


# **CHAPTER 41**



## **FACING REALITY TO PRESERVE THE PRESENT BIOSPHERE**







***“REALITY IS THAT WHICH,  
WHEN YOU STOP BELIEVING  
IN IT, DOESN'T GO AWAY.”***

Philip K. Dick<sup>1</sup>

 **NINE INTERACTIVE CRISES<sup>2,3</sup> THREATEN THE PRESENT BIOSPHERE, WHICH SERVES AS A LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE MILLIONS OF SPECIES THAT EVOLVED IN IT, INCLUDING HUMANS, AND ALSO PROVIDES RENEWABLE RESOURCES ESSENTIAL TO THE HUMAN ECONOMY.**

-  **Despite the importance of these crises, little or no attention has been given to them.**
-  **However, global crises require facing reality, however unpleasant.**

 ***“WE ARE THE HEALTHIEST, WEALTHIEST, AND LONGEST-LIVED PEOPLE IN HISTORY. AND WE ARE INCREASINGLY AFRAID. THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT PARADOXES OF OUR TIME.”<sup>4</sup>***

-  ***“Some of the more common fears are: (1) fear of the unknown, (2) fear of failure and rejection, (3) fear of loss (losing what you have), (4) fear of facing reality, and (5) fear of disapproval.”<sup>5</sup>***
-  **Facing reality is facilitated if new information is framed in the context of the preponderance of evidence.**
-  **Special interest groups rarely have the common good as a high priority.**









# THE MERCHANTS OF DOUBT<sup>6</sup> AND THE MERCHANTS OF FEAR<sup>7</sup> SPEND HUGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO OBSCURE REALITY.


- 🌍 Humankind is creating an alien planet (a reality), and it fears the changes necessary in lifestyle and worldview to eliminate or minimize existing threats to the present Biosphere.
- 🌍 However, *“Pushing through fear is less frightening than living with the underlying fear that comes from the feeling of helplessness.”*<sup>8</sup>
- 🌍 *“Public opinion about climate change . . . can be compared to waves ‘in a shallow pan,’ easily tipped with ‘a lot of sloshing but not a lot of depth.’”*<sup>9</sup>



**🗣️ “POLITICIANS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD EAGERLY TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NUMBER OF NEW JOBS CREATED IN THE US EACH MONTH. . . . AROUND 125,000 NEW JOBS EACH MONTH [MUST BE CREATED] JUST TO TAKE CARE OF THE POPULATION GROWTH IN THE US!”<sup>10</sup>**

- 🌐 Population grows exponentially — jobs rarely grow for any substantial amount of time.
- 🌐 Most jobs are based on resources that rarely grow exponentially on a finite planet.
- 🌐 The news media should be responsible for quality control to ensure that verifiable evidence (reality) is provided in letters, commentaries, and news articles.

 **“ONE OFTEN READS AND HEARS STATEMENTS: ‘THE UNITED STATES HAS 250 YEARS SUPPLY OF COAL,’ ‘THE UNITED STATES OIL INDEPENDENCE IS NO LONGER A JOKE’ AND ‘SHALE GAS COULD SUPPLY 100 YEARS OF CONSUMPTION FOR THE UNITED STATES.’”<sup>11</sup>**

-  Careful analysis (reality) *“clearly shows that those optimistic statements are false.”<sup>11</sup>*
-  *“To be accurate about the extraction of a fossil fuel from the Earth in the future, one must use a mathematical function that rises quickly, usually exponentially, then levels off to a peak and then falls, usually exponentially, either slower or faster than it rose.”<sup>11</sup>*
-  *“... coal extraction in the United States is peaking about now at about 80 percent extracted . . .”<sup>11</sup>*
-  *“... crude oil is about 78 percent extracted in the United States . . .”<sup>11</sup>*
-  *“It appears that natural gas is about 71 percent extracted in the United States.”<sup>11</sup>*

 ***“NEVERTHELESS, THE GENERAL PICTURE [ABOUT RESOURCES] IS INESCAPABLE: IT IS ONE OF MUTUALLY INTERACTING INSTANCES OF OVERCONSUMPTION AND EMERGING SCARCITY.”<sup>12</sup>***

-  ***“If the increased availability of cheap energy has historically enabled unprecedented growth in the extraction rates of other resources, then the coincidence of Peak Oil with the peaking and decline of many other resources is entirely predictable.”<sup>12</sup>***
-  ***The generation of Americans born after World War II has “. . . stolen much from the future generations; the main question remaining is, can we now give them back at least the possibility that they might build the world we once dreamed of?”<sup>12</sup>***



# HUMANITY HAS LEFT THE BRIEF CORNUCOPIAN ERA AND IS ENTERING A LONG-TERM ERA OF SCARCITY.

- 🌍 Inhabitants of developed countries must learn to live in an age of scarcity (reality) so that the lives of those living in misery are not worsened.
- 🌍 Regulations protecting the present Biosphere must be enforced so that no resources are impaired. In short, the “. . . *largely successful war on federal regulatory agencies . . .*”<sup>13</sup> must cease.
- 🌍 Disasters such as Fukushima, whose operators knew “*safety improvements were needed before the disaster but had failed to implement them,*”<sup>14</sup> should never happen again.
- 🌍 Economic growth should never be given a higher priority than compassion.

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