

Looking to the Future

OK, it is time now to look forward and say a few words about what I think might possibly lie ahead for humanity in the future. As I feel very much part of the whole, I regard this issue as an integral part of my memoir. Indeed, I am increasingly realising that the more I can own my human-collective self – realise I am not separate from but deeply part of humanity as a whole - the more fully me I become!

As I look around at my planet, I feel a lot of sorrow at its condition and huge anger at the many injustices that exist. I think the biggest problems are selfishness (extreme ego-centredness), huge greed, huge corruption, apathy, and an obsession with materiality and power, all of which are symptomatic of a lack of consciousness or of a very immature humanity.

Too many world leaders have grown older but have not grown up and got wiser. Hypnotised by the comforts of status, pleasure, wealth and power, few think of what the planet really needs, as they are primarily concerned with what benefits themselves and their clan and how they can cling on to power. This process has worsened during the pandemic, and world inequality has worsened, with the rich having grown considerably richer and the poor very much poorer. Today, 1 per cent of the world's population have more wealth than the rest of the world put together. And this is utterly insane.

Indeed, as I write, information is currently emerging on how many wealthy people are able to hide their millions in offshore tax havens and pay little to no tax. This, my friend, is not a perversion of capitalism. It is capitalism's true ugly face that has always existed, just as there has always existed a marriage between so called 'respectable bankers' and the oligarchs and kleptocrats who drain their nations' wealth and channel it into these havens.

We need to understand that we live in a world where huge injustice reigns and where many millions of us turn our backs towards those who are 'not like us', who have different skin colours, sexual preferences, financial levels, beliefs, nationalities, opinions, attitudes and worldviews, often seeing them as 'the enemy'. And this is enormously sad. Not enough of us are able to realise that despite great diversity, all of us human beings are linked together – part of one human family...

Indeed, it is clear to me that our planet is in a very precarious place and is becoming more so by the day. Many countries are collapsing socially, economically and politically (I recently read an article suggesting that with the way things are going, America may well descend into becoming a 'failed state!').

Just as I was about to give up this manuscript to my publishers, Vladimir Putin, the Russian President, whose monstrosity has been steadily marinating over the twenty-plus years he has been in power - there is great truth in Lord Acton's remark that

“power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely” - decided to invade Ukraine, to the horror of the rest of the world. In this unprovoked and brutal attack upon a democratic country, we see the same kind of viciousness that was once displayed by Ivan the Terrible and later by Stalin. It also shows us that negative patterns, unless healed, continue to raise their ugly heads not only in our personal lives but also in the destiny of nations.

Very understandably, the rest of the world is reacting very strongly; Russia is now being thwarted by tough sanctions from all corners of the globe and weaponry is pouring into Ukraine to help it defend itself. The result is that Putin has, at time of writing, just announced that he is putting his enormous nuclear arsenal on high alert. Right now, the world is probably in the most unsafe place it has been since the Second World War.

The general fear and uncertainty that is everywhere today has also opened up a space that is conducive to allowing fear-stoking fascistic/populist forces to come into their own, replete with their paranoid signature tunes including how all social ills are caused by ‘evil immigrants’, and that as there are ‘huge dangers everywhere’, there is a legitimate and urgent need for greater law and order, thus ‘legitimising’ the use of force to suppress resistance. Those who have the courage to take stands to resist their authoritarianism are all too often labelled ‘terrorists’!

Essentially what totalitarian movements do, by continually doling out a diet of lies and conspiracy theories, is conjure up an oversimplistic and duplicitous world that is more acceptable than reality itself, so that those who feel uprooted can find a home and don’t have to face the real shocks that real life and real experience can give them. In many countries today, more and more people are feeling uprooted and there is no doubt that democracy is under very grave threat.

The coronavirus has not only claimed many lives but has also served as a catalyst in bringing up very deep Shadow issues for humanity. Whether this virus will continue as a disequilibrating force to mutate and shake up the world and render ever-greater suffering for the world’s not-have’s, or whether it will gradually fade away, no one knows. James Lovelock, who coined the idea of the Gaia Hypothesis, which suggests that our planet is an intelligent self-regulating mechanism, has recently been putting forward the theory that it has grown increasingly sick of us human beings continually abusing it and is now fighting back to eliminate the threat we present and that the Covid virus is one of the various weapons it is using!

