

WORLDCHANGING A USER'S GUIDE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

In the foreword of the book *Worldchanging*¹ Van Jones is writing “**Western nations** are getting more and more ethnically diverse, but less and less economically prosperous. We have just a few years to learn how to live together if we want our children to have a future worth living in. That’s reality in the twenty-first century.” *Worldchanging* is a kind of distillate of that new world. To read *Worldchanging* is to understand the range of solutions from which we can draw to build a workable future, and to glimpse a **vision** what that future might look like. p.13

We now realize that we are in the midst of a **crisis** that worsens with every passing day, and that things are worse than we thought. That crisis can be measured. In 2009, a group of scientists led by the Stockholm Resilience Centre determined ‘planetary boundaries’ for nine major natural systems that represent the earth’s ability to sustain life, its **biocapacity**:
1.. greenhouse-gas concentration in the atmosphere, 2.. ozone depletion, 3.. ocean acidity, 4.. freshwater consumption, 5.. deforestation, 6.. the global nitrogen cycle, 7.. terrestrial biodiversity, 8..chemical dispersion, and 9.. marine ecosystems. Its crystal clear that humanity has pushed nature beyond its biocapacity and has overshoot the planet’s limits. p. 17

There’s no way the whole world could get rich the way Americans and Europeans did, even if we didn’t care about the consequences. The ‘**Western model**’ of development is bankrupt. p.19 Another two decades of the **status quo** will make many of our goals nearly impossible. Every passing year makes it more difficult to raise billions of people out of poverty to become parts of stable, democratic states with functioning economic, legal, and health systems. p.21. But, if we spend the next two decades in action, we may be surprised at how much different life will be in forty years. Some of the changes a zero-impact future will demand are solutions we’ve only just recently come to accept, ... like converting from fossil fuels to wind and solar energy. p.22

There will be no alternative to bright **green designs** and technologies to meet the consumption demands of 6 billion urbanites for everything from food to housing to transportation. We can build zero-impact cities, and we need to. If carbon-neutrality and zero-waste systems are going to develop, they’ll be led by cities. We’ve never had more tools at hand for changing how cities are built. From Copenhagen, Melbourne to Vancouver,² ... with radical new architectural designs, we’re capable of making structure that use 90 percent less energy than the ones the last generation built, ... green infrastructure (urban gardening), district energy .. and with new cultures of urban living. p.24

Worldchanging collects the most interesting and useful ideas (stuff, shelter, cities, community, business, politics, planet) we’ve found in seven years of exploration to give a survey of the kinds of solutions humanity has to work with.....If you’re ready to change the world, the planet needs you and there’s no time to lose. The crucial first step is to begin to imagine the future you’d like to see, because you can’t build what you can’t imagine. p.26³

**Think about what life could be like in a bright green future...
in a world improved by better ideas and new solutions.**

¹ WORLDCHANGING; Ed. by Alexander Steffen. Publ. by ABRAMS in N.Y. ISBN 978-0-8109-9746-2

² Also the ‘2000 Watt society’ in Zurich (Switzerland), or Kaindorf (Stmk.) and Güssing (Bgld.) in Austria.

³ IP 2013 – “Permaculture Design Course-The city of the future” in Neusiedl am See. This will be the task for the students!