A DIFFERENT WORLD AWAITS

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Seems like we're still missing something big most of the time when we talk about "sustainability," "global warming," or "peak oil." The "What can *we* do?" question always gets the "Replace your lightbulbs" answer. We've been saying that for over 30 years. True, but only a *small* truth.

What seems to be stirring underneath is a huge ball of fear in most of us that all this means we're going into real hard and scary times that we've no clue how to deal with. A ball of fear that paralyzes us, makes it impossible to hear or think about action, to even acknowledge the issues.

I've been excited and hopeful and impatient ever since it burst through to me in the early '70s that life can be way-better using a tenth of the energy and resources we use today. I'm still only scratching the surface of the wonderful changes that await us, but somehow I haven't been able to articulate what it really feels like, and what the real changes are.

Let's go back to "Replace your lightbulbs". Yes, we can reduce our energy use by 75-90% through those things. But so what? Zoom out a frame. Switch the context. We used to say, "Save energy, save money!" But any money we saved, we'd spend on something else. And almost everything we can spend money on represents an energy and resources expenditure.

So, stop at the "Save money". Don't let that money burn a hole in your pocket. There's an alternative. Work less, earn less, have more free time, more fun. Impossible!? Umm, Germany long ago changed to a 30 hour work week, and did just that. Three-day weekends every week. Time to do things you love. And impossible things. Things nobody will pay you to do. I haven't worked more than 1/4 time for 30 years, and have spent the rest of my time on ever-more-amazing adventures. This is a real shift – our lives not defined by our jobs.

But all the bills???? OK, that's back in the material realm, but deal with it. Get out of debt. Period. Get two low-interest credit cards, and cycle months so you aren't paying interest on everything you buy. Pay cash. Track what you spend. Buy fewer toys, take fewer trips, keep wearing your old clothes. How many years of our life do we spend just to pay financing interest on our homes? Sell your home, get one half the size. Move closer to work, get rid of a car.

Another real shift: All this is about facing truth and taking responsibility, not saving energy. The truth of our culture pillaging, stealing, and wasting the resources of our children and grandchildren, other nations, and other life. The truth that the material things we spend those resources on are poor substitutes for the truly important things in life. The truth that they really don't make us happy. The truth and responsibility that better "health" means ever more people, unless we take responsibility for our numbers. The truth that our whole culture has gotten incredibly lazy and incompetent. Even spending every evening watching advertising brainwash us to do stupid things. Who, even, has the guts to say that our government, our own nation, is the greatest terrorist organization on earth? The real cause of the *mini-terrorists* it tries to make us so afraid of.

Who *does* have weapons of mass destruction? Huge stockpiles. And uses them on others, and threatens others, and starts wars based knowingly on lies to steal the oil of other nations? U.S. There's a lot of truth it's time to face.

If it weren't for the impact on our workers, it would almost be fun watching General Motors and Ford commit suicide. Fighting congress for lower gas mileage standards so they can sell their gas guzzlers, keeping us draining oil reserves faster and faster. Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth" had one image in it that really hit square. A graph of the auto energy efficiency standards of Europe, Japan, China, the rest of the world . . . and way below, the US. That says far-more efficient cars can and are made and sold. But secondly, it says US manufacturers are refusing to even produce a car that can give them access to sell in the whole global car market. If that isn't market-based self-suicide, what is? And if we can't even think better, we ARE in for a hard future.

And under all this, there's a way bigger truth. That emptiness we feel inside. The rational, literate, material focus of Western culture since 1400 is a culture of disconnect. Creating a world in its self-image, of gleaming fake surfaces hiding inner emptiness; false and incomplete knowing of anything; things known only in their irrelevant distinctions, not in their wonderful connectedness. The integral knowing of our deeper consciousness gives us a profoundly different life and awareness of the world. And it is an aspect of the physics of qi energy that our culture also has refused to acknowledge. More on that later.

A DIFFERENT WORLD AWAITS, II.

OK, so we've these big balls of fear inside. It's the fear-balls of Roman or Colonial American slave-owners, of the wealthy, of those not sure anymore we can make it on our own, in a world set up so we can't make it on our own. "I've got mine, damn it, and I'm not going to share." (Guess what – the real joy is *in* that sharing!) This isn't the self-confidence that made the good side of our nation, the side that the world has loved and honored. Rational talking about it won't help. This is our deeper consciousness speaking true to us that we can't make it the way we are.