Few can deny that humanity en masse is currently journeying ever deeper into a collective Dark Night of the Soul crisis. As the American philosopher William Ophuls put it in his book *Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilisations Fail*:

‘What the impending crises force us to confront is that we have sacrificed meaning, morality and almost all higher values for the ‘sordid boon’ of material wealth and worldly power. To keep drinking from this poisoned chalice will only bring sickness and death.’

The tragic thing is that too many people in positions of power in government and in our institutions, are continuing to drink from it, indeed, are addicted to its liquids and are enormously resistant to change. We see this reflected in the refusal of so many nations to cut down on their use of fossil fuels. I find it interesting that so many world leaders today are elderly men who won't be alive to experience the tragic consequences of their rigidities.

This ties up with what the academic and historian Niall Ferguson recently said.

Civilisations behave like all complex adaptive systems. They function in apparent equilibrium for some unknowable period. And then, quite abruptly they collapse – the shift from consummation to destruction and then to desolation is not cyclical. It is sudden...

So it is very probable that over the next thirty years or so, our world situation will continue to greatly worsen.

Several things are crystal clear today.

The world does not work for a very large number of people. Not only for the very poor and for those living in countries where there are droughts, famines, poverty and civil wars raging – in these countries there is often also a lot of crime and corruption – but things are also far from easy for many of the 'haves'! In these cases, the crises are more internal. I see huge unhappiness and depression in the world today, which is the natural consequence of living in a system that primarily addresses only our egoic selves and where one is not especially encouraged to be kind to neighbours, and where you believe you are disconnected from other human beings and are therefore an 'island unto yourself'.

There is a vast tsunami of grief in the world today. OK, a few things are getting better – for example the health of people with AIDS, and women's rights and gay rights are in many places improving – but many things are getting worse and worse – breaking down – faster and faster. Certainly, to continue to move forward by looking in the rear-view mirror, or to persevere with a 'business as usual' mindset, which still seems to be the approach that many governments, businesses and institutions are taking, I regard as global suicide.

We return to the thesis implicit in my introduction about how important our personal evolution is. I remember in the seventies reading a book written by George Land entitled *Grow or Die*. And what he says is even truer today. *Unless as a species we start evolving, unless we work to come into our deeper selfhood and realise our interconnectedness, and start living our true story and begin helping each other and cooperating together and being kind to one another, and stop trashing our planet and instead start living more sustainably, we haven't a chance in hell of 'making it'.*

I stress once more: the main reason why we have so much evil, greed, trauma, violence, corruption, selfishness, hatred, war, cruelty, nationalism, terrorism, fascism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, nationalism and inequality is because not enough of us have

worked on ourselves to have evolved a big enough heart and an expanded enough soul. Our worldview is much too blinkered. Too many of us have not the slightest idea that who we are has nothing to do with the person that our ego agendas tell us we are, and the result is that we remain closed off to our deeper humanity. This means that we have little or no connection to those locations within our psyche where our altruism, our courage, our kindness, our wisdom, truth, compassion, creativity and love lie, all of which are the necessary antidotes enabling and empowering us to live our lives very differently.

What we need is a new vision. One with heart and compassion. One with wisdom. Old visions such as the 'American Dream', which made materiality into its God, have proved to be utterly hollow. If we are to survive as a species, we have to choose a new path for living on Earth that is regenerative not destructive, wholistic not reductive, supportive of life as opposed to detrimental to it. We need a path of soul. With soul, we can truly begin envisioning ourselves as caretakers of our planet as opposed to abusers of it.

We also need to remember that we human beings hold our future in our hands. Where we go from here is up to you and me and what we individually and collectively choose, as no one and nothing 'out there' is going to save us. Certainly not our governments and our institutions. Just as it is up to us individually whether we act out our conditioned story or find our true story, so the same holds true regarding our relationship with our planet. You and I and the way we live need to be the change. Not tomorrow but right now. Our future is open. It is not set in stone. If we continue in the direction we are currently moving in – many of us talking the right talk but all too often refusing to walk it – we face catastrophic consequences.

