbying influence. Gun violence results in thousands of deaths and injuries annually with an alarming rate of mass public shootings on the rise. It is clear that the only beneficiaries of the military industry are those that sell the weapons and the by-products of war. The burden is on the taxpayer who pays for the often artificially manufactured security risks as well as the traumatic consequences on the soldiers, civilians and the environment.

The industry cannot make money off peace. It thrives on conflict and violence. Clearly investing vast sums of money in creative peace-building efforts would be a far healthier option, but this is not the preferred strategy of governments towing the line of the profit-driven “defence and security” industries.

*“It is ironic that the U.S. would begin a devastating war, allegedly in search of weapons of mass destruction when the most worrisome developments in this field are occurring in your own backyard. It is ironic that the U.S. should be fighting monstrously expensive wars allegedly to bring democracy to those countries, when it itself can no longer claim to be called a democracy when trillions, and I mean thousands of billions of dollars have been spent on projects which both congress and the commander in chief know nothing about.” Canada’s former Minister of National Defence,
- Paul Hellyer in 2008*

The Fossil Fuel Industry

The profit driven fossil fuel industry dominates our mainstream energy narrative. It presents the use of fossil fuels as the primary if not only viable source of energy and often paints itself as working in environmentally careful ways. While the devastating impact of fossil fuels on the climate has been known for years, and knowledge about alternative energy

technologies have been available since the time of the inventor Nicolas Tesla, this information has been carefully guarded and hidden from the public.

Over the last years we have witnessed tragic oil spills in the oceans and rivers and the poisoning of the underground waters. Forest are laid to waste to make way for drilling and species are becoming extinct. For decades the world has been held hostage to the large coal and oil companies who have used their power to gain power and control economies across the world. Fracking for natural gas has now become the norm and has brought with it a host of new threats to human and environmental health.

The notion that planetary resources can be owned, mined or depleted without damaging the entire eco-system is one of the most dangerous concepts derived from the worldview of separateness and domination.

It goes against the fundamental principles of life to consider that local resources can belong to a particular country or corporation and not to the entire interconnected planetary eco-system. This idea is as absurd as believing a specific organ in the human body serves only its particular region, and can be used independently of its living context. In abusing forests, waters, fuels, gases, metals and minerals we have upset the intricate web of life in ways we are only beginning to discover. Fossil fuels is a primary cause of global warming is the most tangible and dangerous symptom of our tampering with the intricate planetary eco-system.

Big Pharma

While the pharmaceutical industry supposedly exists for the benefit of human health and often has breakthroughs that serve humanity, the industry has become fundamentally corrupted by the profit motive. In many cases it is complicit in peddling in false science, addiction and disease. Across the world, the pharmaceutical industry has strong ties with governments which means that health policies and subsidized medicines are often severely swayed by interest groups.

Increasing scrutiny is revealing a host of scandals that include sponsored and falsified research, addictive medications, concealing natural cures, testing products on people without their consent, barbaric testing on animals and hiding the side effects of drugs. Waterways and soil are shown to have traces of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals and are thus contaminating humans and other species in ways that we know very little about.

The pharmaceutical industry targets symptoms rather than the roots of medical problems and some medications often generate side effects that in turn require further medication in a spiral of addiction and dependence.

“Side effects of those very same prescription drugs are the third leading cause of death, behind heart disease and cancer. That’s right! Prescription drugs kill more people than traffic accidents.”

Dr. Barbara Starfield, the Journal of the American Medical Association, 2000

“Adverse effects of medications” (from drugs that were correctly prescribed and taken) kill 106,000 people per year. And that doesn’t include accidental overdoses.” T. Colin Campbell, Whole: Rethinking the Science of Nutrition

There is increasing evidence that much of what is now called the “cancer industry” is one of the largest and most profitable hoaxes. It has invested fortunes in research and development while hiding information about natural cures.

“We have a multi-billion dollar industry that is killing people, right and left, just for financial gain. Their idea of research is to see whether two doses of this poison, is better than three doses of that poison.” – Glen Warner, M.D. oncologist

While many well-intentioned doctors work according to what they are taught, other doctors have knowingly abused their clients with misdiagnoses, unnecessary medications and other interventions in order to benefit financially.

