

u4Ya.ca

A book for a better world



Rick Dickinson

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Dear Readers,

Fear Feeders
False Leaders
Cheer Greed 'ers
Earth Bleeders
Hate Seeders
Drone Breeders

-Change Needers

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Introduction

Have you ever taken a good, hard look at the world in which we live?

It is not always an easy thing to do, especially considering the current state of our world. Wars, genocide, violence, and billions who live in poverty. We don't have to look far to see someone who is living a painful existence. But this is the world in which we were born and raised... things have always been rough, and they always will be, right?

The purpose of this book is to share with you, gentle reader, my feelings of hope. After reading this book, I hope that you will find it easier to share in the dream of a better future for everyone.

I know that I used to feel like wanting a better world was pointless – just an exercise in futility. But no longer. I have learned that we can make our world a better place. By opening our minds to new ideas, by learning, and by constantly seeking to grow, we can readily embrace the options that are available to us.

We already have many ways in which we can improve our world... feasible and plausible solutions to many of the problems that plague our existence. If we wanted to, we could witness dramatic improvements to the quality of life on earth. While there is no way to create a Utopia, we can still significantly decrease suffering on a global scale, and we can do it within our lifetimes.

Now, while I do offer suggestions for both self-improvement and world-improvement, please remember that I am only one human with one mind. I cannot hope to have all the answers, nor do I profess to be infallible. Rather than trying to convince you that I am right, I am simply providing rational arguments to support ideas that I deem worthy of further consideration.

I hope you enjoy the book,

-Rick

Having an Open Mind About Having an Open Mind

Fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people are so full of doubts.
- Bertrand Russell

If we ask ourselves the question “Do I have an open mind?”, we can all honestly say that we do. The converse is also true, because we all have closed minds as well. Essential to our survival, we have varying degrees of acceptance and dismissal to new information. We need an open mind to learn and a closed mind to be able to function.

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage everyone, including myself, to never forget how much we know and need to learn. And while it is necessary to have a closed mind to survive, I feel that the more we open our minds to new ideas, the more we will grow as individuals and as a species.

How much do we know?

First, I'd like to discuss how much we know. Humanity's infinite ignorance has been known since before the time of Socrates (2500 years ago), who has been quoted as having said “I know that I know almost nothing, and hardly that.” I agree completely... one of the most important lessons I have learned is how little I know.

If it were possible to sum up the entire amount of knowledge any one of us knows, this amount would be finite, since there is a limit to how much any of us can know. The amount of knowledge in the universe is infinite - there is, as far as we know, an unlimited amount of information with the potential to be learned.

Mathematics teaches us that when we compare a finite number (what we know) with an infinite number (what we could know), the finite number shrinks so small that it becomes virtually zero, meaning we essentially know nothing. The collective knowledge of our planet, from the moment life began until now, is finite. Humanity, on a universal scale, knows nothing. It is as the great Karl Popper said, “Our knowledge can be only finite, while our ignorance must necessarily be infinite.” Popper also points out that no human can be smarter than another, since we all know virtually nothing.

But it's not so bad; we have already developed a knowledge base that far exceeds what any single human could ever hope to learn (even Ken Jennings lost on *Jeopardy*). And we will continue to learn and grow as long we have our experts who, as lifelong students, advance specialized fields of human understanding.

While it is true that we have already accomplished a lot, we have the potential to do much greater things. We tend to feel proud of who we are and what we have done (as we should), but we are still just cavemen with digital cameras. When we consider how long the human race has existed (less than 200,000 years) compared with how long our planet has existed (~4.5 Billion years), I find myself humbled and submit that we are just newborns on the cosmic scale. We still have unnecessary suffering due to war and starvation on our planet, both of which I consider signs of our archaic existence. We still have a very long way to go to claim success.

Why have a closed mind?

Given how much we know, it seems reasonable to assume that the more we open our minds, the more likely we are to learn new things. However, learning is a slow process, and there is just too much information for us to learn. Therefore, we need a closed mind. If we couldn't categorize and conceptualize the world around us, we would wither away, lost in an infinite sea of confusion and doubt. We need an ability to cope with the massive influx of stimuli, otherwise we would not survive.

It is human nature to become defensive when presented with an idea that conflicts with our beliefs. If someone says something we don't agree with, it is natural to want to defend our point of view; that we are right and they are wrong. Wrong, I tell you... wrong. We all have a sense of pride, a sense of self-confidence.

Pride is the manifestation of a closed mind, allowing us to feel like we are right and what we know is right. If an idea or a way of thinking threatens our pride, in the sense that it conflicts with our own understanding, it is both effective and efficient to dismiss it before giving it due consideration. We cannot spend all our time learning new things if we want to get anything else done. We have to go with what we know.

Not only are we designed with closed minds in order to function, we are genetically programmed to seek status, and a high status usually comes from being successful. The feeling of confidence that comes from a closed mind is essential for us to feel secure with what we believe, and to rationalize the actions we take. When we are sure of ourselves in the face of conflicting ideas, we can be confident that what we believe is right, and with confidence comes success.

Closed minds are also essential for establishing and maintaining civilizations. Traditions, values, and institutions are the products of closed minds, ensuring what our ancestors believed is also what today's society tends to believe. Reinforcing old ideals serves as the glue that binds society. Without closed mindedness, there would be no rules, no structure, and humanity is unlikely to survive in a state of total anarchy.

Why have an open mind?

An open mind allows new information to be objectively considered, even if it conflicts with the mind's current understanding. For a mind to grow and learn, it must necessarily be open.

As individuals, an open mind can allow us to find out new things about ourselves and the world around us. With an open mind, we can learn and become more tolerant to the diversity of our species. When we open our minds to new ideas, we gain the judgment that can overcome the perpetuated ignorance of closed-mindedness.

As a species, the more accepting we are to new information and developments, the more we can objectively criticize both old and new ideals, thereby improving the faults of our society and of our world's system. If we allow for growth on an individual scale, we allow for growth on a societal scale as well. Open minds are essential for progress.

Opening our minds a bit more

A closed mind is both natural and essential. An open mind leads to new growth and understanding, and most often, self-improvement. This section provides us with a few suggestions on how to increase the level to which we are open to new ideas, and therefore, increase the likelihood of self-improvement. These suggestions include acknowledging our ignorance, thinking objectively, being more tolerant, and always learning.

As humans, we will never be perfect

One step towards opening our minds is openly acknowledging how much we know, and how easy it is for us to be ill-informed. It is hard to admit that we are wrong about anything, but humility is essential for increasing open-mindedness. This is not easy to do, since admitting that we are fallible conflicts with our pride, but like Marsellus Wallace says in *Pulp Fiction*... “**Fuck pride!**”

We have all had experiences in our lives where we have been wrong or where we have changed our minds about something. There is nothing wrong with making mistakes; it is what we do. What is important, however, is how we deal with our imperfections. If we rely on closed mindedness, we tend to dismiss our errors and continue feeling like we are right. If we try to have an open mind, we can learn from our mistakes and improve ourselves, so that we are less likely to repeat the mistakes we have already made.

Being open to criticism; either from one's self; or from others; can lead to improvement. Being open-minded means trying to be honest with ourselves, and trying not to get defensive with regards to others' opinions of us. Criticism allows us to locate our weaknesses and errors, thereby providing us with an opportunity for self-improvement.

Trying to think objectively

Socrates taught his students that the pursuit of truth could only begin once they start to question and analyze every belief that they ever held dear. If a certain belief passes the tests of evidence, deduction, and logic, it should be kept. If it doesn't, the belief should not only be discarded, but the thinker must also question why they were led to believe the erroneous.

The challenge in doing what Socrates suggests is in being objective. Since we tend to already be on one side of the argument (either by personal choice, or from what we have always been taught to believe), we naturally feel like our choices are right, and that we are right. To do otherwise would be to admit that we are wrong, and that those who taught us are wrong. But, like previously noted, there is nothing wrong with being wrong, especially if we acknowledge that we are wrong when we are.

Instead of assuming that we are always right, we can actively pursue truth by looking at all sides of an argument before coming to a conclusion, and even after making a decision, still remaining open to the possibility of being mistaken.

Trying to be more tolerant

Pride in self and pride in one's own culture is perfectly natural. But this same pride can also bring feelings of superiority, meaning that we feel that our way of living is the best, and that all other cultures and beliefs are somehow inferior. Increasing our open-mindedness will result in our being more tolerant towards the diversity amongst humans.

With regards to things like racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious intolerance, we should all become hypocrites, in that we become intolerant of intolerance. We should recognize that such ignorance will only subside through learning and understanding.

An open minded individual tries to see that, despite superficial differences, all humans are essentially the same. We share the same needs, the same hopes and dreams, and the same fears. Any human, regardless of race or gender, when given the same opportunities in life, has the potential to achieve the same level as any other. (We can consider genetic handicaps, or the lack thereof, one of life's opportunities)

Always learn

Increasing our level of open-mindedness means we always seek to learn new things and to grow. If we fail to open our minds to new aspects of life, if we start to feel like we know everything we need to know, then we miss out on new possibilities and new opportunities for self-improvement. As long as we are not facing the boredom of omnipotence, there will always exist the exhilaration of learning new things.

A few last remarks

In our world, with so much going on, so much to do, and so much to learn, we have no choice but to depend on our leaders and our experts. We depend on our experts for the truth, and we depend on our leaders for judgment. We have no choice but to leave our trust and faith in these individuals to do what they feel is best.

Unfortunately, certainty is not something humans can ever be certain of. Like any human, our experts and leaders are faced with the task of being right while being infinitely ignorant. No human is infallible; we all make mistakes.

If we have leaders and experts with minds that are mostly closed, the flaws of our society can only persist. When those in charge have minds that are a bit more open, progress happens and our world improves.

I do not know if there is a point to encourage people to have an open mind. Those of us who are more open minded already strive to have an open mind. Those of us who are more closed minded feel like there is little new to learn, and therefore do not feel the need for increased open-mindedness. But it rarely hurts to try.

A closed mind never changes; an open mind can learn and grow. Opening our minds more, and being more tolerant towards the differences amongst us will be essential for paving the path that takes our species beyond the dark ages. A better world is waiting for us, and it starts when we have an open mind about having an open mind.

Corporations and the Media

Stay tuned while corporations try to sell us their wretched sins. - The Tick

Corporations

Corporations are the dominant institution on our planet, making them the most powerful institution on earth. Although often vilified and blamed for the world's problems, corporations are simply an inanimate tool providing a service to society. Most often, the by-products of the corporate structure – like moving operations to a country that has cheap labour and lax pollution laws – are the result of decisions made to increase the value of the company and appease the shareholders.

It is not simply a few individuals who are responsible for “bad” decisions. Those who are employed by corporations, from interns to CEOs, are not evil. Like all of us, they make mistakes, but they are no worse than any of us, for we are all to blame. Corporations and their by-products are the manifestation of humanity's greed; we all want to get more for less, and corporations are bound by law to increase profits.

Although the problems associated with corporations are simply the result of a system based on selfishness, it is still imperative to the future of our world that our economic system is operated at a sustainable level. Our planet has limits, human desire does not.

So, what then... get rid of corporations? Hell no. Corporations have become a necessity; we all want and need the products pumped out and peddled by the corporate machine. Compounded by our world's ever expanding populace, we have become dependent, and it is our dependency that allows us to take the negative aspects as inevitable – as if we have to take the good with the bad.

Even though corporations are the world's most influential institution, they still depend on humanity. We are all the driving force behind the profits that are made; we do the work and we buy the products, giving us the ultimate power to decide how our world's dominant institution is operated.

There are already many works that deal with both corporations and the media. A few I recommend are the provocative documentaries [The Corporation](#) by Mark Achbar et al., [Outfoxed](#) by Robert Greenwald, and the 3 part BBC series [The Power of Nightmares](#). Also, check out the stimulating book [When Corporations Rule the World](#) by David C. Korton, or the comedy [Network](#).

The Media

The influence of the media is enormous. Printed media, radio, and television all impact our perception of the world. For most of us, the media serves as a primary source of new information. An institution like the media, which is such an integral part of our lives, can also be used to control society.

Along with the news and entertainment, the media serves as the voice of our world's biggest institutions, including corporations. Considering that nearly all our media sources are corporately owned, we can see the double-edged sword of the media – it can be tainted by a corporate agenda. Like the haunted house ride at Disney, the media shows us a reflection of society as well as the superimposed ghost of materialism.

As the dominant institution on our planet, corporations can be thought of as the “parents” of our world, with humanity being the children. The corporate voice - the media - entertains us, tells us what's new, and shows us ways to improve our lives. This is not necessarily a bad thing, for we will always have room for improvement in our lives.

The problem, in my opinion, is that our “parents” do not care about our well-being; corporations can only care about themselves. Along with the positives that the media provides comes the underlying corporate agenda, which subtly shapes society so that we eventually become what corporations want us to be – passive consumers.

It is easy to simply dismiss media bashing as nonsense, especially considering the barrage of entertaining stimuli that appeals to our inner most beings. But if we can break the hypnotic trance of the media, looking beyond the trite tripe, we begin to see that the so called “cheap entertainment” is coming at a much higher cost than we expected to pay.