That all said, I am very positive about the future of humankind. I believe that humanity is posed for a quantum leap in consciousness. I also know that if we need something new – which of course we do – that 'oldness' needs to die to create the space for it. In other words, from a short-term perspective, the many things we see collapsing around us may be labelled a tragedy. From a long-term perspective, perhaps we can see what is happening as being analogous to a process of necessary shedding and thus clearing the way for a whole new 'planetary way of being' to come into expression.

In his book *Cosmic Consciousness*, Richard Bucke, looking to the future, tells us that

'Cosmic consciousness will become more and more universal earlier in an individual's life, until the race at large will possess this faculty... This new race is in the act of being born from us and in the near future, it will occupy and possess the Earth.'

Despite everything I have said about what is 'wrong' with our world, with all my heart I believe this. I am not one of those pessimists who believe we are now past the point of no return and it is only a question of time before we face our total comeuppance. Yes, I believe that our civilisation is collapsing and that we are approaching a time when the entire dam might burst, but we also need to remember how dysfunctional that 'civilisation' has become. I have no doubt that the next half-century is going to be a time of enormous upheaval, pain, confusion and uncertainty in which many of our

existing societal structures are not going to be able to cope. But I also feel sure – I feel it deeply inside my heart – that humanity is, in the long run, going to pull through. Breakdown need not lead to a complete collapse. The grace forces are not going to let us down. I resonate very much with what the late Bede Griffiths, the Buddhist monk and Christian scholar, said when questioned on this issue.

'We will make it but it will cost everything. Just as Jesus had to go through death into the new world of the resurrection, so millions of us will have to go through a death to the past and to all old ways of being if we are to be brought by the grace of God into the truth of a new age... God, I believe, wants a new world and a new humanity to be born.'

Put simply, grace is shining through all the destructiveness that will be taking place. It will be showing us its fierce face. Here, I am also reminded of a poem by Rumi:

*Be grateful for the Friend's tyranny not his tenderness,
So the arrogance in you can become a lover that weeps...*

Duane Elgin in his book *Choosing Earth* suggests that there are three paths lying ahead for us.

In the first path chaos reigns, and our civilisation crashes and collapses.

The second path indicates that we turn more and more to authoritarian rulers who promise safety.

In the third path, we don't hit rock bottom. We descend, as a species, into huge chaos, and the flames burn and many institutions crumble, but we don't have a full-on crash. Here, the destructive unravelling of the old dysfunctional society meets the constructive forces weaving a new world order based on planetary thinking. This is basically what I see lying ahead of us in the next half-century.

I have little doubt that from now on, things will continue to get worse and our human suffering will increase. There may be a few years where initially it seems as if everything has gone kaput. But this won't be the case. Yes, a few nations that are failing may well collapse completely. For the rest of society, there will be food and water shortages and people will probably fight each other to get to them. Probably social services won't be able to cope and our financial system will become increasingly compromised and somewhere down the line there may well be a full-blown global financial collapse. I also have little doubt that more demagogues will come into positions of power in certain countries, although it will not be a full-blown authoritarian takeover in all countries.

Everything in our global Shadow that, species-wise, we have thus far managed to dodge confronting, we will now no longer be able to. This includes all the many vicious and hostile ways in which wealthy nations have exploited less wealthy ones over the last four hundred years.

Put simply, I think that the next twenty to sixty years are going to be very tumultuous, as all those structures, organisations and institutions that we believed in and felt made us safe are going to slowly – and in some instances probably very rapidly – disintegrate, so that in all probability the world we are going to have will be unrecognisable to the one we have today. Organisations like NATO, the IMF and the UN may well cease to exist and large entities like Amazon, Microsoft and Google may well go under. The world's wealthy, who currently feel that they have the wherewithal to avoid these crises (if one country is under water, they own properties in other countries) could well find themselves in the same boat as everyone else and discover that their money and possessions are not going to be able to save them. Yes my friend. All the king's horses and all the king's men are not going to be able to put Humpty Dumpty together again! But in the long run, this will be for the best. What is needed is a post-Humpty world!