Vaccines are among the most controversial health interventions as they are often imposed as mandatory with minimal transparency as to the research and risks involved. There is widespread concern that some vaccines are tested in underdeveloped countries under the guise of humanitarian aid. There is also increasing data as to possible side effects including a range of serious health conditions. While some vaccines may serve important functions there are also investigations into ways they may be contributing to chronic diseases across the globe.

Society has been conditioned to believe in scientific proof as the ultimate stamp of validity. While science has brought knowledge to the world of medicine it has also been severely abused within the medical establishment itself. The scientific aura gives enormous power to those with money to buy rigged studies, and to prove and print whatever will sell.

In the same way that the military industry profits from war, the pharmaceutical industry profits from disease. This means it has no incentive to proactively cultivate health, and in some cases it is known to suppress information regarding the importance of healthy plant-based nutrition and the use of known plants as preventative medicine and cures.



Chapter 9

Nourishment - The basis of life

Nourishment is the basis of life. The societal disconnect from the source of food is part of our larger cultural story of money and exploitation. We have relinquished control of our food to profit driven industries and governments at the expense of our health and that of the environment.

Our food, the primary source of our health, has been hijacked by a vast profit machine that invests billions to control consumer's choices and habits. Processed foods and pesticides are contributing to serious chronic diseases and environmental destruction, yet billions of people continue to consume products devoid of nutritional value and laced with a range of harmful ingredients. To understand why so many are "choosing" unhealthy options one needs to look at the chain of industries that benefit from the processed food production line.

The food propaganda machine works to disconnect people from their intuitive and inherited relationship with the land. Food monopolies use their power to undercut small, local organic farmers and to own more and more land and water resources in a spiral of control and deception. Many use a range of genetically modified seeds and dangerous pesticides, hormones and antibiotics.

The food industries lobby governments in order to gain larger slices of the market while fighting to conceal the presence of various toxins, GMO's or the country of origin of products. In this way, they work together seamlessly to pick consumer pockets by offering an illusion of choice.

Big agriculture industries, like Monsanto are notorious for their use of dangerous pesticides in food, genetic modification of plants and their

strategy to patent and own essential seeds and withhold information about the ingredients. Chemical and biological contaminants obstruct nature's communication pathways and have severely depleted our individual and collective immune system.

People living in urban environments are increasingly distanced from the source of their food and dependent on industrialized products largely controlled by a few major corporations. Supermarkets are filled with processed foods that travel vast distances before reaching the shelves. Local farming is being pushed aside by food giants that use dangerous chemical additives to prolong shelf life. The sugar and wheat industries inundate the public with seductive messaging of comfort foods, while actively spreading addiction and disease. Junk food is sold cheaper than real food to make it even more attractive and accessible.

Mainstream nutritional information is based on obsolete reductionist science that focuses on certain individual nutrients such as proteins, fats, carbohydrates and vitamins. A holistic nutritional approach shows however that:

“Most nutrients are known to interact symbiotically with at least eight other nutrients. This makes the odds of supplying any one individual nutrient in a healthful manner infinitesimally small. It is simply impossible to get the dosage and ratio correct, except through the consumption of whole foods.”
Douglas Graham

Food and health illiteracy is in the interests of and to a large extent sponsored by those at the helms of the interwoven industries that run the economy. Schools do not teach children about healthy nutrition or how to grow and prepare food. In the absence of real education about food and health, advertising becomes the key source of information. But advertisements are designed to sell products irrespective of their health consequences. Diet related illnesses, chronic diseases and disorders, such as heart disease, cancers, diabetes, obesity, anorexia and bulimia are symptoms of the corrupt and profit driven food industry.

Advertising based on reductionist sponsored science creates a culture of consumers addicted to unhealthy foods and obsessed with counting calories and isolated nutrients.

The food industry has in turn generated food supplement and diet industries that use similar tactics.

*“These days, the supplement industry has the process down to a “science.” New scientific research on single nutrients generalizes in a very superficial way about their ability to promote human health. Companies put these newly discovered “nutrients” into pills, organize public relations campaigns, and write marketing plans to encourage a confused public to buy.” (T. Colin Campbell, *Whole: Rethinking the Science of Nutrition*)*

The reductionist picture of food is a product of the same mindset of separateness from which democracy itself is derived. It focuses on isolated phenomena and less on their relationship with each other and on their whole system impact.