The only way out that I know is step-by-step experience and feeling of little pieces of the good new life awaiting us. I used to feel there was a huge frightening chasm we somehow had to leap across to get out of our blocked-headed world. But then, one day, my grip on that mindset slipped, let go, and I stood there laughing on the solid ground that had always there beneath us, that we couldn't see. Connecting us to everything else. Giving us truth. (Oh, what a relief!!!) Letting us feel and be moved deeply by the awesome beauty of our universe.

So what is different in this world?

We know, utterly, that there is enough for everyone's needs, though never enough for *anyone's* greeds. There's no need to fear, to fight, to hoard. Whoa! That's a big one. Let it sink in, and feel what that loosens inside!

Incredible possibilities can happen through sharing, not feeling we need to hoard everything for ourselves. Not just sharing stuff, but ideas, wisdom, fears, dreams of what wonderful new things we can create together.

We can slow down. Work less. Relax. Really listen and enjoy. Savor! When we do, we discover a deepness and vitality within connecting with others and other life that we had no clue existed.

We can do *real* work. Caring for each other and our world. Developing and exercising new skills and capabilities. Doing things with love and beauty. Creating unheard-of magically-wonderful things. Work *that feeds our hearts* before and in the doing, not in what we can buy from our pay. Not pushing papers to squeeze work out of others, nor sweating at slave-wages while others get rich off our work.

We don't have to make it on our own. We don't have to understand it all, plan, know what to do. Just be wholly present in each moment; in true with ourselves and with our hearts open. Wonderful things can come from both getting help and giving it.

The intensity, beauty, and heart-moving power of what we experience every moment leaps an order-of-magnitude. We see, hear, touch and feel different things, and far more intensely. Way cheaper, better, and longer-lasting than drugs.

Our lives no longer need to be based in fear. Not fear of hunger. Not fear of death. Not trumped-up fears fed us by the media to get compliance with exploitation.

We don't need to waste a quarter of our lives being "educated" – sitting silently in rows in sterile boxes, being fed what nobody really believes and what really won't work.

We are empowered to *really* live. We don't need to live second-hand lives any more. We neither need nor accept the stifling layers of corporate and governmental structure and rules, once we are truly experiencing the interconnectedness and cross-nurturing of all life.

The intimacy we feel with others, and with all life, breaks open our hearts. Wow!! is all I can say.

The hard stuff of life is where we truly grow – our true classroom. Anesthesia of any kind only blocks off what we could have gained. Death of loved ones, illness, heart-break, childbirth, disasters. It's where we find our real inner resources, clarity on what is truly important in our lives. The full wonder of what we've shared with others often doesn't become visible until we lose it. Feelings of grief and loss only measure the strength of what we had and shared.

Appearances don't matter anymore. Doesn't matter what we're *supposed* to wear or say or look like, or do. With integral consciousness, we all are aware of what is going on inside everyone and everything else, so it's useless to fake it. But others not only know, but *care*, so whatever is inside can be shared. And we've got help with it all. Hey, the dramas of all this is way better than watching soap-opera ripoffs on TV. And real. And cheaper and works better than a psychiatrist.

We don't feel crazy anymore. Because we can *feel* truth again, more immune to the self-serving lies that inundate us from the media. And we know others feel the "offness" of that world as much as we do.

We can't afford to not deal with the truths we experience. In our "looter's paradise" it's been easy to just throw money at problems, or send them off-shore, or to lie or ignore

them. Doesn't correct the problems, doesn't get the juice of life flowing again. Way better just facing and dealing with things.

A sustainable culture is profoundly different from a growth culture. Absolutely opposite operating rules. Life is totally different in each. Replacing lightbulbs is scrambling to maintain a culture we should be celebrating moving beyond.
It's necessary, but almost irrelevant to the wonderful changes we are in the midst of.

A DIFFERENT WORLD AWAITS, III.