While I do not feel there will be a total collapse, I think a certain levelling-out will occur. Essentially, I cannot see how there will not be terrible suffering and trauma in the years ahead, perhaps for the simple reason that people only really change when a crisis becomes so unbearable that one has no choice. Terrible shocks – losing everything that we hold precious – if they don't destroy us (and they certainly have that potential) can also transform us. I sense that many who believe they are superior to the rest of the human race will start to see that this is not the case, and so they will lose much of their arrogance. In Duane Elgin's words:

It is the immense suffering of millions – even billions – of precious human beings coupled with the destruction of many other life forms, that will burn through our complacency and isolation. Suffering is the psychological and psychic fire that can awaken our compassion and fuse individuals, communities and nations into a cohesive and consciously organised global civilisation.

I absolutely concur with this – and have certainly found it to be the case in my own life (as you've seen) and in my psychotherapy practice. The main reason why I am positive about the long run is because I believe there are many millions of wonderfully evolved souls coming out of the woodwork in ever greater numbers and in every nation on the planet, all dedicating their lives, in a multitude of different ways, to taking stands for a healthier planet. The media, with its tendency to stress only the bad things occurring, has not always put enough emphasis upon how powerful this infusion of goodness is as an antidote to the corruption, apathy and evil swirling around all of us today.

Many of these 'new people' are young. Two of the best known examples are Malala Yousafzai, who, despite being shot in the head by the Taliban, has campaigned tirelessly for girls to go to school, and Greta Thunberg, who lectures world leaders on the need to live up to their climate change promises and does not hesitate to tell them exactly what she thinks. I repeat: there are many millions of these fantastic brave, visionary people on the planet today who are choosing to champion those causes which particularly touch them, and I predict that they will grow in numbers and in potency over the next thirty years. What I also find very encouraging is how many

extremely wealthy people are also waking up and realising that bigger houses, bigger yachts and more expensive art on their walls is not really what life is about any more, and are consequently choosing to use their wealth in ways that make big differences. This is so important, for a new society will not be able to come fully into expression without many quadrillions to finance it.

I've been privileged in my life to have met many of these 'awakeners' who are starting to arise, phoenix-like, out of the ashes. And these brave, loving, conscious, visionary people exist in every walk of life and in every race. Their commitment is to having a society that works for everyone. What I have also learned from some of these people is that all the structures for a new, more workable world exist right now, just as solutions for all the many problems on our planet also exist. What we don't yet have is the willingness to implement them, as to do so would require many more people to be willing to relinquish their old privileges and lifestyles, and things as yet aren't quite 'hot' enough to enable this to happen.

Duane Elgin's words also tie in with what philosopher Chris Bache says in his book *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*, mentioned earlier.

He suggests that we see the species-mind as a unified psychic field and that this field will be driven into a state far from equilibrium by the extreme suffering generated by a monumental global ecological crisis; and that in this hyper-aroused state, the species-mind will exhibit the capacity for rapidly accelerated change, heightened creativity and higher self-organisation. Under the pressure of the extreme conditions of the future, the human psyche will come alive at new levels, and the interconnections between people previously too subtle to be detected will become obvious. And all of this will take place much more quickly than anyone could have predicted.

Ilya Prigogine, in his well-known study of dissipative structures, also talked about this. He has shown us that one of the properties of systems when they are driven into difficulties is that they don't just break down; they evolve a capacity for higher self-organisation. They generate new structures that pull higher forms of order out of the resultant chaos. And this is exactly what will happen, with huge suffering acting as the purifying fire leading to the awakening of the soul of humanity.

I see a new centre of operation emerging on the planet, plus a whole new cadre of conscious world leaders who will have heart and soul and who will realise that the more their nation can support what is in the best interest of the world community as a whole, the more they will be drawn to enact policies that are also conducive to their own health and well-being. Instead of the aggression shown, say, by a Putin, the richest man in the world today, who currently tries to advance Russia by doing his best to find as many ways as he can to weaken Europe, we will have a wholly new kind of world leader who will be moved to govern out of the wisdom born of having an open heart and an awake soul.

We will also see an ever-greater emergence of powerful feminine energy in the world; the patriarchal mindset will be dealt a heavy blow by these crises, as people look back and see the enormous devastations that have been done in its name.