My qualm is not necessarily with the sitcoms, the reality shows, or any of the generic trash that floods out into the universe – it is the commercial aspect. Nearly all forms of media are tainted; underneath the facade of news and entertainment, someone is trying to sell us something, and they are succeeding.

Commercials

Conjoined with nearly all forms of entertainment is a trillion dollar industry - advertising. Business organizations are eager to attach their brands and products to anything that gets noticed, and those who create the entertainment seek to maximize their viewing audience. Once they have caught our eye, advertisers use a plethora of tactics to ensure their ads have the most impact. Years of sophisticated market research has taught ad companies the most effective ways to appeal to our inner-most desires.

When we see food commercials, it makes us slightly more hungry. When we see attractive people and sexual innuendos, it increases our sex drives. When we see images of people enjoying life, we cannot help but associate the products they are selling with happiness. Even if the effect is minuscule, and even if we willingly expose ourselves, advertisements are still a form of mind control. Although few of us like to admit that we can be controlled, like any animal, we have little choice.

One single message from one corporation has the effect of only slightly increasing the likelihood of us being enticed by the product we are shown. The combined effect of all the advertisements that we are bombarded with results in the creation of a dream life – a materialistic utopia where we can have ultimate happiness. This ideal, although impossible to attain given our insatiable drives, has become ingrained into our culture, and we, in general, have become a materialist society.

Along with any advertisement that shows us something we could have - be it a new car, a sexy smile, or any of the “salubrious” selection of stuff – we are also being told that who we are right now is insufficient. Even though we may be completely assured of who we are, advertisements are telling us that **we are not good enough**.

Advertisements tend to prey on our insecurities and hope that we will consume in order to gain acceptance in a materialist society that associates possessions and appearance with status. The consequences of individuals constantly searching for an unreachable ideal is a population left feeling inadequate and a society with potential self-esteem issues.

As human beings, self-doubt is instinctively present in all of us. Humans, being descendants of tribal primates, have inherent self-doubt, which is essential for determining rank and maintaining social structure.[\[Morris\]](#) This means that as long as we are told that we are inadequate, and no one tells us any different, then we will always feel inadequate.

Arguably a contributing factor, the repercussions of a society consistently feeling inadequate are, amongst other things, depression, crime, and obesity (the effects of fast-food corporations, as seen in Morgan Spurlock's [Super Size Me](#), can only be exasperated by a lack in self-esteem).

Unfortunately, the voice of the media can never tell us that we are good enough; corporations and our economic system thrive on humanity's quest for personal gain. As long as humans feel inadequate, as long as there exists self-doubt, there will be a need for someone to have more than someone else so that they can feel superior.

As an empathetic human, I have little choice but to argue that something potentially harmful to humanity is a bad thing. I want a healthy world where we can be happy with what we already have, but that is just my opinion. It would be foolish of me to argue that a materialistic life is not the best way to live, because there is no certainty in human knowledge.

And really, so what if we are being sold something and they use the most effective ways they can find to peddle their wares... a person needs to eat, right?

News Media

Where we can run into real problems is when there is no distinction between the entertainment we watch and the information we receive, meaning our news is subject to the same taint as our entertainment.

If there was a corporation that poured chemicals into our water supply, altering it to control society, and we found out about it, there would be an outrage. However, when the information we

receive from the media has the same taint, we do not get outraged. Why not? For one, part of the taint tells us not to question it - we are taught to believe that our news media is accurate, and therefore trustworthy.

We rely on the media for accurate information. We'd like to think all our news comes from objective journalists with enough integrity to resist manipulation from their superiors, and some of it is. However, if we are too lazy to find out how biased one source of media is, then we remain ignorant of the possibility of being manipulated.

If the source of the information we rely upon to make political decisions is biased, then our actions are more likely to agree with the ones who originally jaded the news we believed to be objective. This effectively undermines democracy, since we make decisions based on misinformation. [[David Brock](#)]

Not only can each news outlet present facts that support their own political agenda, the news media, in general, has a combined effect of running a fear campaign underneath the facade of giving us news, which is exemplified in Michael Moore's documentary *[Bowling for Columbine](#)*.

The news media relies on its ability to influence society, and it uses its influence to instill fear in the population. Why fear? Fear is an extremely powerful motivator, present in all animals, including humans. When something has the power to manipulate our innermost fears, it has the power to control us.

The use of fear as a means of control is not a new concept; it has been used for millenia. Tyrants used to put the heads of their vanquished foes on stakes for all to see, which is enough to keep a lot of people in line. Many religions rely on a self-enforcing policy of fear, ensuring that we stay consciously aware of the actual or imaginary repercussions of our actions.

The effect of the news media's fear campaign is essentially the same as the fear campaigns of the past – it is designed to keep society under control. The effect of the news media's fear campaign works on several levels:

i. Keep us watching

The power of fear is a well known tool used by the corporations through the media. Some sources are worse than others, but fear is a dominant message that is fed to us in daily doses. Fear keeps people glued to the set waiting for more news... waiting for more fear. Once in the deer-in-headlights state, the bombardment of the self-worth questioning ads becomes much more effective.

ii. Stress the population

I was watching CNN a while ago, and they were talking about how 1 Billion would die as a result of the avian flu. 1 Billion human lives! I have not seen any other news media confirm such a high number, but if CNN was the only channel I watched, I would have – after changing my shorts – bought a gun, a year's supply of food and locked myself in a plastic bubble.

Even without the apocalyptic messages of CNN, it is easy to see how even a slight misrepresentation can feed fear, which can have a cyclical effect: fear – consume – fear – consume. A stressed population will work harder and consume more. Like Marilyn Manson says “Keep the people scared, and they will consume. It doesn't get much simpler than that.”

iii. Make us feel insecure

Another use of fear is to keep the population frightened of an unknown enemy. The purpose of spreading “propaganda” of unknown enemies is to keep a population frightened so that they stay under the umbrella of an administration whose policies harm the very people they are supposed to be protecting. [[Chomsky](#)]

A scared population is a malleable population. If we are constantly told that someone is determined to destroy us and our way of life, it is easier for those in control to manipulate us. The Cold War, the Drug War, the Terror War... all represent an ominous enemy, and its up to our leaders to “protect” us. Those in charge gain the power to do what they deem necessary to maintain safety. Meanwhile, civil liberties are stripped, countries go to war, and the veil of fear is never lifted.

iv. Keep us divided

The use of fear to keep populations divided is, I feel, the most important aspect of the media's fear campaign. From over-representing minority crime, drug use, and gang violence on our streets, to the threat of an imminent terrorist attack, the result is an increased level of fear in society. The higher our level of fear, the more we are likely to be afraid of the unknown, including our fellow citizens.

As long as we all fear our neighbours, humankind will not be able to halt the self-perpetuating autocracy that has always existed. The world's leaders want us to live in “Tupperware” societies, never going outside our own social circles. As long as we fear minority groups, as long as we fear people who are strangers, we will not feel safe in the world. The world's leaders do not want us to unite; they do not want us to take the power back.

Climbing a Growing Mountain

Institutions have lifespans well beyond those of humans, meaning their influence doesn't erode over time. Instead, slowly but surely, corporations can manipulate the legal system to gain more and more power as time goes by, systematically gaining control over the masses, all the while using the media to alter our perceptions of reality.

With every new generation, it will only get harder to change the corporate structure. Our youth are, just as we were, being conditioned to accept corporations as the dominant institution. Children are being targeted by corporations, ensuring new generations of loyal consumers who support the corporate ideal unquestionably.

Anything that we consider a change for the worse will be considered normal to our children, who will grow up with it already being a reality, just as the new problems of our parents generation were passed down to us.

If corporations and the media remain unchallenged, this trend could continue to the point where everything and everyone is owned. As scary or unbelievable a concept like a complete stranglehold on earth would be, complete ownership is one eventual outcome of a system driven solely for greed and profit.

What Can We Do?

As long as information remains free, there will always be options for anyone wanting to change the system. A good step is to become informed – an informed public is an empowered public. There are plenty of works that discuss the good and the bad of both corporations and the media; we can learn from them and spread the information to our peers.

We can turn off our televisions and read a book, or at least buy a TiVo. Television will never tell us that we are watching too much. If we don't tell ourselves to stop, and no one else tells us to stop, then we could end up watching too much, and too much of anything is usually a bad thing.

It is important to get news from a wide variety of sources, instead on relying on just one station or one newspaper. Also, Internet news such as Google news, are automatically generated and provide various viewpoints on similar issues, giving us a wider scope of perspectives.

What I'd Like to See

Imagine this: we turn on the 6 o'clock news, and the first twenty minutes are all positive, uplifting stories. We hear about how the world around us - locally, nationally and globally - is improving. Even if the world has not changed at all, our perception of the world has improved. Instead of being bombarded with sensationalist news that gives us the impression that the world is falling apart, we get the opposite effect – thinking that our world is improving.

Why is news not like this right now? News is corporately owned, just like the rest of the media. For a news source to profit, it needs to sell commercials, and to sell commercials it has to attract viewers. Our society loves sensationalist news. It is a fact of life: atrocities, violence and debauchery stimulate us. A story about a 10 car pile-up is way more interesting than an increase in charitable donations, which is why the news always starts with the hottest stories first.

However, if we were to take away the commercial aspect of the news media - ads in newspapers, commercials on the radio and TV - then we take away the need for sensationalist news. If all news media sources had the same regulations and the same enforcements, one news source could be as reliable and unbiased as any other.

We have government regulations that keep our water supply safe to drink (usually), and ensure that our food is safe to eat (mostly), as well as laws that try to keep our air clean. Our news information has the ability to shape our perception of the world – why don't we have stricter regulations to ensure that such a vital resource is as clean as possible? I feel that it would take relatively few resources to ensure that all news sources are as unbiased as possible.

One may argue that without the commercial revenue, news media is no longer feasible, meaning they won't be able to afford to produce and release the news. But if we remove the requirement for sensationalism, presenting the news would take much smaller budgets – there would be no reason to have the prettiest spokespeople, computer graphics and the rest of the catchy, flashy aspects of the news media. Just news, plain and simple.

I am not suggesting that we have to restructure the majority of the media, nor am I saying we should get rid of commercials entirely. All I am suggesting is to implement new regulations for all media outlets that provide news – enforcing a policy (for as long as the news is being shown) of no commercials allowed, no endorsements, and (ideally) no private agendas, with all information regulated and monitored by watchdog organizations with the power to stop misinformation from being propagated.

Now, I know that our information can never be totally pure or accurate, as there is only so much we know to be true, but our news should strive to maintain the integrity and ideals of true journalists – unbiased, objective and untainted. I also know that there is no way to please everyone – but it is possible to ensure that all sides of an issue get relatively equal representation, across the board.

Information is too essential a resource for it to be tainted by a corporate agenda; regulated and standardized news media is a possibility that we can make happen.

Final Remarks

It seems devious... almost unfathomable to think that our media (and therefore our world) is being controlled (even if only slightly) by a hidden agenda, but it is only this way because we have allowed it to continue. If we decide to regulate our world's biggest corporations, we will be able to remove most of the corporate taint of media.

Again, let me stress that there is no evil plot, and it is doubtful that anyone is scheming for the demise of humanity. The negative aspects of both corporations and the media are a by-product of our system... a system based on greed, which can result in a stressed and depressed population and a depleted earth.

Just like global warming, corporately controlled media should be a major issue of discussion. Removing the corporately induced veil of fear that surrounds society will be one small step with, I feel, dramatic effects.

Unfortunately, society depends on the media to distribute information, so we will have to take advantage of other forms of communication, like Indy media, word of mouth, and non-violent civil disobedience, if we want to spread information and encourage change.

We have the right and we have the power to choose how our world's corporations and the media are operated. We have the responsibility to do the most to ensure the well-being of our societies, both today and tomorrow.

Education: Our Best Investment

Education is our world's most important institution. Education is essential for bringing equality, peace, and prosperity. There is no greater asset to an individual than an educated mind. There is no greater asset to the world than an educated population. Our world's education system should be given the utmost priority today, ensuring a brighter tomorrow.

Every Human has Potential

A brain is like a muscle. Some humans have bigger muscles. Some humans are better equipped for thinking. However, there is no reason why a slower brain cannot become quicker. Just as training and exercise make muscles grow, reading and learning can make a brain more fit and better equipped for thought.

Granted, the limits which can be attained by any human will at some level be preordained by genetics, but it would only be the difference between a genius and a super genius - an experienced weightlifter vs. a world's strongest human.

I firmly believe the level achieved by any human is a result of the opportunities they were presented with during their lives. Mentally challenged aside, if given a lifetime of opportunities, everyone in the world has the ability to take any career path they choose; be it doctor, architect, or politician. It is only the opportunity that is lacking, not the potential.

If everyone in the world had the same opportunity to get a good education from preschool to PhD, socio-economic backgrounds would not be more important to success than drive and ambition. If we look at the hierarchies that exist within our society, it is not abilities that separates people, it is opportunities. When a group of people keep the best education for themselves, over time, a gap will develop between those who have opportunities and those who do not.