The animal agriculture industry has generated some of the most dominant and dangerous myths in the mainstream food narrative. Through its marketing we have been indoctrinated to believe that consuming milk and flesh of animals is healthy and desirable. Marketing campaigns have also successfully obscured the devastating impact of animal agriculture on the planet.

Factory farmed meat and dairy has been linked to a range of chronic diseases including heart disease, obesity, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, allergies, respiratory diseases and even impotence. The animal agriculture industry is also known to be a leading cause of greenhouse-gas emissions, water waste, water pollution, ocean dead zones, deforestation, habitat destruction and species extinction that each significantly impacts the climate.

The meat and dairy industries invest huge sums to market apparent health of their products despite the fact that factory farmed foods are known to be

toxic and cause chronic disease. People that eat animal products are ingesting a cocktail of dangerous chemicals, growth hormones and antibiotics as well as the trauma and suffering of animals held in extremely unnatural and inhumane conditions.

A United Nations Environment Program report emphasizes that a global shift towards a plant based diet is vital to save the world from hunger, poverty and the worst impacts of climate change. Despite all of this people continue to consume animal agriculture products and damage their own health and that of the environment.

The consequences of our current relationship to food is devastating. In the same way that food policies are a crucial factor in disease creation, healing of people and planet requires a radical shift in our relationship to food, to agriculture and to the land itself.



Chapter 10

Education Disconnected from Life Wisdom

“I don’t want a nation of thinkers, I want a nation of workers.” John D Rockefeller

Many education systems in democratic countries have created dependent, addictive cultures susceptible to the messaging of those with political, ideological and financial agendas. They have reinforced the picture of one all-powerful leader on whom we must depend and to whom we relinquish responsibility. They have perpetuated the domination mindset of separateness, hierarchy and privilege. The structure, content and teaching methods have created a culture of passive, dependent citizens who are to a large extent disinterested in global issues, addicted to competitive consumer culture and disconnected from life wisdom.

Public education systems are the primary socializing systems that prepares youth to take up their roles as adults in the community. As they stand, they are for the most part disconnected from the vital principles of human health and thriving eco-systems. Our culture, with its severe impact on human and environmental health, is a reflection of the education of previous generations.

When children are forced to sit still at their desks in crowded classrooms they become disconnected from their bodies, nature and life. They are not given an opportunity to develop their instincts, intuition, or critical thinking. They are not educated to become creative and caring problem solvers willing to contribute to their larger environment.

Public schools and public higher education systems are steeped in rigid bureaucratic structures and colonialist legacies. They instil principles of privilege, control and compliance that go against the principles of life and

healthy living systems. The system perpetuates myths on which the democratic system is founded. It has for the most part succeeded in maintaining cultures that preserve the socio-economic status quo and feed the leeching economic system. It has failed in raising healthy aware adults with the ecologically sound professions required to tackle the global crises we face.

We are now in the absurd situation where higher education systems are producing over-educated people struggling to find jobs. They are mired in debt from college expenses and skilled in many knowledge areas that have little practical relevance to the health challenges of society today.

The focus of teachers is primarily on providing isolated, subject based knowledge and encouraging achievement defined by grades. Teachers are not trained in cultivating values or dealing with emotional, psychological and community issues. The vacuum is filled by media that plays a powerful role in shaping the minds and behaviour of children. A vast amount of money is spent on sophisticated advertising targeting children as consumers.

Addiction to technology is becoming a recognized problem worldwide. The addiction to screens is creating not only a vast array of social disorders but concern as to the long term impact of such extreme exposure.

Advertisements use whatever means to sell unhealthy and addictive products, ideas and behaviours inundate susceptible minds and shape their perception of the world. The majority of content is profit driven and sells cultures of war, social violence, sexual abuse and the sexual objectification of women, men and children.

A school is a microcosm of the larger societies and of the competitive culture where self-interest, deceit and bullying abound. Classrooms today are more multi-cultural and multi-religious than ever before yet educators are not trained to deal with complex inter-personal and inter-cultural dynamics. The education system is generally disconnected from the community and while it is given full responsibility for a child's education it has neither the authority nor the tools to take up the role effectively.