Certain countries will need to apologise for the damage they have done to other countries and to certain segments of people in their own countries, and a lot of forgiveness rituals will need to be created.

Many different kinds of reconciliation will also be called for as people start to realise the futility and huge cost of not having respected and often having demonised those who do not see the world the same way as they do and who belong to different races and religions, have different sexual ethics or different skin colours.

In this emerging new world order, the world will be much more integrated and the have's will be moved to support the not-have's. All the thinking about having to make more and more money and have more and more possessions will have fallen away and the utter absurdity of some people being billionaires while others starve will be appreciated. All people will see the necessity and the value of making their lives simpler at all levels.

There will also be a time of great mourning for all the lives lost and the huge suffering that will have taken place, as well as the devastation done to the planet in the name of greed. It may take many years for the wounds we have inflicted on our planet to heal. However, while they certainly threaten its life, they will not completely snuff it out and in the future we may see all sorts of healings taking place at many different levels. It may be that if those forces conspiring to detonate positive changes reach a critical threshold and the infrastructure required to deploy them becomes dominant, a 'counter-flip' may occur, driving fossil fuels to extinction. I know this is maybe stretching things but I have read many accounts of sudden healings or of a 'quantum healing' occurring for individuals with, for example, so-called incurable cancer, and I ask myself if what may be possible for the individual may not also be possible for the planet!

The important thing to understand is that the human race will less and less be operating out of its old egoic centre and more and more out of a soul perspective. And this will radically change the context in which we view the world. As such, all problems and challenges will be seen in a broader, wider, deeper and more compassionate context, and thus solutions will be much easier to come by.

I feel a little sad and even a bit guilty that my daughter and stepdaughter will have big challenges to face during the course of their lives and won't have it nearly as easy as I did. However, accompanying the huge sorrow is also a sense that there is something innately empowering about living in these challenging times, and I have no doubt that both girls will rise to the challenges and thus their personal development will be much speedier than mine.

Here are a few key changes that I would like to see gradually coming about.

- 1) With the emergence of soul, a new consciousness of fullness of being or of abundance begins to permeate the thinking of millions of people, with the result that the mindset of separation and scarcity begins gradually to melt away.
- 2) Visionaries or activists working for a transformed world will be honoured and encouraged. They will become the 'new centre', while those who are currently at the 'centre of things' – the 'ancien regime' – will find themselves slipping away to the peripheries of life. In this new context, farmers who transform deserts to grow food or mediators who work to heal war-torn societies or journalists who work reporting in war zones, or climate change activists, will be all honoured for the immensely important work which they do and will be seen as the real 'great and the good'.
- 3) Personal achievement will no longer be measured in money or power and being wealthy will no longer be defined by what we own, but by the quality of our lives – how much we are able to love and be loved, how creative we are, how holistically healthy we are, and how much we are able to live with kindness and heart.
- 4) We will start creating a participatory society, one where all people will have a voice in the decisions that affect their life and future. More and more people will start demanding freedom and having their rights respected, and by the end of this century, I predict the demise of many right-wing populists. Democracy, which at one stage was rapidly failing, will come bouncing back only now manifesting as an even truer voice of the people.
- 5) The self-centred nation state, utterly disconnected from its soul and thus from its *raison d'être* in the world, gives way to a transnational system, where individual nations connect to their higher purposes and see their deeper role in supporting the emerging world community.
- 6) There will be more peace and less war. Where war still exists, instead of brute force new technologies around conflict resolution will begin to be used.
- 7) A new model of what it means to be human begins to emerge whereby we no longer deify the rich, the notorious and the famous. Instead, we come to see that our real heroes or real 'great and the good' on the planet are those who live unselfishly, humbly, wisely, simply and unpretentiously. A new 'aristocracy of soul' composed of men and women who will have worked on their own evolution will start coming into being.
- 8) Those who have managed to hold on to some of their wealth are happy to share their good fortune with those who are poor and marginalised, so that the latter feel empowered and more able to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps.
- 9) Nations that have huge debts as a result of exploitation that goes back many centuries are released from their obligations, at the same time that those nations which have done the exploiting open their eyes to the huge damage done in the name of 'advancement'.