Knowledge is Power: Education Brings Equality

In our world there is not just two sides, but a spectrum from poor to rich, with the best educational opportunities going to the wealthy. It is easy to see how a ruling class can deny knowledge to a subordinate class, thereby making it easier for the rulers to remain in charge, and for their offspring to continue the trend.

Humans who are born into subordinate roles are taught that they belong where they are put, since they are somehow inferior. If someone accepts a subordinate role, they may never seek to rise above. Once we are denied the same learning experiences that those in power receive, we miss the opportunity that knowledge provides. Education gives us confidence; we learn to believe in ourselves.

Only when we learn enough to question the rationale behind the system, can we become empowered enough to rise above oppression and encourage change. Knowledge breaks down injustices

in the system. History shows this, both with minority rights and female rights. Subordinate positions for race and gender still exist in the world, but education will break down these barriers. Education is empowering.

On a global scale, the more knowledge humanity has, the more power we all have. An educated public is less easily controlled by corrupt legislation. Education brings power to the people, and that power can negate injustice and exploitation. An educated public can end the tyrannical rule that has been perpetuated for millenia. Once enough individuals are empowered with enough knowledge, equality will happen on earth.

Education Brings Peace

There is a lot of anger in our world. Everyday, we bear witness to violent acts. Where does violence come from? Violence starts with ignorance; we fear what we do not understand; we tend to hate what we fear; hate turns into anger, and one outlet for a surplus of anger is violence.[Yoda]

Whenever we encounter – either mentally or physically - a situation where we cannot find a solution, we feel helpless. We hate feeling helpless. We hate being unable to express our emotions. When we lack a way to comprehend or communicate the emotions we are feeling, we become frustrated at our own inabilities. We hate the feeling of losing power over the situation. We fear our own ignorance – our own imperfections – so we get defensive, which can result in negative behaviour.

As we learn more and more, our level of self-understanding increases and our dependence on violence decreases. Education brings peace to the individual. When we learn ways to communicate our feelings, and understand our emotions, we can confront our deepest fears and search for inner peace. The more individuals who are at peace, the more peaceful our world will be.

A lot of hate is perpetuated throughout our world... generations of ignorance being passed down. With knowledge, we learn some important virtues: patience, tolerance and acceptance. By learning; by going beyond what we already know, we can overcome our own misconceptions, thereby overcoming our own hatreds. Expanding our understanding and learning new things allows us to overcome ignorance.

As we gain wisdom, fears and prejudice evaporate, allowing us to appreciate the splendid plethora that is humanity. Education teaches us that despite superficial differences, all humans are essentially the same. We are all of the same species, we all share the same genes. We are all members of one family sharing one world.

Education allows us to communicate with words instead of weapons. Communication is essential to diplomacy and peaceful co-existence. If humans had the ability to communicate with one another across language, religious and cultural barriers, we would not need to devote so many resources towards warfare. Instead, we could build a trusting relationship, sharing knowledge and resources for the betterment of all.

I believe that nearly all humans in the world could live next door to anyone else in the world, and live in harmony. Most of us are non-violent. Peace is only a dream because it has not yet become a reality, not because it is a fantasy. Once enough people learn and believe that peace is possible, peace will become inevitable. Education is key for bringing peace to our world.

Education Brings Prosperity

What is it that most of us want more than anything else? A long and healthy life. The longer and healthier our lives, the more fulfilled we are, right? Well, what brings a long and healthy life more than anything? Knowledge – learning how to live right combined with the latest in science and medicine.

Statistically, the higher one's level of education, the higher the quality of life. This comes from the obvious benefits that increased education provides: more career options, a higher salary, more confidence, more respect in society, and more time to learn how to live. Knowledge truly is power.

Most of all that we learn and all the technology that we use everyday comes from humankind's knowledge base. Everything our species knows is the product of thousands of years of advancements in different areas of understanding. New technology and new advancements come when education meets ingenuity. Meme theory shows that the more information we all know, the more progress will occur.

What's meme theory? Meme theory is simply a way of looking at how information is spread throughout our world. A meme (rhymes with dream) is an abstract view of one unit of information. Everything we know, from the smallest bits of information (like a letter in the alphabet) to complex concepts (like the Theory of Everything), can be thought of as single meme or a meme made from a combination of other memes.

We can think of the human brain as a computer: a meme processing unit (MPU). Most of what everyone thinks everyday has already been thought of, but, occasionally, a few memes come together in a way that has not yet been processed and progress occurs. Progress never comes in huge chunks, only tiny advancements at a time. Like coral, humanity's knowledge continually grows off the existing base.

Now, if you think of humanity as a distributed meme processing machine – a supercomputer of interconnected MPUs spanning the globe - then the more we know as a species, the higher the probability of new discoveries being found. The more discoveries we find, the better off we all are. When we increase the amount of education everyone receives, we increase the amount of progress that will happen. Education brings prosperity.

Just a dream?

There is an ideal future we can all envision. A world of peace, where everyone lives with security. A world where everyone can have shelter, clothing, food, and, of course, entertainment. Education is key to bringing us this future. Shifting more resources into education will have dramatic effects, resulting in more progress and an increase in the standard of living for all.

If we had the resources, we could build towards a system where, if students continually made progress, they could get whatever they needed to stay in school. Health care, boarding costs, and child support could all be made available, thereby allowing everyone access to education. A better system could be tolerant to the differences in learning abilities that exist. Each student can learn at a pace catered to them, allowing everyone to reach their full potential.

Who is going to pay for this? Where is the money going to come from to dramatically improve the world's education system? The truth is that the resources already exist to improve the quality of the education system. However, education is not given a high priority; it is put into the background when it should be our utmost priority.

Reallocating where we spend our resources could allow for vast improvements to our world. Imagine if the combined military budgets of the world were used for education instead of war. Instead of destruction, we could focus on construction - books instead of bombs.

Another way of allocating resources is to implement a capital cap on a global scale, so that we can devote the world's profits towards things that will improve the quality of our future, like education. As the cost of technology decreases, low cost solutions make improved education an economically feasible option for the entire world.

Significant progress can happen in our lifetimes. The more we invest now, the higher the probability of our lives improving. We need to reassess the importance that education can play in our lives, for a better today and a brighter tomorrow. A better world is not far off, and improving our world's education will help bring us there.

I Want!

We can go anywhere or buy anything, but the only place we will find happiness is inside our own heads. -Jim Unger (paraphrased)

Why do we want? Why must we always want something? What we can do about our wants? Along with attempts to answer these questions, I will provide some suggestions for anyone wishing to increase their level of happiness.

Most of the ideas I present here stem from the Buddhist philosophy, whose primary belief is that **life is suffering** and **the cause of suffering is desire**. We hurt because we want something we don't have or we have something we don't want. If we can eliminate all of our suffering, then we have achieved total happiness, like Heaven, Paradise or Nirvana.

Why do we want?

First I will answer the question “Why do we want?”, because understanding why we want can help us in dealing with our wants.

As humans, we are faced with three layers of wanting. The first is the instinctual layer, on top of which is the conscious layer, followed by the sentient layer.

The primary layer, which is present in all forms of life, is the instinctual, genetic level. The will to survive and propagate is the most fundamental edict of any genetic code, for life would not continue without it. Direct instructions – instincts – are what ensures most forms of life and, ultimately, its genetic code persists.

Instincts are responsible for simple yet essential things, like gaining nourishment and encouraging reproduction. For humans, instincts mostly run on a subconscious level, barely recognizable except in extreme cases, like fight or flight situations. It is due to the second layer of wanting that we remain mostly unaware of our instincts.

We think at the second level of wanting - the conscious (or memetic) layer - making it hard to analyze our instincts. Yet a lot of our desires and, therefore, our actions stem directly from our instincts. Things like eating, drinking, and fornicating are essential for our genes' survival, so we often seek to indulge in the pleasure of satisfying our drives, or at least avoid the pain of denying our drives.

Thoughts like "I want to eat or drink", "I'm horny" or "I want to own that" can all be considered conscious thoughts which stem from our genetic will. As an extension of genetic will, conscious will is controlled by genes through a simple feedback mechanism – pleasure and pain.

When our thoughts and actions coincide with our genetic will, like catching and eating food, we are rewarded with pleasure. If we do something against our genetic will, like starving, such actions are negatively reinforced with pain. The end result is an individual whose actions increase the likelihood of its gene's survival and propagation.

All animals, I presume, have varying degrees of consciousness. Consciousness can be thought of as a computer program running in the animals brain on top of the subconscious, gathering and processing information throughout it's life. This conscious program is essential for complex animals in complex environments, giving the organism a way to learn and react beyond what can be preprogrammed by genetics.

Besides growing and dividing, conscious thought gives animals new options to increase their genetic viability, like learning ways to out-compete rivals. Most animals, humans included, constantly seek to improve their own status, since a higher status will often increase the reproductive success of the individual.

Although few of us seek to dominate the entire world, we all still seek what [Morris](#) calls pseudo-tribe dominance, meaning we wish to be the best in our own social circles, like with friends, at work, in sports or with games. Even if we do not indulge it, we all have a desire to win.

The human animal, as far as we know, has the most developed consciousness out of all the animal kingdom, giving us the ability to learn from and understand our environment at a level never before achieved on earth. Along with the technology we create, our big brains bring the layer of sentience: not only are we self-aware, we are also conscious of our own mortality.

We learn very early on that everyone, including ourselves, will die. We live our lives on a busy street, full of speeding buses. We see, everyday, everywhere around us, people being taken out - splat! ... there goes another - and we know that that there is a bus out there with our own number on it, barreling down on us to take us into the unknown of death.

Our inevitable death creates the highest layer of wanting: what I call the lifetime will, or life-will. We want fulfillment and satisfaction and to feel like we are getting the most out of life. We want the sense of security that comes from feeling like we are making the right choices, both for today and tomorrow.

Wanting the answers to questions like "What is the meaning of life?", "Is there a purpose?", or "Am I living right?" can be considered life-will desires.

When it comes to ways of satiating our life-will, most of us have learned ideas that make sense. Sometimes we are taught these ideas by our religions, by our family and friends, by society, and by our own life experiences. Our desire to live good lives, although separate from genetic will, operates with the same pleasure/pain mechanism as our conscious will.

Some life-wills are centered around denying our wants. Often for spiritual reasons, some humans choose a life of poverty, chastity and deprivation to fulfill their life-wills. Other life-wills are centered around indulgence, such as promiscuous individuals, or devout economic materialists (more on this later). Some of us are humanitarians, giving to help others. Some of us are monogamists, with a life-will centered around raising a family unit. Most often, life-wills are not solely denial or indulgence, but a combination there of.

In our infinite ignorance, no one can ever know for sure what is the best way to live. We have no choice but to rely on faith... faith that we are making the right choices. But, no matter what, we all want to feel good by doing what is best for our genes, as well as what we feel is best for our lives.

Dealing with our wants

When it comes to dealing with our insatiable wants, I see three ways to respond: we can try to deny our wants, we can try to satiate our wants, and we can try to decrease our wants.

Denial

Denying our wants is something we all do in our lives. Whether we go on a diet, abstain from infidelity, or live a life of chastity, denial, and the associated pain, is something we all have to experience. Sometimes we have a choice, sometimes we do not.

When we have a choice, we use will power to resist the temptation to indulge a want. Usually, we use will power when our life-will (what we want to be) conflicts with our genetic will (what we want right now). When we use will power to avoid over-eating, we are using our conscious thought to deny our desire to eat, since we want the long-term happiness of nearing our desired physical self rather than the short-term satisfaction of downing a big bowl of warm fudge brownies with scoops of chocolate soy-based frozen treat, or whatever else we do to feel good.

When we do not have a choice, meaning our life-will and our genetic will both want the same thing, is when we suffer the most. There is no long-term happiness associated with starving, if one is starving due to the lack of access to food. When we want something, or feel like we need something but do not have it, we suffer from the unfulfilled desire.

Indulgence

Indulging our wants is something we all do in our lives. Whether we eat a meal, drink a beer or buy a trip into space, indulgence, and the associated pleasure, is something we all have to experience. Sometimes we have a choice, sometimes we do not.

When we do not have a choice, meaning indulgence is something we have to do, it usually stems from a genetic will. We cannot deny our need for air, water or food, or deny any of our bodily functions without pain and death. When we indulge our genetic wills, we gain the immediate pleasure of fulfilling a desire, and avoid the pain of denial.

If we choose to indulge in something, it will bring the immediate pleasure of genetic will satiation. If the indulgence corresponds with our life-will desires, then we get the added bonus of life-will fulfillment. If the indulgence opposes our life-will desires, we will regret our actions and experience the pain of unfulfilled life-will desires.

We are programmed to seek out pleasure, and many things in life bring us pleasure. Most of our desires stem from our ancestral genetic drives, which were essential to getting humanity to where it is today. However, for a lot of humans on earth, basic necessities can be met with little work. So while we are not barely surviving, our genes are written as if we were. With our basic drives met, most of us tend to spend our time indulging our conscious-will for status and our life-will desires.

Denying our wants results in pain. Indulging our wants results in pleasure, but does not stop our wants from persisting. Decreasing our wants can be an effective way to decrease the pain caused by unfulfilled wants.

