

Chapter 17. Fostering Personal and Planetary Sustainability



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FOSTERING PERSONAL AND PLANETARY SUSTAINABILITY

**WHAT PART CAN YOU PLAY TO KEEP THE WORLD, OUR CITIES AND TOWNS,
AND OUR PEOPLE CLEAN, HEALTHY, AND ALIVE?**

*“Collaboration is the key to understanding the problems,
their solutions, and who’s doing what and when.”*

–Tracy Gary, Inspired Philanthropy

Fostering Personal and Planetary Sustainability

If you live in the United States or any of the developed countries of the world today, you are probably surrounded by media spouting questions about climate change, renewable energy, organic foods, resource depletion, and warnings about the coming shortages of fresh water and food. We are living in extraordinary times simply because it is now necessary for us to become more aware of our relationship with our planet, Earth.

Since Mother Earth is “our nest” and her gifts of soil, rain, oil, plants, animals, and minerals are what make life possible as we know it, the biggest decision we need to make is whether life as we know it is worth continuing. We all agree that life itself is worth continuing, but there is a great deal of disagreement and confusion about the difference between life and life-style.

Many people want changes, and are willing to take steps to make those changes happen. However, with all of the flap and fuss about sustainability, no one has yet painted a good picture of what a truly sustainable world would look like. What would this new world sound like? How would we get around – or would we need to get around? How would we produce what we need, or would our needs be completely different?

In our current society, we all get up each morning and go to work to make the money we need to buy the things that support our

life – food, shelter, clothing, transportation, communication, and hopefully a few luxuries. If we stop tearing up the land to build cities and feed people, where will we live or work, and how will we eat? If we run out of oil, how will we drive or fly around to visit family or see with our own eyes what is happening in that new manufacturing division? If coal and nuclear-generated electrical power is reduced, how will we stay warm, cool, run our kitchens, or our computers?

The truth of our situation is that we, especially in America, have carried the concept of individualism to an extreme, and now we must begin working our way back toward communalism. The days of the lone individual, pulling himself up by his bootstraps, amassing the power to dictate the course of others lives is over. It is time to develop our power as groups. In the face of climate change, droughts, floods, storms, and earthquakes, we cannot abandon one another. We must be there for each other in ways that we haven't been in the past.

Given the need for whole-system change, it is not useful to make a few changes here and there. If a power plant, a grocery store, or small manufacturing company closes, people's lives are severely disrupted. As disruption accumulates, there can be increasing chaos for all. Yet why go this route? Why not address the whole house of cards and institute the kinds of oversight and design changes that would allow us to design small cities and regions that are based on sustainability, renewables, organics, and other principles of common sense? The old cities may have developed in a chaotic, disorderly fashion, but that doesn't mean they have to devolve in that manner.

Look at the time, energy, money, brain-power, and resources that are pulled into play to design and build a car or a sports stadium. Should we do any less when designing our future?

It is imperative that we stop looking for the government or someone else to save us. The government is only a small piece of one institution. We may as well expect the dentists of the medical world to save us. Rather, we must come together in groups and tackle the issues that must be dealt with. Is there enough water in your region to support the number of people who live there? Can you produce enough food for everyone? Do you need to abandon the idea of “jobs” and instead focus on discerning the “work that must be done,” then go about getting that work completed? What neighboring region may have resources you need, and what could you exchange in return? It is far too late for uncoordinated, piecemeal changes, or for fooling ourselves into thinking that we can change a few lightbulbs and keep everything else the same.

The future is in our hands. It is ours to envision and create. Where are the people who will take on the job of pulling together a new view of what is possible? If we can create the vision, we can certainly set the goals, create action plans, put together educational movements that will get others on board, and begin raising the money that will fund the kinds of places we would all love to live. *Fostering Personal and Planetary Sustainability* will provide the resources to start you moving in the direction that we all must eventually go. ♦

Self-Assessment Exercise

Complete this self-assessment quiz to discover how well you are fulfilling your ultimate destiny in this area of life. The exercise will also help you discover which of our programs would be of greatest value to you, your family and your work. Select the number that best describes you and then calculate the total. The number 1 means that this pertains to you very little of the time and 5 means that this is always in your life. If a statement doesn't apply to you, circle N/A and count it as a 3.

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I proactively seek out ways to be a better steward over the earthly resources I touch and use.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I do all the recycling I reasonably can.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I do little things to use fossil fuels more efficiently such as combining errands, carpooling, setting thermostats conservatively, driving a fuel efficient vehicle, etc.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I am part of one or more organizations that are involved in planetary sustainability.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I support companies and causes that seek to bring sustainable and appropriate technology here or to developing countries.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I believe science and technology are important in sustainability efforts, but that the real key is personal awareness and commitment to action.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I seek to educate myself and raise my consciousness about what else I can do to improve environmental and social conditions around the world.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Knowing that local action widens out toward planetary transformation, I actively support local initiatives of environmental care.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I am willing to pay a bit more for products or services, such as "green" electricity, that help the earth's environment.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
When I am in a position of influence, I am willing to take some personal risk in trying to get others to support sustainability efforts.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5

Total Score _____

Whatever your present score in this area, Ultimate Destiny has programs and services that will help you discover your dreams, realize more of your inherent potential and know how to manifest your ultimate destiny!

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