Intensifying rates of bullying, sexual abuse, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, drug addiction and a range of social and behavioural disorders are a direct result of the divisive, consumer culture and political discourse. Children are conditioned by the culture they witness through media. Politicians, celebrities, reality tv stars and talk show hosts become role models. One can imagine the impact of democratic election campaigns, and the often bullying, demeaning, deceitful and corrupt political discourse and behaviour on the psyche of children. The divisive, abusive campaign culture is a core part of what we learn from democracy in action.

It is unrealistic to believe that the education system can contend with the spectrum of social challenges rampant in our divisive, consumer driven societies. How can teachers be expected to help children deal with the onslaught of false and addictive messaging or the violent and narcissistic, self-indulgent role models they are exposed to on television, video games and social media?

Mainstream methods teach children to relinquish their power to external authorities without questioning its integrity or value. They are taught to rely on external, biased “authorities” for assessment of their character and worth in the world. They are not taught to trust in their own sense of self-worth or recognize their own value. A child’s sense of self-worth is thus easily impacted by the prejudices, moods and whims of their educators.

The dynamics of competition are imposed on children when they learn to compare their own worth to others’ according to narrow parameters that privilege certain intelligences over others. Diversity is oppressed and images of success are standardized. Teachers trained to teach specific disciplines usually have limited perspectives and use language and techniques that are relevant only for children with particular skill sets.

This means that the education system privileges only those with a narrow range of intelligences, particularly the more rational and scientific intelligences. Many children go through twelve years of school frustrated, unseen and uncultivated in their diverse talents. This in turn depletes the diverse range of talents and skills necessary for society to flourish.

Ruthless focus on grades distances children from the innate pleasure of learning. It also encourages deceit of children, teachers and parents around the grading process. Evaluation through dualistic judgments such as right, wrong, good, bad, successful, unsuccessful, sabotages the child's capacity to discern in more nuanced and pleasurable ways and develop intrinsic motivation to learn.

With the primary emphasis on competition, children learn to see each other more as a threat to advancement than a kindred soul with shared needs, complementary gifts and a common destiny. This perspective aborts the development of emotional intelligence and capacity of empathy for others. It does not educate toward individual, community and environmental health – our most fundamental resource.

Children are taught a narrow range of disconnected knowledge areas with very little understanding of the fundamental interconnectedness of these subjects and their relevance to life. They are not exposed to system theories, ecology or life enhancing community practices. They do not learn to apply their knowledge in real, integrative life situations.

Mainstream education reinforces the system of privilege as it is often divided into public and private schools and in many countries public and private universities as well. While public schools generally perpetuate outdated modes of learning, it is usually the expensive private schools that offer children extraordinary opportunities for creative learning, adapted to their diverse needs. In this way, the system perpetuates the growing divides between rich and the poor.

The education system has created dependent citizens with little skills or resources to grow their own food or ensure their own health and safety. They are not given the tools for self-realization and mutual enrichment with their environment. They are not taught how the body works, basic nutrition, hygiene, healthy movement or meditation practices, healthy sexuality, environmental conservation or eco-system vitality. They do not learn how to grow or prepare food. They are taught to outsource their own

self-care to others leaving them further susceptible to false information and the profit driven “health” industries.

It is naïve to believe that either parents or the education system are equipped to deal with the symptoms of democracies today. Educators and parents are products of the same system and are exposed to the same content and culture. They too have grown up in power and profit-driven, hierarchic societies with little ability to sift truth from falsehood. How can adults impart values different from those they learned as children?

The result is that rather than educating towards healthier people and planet, the structure and content of the current education system contributes to many of the human and environmental health crises we face today.



Chapter 11:

Climate Change: The Final Wake-Up Call

The damage to health and life itself from our current governance systems cannot be overstated, and can no longer be ignored.

We continue to use our power in ways that are destroying the very ecosystem on which we depend. The situation is critical. Global warming is the collective wake-up call for us to work together and co-create an entirely new governance system that works uncompromisingly for the healing of the planet and all its inhabitants.

Our mindset of separateness and domination has ignored the reality that we are interconnected and that the entire planet functions as an interdependent living system. As in any living system when we impact a part, we impact the whole. We have denied the vast consequences of our behaviour and convinced ourselves that the multitude of environmental disasters mushrooming across the planet are isolated events and can be contained in their local areas. Climate change, the greatest challenge we now face is a manifestation of our fundamental interconnectedness.