Decreasing our wants

Decreasing our wants is not an easy thing to do. There is no way to instantly achieve a state of happiness that lasts beyond the instant. It can take lifetimes of work to become at peace with one's wants. But when we decrease our wants, we decrease our suffering and increase our happiness.

I can only offer suggestions of some ways to help us decrease our wants, which include understanding our insatiability, being confident in who we are, meditation, marijuana, and lucid dreaming. Ultimately, it is up to each of us to find out what we feel works best. Still, I do believe it is a worthwhile endeavour to seek to decrease our suffering, because when we do, it can improve every single day of our lives.

Understanding the insatiability of our desires

In Greek mythology, Sisyphus is eternally forced to roll a boulder up a mountain, only to have it fall down the other side when he reaches the top. Like Sisyphus, we too are condemned to an existence of fleeting satisfaction. No matter how much we indulge our wants and satisfy our desires, the feeling only lasts for a moment and then fades away.

Just like any organism driven by a genetic code designed for self-perpetuation, humans are insatiable. We have no genetic code, no programming, for permanent satiation. We have no instincts or ingrained ways to feel like we *finally* have enough. Complete satisfaction only lasts for an instant and then it gets replaced by new desires and new wants.

By wanting all the things we want, we create a potential future self. This future self, which exists only in our minds, has the things we currently want, like having more wealth. If we were to instantly become our future self, say, by winning the lottery, we would not suffer as long as we no longer wanted. But by our very nature, we would always come to want more, creating a new future self who needs more of something, and thereby continue to suffer.

This scenario presents us with two options to be completely happy. First, we can decrease our suffering by constantly moving our present self towards our ideal future self, meaning we gain whatever it is we want. Or, we can decrease our suffering by bringing our future self nearer to our present self, meaning we convince ourselves that we already have what we want.

Indulging our wants takes work – we have to work towards whatever it is we wish to acquire. Decreasing our wants takes work – we have to work towards being happy with who we are now. A combination of both methods creates a two-fold effect towards increasing our level of happiness.

In other words, to help feel like we have enough we can actively and consciously try to feel like we have enough. To do this, we need to rely on our memetic layer – our ability to think – to overrule our genetic level, using our brainpower to help in overcoming the suffering caused by our insatiable desires.

Being confident in who we are

You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your own love and affection.
- Buddha

Self-doubt is something we all feel. This is not to be ashamed of, since self-doubt is inherent and instinctual. Our genetic programming makes us our own toughest critics; we always ask ourselves “Am I good enough?” As imperfect beings, we will always have room for improvement, but that does not mean we cannot feel like we are already good enough.

Being confident in who we are means we can answer the self-doubting question with an absolute, affirmative, “Yes! I am good enough.” If we can be completely confident in who we are and with what we already have, then we no longer have to submit to the doubt that causes us to feel like we still need more. If we can be completely confident, then no matter what happens in the future, we can be assured that we will still be okay, knowing that our confidence is all we will need in the future as well.

We will always have doubts, so unless we tell ourselves or somebody else tells us, we will never feel like we have enough. When we rely on others to tell us we are good enough, we will always need others to give us praise to feel worth, that is, until the feelings come from within ourselves. When we tell ourselves that we are already good enough, we can make ourselves happy – happy with who we are.

If the feelings of worth come from within, we no longer need the feelings of worth earned through status, meaning we do not feel like we need to prove anything to anyone, including ourselves. Although it is an unending task, overcoming our inherent self-doubt means we always have to acknowledge that we have enough, and that we are already good enough.

Meditation

Meditation is something we have all done in our lives. Meditation, quite simply, is just thinking – the less distractions and the more time we spend, the deeper we meditate. Meditation is great. Along with being a stress buster, a path to insight and introspection, meditation is also an effective way to feel confident in who we already are.

Marijuana

Marijuana is a mind-altering substance, illegal in many places of the world. It is a gateway drug, not in the sense of leading to other drugs, but in the sense that it opens a door to introspection. Marijuana, as many of its fans will attest, can give a sense of peace and serenity that lasts well beyond the immediate high.

I am not suggesting partaking in illegal activities; there are places in the world where we can smoke marijuana legally in a controlled environment. And while occasional recreational use can be beneficial, habitual use can become detrimental, so while I am not suggesting we all become potheads, I still encourage people to consider marijuana as one possible way to help us to decrease our suffering.

Lucid dreaming

Lucid dreaming is the art of being aware of the fact that we are dreaming when we are dreaming, so that we become awake inside our dreams. Lucid dreaming is one way to experience anything we could ever want. Even though our dreams bring nothing tangible into our waking life, it does bring experiences. Lucid dreaming allows us to indulge ourselves and receive the same pleasures, just as pleasurable as when we are awake.

Economic Materialism

Economic materialism is the belief that the more stuff one has, the better. Things like fame, beauty, and wealth are all equated with power and status, and therefore, happiness. Like Proximo in *Gladiator*, we who are materialists wish to suckle from the Great Whore until we are fat and happy and we can suckle no more.

The quest for status, the will to power, is not new; it has always been a driving force behind humanity's progress. Beauty, fame, wealth - all forms of power - have always been desired. The higher one's status, the higher one's reproductive value. Power, and the pleasure response its acquisition brings, is a very strong motivator for us.

We are driven by both our genetic-will and life-will to keep up with and surpass others. Although worldly possessions may seem superficial to spiritualists, materialism is no less meaningful than being devout. As materialists, when we improve our economic positions, say, by buying a new car or getting a better job, we receive pleasure from the increased status – a warm sense of accomplishment, as well as the satisfying feelings of worth.

Today, more so than in the past, economic materialism has become a prominent life-will ambition in our world. Corporate media, and therefore society in general, has increased our desire for worldly possessions by appealing to our will for status. Modern technology and advertising makes it easier for us to create a future self who is living the dream life of consumption, and, everyday we are presented with ways of inching towards the unattainable ideal.

As nice as more stuff would be, if we can be conscious of our insatiable desires, we can also know it will never be enough. There is no plateau or finish line that gets triggered once we attain a certain amount of status. The only way we feel like we have enough is when we decide that we already do. Until we are confident in who we are, we will want to indulge in status to fill the void left by our self-doubt.

The next time we want something we don't need, the next time we felt the urge to splurge on something that is more for status satisfaction rather than necessity, we could, if we wanted to, try reaffirming our present self, meditating about it, smoking a joint, and if all that failed, indulging in a dream. The more of us able to decrease our wants in a small world with a growing population, the better off we all are.

Not wanting

We will never be able to live without wanting. First, to continue to stay alive we have to want to live. And second, to want to live without wants means we are faced with the paradox of wanting to not want.

As effective as decreasing our wants can be, and as much as I am aware of what is driving me to want, I still continue to want: I want to better myself, physically and mentally. I want to grow and learn; to find out new things about the universe and myself. I want to live and enjoy life. I also want a happier world with less misery. And for all that I want, I will suffer; but I believe the things I want are worth the suffering, even if I never get them.

Despite my wants, I still believe that the less we want, the happier we are. The happier we are, the more positive our thinking becomes, and the easier it is for us to get the things we want. This means if we decrease our wants, it becomes easier to satiate the ones that remain. Ironically, not wanting can make it easier to get what we want.

Last remarks

Like the Buddhists, I agree that life is suffering, but I also feel that **life is great**. It is great to exist! I know that it can be hard to always stay positive considering the shit we live with, but suffering will always exist; for as long as we have room to grow, we will have something to want. Besides, suffering has to exist for us to be able to be happy. Just as we cannot have a meaningful life without death, we cannot experience pleasure without being able to experience pain.

It is true, that by not wanting more, we could potentially end up with less stuff, but we will have suffered less and enjoyed more of life everyday until our own bus arrives.

The Financial Elite

The financial elite are the wealthiest humans on the planet. Although they only make up a tiny fraction of the world's population, the financial elite control a large portion of the entire world's wealth. Most of them were born wealthy, and those that became wealthy had opportunities in their lives that most humans never receive.

Most people are familiar with at least a few of the financial elite: Bill Gates, Richard Branson, Donald Trump, or the Walton family (of Wal-Mart). There is a difference between a rich person and someone who is financially elite. Hollywood celebrities, although well-off, are not usually financially elite. To paraphrase Chris Rock, “Shaq is rich, the person who signs his cheque is financially elite”

Sometimes just called “the elite”, I prefer to refer to them as “the financial elite”, since they are not elite in any other respect other than their wealth – not intelligence, culture, drive or ambition. Quite simply, they have been more fortunate in life, for without the opportunities they have had in their lives, they would be no different than anyone else.

When someone finds out about our world's concentration of wealth - how a tiny group controls over a third of the world's wealth - a common response (after the initial doubt) is resentment and frustration. What's worse is that not only are they extremely powerful, the gap between themselves and the rest of the world continues to grow – they are gaining more every day.

It is easy to vilify and demonize the financial elite as being greedy, blind to human suffering, and hellbent on sacrificing everything to get more – more wealth, more fame, and ultimately, more power. However, the financial elite are average human beings, meaning they are no different - no better or worse - than any of us.

The financial elite, being human, are subject to the same insatiable drives we all are. No matter how much any of us have, we will always want more. We cannot blame the financial elite for liking their wealth and wanting to keep it. It is unlikely, if any other human had lived the exact same life as a financially elite person, that they would turn out any different. We are all the product of the lives we have lived.

It is true that they have way more than is necessary and definitely have enough to spare. And, like most of us, the financial elite often give to charity. But, just like anyone else, few of them would be willing to part with most of their wealth and status in the hopes of improving the world. Even if they did, it would not be enough to solve all of the world's problems.

But, just because they are human, and just because they are doing what any other human would do, doesn't necessarily make it a good situation for humanity to be in.

For one, the amount of power that the financial elite wield can influence entire populations, essentially undermining democracy to maintain the status quo. With control over our biggest source of news information – the media – it is easy to subtly “steer the herd” and, even if only moderately, shape society.

Second, and more importantly, it is a risky situation to have too much power in the hands of a few, simply because of the nature of human beings.

Imagine being born into an extremely wealthy family, where you are treated like royalty, from birth to death, and where everyone else on earth is either a peer or a subordinate. Naturally, any human born into a position of power could easily develop contempt for other humans, since there would be few influences that encourage respect for others. We could claim that if we had billions of dollars we would use our vast wealth and power to decrease the suffering of our fellow human, but that opinion usually comes from a life of wanting.

Even if someone were to start in a life of poverty and climb all the way up to the top, it is unlikely that they would be the type of person who cares about humanity. Those who have the strongest craving for power are usually doing it out of a selfish need – a need to prove to everyone and themselves that they are successful. The more of this selfish drive that someone has, the less likely they are to have empathy for other humans. This means that the people who become the most powerful are the least likely to care about those beneath them.

Both types of financial elite, either by being born into or by becoming wealthy, expose a fatal flaw of humanity in an unrestricted system - the more power someone has, the less likely they are to care about other humans. We don't have to look beyond Hitler or Hussein to see proof of this. I doubt that any one person or group will gain control of our entire species, but if it did happen, things would not be pleasant for most of us.

Even without the supreme ruler situation, there is another devious scenario. Put yourself into the shoes of a financial elite... you have everything you want and you always will. Now, given that more wealth and power won't really help you, how could you make the world a better place for yourself? Well, the world is overpopulated... if there was a way to keep your power, but eliminate a large amount of the population, things would be better off for you. There would be less traffic, less pollution, and shorter line-ups... essentially the world, from your point of view, has improved.

Devious scenarios aside, I'm sure most, if not all, of the financial elite are caring humanitarians, but they really have no reason to invest in a safer, cleaner world, since they can afford to buy whatever they need, including a ticket off the planet when the need arises. And, considering what our species is capable of, it is not an impossibility that someone would eradicate humanity - all it would take is enough power in the hands of a sociopath.

The only option we have to increase our security from people who are absolutely corrupted by absolute power is to restrict the amount of power people can have. Once we set reasonable limits on the amount of wealth that any one human can control, we will have taken a step towards securing the future of the world.

Unfortunately, it will not be easy to convince the financial elite that it would be best if they relinquished their power. The thought of losing status is not something any human wants to face, especially not on the global stage. Even if the financially elite wanted to get off the throne, they would be unable to. For one, they would be shunned by their family and peers. Secondly, who would fill the void left behind?

A feasible option for redistributing the power from the financial elite to our entire species is for us to unite and retake it. With the solidarity that comes through global unity, we could seize the reigns and control the direction we are heading. Taking control of our world is essential, not just for a sustainable economy, but also for the future health of our world and the freedom of our species.

The Capital Cap

A capital cap will not be enough to make the world a better place overnight, but it is a good step that will help steer our species towards a better future.

Everyone works

We all work. Working takes up a large portion of our lifetimes. Since our work comes at such a cost, shouldn't we ensure that we are getting the most for our sweat and blood? Yes, we get paid now, but what kind of world are we all working towards? With so many problems in our world, is it so hard to believe there may be a better economic system for us?

If there was a way for us to get more for the same amount of work, if we all stand to gain from an improved system, isn't it worth considering?

It can be hard for devout capitalists to believe that another ideology could be superior to capitalism – the system we all spend our lives supporting – but opening our minds to new possibilities will allow us to improve our world.

How much is enough?