So how are *we* really different in this new world? To begin, we're no longer afraid to be at odds with our conventional world. We intuit, deeply, both its wrongness and the rightness of alternatives. We're no longer afraid to live out loud a different world. We trust our deep-senses and our b.s.-detectors, and have no patience with smiley-facing that everything's OK, that maybe we're just a little mixed up inside. We're not, and we know it.

We begin to hear people's unspoken heart-questions beneath their silences and innocuous spoken questions, and zero in our responses to those deeper ones people are afraid to speak. We are tuned to multiple channels – it's obvious when people are speaking their truth and when they are b.s.ing. We're willing to open our hearts and speak our own fears and questions; share our own insecurities, doubts, and dreams.

I picked up a copy of ODE Magazine the other day. It's full of snippets of supposedly positive, green, new-world stuff. Most of it's a yawn, but usually one or two goodies. I don't know if their advertising has changed or what, but all I could see this time was the same old corporate mutual fund ads and display ads for unnecessary narcissistic "stuff". Used to be small ads for small organic food product producers etc. I instantly lost any trust or interest I may have had for the contents of the magazine.

It's not necessarily what the magazine is covering, but what they aren't. I had a call a couple of weeks ago from a woman from some national public television network. They were developing a series on sustainable architecture and were interested in me possibly being on it. My first response was to say I wasn't interested, they could check my website if they wanted to know anything I knew. But I shut up and kept listening to see what I might learn.

She went on that Hugh Downs, or someone, was going to be the moderator – in a tone that I should be impressed and start panting to be on the shows. "I'm sorry, I suppose I should know who that is, but I've never had a TV." Somewhat stunned silence.

She then asked me how large my firm was, who I marketed to, etc. I laughed. This was getting funny. "Do you have to be big to know anything about sustainability? Or do you have to pay to be on this show?" "Oh, no! This is *public* television. We don't do ads," she replied. Then, of course, she went on to explain the behind-the-barn advertising they did do. I was in "slow" mode, and truth-bubbles started popping to the surface. "Oh, so the Bush administrations *have* totally gutted public TV, but left the carcass so everyone could pretend it still had public funding and could be an independent voice?" Her silence *was* an answer.

"So, in effect, nothing gets on public TV unless it is big enough and corporate enough to get financial benefit from this "non-ad" ad exposure? How can you talk about sustainability? Big isn't sustainable." Long, bewildered pause. "Huh?" "OK, simple

ecology. Anything big becomes a food source for something else. Anything big is complicated and needs a big energy source. Complicated falls apart when the going gets rough, and all big energy sources dry up." I think she got it.

"What are you doing, personally, in all of this," I asked. "What happens because of your own actions? Are you aware that you are part of stealing the intellectual property of the little guys who developed this stuff, and presenting it to the public as having been done by the big guys who can benefit from national advertising? I'd bet you won't be saying that big isn't sustainable, and sustainability becomes just another marketing buzzword."

This is the warped world of untruth we live in, and how, without rancor, we start seeing and acting relative to it from another place. But this isn't about TV or advertising. It's about how our awareness works, how answers arise in our consciousness, how close we speak the truths we feel.

We spent a night in a couple of eastern Oregon towns last week – communities about the size of our own. But we saw them differently - from outside. Part of it was physical - 100' wide empty gravel streets in an almost treeless landscape. Empty boarded-up commercial buildings instead of key-locked-up absentee vacation homes. Two kids aimlessly biking up and down the empty gravel. Many churches, locked up, but no people. Lawns manicured to be looked at, but nobody to look. Closed up buildings - two schools, a courthouse, a city hall, a retirement home, several state agencies. Only thing open - one bar. All in their own territory, nothing mixing together or connecting. The result of the separate mind-boxes our language puts the different parts of our reality into. Where were the people?

Where was the life? What generates life? Is life where everyone sits apart in their secure and private living rooms, all watching the same endless TV commercials? Why no people in the evening together - talking, laughing, singing, telling stories? Where is the intimacy together, the young and old together, the magic weave of relationships, the enriching and celebrating the place they live together?

This is the richness and complexity and interweavingness that is sustainability. Can't get it from here. Gotta jump the chasm, or let go and feel the real ground beneath our feet. Replac lightbulbs? No, go out and look at the stars!