The climate has no borders. Like symptoms in the human body that reveal much about our habits and state of mind, global warming is tangible feedback reflecting our collective state of awareness and the impact of our behaviour on our collective body. Our stance towards the earth is a parasitic, cancerous one and can be likened to an auto-immune disease that attacks parts of the self it fails to recognize as self.

In an interconnected world, it is inevitable that we will be destroyed together with what we destroy. There is no “other” place we can export our destructiveness.

The life threatening process of global warming is a devastating symptom of our interference in life's codes. Imagine consistently mining a human's bones for minerals, draining the blood, contaminating the body's air and water while putting the person under constant emotional stress and still expecting the body to function as normal.

The devastation from climate change reflects humanity's neglect of the subtle web of life. It is a disease of dishonoring relationships from within a mindset of separateness, privilege and domination. In this sense climate change is a harsh and powerful master – an evolutionary wake-up call to learn from the climate code about consciousness.

In the face of the climate crisis, environmentalists are calling for the immediate termination of the fossil fuel and animal agriculture industries, considered the primary causes of climate change and planetary devastation. Both industries are examples of our ruthless and irresponsible relationship with the earth. The end of these industries is a prerequisite for reversing climate change but it is not enough.

The disease of climate change stems from the underlying domination mindset driving all industries that go against life. It is not enough to contain the effect of the industries, the domination mindset itself must be uprooted and replaced with a mindset that honors and cultivates life. As long as there is a mindset of oppression and exploitation there will be disease.

Our political and economic languages are not languages of life and we cannot pretend to heal the climate using these life destroying frameworks. It has been recognized that the "sustainability approach" cannot be effective in reversing climate change.

Unsustainable Sustainability

The term sustainable development is rooted in the mindset of separateness, domination and exploitation. While many are using the term in innovative ways for the good of the planet, the mainstream argument

often focuses on how to continue take from the earth as much as "sustainably" possible while giving back as little as possible.

The term “resources” is telling in itself. It reflects how as humans we have usurped nature, regarding it primarily as "resources" for our benefit while denying the possibility that the elements of nature exist in a precise location where they have evolved to play an essential role on behalf of the entire planetary ecosystem. Similarly the precise migration routes of animals play a vital ecological function and when we interfere with them we upset the delicate balance of life.

“Sustainable” policies generally work towards managing the inevitable harm of the existing system while leaving the foundational mindset intact. The approach does not work to eliminate compromise and oppression. It addresses symptoms of the disease while leaving the cancer,(the domination mindset) intact.

A so-called “sustainable” outcome is to a large extent informed by science and ecology but negotiated primarily on the basis of economic and political interests. Such outcomes are often the results of deals between leaders of countries and corporations working for personal, national or corporate gain at the expense of the whole. Policies are generally crafted in the form of long term targets with legal loopholes that privilege those in power and perpetuate the imbalance and disease.

We have caused a life-threatening disease to our living environment and now face the sixth extinction. Either we honor the invisible ties that bind us and focus on transforming our behavior, or face our own extinction.

Since we have been talking the “sustainable language” and the word sustainability has been integrated into global policies, we continue to poison the air, earth and oceans and face ongoing environmental crises. Mining, fracking, industrial agriculture, radiation from technology, industrial waste, nuclear spillage, destruction of forests are among the major contributors to climate change, species endangerment and human disease.

Compromising how much toxins the planet can safely tolerate is as absurd as compromising how much cancer human bodies can safely tolerate.

The damage to human and environmental health is not always immediately evident; it can fester for years beneath the surface. So what we are seeing now, erupting in many forms, is the result of many years of these destructive policies that go against life. With social media, independent journalism and the radical changes in weather and environmental catastrophes it can no longer be hidden.

From a Sustainable Approach to a Thriving evolution Approach

Nature does not evolve according to a principle of what is sustainable, but rather according to a code of thriving evolution, a process that constantly enriches itself. Nature and health do not work with a formula of compromise but rather of exquisite precision in distributing and replenishing healthy resources for the flourishing of all parts of the interconnected ecosystem. To reverse climate change we need to transform our basic mindset and organize ourselves uncompromisingly in alignment with the code of thriving living systems.