For nearly anyone on the planet, a few US million would go a long way towards getting everything they've ever wanted. With, say, ten million dollars, you would no longer have to worry about financial trouble. You could afford a nice home, receive the best health care, get the best education for your children, live an indulgent lifestyle, and still have enough left over to take care of your family for generations.

What if you had fifty million dollars instead of ten? You would be living it up five times as much, right? Nearly everyone on earth would agree that, yes, US\$50,000,000 is enough... and to please send the check right away!

Some humans are fortunate enough to have way more wealth than is necessary, in the area of billions of dollars. Once a fortune is big enough, essential things like shelter, food, and clothing become trivial. If we can afford everything we need to live, we end up looking for things to buy, shopping the globe for something to spend our money on, like a Ferrari or a trip into space.

If we want something, we will feel satisfied when we get it. However, no matter how much stuff we buy, no matter how many wants we satiate, we will always go on wanting more. Look at the wealthiest humans on the planet, most of whom would still take more if it were available... more money, more power, more fame.

It is easy to believe that having a lot is better than having a lil', but once we gain what we want, the feeling of satisfaction is always fleeting. We will always continue to want - to either gain more or gain something else. We all want more... we will always want more. Human beings are *insatiable*; we can never have enough.

Greed is not evil; it is natural. Greed is essential for perpetuating all life, for without wanting something for one's self there would be no reason to live. Greed is one of the defining qualities of human nature. Without inherent greed we would never have survived and advanced to where we are today.

Human nature is essential to how our world works. Our insatiable desires keep the economy turning and ensure that progress continues. Selfishness ensures that humanity continues to advance. Unfortunately, selfishness is also responsible for a lot of the troubles we face: injustice, pollution, starvation, and war. A system that allows human nature to run unchecked takes its toll on all of us and our planet.

Instead of asking how much is enough, as insatiable beings we should be asking the question “when are we no longer living in need?” It is in the interest of every human to consider an amount of wealth that none of us should be able to exceed.

The capital cap is the point at which we, as a species, decide when someone has enough wealth. Since there is no point where a wealthy person will ever feel like they have enough, we need to collectively agree on one. Like bartenders in a club, we can let the wealthy know when they are cut off.

There are many economic ideologies practiced in our world. For an economic system to be successful, it needs to take into account human nature.

Capitalism

A capitalist system works because it takes into account human nature; we are all inherently selfish. Capitalism is essential to keep people working and ensures that progress continues. Few people would seek the million dollar invention without the possibility of earning the million dollars. The quest for personal profit drives the economy.

Capitalism works well on a local scale. Imagine a family owned business with about a hundred employees. Most of the employees gain from hard work, earning promotions, as well as reaping the benefits of working for a successful company. The owners remain efficient to compete in the marketplace, while maintaining a level of quality to keep the customers satisfied. This situation works because everyone from the bottom to the top are working with the same goal in mind: to make more.

Capitalism, while working on a local scale, fails on a global scale. A fundamental ideal of capitalism is that the harder one works, the more money they make. That is what we are all taught as children, and it would be true if we all started as equals or if there were unlimited resources available to everyone.

Imagine a field of wheat that continually grows and provides more than enough wheat for a whole village. The villagers can go into the field and harvest as much or as little wheat as they want. Those who work less will have less. Those who work harder will reap more wheat, gaining more profit for themselves, thereby earning a higher standard of living.

Now imagine the field of wheat being owned and taxed. The scenario is no longer fair if everyone works except for the owners who live off everyone else's labour. Yes, hard work still means more profit for the individual. Yes, the hard workers might even own their own fields someday, if they are lucky. But everyone is still paying to the owners unless they become owners themselves. With everyone wanting to be an owner, soon few can afford to buy a field, no matter how hard they work.

Expand this scenario to the whole world. The villagers become the population of the world, and the wheat fields become our major industries, like agriculture and oil. All of our major industries are owned primarily by the financial elite. Most industries have been owned for generations. New markets do develop, but it happens rarely and they are filled quickly, like with Gates and Branson. Unable to climb to the top, most workers of the world pay a fee to the owners who reap the rewards of humanity's labour while providing comparatively little in return.

Even without the owners, capitalism is still imperfect for our world. Capitalism is primarily about immediate rewards... I want it all, and I want it now! Capitalism maximizes profits for the short term, but does not take into account the long term. There is little money in investing in a better future for the world, meaning capitalism does little to ensure a secure future.

An insecure world and a capitalist system can create a cycle of fear and consumption. Reinforced by the media, we get the perception that our future is unstable. If we believe our world is falling apart, then, to ensure our own survival in a worse and worse world, we are motivated to build up our own supplies and strengthen our own castles.

Capitalism is flawed because the negative impacts of our selfish actions only increase our dependency on selfishness. If everyone is out for themselves in a world with an increasing population, it becomes increasingly harder to be able to buy our own security. Instead of supporting a selfish system, we should be asking ourselves if it is better to have more money in a worse world, or less money in a better world.

The result of a global system that drives at uncontrolled levels is a world that is being driven at an unsustainable level. A system that runs at an unsustainable level is bound for failure. We will not be able to run our capitalist system forever.

Socialism

A system that depends on the goodness of all humans could work, if there was nothing but goodness in the world, but we are imperfect beings in an imperfect world.

Socialism is flawed because it fails to take into account a normal human characteristic - laziness. We are all less likely to work if we get paid the same to do nothing. Progress can slow without the financial opportunities provided by a free market system.

Socialism does have some positive aspects that we can relate to. We are all empathetic to others to some degree, and we all generally care about life and our future. Socialism works on the principal that when we are united with the same cause, we will all achieve more. Socialism is about the long term, ensuring quality of life for all - something we all deserve.

On a global scale, socialism would alleviate much of the suffering we have on our planet. As a species, we have the resources available to provide the necessities of life to all in need. But our own inherent selfishness prevents us from considering a socialist system, for we fear that we will have to share our hard earned money with people who are “undeserving”.

The best of both

The capital cap system is catered to human nature. To ensure progress continues we need to keep the incentives that make everyone work. We also have to keep a check on greed - we have a responsibility to ourselves and to our home world. A capital cap prevents us from indulging greed and selfishness to the point where it is having detrimental effects on all life on earth.

A capital cap system takes the best parts of both ideologies. Capitalism is catered to the individual, driven by our own selfish drives. Socialism is catered to the whole, driven by empathy. Capitalism works at the individual level while socialism works on a world scale. Capitalism can keep our world turning and socialism can keep our world from falling apart.

How will the capital cap affect everyone?

The beauty of the capital cap is how few humans and businesses it will have an immediate “negative” impact on. Only a tiny minority of humans (around %0.001) would be adversely affected by a capital cap - you, I, and everyone we know would stand to gain. We can embrace a new paradigm where the profits of our labours come back to us. We can begin to run our world at a sustainable level.

According to the 2004 World Wealth Report, there are around 70,000 people on this planet with over \$US30 million, controlling between five and ten trillion dollars of wealth. This is an extraordinary amount for a small group of individuals to have. When you consider that there are around 6.5 billion people on earth, it works out to around \$1500 per human. To someone fortunate enough to live in a wealthy nation, a few grand is not a big deal, but to the billions of humans who live on less than \$2 a day, even \$150 would be a jackpot.

These surplus resources could be used to dramatically improve social services across the world: better living conditions, a better education system and improved health care. While it is true that the capital cap will have a more dramatic effect on the poorest parts of our world, things will not get worse for the wealthy nations, and the long term effects are a more sustainable economy, a more peaceful world, and a brighter future for all life.

We will still have to work for (at least) the same amount of money, but along with the usual reasons to work we will have new incentives. Instead of the profits of our labour going to a tiny minority, it will go to the majority. This means our hard work will not only benefit ourselves directly, it will benefit the world.

Any improvement to our world increases our personal quality of life, since we will be living in a better world. A better world can make everyday more enjoyable for everyone, and a happy worker is a productive worker. A superior system that is embraced globally has the potential to make for a cyclically improving world, rather than a world that is steadily in decline.

What about businesses?

As our population continues to grow, we become more and more dependent on efficient ways to provide the products and services we need. Big business is an essential resource; we cannot survive without most of the services they provide. Agriculture, natural resources, technology, medicine, entertainment... one way or another, our money eventually ends up going to one of the big guys.

These industries - the ones our very existence depends on - are controlled, with the support of legislation, by very small groups of financial elites. A tiny fraction of our population reaps the largest rewards of humanity's labour. They lay claim on something we all need, something we all use. By usurping what everyone needs, they not only control vast amounts of wealth, they also gain power over everyone who depends on the resources they provide, i.e. they control all of us.

Corporations, by their very definition, are designed with only self-interest in mind. The main decisions are usually made by a board of directors lead by the CEO. The CEO's first priority is to the shareholders; not to the employees, not to the customers, not to the people of the world or our future. The only choice a CEO has is to operate solely to maximize profit, for to do otherwise means being replaced by someone who will. This is not a viable long term solution for our planet.

With a cap cap system we won't have to work any harder than we do now, and it won't take much restructuring to transition to a new system. A cap cap won't dramatically alter our working lives. The only change is how the profits are made and where the profits go. To do this, we only need to replace the very top of the organization, making sustainability the main deciding factor instead of profit.

Picture a large business organization. Imagine every cog of this corporate machine, from the very bottom all the way up, driving as efficiently as it does now, with one difference: the very top – the head – is steering the machine in a new direction aimed at making the world a better place for everyone, including its own employees. This would add a bit more grease to the cogs, making the whole machine run more smoothly.

Under a capital cap system, our largest industries and corporations would no longer be run for the profit of the few. Instead, our business communities could strive for sustainable yet efficient productivity, and the profits that are made would go to the employees, the customers, and to the world.

It will be important to have a distinction between a capital cap for individuals and a capital cap for a business. Ideally, we would only want to take control of the world's largest industries – the multi-billion dollar businesses – thereby keeping economic disruptions to a minimum while taking control of a significant portion of humanity's resources.

Now, it is true that big business already gives back to the community. Even Bill Gates is (reportedly) planning on giving up nearly all his fortune at some point in his life. As noble such a gesture is, the ones who give the “charity” still have the power to choose where the money goes. Even though the elite claim the wealth as their own, it was us - the workers - who earned the profits, and we should have the right to decide where the profits go.

When the largest business communities becomes publicly operated, we will all stand to gain. The efforts of the earth's workforce will come back to all of us.

How can we make it happen?

Changing a dominant institution on a global scale is no simple or easy task. Change will not happen overnight; it can take years, even lifetimes, for our world to progress towards an improved system. But it is possible to start today, and anyone can help make a better world become a reality. The most important step will be to gain enough support, and to do this we will need to spread the message to everyone we know.

Using anything from word of mouth to the Internet, we need to let those around us know that they could be making more for the same amount of work. We need to inform our friends, family and co-workers of ways we can improve our world's economic system. Like Huey P. Long and many others have done, we need to encourage people to question a system that allows a tiny minority to prosper on the backs of everyone else.

It is not always an easy task to share ideas with others, but it can be worth it just to try. It only takes one person, in any walk of life, reaching out to those around them to make a difference.

With enough support we can form a global union of all the workers of the world, giving us the power of solidarity. Together, we will be able to peacefully take control of our world's economy, and thereby take control of world and our future.

Hey, wait a sec...

“Wait”, someone might say, “Isn't taking away from the elite unfair?” Yes, it is. But think about this... for someone to have so much for themselves and not share with others who have so little, the only rationale could be for the elite to think that life isn't fair. They're right... life isn't fair and never will be.

Taking away the wealth from the few for the benefit of us all will not be fair to the few. They will lose their fame, they will lose a big chunk of their fortune, and they will lose their most important resource – power. They will still be wealthy enough to live their lives in the lap of luxury, but they will no longer be in control of our industries and our world. They will lose the power to rule our lives.

Yes, there will always be winners and losers. But we, the entire human race, can take our power back and decide what is and isn't fair. We have the power, and we have the right! We all deserve more. I say “boo-hoo” for the financial elite, **it's time that life was more fair for all of us!**

Obstacles

No amount of planning can predict all of the problems that will arise if humanity chooses to shift from one system to another. There will likely be unintended consequences. The fact that complications will occur should not overshadow the desired end result. To every question and problem that will arise, when we work together we will always find the best solution. We can persevere through any obstruction if we maintain a vision and hope for a better future.

We will all get more

Just as kingdoms were never built by kings alone, we've made it to where we are today on the backs of the workers. It is our work, our toil, that has made the world the way it is, and our work keeps the world turning. Most of us will never be lucky enough to become multi-millionaires, no matter how hard we work. So instead of hanging onto pipe dreams, we should consider a system where we can all get more.

If we spread the wealth, we will all be better off. By taking control of our world's industries, we will be able to ensure a sustainable economy. Pollution, sweat shops, and corporate scandals will no longer be a necessity. We could take control of the media, using it to spread positive messages and encouraging a better world.

We can replace the financial elites and take control of our major industries, ensuring that we get the most for our work, both today and tomorrow. We can devote the fruits of humanity's labour towards improving our world. When social services become a priority, everyone's standard of living will increase.

