

THE TRANSITION – THE ISSUES

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 Issues :: The Opportunities

I'm going to frame this in a slightly different manner than you might expect. Even though the typical discussion of 'The Issues' would focus on the negative challenges that we are facing. There are numerous books, articles, series, and documentaries describing the depth and breadth of the challenges facing us, and the negative impact that humans have wrought on the planet. There isn't enough space here to do it any justice. As in the Introduction article, rather than focusing on the topics of debate, I'm going to bypass the philosophical/political wrangling to encourage a focus on solutions.

An expert described the Russian democratic revolution of the late 80's different than the accepted American perspective. He described the "insulted dignity of the citizens, (which created) a struggle for liberation through moral revolution of new standards." This is the type of movement that I have been witnessing within the "Green"/Sustainability communities. There is a new moral, conscious evolutionary understanding underway and we are fortunate to experience it. This is the type of movement that inspires people to act, to change, to transform. Focusing on what is wrong, building organizational infrastructure around the problem only reinforces that which you are against.

It is time to be inclusive and welcome everyone working together for the solutions. This was the biggest misstep of the social revolution of the 1960's and the environmental revolution of the 1970's. It was an antagonistic paradigm: Us vs. Them, and Environmentalists vs. Business, etc. Entire organizations were created to address social and environmental problems. These organizations still make up the vast majority of the nonprofit sector. What we need now is a shift in consciousness, a realization that what you put your attention on manifests. We are realizing that we create our reality, and that we have been given the privilege and the responsibility to design our future through the work of the present. It is our attention, intention, and focus that need to shift. Rather than remaining stuck in the fallacy that creating our own utopia is somehow immature and foolish, we can realize that idealism drives creativity and that all planning is normative, if you are conscious.

"But wait!" you may be thinking. I want someone to explain the issues. Well, ok then... The issues are simple. What are your basic needs? From where and how do you get them? If you think that I am joking, answer these two basic questions for yourself. And, once you have, get back to enjoying the creative manifestation of heaven on earth. Viable designs for holistic, sustainable community have been around for over a century. Wait, what? Yes, we have the ability to create our experience here. We can live a life of heaven or hell, right here on Earth. We have

the choice to see the beauty of this remarkable planet and the infinite number of miracles happening exquisitely every single second. Or, we can live in a constant state of purgatory, misery, and fear. We have the choice to determine how life exists on this planet. This is our burden, our responsibility, and it can be our greatest gift, if we are up to the challenge.

Challenge builds character. Will we choose to fold under the pressure? Or, will we rise to meet our greatest potential and fullest destiny. Life is begging for us to evolve. Do you feel it? The clock is ticking down. Every moment that we waste, continuing to pollute and destroy our environment, makes the situation that much more critical.

We have become so engrained in a society that is built upon generations of specialization coming out of the Industrial Revolution. A lot has to do with the fact that our society has been artificially sustained by a seemingly limitless supply of fossil fuel energy. This reality has created our relative abundance and dominance over nature, but has also turned us into vampires of ‘black gold’, the blood of ancient ancestral species. This thirst for energy and power has contributed to our greatest environmental toxic challenges.

Much of the destruction that we have perpetrated has taken place in a relatively short timespan. It is only within the past say 3 or 4 generations that we have really begun to alter the planet’s ecosystems and thus the life-supporting capacity of the planet. Since WWII, the U.S. has succeeded in creating a lifestyle and a belief in a dream of exuberant entitlement that has driven us past the Earth’s carrying capacity. What will be our legacy from this point forward? Will we overcome our greed and immaturity to create life-supporting, thriving systems based in sustainable communities?

For resources on this topic see: <http://www.slideshare.net/MontgomeryNorton/resources-the-transitionarticle-2>

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. www.MontgomeryNorton.com