

THE TRANSITION

transition |tran'zi sh ən; -'si sh ən|

noun

the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another

The Transition

The purpose of this article is to facilitate a discussion that may ultimately translate into action. Quality of life is a choice. We have the ability to demonstrate our creative intelligence through how we overcome obstacles, develop solutions, and transform challenges into opportunities. The transition from an inevitable collapse of our interconnected global civilization to a sustainable community model is our choice.

There is no doubt that we are facing a multitude of crises on unprecedented scales. The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, yet the environment is deteriorating on all accounts. While human population continues to grow, every ecosystem on the planet is in decline. Our culture, priorities, and values are clearly out of balance.

Our cost of living is continuing to increase, while our quality of life decreases. Our pursuit of the "American Dream", where wealth is attainable for all and we are entitled to a life of luxury, is a false choice. Our beautiful, rich, and resourceful planet cannot support our current world population living the 'American Dream'. Unfortunately, this is the message that we have propagated around the world. We have sold the idea that we are entitled to linear growth economies and continuously increasing standards of living.

There is no debate that our modern civilization is a result of harnessing the power of fossilized solar energy in the form of carbon fuels. Fossil fuels have driven the explosion of technology and the 'advancements' of society. The discovery of this stored energy has allowed us to transform our planet over the course of just a few generations. Unfortunately, this lifestyle is not sustainable and it has directly contributed to the exponential explosion of world population, environmental pollution, and climate change.

We can debate the validity of the causes of the collapse all we want, but the solutions are the same. We need to return to a culture of self-sufficiency. This does not mean the kind of 'rugged individualism', but a return to community sufficiency. We need a resurgence of an ethos for cooperative interaction, leading to collaborative community planning & development. This will not come through piecemeal master-planned communities or mixed-use redevelopment zones. We need to take an integrated approach to understanding our community needs, deficiencies, and resource abundance. Then we can implement best management practices (BMP) to create positive synergistic effects.

The crises facing us are simply, opportunities to generate healthy resilient organization and sustainable infrastructure. The 'Transition' is our chance for evolution through cooperative and

peaceful transformation, rather than chaos and violence based in fear. Communities can react to difficult circumstances with riots and looting, or organization and planning. How will we act? What choices will we make? And, what choices are we making today to create the world and quality of life that will sustain us?

For resources on this topic see: <http://www.slideshare.net/MontgomeryNorton/resources-the-transition>

Bio:

Montgomery Norton graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a BA in Social Ecology and Education, and a MA in Urban & Regional Planning with a specialization in Sustainability. Mr. Norton served as the graduate student representative to the Sustainability Steering Committee for the University of California, ten campus system. Mr. Norton is the founder of Paradigm Solutions Development, a Sustainability Incubation and Orchestration services firm. He is also a founding board member of the Orange County Sustainability Collaborative, as well as serving as an advisor to many other organizations. Mr. Norton just moved to Napa, CA where he is hoping to contribute to the growing sustainable community development.