This is our planet! It belongs to all of us. We are all born here, we all live here, and we will all die here. This is the only planet we will ever call home. We have the right and the responsibility to secure our own future and the future of our world.

Potential Obstacles for a Capital Cap System

These are some of the obstacles that can be used as arguments against a capital cap. No doubt others problems will surface, but together we can find working solutions. It could be considered foolish to reveal the flaws of a plan, but no plan is perfect. To improve this plan we have to first expose the flaws.

A capital cap is essentially a redistribution of wealth and power, meaning someone is going to lose. Why would the financial elite - the only ones who will lose – allow a capital cap system to be implemented?

The financial elite (FE) represent one of the biggest obstacles to implementing a capital cap. The FE's have the most control and influence over the world, and therefore have every reason to be reluctant towards change.

The only way any FE would willingly accept a cap cap is if they believed that it would improve their world, and they feel they would be better off living in a better world.

I doubt many FE's will encourage global economic policy reform. I expect most to be opposed, and some will take action. The FE's have many tools in their arsenal to actively fight change, with the end result always being the same as has been used for millenia – instilling fear. Fear is an excellent motivator and it is a universal human instinct – giving those who can instill fear in a society the power to influence the world.

Fear can be instilled using many techniques which include, but are not limited to, propaganda, implementing information restrictions on the Internet, government sanctions against any form of cooperative or protest, and controlling uprisings using a police state, including incarcerations, violence and assassinations (both character and literal).

Fear can be crushed with hope. If hope spreads to enough hearts, the possibility of unification of the human race will become a reality, after which we can restructure our economic system. The true power, the real power, is where it has always been... with the people. Solidarity has always conquered oppression.

Given an inevitable threat to their fortunes, a lot of the financial elite will be tempted to hide their assets. Also, what is to stop corporations from dividing into enough smaller corporations to stay under an imposed limit?

The primary goal of the capital cap will be the elimination of such a high concentration of wealth and power. There will always be those who want more than everyone else, and some will do anything to get it. But there are only so many places to hide wealth, and most of them can be found.

It is not like the financial elites have vast stores of gold in their banks and homes. A lot of wealth is in the form of property (land and buildings). This wealth cannot be easily liquidated, so how will it benefit everyone to take this away from the financial elite?

A lot of the property owned by the FE's is used by other people, meaning most people have pay to the owners to use this space. If the owners who control the most property had to relinquish their control, it could then be considered public domain. This does not mean that individuals cannot own property, but a capital cap, ideally, would prevent a small group of individuals from usurping the shared commons.

A lot of the FE's wealth is in the form of stocks and bonds and cannot easily be liquidated. How would a capital cap affect the stock market?

The stock market is another big obstacle to a capital cap system, since it is already in place and keeps a lot of people content with the current system. Around half of the stock market is owned by less than %1 of the world, with the other half being owned by the rest of the world. The stock market is a way for anyone to get a piece of the pie. When people get their own little slice, they will not want to risk change for fear of losing their slice.

However, if we only take control of the shares owned by the financial elite, then the world's people can take ownership of target industries without disrupting the entire economic system. In our digital world, it only takes a few clicks to move control of these shares to a global community.

Who decides the limit imposed by the capital cap? Whats to protect everyone's assets if we just start stripping away wealth?

A limit cannot be set so high that it has no impact, nor can it be set so low that too many people are affected. The capital cap can only be implemented if the majority agrees with it. Since most people do not want to lose anything, it is imperative that only a tiny percentage of people are affected.

“But I want more than the capital cap... I want to be a billionaire.”

I know, we all do. We all can imagine unlimited power, wealth, fame and fortune. I am sure there are some who aspire to be the first trillionaire. We can dream of what it would be like, not to have any problems ever. Unfortunately, we are not destined to live without problems. No matter how much stuff we have, problems are inevitable. Imposing realistic limits on humanity's personal wealth accumulation will benefit us all.

A capital cap would take away a freedom: the freedom to earn.

Yes, a cap would set a point where a wealthy person cannot make more. They can still continue to work, if they choose, but they would no longer be doing it solely for themselves. If, at that point, one still feels like they need to have more, then having more would be unlikely to help.

Instead of trying to earn more, they should be happy with what they have already done and accept their accomplishment as a success in the business world. If they wish to do more, then they could find another field to excel in, like sports, arts, philosophy, science, or medicine.

Aren't you talking about a revolution?

I prefer the term **evolution**, rather than revolution. It will be an evolution of our species, since we will unite on a global scale, taking hold of our world and our future. No species in the history of earth has ever done what we have the potential to do - set up a sharing global community. It will be an evolution of thought, and an evolution of ideology.

Revolutions often imply violence. Although there is the potential for heated exchange, I see no reason for violence. A capital cap system is one that can gain support solely on the merits it possesses.

Any system that is implemented with violence is flawed, since it had to force its way into power. Peace can only come using peaceful methods.

What's to keep big companies efficient if they are publicly owned? Won't a capital cap system make for lazy industries, with inferior products becoming more expensive?

Well, for one, the drive for profit takes efficiency to the point where big industries externalize the costs onto all of us, our world and our future.

Second, the exact same incentives remain for employees all the way up the chain. Hard work gets rewarded, the same as it is now. It is only the very top part that switches the agenda, so that profits are not the sole priority. Besides, profits can still be made while maintaining a sustainable economy.

“A capital cap will result in worldwide economic collapse!”, or “...these are the thoughts of a terrorist who is trying to destroy our way of life” or “reading about a capital cap will cause your eyes to melt and your head to explode”

It is way easier to discredit an author than to refute their ideas. In the scientific community, most often facts are used to prove and disprove theories. In our society, facts are often less important than public image, making a good PR or a good slander campaign more effective than actual research.

We can never wait for a breaking story on the 6 o'clock news saying things like “Path to World Peace Found” or “Humans of the world are uniting”. As nice as these stories would be, as long as the media is corporately owned our news will be reluctant to encourage ways to empower humanity.

Corporations often increase profits by relying on the poorest countries for tax breaks, lax pollution laws and near slave labour. If the biggest industries become publicly owned, thereby stopping the “exploitation” of the poor, won't that mean the lifestyle that the wealthy are used to will no longer continue?

Not necessarily. A capital cap will mean more for everyone but those at the top, so if we all have more, then our lifestyle need not change.

Nearly everyone who has wealth or power in our world today relies on a capitalist system. Why should anyone question capitalism – the system that brought us to where we are today?

Why not question it? Why not objectively consider if there is another alternative that provides the benefits of capitalism with more long term viability?

I suspect a large majority of successful capitalists will be opposed to changing the system that got them to where they are today. Successful capitalist, even if they aren't financially elite, still have control over people.

I like my lifestyle, and I am reluctant to give up what little I have. However, I take little satisfaction knowing my lifestyle could be coming at a cost beyond money. And if things could be better for everyone, isn't it worth the effort?

It will be up to anyone who wishes more for themselves to convince everyone around them - fellow employees, employers, business leaders, celebrities, politicians - that they too could be gaining more.

You are clearly an ignorant fool who knows little of life, little of macroeconomics, and whose flighty, lofty ideas are a danger to the stability of the world.

I may be ignorant, and I do have lofty ideas. However, it is foolish to think that our world is stable right now.

Obstacles summary

Any time there is change, it comes with a fear, since there is an unknown as to what the outcome will actually be. We fear we will end up losing more than we will gain. It is up to us, as individuals, to decide what makes the most sense. We cannot always rely on others to decide for us. Sometimes we have to make up our own minds, and do what we feel is right.

We cannot wait for the ripe apple to fall off the tree. We have to make it fall.

- Che Guevara

Global Unity

We are one family, but we are not learning this fast enough. - Desmond Tutu

Imagine a planet somewhere in the universe where a sentient species has evolved and colonized the entire planet, much like we have done on earth. The nations of this world united while maintaining their own distinct identities. War no longer exists because there is no one left to fight.

The beings of this world look at each other not with fear, but as members of their own global family. Children are raised in a world of peace, learning that they too are part of the world's family. The global family does its best to alleviate suffering wherever it exists, and works towards ensuring a bright and prosperous future for all life. Sounds nice, doesn't it?

Now imagine if 100 years ago humans started to spread a message of peace, and a peace movement gained momentum all over the world. The dream of world peace was made desirable and believable to enough humans for a global family to become a majority. Despite the obstacles that arose, the dream was passed on and pressed on, through education, word of mouth, and through the new generations. Imagine where our world would be today, 100 years after the peace movement started. We could be living in a world of peace, right now.

Where do we want our world to be in 100 years?

The idea of world peace has been around for a long time. With all the turmoil that continues to plague our world, peace has never seemed further away. But really, world peace has never been closer; it is just outside our grasp... we only need to seize it.

Global unity – the unification of the people of the world – will bring peace and prosperity for everyone. The path to global unity is a relatively simple and quick process. We can make peace happen within a few generations.

It will benefit everyone

Everyone stands to gain from a united world. A world of peace means we live with less fear and a higher quality of life. Global unity will also help to secure our children's future and the survival of our species.

Not only will global unity benefit everyone directly, it represents an opportunity to do something that has never before been done on earth – we could unite on a global scale. Global unity will be an accomplishment we can all be proud of.

In a world where nations cooperate, we will no longer have to fear foreign invasion or nuclear annihilation. With global unity, we also get the personal security that comes from knowing that if either ourselves or a loved one becomes sick or injured, the world is more able to help.

Another benefit of global unity will be an increase to nearly everyone's economic situation – which means more money! We will be able to take control of our world's wealth and divert the profits of humanity's labour into social services, like health care and education, which are investments into our future.

The first surplus of wealth comes from the trillions of dollars spent on military budgets. With no one left to fight, the world's war machine can be dismantled, which is something everyone should want, if not for themselves, then for their family.

The second economic surplus will come when we replace our current economic system with one that is both sustainable and more equally distributes wealth.

In our world today, there is such a huge wealth gap between the financial elite and everyone else. This gap only encourages instability, and perpetuates things like war and starvation. With the solidarity that comes from global unity, we could impose a system like the capital cap which keeps the benefits of capitalism but prevents humans from amassing billions of dollars and the power that goes along with that kind of wealth. Like a class action suit against the world's wealthiest, we can take back the power and force the billionaires of the world to share.

The immediate effects of global unity – less fear, more social services, and a sustainable economy – will increase the quality of life for every human on earth. A human living with a higher quality of life will be less dependent on crime, violence or drugs. Global unity will bring a cyclically improving world; things will get better with every new generation.

Through global unity and world peace, we are more likely to see our species' genetic code survive and proliferate, giving us an opportunity to spread the seeds of humanity throughout the universe.

And really, isn't that what its all about? We spend most of our lives invested in increasing our status – get educated, get a job, get in shape, get a spouse, get a home, and get lots of fancy stuff. For the most part, our lives are spent getting the most for ourselves, and ultimately, the most for our children. But what is the point if we let our world fall apart? Global unity will help to ensure our life's efforts are not wasted.

We can make it happen

Global unity can be made a reality. Using tools like the Internet, it will be possible for the benefits of global unity to become known to more and more people. When enough people want peace and believe it can happen, global unity will be made a reality.

One main characteristic of any human is selfishness; we all are genetically programmed to want more for ourselves. While greed may seem like the main reason why peace cannot happen, it is actually the main reason why peace can happen. Given an option that will give us more, we will almost always choose it. Global unity, and the personal benefits it will bring, is something everyone will naturally want.

While global unity is something that everyone will benefit from, we still need a way to get from where we are now to where we want to be. The way to a world of peace – **the peace path** – is a relatively simple process. The peace path has three steps, each of which can be done by the individual, and each can be done simultaneously.

The first step to world peace is to expand the way we look at ourselves in the world. Instead of only considering ourselves to be part of a city, state/province, and country, we go one step further and consider ourselves to be part of the world. For example, George W. Bush is from New Haven, Connecticut, and America, but he is also a human from planet earth.

Once we accept this expanded paradigm, then, when it comes to others, no matter their beliefs or appearances, they too become part of our group, part of our family. If others embrace the same global family paradigm, then they too will consider us to be members of their global family. Humans are naturally social animals; we love and protect our family, and we hate and fight threats to our family. When our world's people embrace a global mentality, our world will love and protect itself.

Being a member of a global family does not mean we all have to conform to one global standard. Instead, we can be more tolerant and embrace the diversity of our species, allowing our differences to compliment each other. Even if someone refuses to accept a global family paradigm, we are not at a disadvantage to consider them as being part of our own.

The second step to world peace is for each individual to seek inner peace. When we can be happy with what we already have and who we already are, then we will be more inclined to be at peace with the world.

An individual who is at peace will be more able to embrace a global family paradigm, as well as be more willing to accept diversity and tolerate difference. Inner peace also brings the confidence to face the unknowns of life, including the changes that global unity will bring.

Seeking inner peace can be a never-ending quest, but as our lifespans continue to grow, peace will be easier to find. As we live longer and longer, we will have more time to absorb, through books and other mediums, the wisdom our species has already learned.

The third step to world peace is encouraging others to take the peace path. Spreading the message of global unity will be essential for making it happen. It is up to anyone who wants world peace to let those around them know the benefits of global unity. It will be important to reach, or to at least try to reach, influential members of the establishment, including church and business leaders, and especially law enforcement personnel. It only takes one person, in any walk of life, to reach out to those around them.