The thriving evolution approach is one that honours nature's wisdom and strives to learn from, and align with it. It studies how nature, undisturbed by humans does not deplete its resources but constantly evolves into richer and more complex forms of harmony in diversity.

The thriving evolution approach is first and foremost based on the understanding that the planet, its biosphere and species function as an interconnected living system. In any living system, the health of the entire system is primary, and the well-being of each part is interdependent with the well-being of the other parts. This means that contrary to our current way of life, we share our health and our destiny with each other and all species. It means that the health of the planet, each other and all species must be our collective priority.

A thriving evolution framework follows the wisdom of ecological experts, whole system thinkers, healers and indigenous leaders and puts ecological wellness at the heart of all decisions. It focuses on uncompromising immediate action dedicated to eliminating all disease and cultivating 100% health. It works with the healing and replenishing wisdom of nature, striving to leave the planet richer for having been here.

It is clear that addressing climate change from the framework of “sustainability” or an approach that seeks to replenish and cultivate life will bring about entirely different outcomes. We can no longer pretend that partial solutions, delays or compromises will suffice.



Chapter 12

A NEW AWARENESS

Unravelling Democracy

The corruption inherent in democracy cannot be attributed to the system alone. It is an inevitable part of the dynamic of divisiveness and privilege found within all of us and at every level of society. Democracy is a system that lends itself to what we choose to do with it. It was created from a mindset of separateness and domination before modern society learned about our fundamental ecological interconnectedness with all of creation. It is not organized around the principles of life and does not have an inbuilt filter to sift healthy from unhealthy behavior. It was not conceived of or structured to be able to cultivate the health and vitality of complex interconnected human and environmental living systems.

The consequences of a system rooted in the domination mindset are inevitable. While democracy has contributed to human consciousness and the evolution of our understanding about the use and abuse of our power, the inherent limitations of the system are evident in the challenges we now face, and it is time to move on.

Shifting consciousness

People across the world are becoming increasingly informed. The veils of secrecy that have shrouded the systematic abuse of power are lifting. Information technology and alternative media are threatening to undo the global system of domination. Growing numbers of courageous whistle-blowers and investigative journalists are revealing the vast

manipulation of power and resources by governments and the financial elite.

The environmental hazards are closer to home than ever and images of the social inequalities and environmental devastation are spreading across social media. Rage at governments and the elite is growing as people worldwide are taking to the streets to demand change. The status quo of control is being threatened and chaos is growing.

An information war is raging. While there are those fighting the secrecy that has enabled the mass deception, some governments are clamping down on privacy and internet freedoms. There are those using the internet to continue to spread misinformation and those using it to spread truth and healthy information and create new systems of social organization.

Over the years many conspiracy theories have existed about the secretive, ruthless abuse of power of governments, corporations and individuals, but many of these theories have been publicly dismissed and ridiculed, deflecting attention and investigation. Some journalists have pursued these threads and it seems Pandora's Box has been opened. Hidden information is being revealed, and many theories dismissed as hoaxes are shown to have substantive evidence.

The war between truth and propaganda is being played out. Visual data is manipulated and only the savviest are able to discern fact from fiction. The information war marks a radically new time where everybody is a journalist and everything can become known, but also a time where misinformation is easily spread.

The new beginning

With the tragic failure of democracy it is our collective responsibility to move beyond the boundaries of the known and invest collectively in the healing of what we have damaged. The only relevant framework for a new system of governance is one that is uncompromisingly aligned with Life.

In the face of shifting consciousness, the time is ripe to question the foundations of everything we thought to be true and right. It is time to break free from the limiting story that democracy is the best of all possible systems and organize together to build something better.

Alongside the implosion of the current systems a vast movement of diverse groups across the world working for healing of our entire eco-system is growing rapidly. Information technology is enabling the spread of healthy information, and providing the platform for sharing resources and inventing entirely new planetary organizational systems. The vision, knowledge, wisdom, and technologies for a thriving future already exist. It is now a matter of connecting the circuits among those dedicated to the benefit of the whole, and creating an entirely new governance system that puts the health and vitality of the planet and all its inhabitants as its only compass.