

COMMENTARY

Open your eyes and go hug a tree

By Richard Jabs

Wake up! What's going on here? This is a crazy, senseless, disgusting, de-spiritualizing, fu--ed destruction of our own life-support system, our sense of self, our relationships with other human beings and with all other living things.

Life is not reaping every "resource," thereby creating a barren, poisoned cemetery out of our planet. It's not genocide of the people who held the wisdom of how to live in tune with the earth. It's not believing that our technology will bail us out, because it got us here, and will only dig our grave deeper.

It's not an elite-controlled society. It's not making a living as we know it. It's not boredom and how can I distract myself from this worthless job. It's not a lonely, confused country of nuclear, dysfunctional families, which claim instant patriotism when going off to war. It's not separate, corrupt, selfish religions, which alienate themselves. It's not superficial relationships. It's not people who have lost their bond with nature. It's not about greed and what will keep ME completely and comfortably enclosed from the real forces of the universe...

Had enough? The list could go on and on.

We still must be in the denial stage if we are not taking daily action in our lives to change this mess. Our generation is going to see major crises result because of the way we live, and it seems we are waiting for them to happen before we change.

Picture a very possible scenario: The earth's population has doubled in 30 years. The economy has become so bad that Congress has reversed all Endangered Species Acts and Wilderness Designations to unleash more resources to fuel the economy. In burning non-renewable resources, we have destroyed the ozone layer. Virtually all ecosystems have been destroyed except for one — cockroaches, rats, opossums and humans, which now face a poisoned landscape, polluted air and water, and massive starvation.

"What befalls the earth befalls man," Chief Seattle said. Many Native Americans have prophesied the earth will soon purify itself and eliminate the "cancer" that has plagued it long enough. How many bigger hints do we need to tell us we are overpopulated — disease, famine, ecocide, war, drug addiction, suicide, homicide, domestic violence, depression...

And we're complaining the economy is bad because we're not able to acquire as much as we once did. Our economy is an indicator of greed, ultimately based on growth and the procurement of natural resources. We cannot have infinite growth in a finite world. We blindly consume like there is no end and bury the waste.

At our present rate of consumption, there will be no more oil left in approximately 30 years. We have already started to fight over oil, but just wait until all the countries that depend on it are fighting over the last reserves. The threat of nuclear war will be much greater.

Industry and high-level gov-

ernment, ignoring blatant warnings, would like to make you think we "will never grow out of trees" or deplete any other resources. They neglect to tell you that humans have exhausted trees and resources as they have settled (raped) the world from east to west, beginning in the Middle East, spreading through Europe and continuing into the New World. Now that we've almost depleted the West Coast's old growth, we head into Central and South America and every other "frontier".

Planting trees is no excuse for cutting down old growth. We are turning our national forests into Douglas fir tree farms. In the process, we are losing massive animal, plant, and fungi species, not merely the spotted owl poster child. The soil has been leached of all nutrients, and when no dead matter can fertilize it, massive soil erodes, waterways are polluted and landscape is slowly turned into desert. When we use resources at a completely unsustainable rate, of course our economy is going to decline!

The timber industry says humans are more important than spotted owls. This statement makes absolutely no sense. Their point is that human profits are more important than the life of the spotted owl. Humans are not going extinct, although it would help if we were. If you really think human life is important, then you will realize we depend on all species in our ecosystem for our survival, including the spotted owl.

We cannot deny we are a part of nature. It just takes a basic ecology lesson or the Native American belief that all things

are connected to realize this. Sometimes I wonder if many of us have actually had an ecology lesson.


We have been separated from the natural processes of the earth for so long that we no longer have any respect for it. We have lost touch with ourselves and other living beings. We must look to the real teachers and the elders of the ones who live in unison with the earth, or else we will perish in vain. We must slow down this deceptive, cascading wave of greed and see things "as they are."

How have you been talked into a lust for the fabricated materials of the world? You can't keep repressing the bond with nature that we once had — it's creating the "void" in all of our lives. And by filling this "void" with materials, superficial relationships, false hopes, and lies, we will surely find death for all future life and relationships on our planet.

Do something — slow down; compromise on your false lifestyle; be constantly aware of the effects of your consumption of each and every product or service — who's profiting, who's being exploited, and what are the consequences to the earth; find something sacred; get to really know yourself, others, and the natural environment around you; figure out how you can change this mess and take responsibility for all of us.


I'll bet you'll be a hell of a lot happier. The worst you can do is laugh and perpetuate this death culture.

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PINK FLOYD

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