

the next 500 years

Our species is dying, and may take our planet with it, because we do not plan for the future. Although there are more of us than ever, the rate at which we are eating into our planet's biological lifeblood may collapse the ecosystem like a global Easter Island, where cutting down all the trees left a wasteland where there had once been jungle.

To correct this course requires our generation, and every generation which follows it, to focus on getting what we want from our lives, and to avoid everything else. Sacrifice will not save us and our world, but deadly accurate desire will. You want to see your friends, but you do not want to pollute the atmosphere and destabilize nations as you drive. Accurate desire is our solution: do what you want, and nothing else.

Desire has gotten a bad rap for thousands of years, but it is the key to our nature and our world. We want to live richly, to experience, to blossom into our lives. It is our nature and our instinct, and ever our secret purpose. Our suppression of desire has driven it into perverse forms: a million substitutions of material wealth for sex and status. In losing our human nature, we risk losing nature itself. We are animals.

Triple Bottom Line - "people, planet, profit" - is as close a framework as we have to designing a way of life fit for everyone. But the words are wrong. It is "the individual, species, and life itself" that we seek to protect and preserve *as we get what we want from life*. We must not pollute the blood of the world as we swim through life.

In disrespecting these basic forces, in failing to identify them, we have left a gulf in our understanding of our goals through which the future is falling. The future slips through our fingers because we will not give things their right names: what is good for you (individual), what is good for the species (humans) and what is good for life itself (the planet and all that we share it with). These forces are real to the extent that evolutionary biology is real: real selective pressures apply to all of this.

500 years is a reasonable window for us to begin to plan for. How will we, and our descendants, live in 500 years? The tech faction will tell you we will be in the stars. The gloom faction will tell you we will eke out an existence in barren deserts. 500 years ago, April 21 1509, Henry VIII was crowned. Do you know who he was?

That's how short time is. 500 years from now it is very likely that the millennia-old farming villages all over the world will continue to exist, even if the people in them are 400 years old and have visited other planets. We eat vegetables and occasionally animals. We have sex. It is what our species does and it is likely to continue doing so long, long into the unknowable future. But we must get there together, and right now our poor handling of life on the planet threatens us all.

Individuals need freedom and the ability to satisfy their basic needs. 25% or more of all humans die because they do not have clean drinking water and a toilet, a smokeless cooking stove and access to food. Almost all of these people can be saved by basic technical education. In 2020 nearly 100% of the human species will have access to the global knowledge base through their cell phones so we can solve this problem.

Our species is, unfortunately, eating into life itself. We are converting the substance of the ecosystem into more people so fast that the ecosystem is dying. We must stop or perish. This requires us, as a species, to bring our environmental impact below the level at which we eat into the earth to live. We do not have a choice about this. Politicians waffle on about cheese import policies while frittering away money on bad weapons and subsidized ecocide. They do this because you let them. Press and education focus us on trivia while the world burns, and this is because of your habits of mind and mine. We must change our focus to what actually matters and then act on what we see.

Life itself will restore the full diversity of planet and species as soon as we let it. **Do not be part of the generation that dropped the ball.**

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