- 10) All corporations embrace a mindset of 'giving to' as opposed to 'taking from,' and put the well-being of people and planet before profit.
- 11) Those who are most resistant and hostile to change are given opportunities to learn to see the world in a new light and the damage they do by opposing the natural flow of evolutionary advancement.
- 12) Understanding the Shadow and how to work with it is a core part of what is taught in schools and universities, so that instead of our projecting our dark sides onto other people, races and nations, we learn to work creatively with it inside ourselves.
- 13) More people start moving away from their involvement in fundamentalisms, pseudo-religions and cults, and begin learning to embrace a spirituality that has depth to it, leading them to realise that we are all united, all equal in the mind of God, and that there exists a divinity that is both within us and that is greater than us. Religions are therefore stripped more and more of their institutionalisms and dogmas that have been such a source of violence in the past, so that a space can emerge for a deeper spirituality to come to the fore, whereby people may feel invigorated and inspired by a connection with a soulfulness that feels real and alive.
- 14) People come increasingly to realise that they are stewards not despoilers of our planet, and that their role is to help Earth's delicate ecosystems recover.
- 15) Politicians learn to be more authentic and honest and refuse to be 'bought', and gradually all forms of government based on repression vanish from the face of the Earth.
- 16) All forms of violence and oppression to minority groups also come to an end. A new value system is gradually born whereby honesty triumphs over corruption, kindness over indifference and generosity over greed.
- 17) Money will be used in new ways, largely spent on things that support the emergence of a new world. The economic system is therefore gradually reformed of its corruption, and bankers attend courses where they are taught to operate with integrity and honesty. The new, emerging world will be one where the wealthy don't just get richer but where money is distributed equally so that no one is marginalised and the less well-developed economies can be assisted by the more developed ones.
- 18) Education will no longer be about trying to help people adjust better to a deviant society, but instead to prepare and encourage them to work to create a new society, and children in school will learn life skills relative to this new emerging culture.
- 19) The old desacralised, de-animated and soulless view of nature that has become the foundation of modern science, and the whole mechanistic worldview, leading to a belief that one can exploit it for profit as much as one wishes, begins to fall away. Instead, people learn to recognise nature's aliveness and sacredness and realise it needs to be celebrated and honoured and related to in a wise way.

20) As a balance against the 'cyberfication' of life, we focus on what is real, purifying everything about the way we eat and think and work and generally live our lives.

21) The media, which so strongly affects how we see the world and which at present mainly deals with money, houses, celebrities and disasters and continually finds fault, undergoes a profound level-shift, gradually becoming an important ally in the game of transformation. Among other things, it shows us examples of soulful human beings who have undergone transformation.

22) Support is increasingly withdrawn from the entity we call 'the system', thus enabling it to evolve and transform into something that supports the emergence of a sustainable and harmonious world.

23) Society is happier and more balanced and people learn to think more in terms of what will serve the larger community and not just enhance their own personal lives. Because the level of corruption will radically decrease, there will be less hatred, less crime, less addiction and more people policing their own local communities.

24) More and more people allow themselves to be 'fed' from higher sources of inspiration or more unified states of consciousness, with the result that there is far less depression and anxiety and much more enthusiasm for life as the realisation that true happiness comes from how full we are inside ourselves and has very little to do with how outwardly wealthy we are.

I will end by saying that one of the big challenges that we all face in the years ahead is not to 'ostrich' it and hide our heads in the sand and close our eyes to some of the very terrible things happening in the world. Just because we don't see things doesn't mean they don't affect us. I think we are all called to have a go at 'giraffing' it – that is, stick our necks out and up and make our hearts strong, and in so doing, choose to have the way we live our lives be a stand for the new kind of society that we wish for.

If we hide away, it will disempower us and consequently make us more susceptible to the turbulence lying ahead, whereas if we confront and accept it and see it as a powerful gate of initiation that individually and collectively we are being 'asked' to move through, the force or grace will be much more easily able to flow through us and guide us. We also need to remember that the more we hold a positive mindset and see through the current chaos to the new world lying ahead that is wishing to unfurl itself, the more effective a role we will be able to play in this great process of evolutionary transformation.