The third step - encouraging others - can be considered the most challenging step, since it requires both courage and confidence. It means standing up for what we believe. Discussing issues like global unity, world peace, or alternative economic systems means we open our ideals to scrutiny and make ourselves vulnerable to criticism and even mockery. However, considering the benefits of successfully achieving global unity, the risks associated with discussing it are worthwhile.

When it comes to spreading the message of global unity, we cannot rely on our mainstream media for support. The majority of our media outlets are owned by a few financial elites. Since global unity will adversely affect the wealth of the media's owners, the media is unlikely to support global

unity. Even if a journalist or television spokesperson wanted to vocally support global unity, they would be reprimanded or fired if they spoke out. This is why it will be up to individuals, using independent means, to spread the message of global unity and world peace.

While it can take years or even decades for a message of unity to reach enough minds for it to prevail, it has never before been easier than it is today. New technology like the Internet provides us with an excellent tool for organizing, gaining support and exchanging ideas. Computers and the Internet are both great ways to overcome language and cultural barriers, making the idea of global unity easy to spread.

With every new generation, world peace is becoming more and more likely. Already, our youth are growing up in a world where, be it through gaming or chatting, they are connected with people from all over the world. Never before have we been more united. We are the generation we have been waiting for.

Let's start now

Global unity and world peace will not happen overnight. It takes time for change to happen on a global scale. As our population continues to grow, peace and unity become increasingly more important for our survival.

While there are many obstacles on the path to world peace, and while our future will always be uncertain, there is one thing we can almost surely be certain of: if we do not strive for peace, we will not find it.

A better world starts with each of us. Together, we can do anything.

Warning!

The following chapter carries a heavy tone of despair... that all is lost for us. This tone is meant only for within the context of this chapter. The ideas presented are not absolute; they are only one possible worse case scenario and should only be considered a warning of what could happen if we continue on the road we are already on.

I truly believe that there is still hope for us. Hope will be the driving force that pushes us over the hurdles that lie ahead.

Continue on, only if you think you can handle it. If you have doubts, then I recommend you re-read the other chapters again.

Obstacles to Global Unity

(a.k.a. Why humanity is doomed to fail)

We are in a giant car heading towards a brick wall at 100 MPH and everyone is arguing about where they want to sit. - David Suzuki

The human race will exist only to serve as an example of what *not* to do as the alpha species of a planet. We are but primates that got lucky and stumbled upon the tool of intelligence. We are by no means capable of long term survival. The reason we are doomed is because of who we are as a species, and because of the system we have already built.

Who we are

We are all the descendants of tribal primates who became fierce predators; apes that used intelligence to out-compete rivals. And the remnants of our primate ancestry remain with us today.

We still possess attributes that were essential for our survival, but some of our traits – laziness, selfishness, insatiability, ignorance, closed-mindedness, violence, fearfulness, and a tendency to form hierarchies – will contribute to our demise.

Humans are lazy

Be it human or hamster, animals benefit from internal mechanisms that promote efficiency and conservation. For without such a trait, an animal would work harder than it had to, foolishly squandering its resources.

In humans, we call this trait laziness, and it can be found in varying degrees in every human. Laziness makes us unwilling to consistently go the extra mile, either physically or mentally.

Humans are selfish

All animals have underlying programming in the form of genetics, whose primary goal is self-perpetuation. Every single action we take has some degree of selfishness; we do something because we feel it is the right thing to do, because it would be best for us, or because it is the least painful option available to us at any given moment.

Our inherent selfishness makes us more inclined to care about ourselves and our own well-being, with the well-being of others given a lower priority.

Humans are insatiable

If an animal could reach a point of permanent satiation, a point where a shut-off switch goes off when they finally have enough, the animal would lose the will to survive. Instead, genetic programming ensures that the animal will constantly seek to maintain or increase its status, and ultimately maintain or enhance its reproductive value.

While insatiability is responsible for driving humanity to where we are today, it also makes every one of us perpetually dissatisfied with what we already have. Most of us can have our basic necessities met, but no matter how much we have, we will always be told by our inner most desires to get more.

In a finite world with an increasing population all wanting more for themselves, we end up in a situation where one person's gain can mean another person's loss.

Humans are ignorant

We have limited knowledge as a species and know even less as individuals. If we consider the universe to contain an unlimited amount of knowledge, our finite knowledge makes us infinitely ignorant.

We also have limited thinking abilities. Even the most gifted humans are restricted in the amount of information they can process.

Our primitive brains running extremely limited knowledge makes us hopelessly inadequate for the task of maintaining our species and our planet.

Humans are closed-minded

Given our insatiable, selfish desires, we require a way to cope within our infinite ignorance, and this coping comes in the form of a closed mind. We shut out doubt in order to be confident, which, in turn, helps us gain the things we need and want.

Closed-mindedness gives us a way to function with our ignorance, but it also perpetuates ignorance. A closed-mind prevents us from needing a reason to grow beyond who we already are, in that we feel we already know all we will ever need to know.

Humans are violent

We evolved from primate predators. We came down from the trees, used our big brains and the tools we created to out-compete the big cats and the big dogs. We are killers; every single one of us is born with the ability to kill other beings, including other humans.

As long as violent behaviour is nurtured in our society, we will always have killers amongst us.

Humans are fearful

All animals need a mechanism for self-preservation. In humans, we call this mechanism fear. Fear keeps us from foolishly destroying ourselves, for, without fear we would not be able to recognize signs of danger.

Fear also helps to keep order in society by setting rules and consequences that keep most people in line. One way to avoid suffering is conform to society; to hide amongst the herd, playing it safe, doing what one is told, and hoping for the best.

Unfortunately, this same fear can be exploited, used to control us and make us do things we would otherwise not do. The more threats we perceive, the more fear we have, and the more we will be inclined to conform to a system that promises security.

Humans are hierarchical

Having evolved from tribal, social primates, we possess ingrained mechanisms that allow us to form communities. Each member learns their own relative rank and status within the group.

This same mechanism makes us inclined to accept a dominant force (be it real or imagined) while we readily accept our subordinate roles. All too easily, we fall in line without questioning our fate.

Our tribal tendencies also make us choose steadfast leaders. Leaders who tell us what to do, who stand tall in the face of adversity, and who make quick decisions. We want leaders that are infallible, but as all humans are fallible, we end up with leaders who can never admit to making mistakes.

All of the potentially negative aspects of humanity could be overcome by humankind's positive traits. Things like ambition, adaptability, empathy, curiosity, tenacity, inventiveness, reasoning, and love could help us to prosper, if it weren't for the system we have already built in our ignorance.

The system we have made

The system we have built is the main reason why we are doomed to fail. Our system, comprised of our dominant institutions like politics, religion and the economy, contains the seeds of destruction which have already sprouted. And they will grow to be the demise of humanity's free spirit.

Unfortunately, we cannot change the system. One aspect of any establishment that wishes to remain established is self-preservation, making any established system designed to resist change. And for a system to keep itself in place, it needs only to maintain the status quo.

Maintaining the status quo

Along with the inherent, self-sustaining property of a hierarchy, there exist two ways in which our system remains in power – indoctrination and enforcement. Put simply, the system keeps itself in place by teaching us the acceptable way to act, and by punishing those who do not act accordingly.

Hierarchical society is self-sustaining

A hierarchy is a system where there is a rank or class, ranging from the top to bottom, with each class downwards consisting of more and more people. In a hierarchy, there are some individuals with more than others - more wealth, more status, and ultimately, more power.

Power brings with it the fear of losing power. Those who have power will be reluctant to give up their power, and they will use every means necessary to secure it. To remain in power, it is not necessary to constantly seek to be the best and most deserving. Rather, it is more effective to keep those who lack power from gaining access to power.

A hierarchy is self-sustaining because the more powerful one is, the more reason they have to keep secure a system that allows them to be powerful. This means that those who are the most powerful, those at the very top, are not only the most inclined to maintain the status quo, they also have the most power to do so.

If, through organization and solidarity, an uprising in a lower level threatened a higher level, the higher level would do everything in its power to stop the uprising.

Indoctrination

Starting from childhood, we are all indoctrinated by the system that is in place. Our parents, wanting us to fit in and be successful, are the first to teach us what constitutes a successful person (which is determined by the system). As we grow, we continue to learn from those around us... friends and family who have also been brought up under the existing system. We internalize the rules of the system – what is acceptable and what is not.

Our indoctrination continues with our school systems. The agenda we are taught is highly dependent on the system. Rarely is a school permitted to teach thoughts that grow to become a threat to the status quo. As long as our education comes solely from our schools, we will remain unable to understand the system, so that we can never question the rationale behind the system.

Generally speaking, instead of expanding the minds of our youth, our education system functions as a funnel, taking in a wide range of traits and personalities, passing the students down an assembly line of standardized testing and generalized studies, and pumping out a final product of unthinking, unquestioning drones to serve as the workforce of the system.

Not only are our schools restricted in the content that can be taught, our institution of education is severely underfunded, making even what is allowed to be taught done so ineffectively. Restricting the best education to those at the top of the hierarchy is one way the system restricts the have-nots from gaining access to power.

Another source of indoctrination comes from religion. Religion emphasizes morality – what is right and what is wrong, as well as the believed repercussions of one's actions. Religion preaches faith, and faith often includes the notion that those in power know what is best, and that to even question one's faith is blasphemous. Because one aspect of faith is to never question the system, faith and ignorance often walk hand in hand.

Throughout our lives we are exposed to a dominant source of indoctrination whose power is immense - the media. The mainstream media provides us with our main source of new information. This gives the media the ability to shape our perception of the world.

In our current system, the media is owned by a handful of corporations, empowering a few people with the ability to control the flow of most of our new information. By restricting or emphasizing information, it is possible for a few people to sway public opinion, undermine democracy, and ultimately crush threats to the status quo.

Indoctrination has already made conformists out of most of us. We have been trained to support the system and the hierarchies that exist. We have come to trust our system. No matter how many dissidents speak out, no matter how much a change would be preferable, the system will remain in control because we were all raised by the system and we have become dependent upon it.

Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies have one main agenda - to serve and protect the powers that be. Wherever indoctrination fails, enforcement takes over, ensuring stability in the system and the maintenance of the status quo.

Law enforcement punishes those who do not conform to the rules of the established system. The police and special task forces impose control onto those who are labeled as being out of control. If someone attempts a disruption, and they lack the power to overcome the dominant members of the hierarchy, they will be crushed.

Law enforcement is also a fear-inducer, demonstrating to conformists what happens if one strays from the designated path, or even poses a threat to the status quo.

History shows us that the threat of state violence tends to increase as the threat to the stability of the system increases. This means that the harder the have-nots try to gain power, the more forcefully the system will try to oppress them.

The majority of humans, being fearful and mortal, will readily conform to whatever system is in place when the threats of state supported violence become a reality.

Hierarchies are naturally self-sustaining, since there is someone with power at every level who doesn't want things to change. Our system is further maintained by the indoctrination we all receive throughout our lives, as well as from the law enforcement agencies who ensure we do not stray from the assigned path.

Since the system we have in place is going to stay in place, we should take a look at exactly is being maintained.

The status quo – what is being maintained?

The status quo for earth is a violent cesspool of selfishness. Our world is in a perpetual state of war with some of our global superpowers leading the fight, while millions of innocents are made to suffer and die. We have a prevailing ideology of selfishness that allows a tiny elite to control a vastly disproportionate amount of wealth and power, while billions live in poverty and millions die every year from extreme poverty.

A world at war

Our world is at war; entire armies invading other nations. War is the status quo; war is being maintained by the system. The institution that maintains war is known as the industrial military complex (a.k.a.: the war machine). The war machine will not be stopped.

War is a trillion dollar business; there are big profits to be made by sending mostly young, mostly poor people to kill and be killed. A trillion dollar industry means powerful individuals who want war to continue, and who will ensure that the system perpetuates war. By controlling the political elite, the media, and ultimately, the populations of entire nations, some of those who are in charge are able to keep war a reality.

Politicians and the media of warmongering countries (U.S. especially) are often funded or owned by corporations that profit from war, and they, in turn, use their power to convince entire populations to support their wars. The citizens are usually gripped with fear and patriotism, standing united behind whatever lies they are told, supporting whatever cause they are sold. Be it the war on communism, the war on drugs, or the war on terrorism, the system ensures the support of enough people to keep the war machine turning.

While the people of warmongering nations pay for the war with their taxes, they also have to pay for the reconstruction of the devastated foreign lands, as well as face the potential threat of repercussions of terrorist acts. The tax dollars going to fuel the war machine are taking away from much needed social services, like education and health care, which keeps a steady supply of uneducated, needy young people to fight the wars of the future.

On the receiving end, the nations unfortunate enough to be the victims of the superpowers' imperial conquests are even worse off. Innocent humans witness invaders kill their families, their friends and fellow citizens. They see their lands and homes demolished. Those who survive get to see the power vacuum left by the invaders be filled with tyrannical dictators (usually sponsored by the invading nations).

The amount of money made from destruction, reconstruction, and conquest of foreign resources will always take precedence over human life and human suffering, for selfishness is inherent in the status quo.

Our selfish system

Those at the top of our selfish system profit from production and consumption. Since we are indoctrinated by the system, we are raised to be producers and consumers. The corporations are responsible for the mass production of consumer goods, the system is responsible for the mass production of consumers.

A selfish system thrives on conformity – people doing what everyone else does, buying what everyone else buys. We work at jobs we (usually) don't like to buy things we (usually) don't need. Our selfish drives are nurtured by the system; we are never taught how to be content with what we have, or that we can ever have enough.

When we support a selfish ideology, we support a system where everyone is out for themselves. It means a system where there is no incentive to invest in a safe future or a cleaner world. Faced with the possibility of global climate change, our system continues on as if the problem is fiction. We have an impending energy crisis as our oil supply peaks, but the system drives on as if nothing were wrong.

Those of us in the wealthiest and most powerful nations are the least likely to want change. The most powerful populations, just like any member of a hierarchy, have power which they do not wish to lose. We fear change, because change represents a threat; a potential loss of the tiny sliver of the pie we have managed to gain for ourselves.

Vehicles, homes, jewelery, businesses, stocks... we are able to earn enough of these things to keep us fat and happy and content. We get our pittance and it keeps us quiet... a few crumbs to keep us supporting a system that allows a few people to control nearly all the dough.

The concentration of wealth

Our selfish system has been around since the time of agriculture, if not sooner. If there is something that everybody wants, but not everyone can get, for some to have more than others requires a selfish system. Having more of anything that is desirable brings power, and this power can help to legitimize the system.

We've always had those on top. First, when we were in tribes, there were the dominant members who had the most power. But the power of the dominant members was limited to the strength of the tribe. As time passed, we were able to form civilizations, with those on top controlling even more power. It was not long until kings were made... and we've had kings ever since.

But never before have our kings been so powerful. Today, we have kings of the entire world, whose power is already immense and is getting stronger every day. This empowers a tiny minority (a few hundred or less) with the ability to significantly impact the media and the political system; significant in that their influence often outweighs the influence of the populations they have control over.

Supporting our kings is a system where expensive election campaigns means politicians rely on corporations for support, which, in turn, expect the politicians to bend the system in their favour. Politicians, business owners and religious leaders are all scratching each others backs in order to maintain or increase their power. Those who could disrupt the system are kept powerless, and those

who are put into positions of power fully support the system.

As wealth and power continue to concentrate, we all end up paying the price. More legislation supporting the corporate agenda means less service at higher rates for customers, and less job security for employees. The concentration of wealth results in an ever increasing corporate hold over the governments of the world.

Humanity has the power to stop the concentration of wealth, but like a horse wearing blinders, we are steered from behind by an unseen force, and we only allowed to see in one direction. If we could take off the blinders, we'd see that we are horses pulling around other horses... others who are no better or worse than ourselves.

But no. For one, since the system has always killed off would-be troublemakers, our populations have been bred to be passive conformists. It is very easy to cut the throat of anyone who sticks their head out. It is much easier for those in power to destroy dissidents than it is to create a fair and just system.

Second, as the concentration of power increases, the system is more able to exploit our fears. By making us believe in the impending doom - a doom that is everywhere, lurking - the system can gain control by promising to protect us from it. Daily doses of fear from the media force us to relinquish power as we give up our human rights and civil liberties. All the while, those in charge gain an ever tightening grip around the world.

The powerful will keep gaining power. The politicians and the media will keep exploiting our fears. The corporations will keep growing while they convince us to work harder to buy more products and take more pills. The war machine will keep trampling nation after nation.

Where are we headed?

We have dug ourselves into a hole and we are too primitive to find a way out of it, so let's find out where we are headed. There are two outcomes which are likely, and neither will be pleasant for anyone alive when it happens. The first is extinction, and the second is totalitarianism.

Extinction

Extinction is one probable outcome for humanity. Extinction could come from a non-human source, be it asteroid impact, global pandemic, or aliens who harvest us for protein, taking a few frozen human-pops for the road.

More likely, if we do go extinct, it will be as a result of our own ineptitude. Our ignorance makes us fallible, but despite our ignorance we have still created weapons of mass destruction. If we add unbridled greed and a climate of fear, we get a recipe for self-destruction.

Eventually, the war machine will run out of defenceless nations to attack, meaning it will either have to attack an armed nation, or face self-destruction. And, with the possible weaponization of space, the probability of malicious or accidental nuclear obliteration will only increase.

If we do wipe ourselves out, we can rest assured that life will go on. Given a few million years, another species might reach sentience, at which point humanity will serve as an example of what can happen to a careless and reckless species.

Totalitarianism

If we manage to avoid extinction, then the other destination for humanity will be totalitarianism. Totalitarianism is a system where the ruling class has complete control over every aspect of life. A complete totalitarian regime is guaranteed to remain in power indefinitely, since no threat could ever develop – humans would not even have the ability to question the status quo.

We are already on the road to totalitarianism, and it will be fear that continues to drive us forward. Those in charge will exploit the cyclical nature of fear and terrorism to increase their power. The more fear we have, the more power we will forfeit to the system that promises to protect us. The more powerful a system gets, the more it is able to manipulate our fears to control us. The climate of fear that already exists in our world will only continue to intensify.

For example, America has been fighting a war on terror that will never be won. Terrorism is only going to increase as America allows its war machine to wreak havoc on the hapless nations of the world. This increase in terrorism will result in a further forfeiting of rights to the system.

America's war on terror - the war for liberty and freedom - is the present day force which is paving the road to totalitarianism. Under the guise of providing security against outside threats, fuelled by the media and the politician's promise of more terror, the powers that be will continue to invoke new legislation like the Patriot Act that further diminish human rights and civil liberties.

As the system battles those who lash out against the loss of liberties, legislation will eventually be put in place that makes it illegal to protest against the law. Once that happens, the only choice we will have is to shut our mouths and do what we are told, otherwise we will endure baton battered brains or worse.

There is a belief that totalitarianism could never come to be, that such a system would never be allowed to happen. Such regimes have existed in the past (Germany) and continue to exist today (North Korea), and it is naive to think that it couldn't happen everywhere.

Sure, there has always been freedom fighters – those who fight the system for the good of the common human. But with the advent of new technology, the system is gaining more and more tools to secure its grip over the world. Also, those who are in charge of maintaining order rarely hesitate to use whatever Orwellian measures are made available.

Already we can see an ever increasing amount of invasive technology. Public cameras with face recognition, email monitoring, and phone taps have become all too common. Once these technologies are put in place, the civil liberties they erode never return. We are well on our way down a one way

street that ends when every aspect of our lives is monitored.

With the developments in robotics, artificial intelligence, and advanced weaponry, it will be possible to create super-cops. Robots with abilities beyond any human, who will take orders without question, even opening fire on civilians, or worse. While the technology does not yet exist, the stepping stones are in place, and the technology will come to exist within our lifetimes.

The final technological checkmate will come in the form of microchip implants - implants which can control our minds, our thoughts. Once this happens, the totalitarian system will be complete, since there will no longer be any free-thinking humans. Instead, we will all be organic robots, unable to do anything other than what the person behind the wheel wants us to do.

Who would want so much power? We all would. Humans are designed to be selfish and to seek out power. No matter how much power the most dominant humans alive today have, they would not hesitate to seize more power if given the opportunity. So, as long as the opportunities exist, power will continue to concentrate in the hands of fewer and fewer.

Would it be that bad? Maybe not. For one, we would never be able to think about how bad things are, since it requires free thought to do so. Also, we would have the sense of security that comes from a loss of freedom – no more worrisome decisions to make. That is, of course, if our rulers decided to keep us as domesticated animals rather than simply exterminating all but a few of us.

Whether we fight the system now and lose, or we fight later when we are doomed for sure, or if we do not fight it at all, we will end up extinct or enslaved. That is where we are heading, like it or not.

A glimmer of hope

Is it all over yet? No. While we haven't reached the point where it has become too late, there are few signs that we will be able to change the direction from the cliff that our great herd is moving towards. As long as nothing changes, we will only be able to watch our species step off the edge while we sit helplessly by and witness it all go down.

If we want to save our species, we will have to change our current system. To change our system, we need to understand and acknowledge that our current system does not function in our best interests. We need to agree that our system is wrong.

War is wrong, no matter what lies we are told to support it. War is little more than innocent people being made to kill other innocents, while the guilty stay home and prosper.

A system based solely on satiating selfish desires is wrong. A selfish system is a destructive, unsustainable system. There is more to life than material possessions.

A system that allows an unfair concentration of wealth and power is a system that needs to keep the have-nots divided in order to remain established. Our system encourages the worst in people; we are indoctrinated to fear and hate each other; in order to keep us separated; in order to keep unbridled greed a dominant factor of the status quo.

A system that allows the concentration of wealth also allows unnecessary human suffering – extreme wealth leads to extreme poverty. If it is wrong for a million humans to starve to death, then it is also wrong for a single human to have over a million times more than what is needed to survive.

We can change our system.

Nearly every human is capable of rational thought. We can all see the realities of our current system if we only look. We also have the ability to learn and grow beyond what we already know. We can make a better reality come true.

We can change our system.

We can get along with each other. All human beings on earth are virtually identical. Beneath our superficial differences, we all have the same biology, the same core beliefs, and the same capabilities for love.

We can change our system.

We can have a world of peace, a world where people everywhere - not just our nations' political leaders, but the actual people who form the populations of the world - feeling part of a united, global family. A world where every child is raised as a member of the world's community, raised to get a long with their fellow humans.

We can change our system.

Instead of endlessly chasing and satisfying our wants – wants often created by the system – we could spend more time realizing how great life is and how happy we can be with what we already have. Instead of solely appeasing shareholders, we can have corporations that are accountable to customers, employees, and the people of the world. Instead of raising new consumers and producers, we could teach our new generations how to be happy human beings.

We can change our system.

By restricting the amount of wealth individuals can control, we can also restrict the amount of power individuals can control. If we redistribute wealth and power to more and more people, we can create a free, democratic world. We could have a world where everyone's voice is heard.

We could have a united, cooperative global family. A world where everyone has food and shelter. A world where we all benefit from the security of a world of peace. A world where those who are in charge are not able to exploit the populations of the world for their own selfish interests. We can have a world where the people have the power.

Changing the system will not be easy. It will take cooperation and organization, first to change the system, and then to maintain the new system. But it can happen. Through the spreading of new ideas, through non-violent civil disobedience, through perseverance and hardship, and with the proliferation of hope, our species could embark on an evolution of thought on a global scale... an awakening.

Now is the time to act if we want a new, free world. Now is the only time we have left to act. We only have a few years left until the system gains too much control and the concentration of power becomes too intense to combat. Right now, it can be done. It will take some work, but the end result will be a system that is better for us – a system that secures the future of our species.

Closing thoughts

Now is the time for change, but will it happen? No. We humans are too lazy, too ignorant, too selfish, and too fearful to change our direction. We are indoctrinated by the system; we do not want to fight it, and, even if we did, the system would fight back. We will not be able to organize the solidarity required to effectively shift the power and change the system. We have been losing for thousands of years, and we will continue to lose.

The system we have built in our ignorance is a trap that will lead to our extinction or our enslavement. We are powerless to stop the abomination we have created. All is lost.

Enjoy these next few years as much as you can. In the near future, it won't matter how hard you work now, how big your home is, or how nice of a car you have. Quit your job, sell your home. Go on vacation. See the world. Party like you have never partied before. Make the most of the days we have left and enjoy your life to the fullest. These next few years will be the only ones we have to look back on (if we are still able to) as the best years of our lives.

Conclusion

We can improve ourselves by always striving to have an open mind, to always increase our understanding and tolerance, and to always learn. We can improve ourselves by seeking the inner peace that comes from loving who we are, right now. We can be happy with who we already are and what we already have.

We can improve our world by restructuring the corporate news media, taking away the commercialization that leads to sensationalism, and instead, have regulated, unbiased news. We can stop the never-ending barrage of fear that is coming from our mainstream media.

We can improve our world by dispersing the concentration of wealth and power, so that more people are in control. The more people who are in control, the more the level of suffering on our planet will decrease as our system becomes more equal.

We can dramatically improve our world by forming a cooperating, global society. We can unite and advance. We can secure our future, and the future of our species.

None of the suggestions provided in this book are impossible. Every single one of them can happen... if we make them happen. Anyone of us can make a difference, as long as we have hope.

About the Book

A lot of this book is derived from the series of essays posted on u4Ya.ca.

This book is not to be sold, but can be freely distributed. Information should be kept free, and anything that can be digitized should be kept free. If you decide to print this book, please distribute it when you are done with it.

Anti-p2p legislation stifles innovation and impedes emerging artists in order to keep those with power happy. The end result of actions by the RIAA, MPAA and others is overpriced, generic products, instead of freely distributed, quality projects that are worthy of being popular.

About the Author

Rick Dickinson is a human being from planet earth, who was born and raised in the nation of Canada. Rather than taking the mainstream path of solely attaining material possessions for himself, he instead decided to try to find realistic ways in which to improve the world, in the hopes that, one day, looking at the world would no longer cause him such pain.